Dramatic Experience

Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe

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Dramatic Experience

The Poetics of Drama and the Early Modern Public Sphere(s)

Edited by

Katja Gvozdeva, Tatiana Korneeva, and Kirill Ospovat

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Acknowledgments

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Contributor Biographies

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with H.P. Bayerdörfer (2005); *Nô Theatre Transversal*, ed. with C. Balme (2008); and *Japanese Theatre Transcultural: German and Italian Intertwinings*, ed. with A. Regelsberger (2011).

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Introduction

Dramatic Experience: The Poetics of Drama and the Early Modern Public Sphere(s)

It is by now well known that early modern theatre as an institution and cultural site represented a locus of accumulation and assembly for social, political, and ideological transformations and tensions that were aggressively reshaping private and public, individual and collective identities during the period from approximately 1500 to 1800. These centuries witnessed an explosion of dramatic theory and theatrical polemics, practice, and production in various dramatic genres; the birth of public playhouses open to socially diverse audiences; and an increased accessibility to dramatic texts through the novel medium of print that was actively forging a new kind of reading public. These developments point to a fundamental question that transcends the disciplinary boundaries of theatre studies and forms the focus of the current volume: how and to what extent did the convergence of dramatic theory, theatrical practice, and various modes of audience experience—among both theatregoers and readers of drama—contribute, during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, to the emergence of spaces we now call 'public sphere(s)'?

The public sphere—in a perspective suggested but not exhausted by Jürgen Habermas in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 1962)—is a symbolic, social, and cultural space where collective and individual identities emerge and shape each other in a dialectical logic of interdependence. In his classic discussion, Habermas famously outlined a single, if multidimensional, shift from an earlier 'representative publicity' (*repräsentative Öffentlichkeit*) associated with royal courts as central sites of power and theatrical production, to a 'bourgeois public sphere' (*bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit*) constituted by novels and journals read in private households.[1] An entire academic field that revises and develops his approaches and conclusions has since emerged around the notion of the public sphere. In particular, the large-scale 'Making Publics' project, which ran from 2005 to 2010 and explored early modern public spheres, produced two important volumes of interdisciplinary scholarship.[2] These collections develop a post-Habermasian

1 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (repr. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

2 *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, ed. by Wilson Bronwen and Paul Yachnin (New York: Routledge, 2010); and *Making Space Public in Early*

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understanding of the early modern public sphere, which 'is more likely to be described as a heterogeneous and conflictual ensemble of social entities than egalitarian totality: a multiplicity of publics and counter-publics that produce and occupy, in turn, a multiplicity of social spaces where their collective identity and voice can be created, discovered, asserted and exercised'.[3] This understanding of the public sphere is well suited to an exploration of the early modern period characterised by parallel processes of pluralisation across different domains. The demystified notion of plural 'social spaces' does not completely supplant the unified 'public sphere' that is conceived of 'not as a bounded space but a vortex of attention', but is related to it through the multiplicity, virtuality, open-endedness, and performativity of social practices that are engaged in 'making spaces public'.[4] As one among many early modern social spaces, theatre is examined (particularly in Steven Mullaney's and Rachel Willie's important contributions) through its dual status as performance both in a public playhouse and on the 'paper stage'.[5] Theatre thus emerges as a form of mediation between private and public, individual and collective; as a 'forum for social thought' and a 'potential catalyst of making of various publics and counter-publics'; and as a 'form of publication' or a 'practical public sphere'. As lived experiences of early modern existence, the 'actual practices of public making give the lie to the myth of a stable and normative public sphere'.[6]

Substantiating and recasting Habermas's claim that theatre as a medium and concept played a central role in the early modern, pre-bourgeois public sphere, these studies provide a strong impulse—along with new

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Modern Europe: Performance, Geography, Privacy, ed. by Angela Vanhaelen and Joseph P. Ward (London: Routledge, 2013). Although the 'Making Publics' project has concluded, its website still operates as a resource for scholars interested in the topic: http://www.making-publics.org/.

3 Steven Mullaney and Angela Vanhaelen, 'Introduction: Making Space Public', in *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Vanhaelen and Ward, p. 3.

4 Ibid., p. 5.

5 See Steven Mullaney's 'What's Hamlet to Habermas? Spatial Literacy, Theatrical Publication, and the Publics of Early Modern Public Stage' (pp. 17–40) and Rachel Willie's 'Viewing the Paper Stage: Civil War, Print, Theatre and the Public Sphere' (pp. 54–75), in *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Vanhaelen and Ward.

6 Steven Mullaney and Angela Vanhaelen, 'Introduction: Making Space Public', pp. 3–8. See also *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Massimo Rospocher (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012); *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

methodological tools—for further exploration of this fertile field.[7] In their discussions of theatre as a space and practice from the double perspective of 'spatiality of the social' and 'sociality of the spatial', these innovative case studies for the most part leave aside the relationship between the poetics of drama and the public spheres, both in terms of the practical implementation of dramatic precepts on the stage in order to affect, mobilise, form, and transform spectators, and in terms of the dramatic theories and public theatrical polemics of the early modern period. The present volume aims to fill this gap by exploring the relationship between 'universal', internationally transferable theatrical poetics, textual genres, and performative techniques, and the lived experience of specific early modern audiences that diverge socially, geographically, and chronologically.

One of the premises of the DramaNet project approach, championed in this book, is that internationally disseminated early modern theatre constitutes the first mass medium in history.[8] This assumption implies that techniques of fiction and aesthetic effects were aligned with—if not steered by—a social logic of mass consumption that allowed playhouses to attract consistently heterogeneous audiences that were otherwise divided by geographical and social distance. The terms 'audience' and 'public' converge when we speak of a play's spectators, but even in its most conventional sense 'public', an adjective referring to something generally accessible or shared and a noun relating to an abstract collective entity, differs from 'audience', a form of focused gathering. This volume attempts to illuminate the various and complex dynamics that made dramatic audiences—real and imagined, readers and spectators alike—into embodiments of and blueprints for more abstract publics or 'public spheres'.[9]

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7 For other recent studies that critically discuss and examine Habermas's theory of the public sphere, see *Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe: Drama, Performance and Debate*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal, Peter G.F. Eversmann, and Elsa Strieman (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn's chapter on public opinion, 'Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries', in *Literature and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal, Arjan van Dixhoorn, and Elsa Strieman (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 1–35.

8 This claim is explored by Joachim Küpper, Principal Investigator of the research group Early Modern European Drama and the Cultural Net (DramaNet), in his forthcoming monograph, *The Cultural Net—Early Modern Drama as Paradigm*.

9 Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). For an important study of early modern conceptions of the public on the threshold of the political and the aesthetic, see Hélène Merlin, *Public et littérature en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994).

From Aristotle to New Historicism, theoretical discussions have recognised drama as a medium tailored to produce and manipulate collective emotions (whether anthropologically constant or socially and historically variable) in order to obtain desired aesthetic, social, and political effects. Indeed, from the Renaissance to the late eighteenth century, the history of European drama and theatre was largely shaped by the re-emergence and subsequent proliferation of theory, a persistent inquiry into the workings and implications of dramatic effect and experience.[10] This process was driven primarily by the reading and adaptation of the two major poetic doctrines from classical antiquity that focus on dramatic genres: Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Ars poetica*. Across centuries and national traditions, theorists and practitioners of drama turned to these two treatises that explored the nature of dramatic experience, its social, political, and moral implications, and its capacity to shape and discipline not only its publics as collectives but also the interior selves of individual spectators (or readers).

Rediscovered in Renaissance Italy, ancient poetic doctrines were immediately (re)interpreted to align with, and to make sense of, the changing social configurations of historical audiences and their expectations as they shaped, and were shaped by, contemporary dramatic practice. In Aristotelian and Horatian exegesis, poetic and moral categories were consistently aligned with the social and the political. Drama and its theory were both understood by neoclassical commentators as media that shaped virtual political communities—'public spheres'. The uses of dramatic poetics as political theory, which can be traced from the very first Aristotelian commentaries in fifteenth-century Italy, can be illustrated by the writings of André Dacier, a highly influential late seventeenth-century French translator and interpreter of classical theory. Dacier's readings of Horace and Aristotle opened up and canonised the procedures and outcomes of humanist exegesis for vernacular publics within and outside France, laying the groundwork for eighteenth-century dramatic theory proper (Jean-Baptiste Dubos, Denis Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Carlo Goldoni, Carlo Gozzi, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, to name but a few). Dacier's preface to his annotated translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* into French (1692), itself quickly translated into English, links the rules of dramatic art to political institutions in the very first lines. To quote an early English translation, 'as the Injustice of Men, gave the occasion to making of Laws; so the decay

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See also *Le Spectateur de théâtre à l'âge classique* (*XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles*), ed. by Bénédicte Louvat-Molozayet and Franck Salaün (Montpellier: L'Entretemps éditions, 2008).

10 Steven Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions in the Age of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

of Arts, and the Faults committed in them, oblig'd first to the making Rules, and the renewing them.' Theatre and poetry, according to Dacier, emerged from the original community rituals, the feasts of the pagans, which were transformed by philosopher poets into 'Diversions, where there is Order, and Shows, where Truth is to be found'. Drama is thus entrusted with the shaping of its audiences in accordance with a specific truth, a process that aligned the rules of dramatic art with political, religious, and moral laws. As a consequence, drama assumes a central place in an all-encompassing collective and political discipline—since, as Dacier puts it, 'the only aim of true Politicks is to procure to the People Virtue, Peace and Pleasure.' Expressly identifying Aristotelian catharsis as the effect of drama with the Horatian principle of combining 'the pleasant and profitable', Dacier interprets the 'purification of the passions' to designate the ethical reformation of the public in general and the socially situated individual in particular: 'Thus the aspiring may learn to give bounds to his Ambition; the Prophane to fear God; the Malicious to forget his Wrongs; the Passionate to restrain his Anger; the Tyrant to forsake his Violence and Injustice.'[11]

Evidently, Dacier was exploring the same dynamic of collective participation and its role in the forging of individual and group identities that is central to (post-)Habermasian discussions of public sphere(s) and the particular role of theatre therein. Early modern drama was clearly aligned with the grand disciplinary movement of the period that accompanied the emergence of modern statehood and modern subjectivity—even if this movement, which has been variously described by Michel Foucault, Norbert Elias, and Gerhard Oestreich, was itself in many respects a cultural utopia rather than a historical reality. Notably, both Elias and Foucault refer to tragedy as a privileged medium of the new moral and legal economy of discipline, submission, and domination, while the neo-Stoic doctrines explored by Oestreich were central to early modern interpretations of tragic affect and its disciplining effects.[12] Accordingly, in several essays in this volume, the issue of theatrical experience or 'theatrical event'—both as a product of the disciplinary thrust and its

11 [André Dacier,] 'Preface', in *Aristotle's Art of Poetry: translated from the original Greek, according to Mr. Theodore Goulston's edition: together with Mr. D'Acier's notes translated from the French* (London: D. Brown & W. Turner, 1705), unpaginated.

12 Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), pp. 111–13; Michel Foucault, *'Society Must Be Defended': Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976* (New York: Picador, 2003), pp. 174–77; Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Hans-Jürgen Schings, 'Consolatio Tragoediae: Zur Theorie des barocken Trauerspiels', in *Deutsche Dramentheorien: Beiträge zu einer historischen Poetik des Dramas in Deutschland*, ed. by Reinhold Grimm (Frankfurt a.M.: Atheneum, 1971).

subversion—emerges as an important vantage point for the discussion of drama and theatre as both practice and theoretical subject.

One dynamic that made theatre—and the subjectivity of the spectator it forged—into an institution of and a paradigm for a specifically early modern order of power has been described by Habermas as 'representative publicity'. Drawing on the theatrical experiences of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, Habermas links drama—and, specifically, tragedy—to a culture of authority grounded in self-constitutive spectacles of domination that both engaged the populace as their audience and reduced its political role to passive spectatorship. This analysis, which builds on Carl Schmitt's discussions of authoritarian representation, resonates with and is supported by other (anti-)Schmittian discussions of the politics of theatre in the 'absolutist' age from Walter Benjamin to Louis Marin and Hélène Merlin-Kajman. The tragic protagonist is identified with the ruler; the theatrical event with the political state of exception, or *coup d'état*.[13] In several contributions to this volume, tragedy is explored as a genre that establishes and renegotiates the outlines of sovereignty in its relationship to the public as theatrical audience and political nation, as both sides are mutually defined through dramatic action that simultaneously unfolds as theatre and politics. The inherent affinity of early modern authority with theatrical poetics is further highlighted in essays on early opera, a genre closely related to tragedy that shared its Aristotelian theoretical basis as well as its festive and political functions.

Aristotelian language also reflected—and reflected upon—the relevance of comedy for the shaping of polities and their publics. By the sixteenth century, Italian playwrights and theorists of drama were drawing on the Aristotelian distinction between tragedy and comedy as based on the social standing of the characters, and were reinterpreting and redefining the moral categories of *nobiltà/bassezza* (the noble and the lowly) as notions of social status. This trend connects dramatic texts created in the process of translation and adaptation of ancient models both with local medieval theatrical traditions and with contemporary political orders based on patriarchal family values and regulated by honour and shame. In this volume, we focus on Renaissance comedy as particularly significant for the relationship between the public and the private, which cannot be clearly separated during this period, especially when dealing

13 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 1985); Louis Marin, 'Théâtralité et pouvoir: Magie, machination, machine: *Médée* de Corneille', in *Politiques de la représentation* (Paris: Kimé, 2005); Hélène Merlin-Kajman, *L'Absolutisme dans les lettres et la théorie des deux corps: passions et politique* (Paris: Champion, 2000).

with sexual matters and marital issues.[14] This seemingly minor dramatic genre, which exposes the 'private' topics of love, sex, and family life, inverts its original Aristotelian function of detecting and blaming minor vices (weaknesses and foibles) to become a powerful public medium that addresses major social and political issues.[15] Textual and performative strategies of Renaissance comedy are examined in our volume from two opposing perspectives: in their relation to ritual scripts that anchored plays in traditional patriarchal society and in their novel meta-dramatic qualities that constituted a new, emancipated audience.

The variety of perspectives represented in this collection reflects the cross-cultural and transnational approach that has informed the DramaNet project. Chronologically, we begin with late medieval theatrical practice and embrace the entire early modern period. Geographically, we address diverse national, linguistic, and cultural traditions: Italy and France, Germany and Tyrol, the Netherlands and Russia. In one instance, we reach beyond Europe in order to compare early modern European dramatic experience with Japanese theatrical culture as it developed from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The essays assembled here address dramatic theory and practice, analyse a wide range of theatrical genres, explore different social contexts, and draw on a variety of methodological approaches. At the same time, they all represent focused historical case studies. Presented in chronological order, the essays and their subjects resonate with each other on many levels, exposing geographic and linguistic affinities, common issues of genre and aesthetics, and shared approaches to social and political experience. All of these build an intricate network of bridges between and among individual contributions.

A predominance of essays exploring Italian drama in this volume corresponds to the leading role of early modern Italy in the development of Europe's dramatic cultures. The volume traces significant phases of this development from the beginning of the sixteenth century up to the second half of the eighteenth century. Our Italian case studies are distributed among different cities: Florence

14 *Privatisierung der Triebe? Sexualität in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Daniela Erlach, Markus Reisenleitner, and Karl Vocelka (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1994); Guido Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007).

15 Laura Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Roger Chartier, 'From Court Festivity to City Spectators', in *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1995), pp. 43–82.

and Siena, where reflection on the ancient poetics of drama emerged together with new forms of theatrical production; Venice, which played a leading role in theatre history at a later stage when, with the appearance of public playhouses, theatrical performance was transformed from a court ceremony into a spectacle for a socially diverse, paying audience; and Parma, a comparatively peripheral theatrical space which, precisely because of its marginality, provides us with a site of little-studied dramatic reflection and interesting experiment.

The collection opens with Sven Thorsten Kilian's 'Opening Spaces for the Reading Audience: Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* (1499/1502) and Niccolò Machiavelli's *Mandragola* (1518)', which focuses not on the reception of plays but on dramatic textuality. Kilian defines early modern plays as meta-textual and poly-functional in their potential to model the heterogeneous audience, their reflexive attitude implying multiple readings, and their ability to procure pleasure. He illuminates the precariousness of what is only seemingly the self-evident and triumphant mechanism of didactic effect as it gave way in Renaissance comedy to a not-so-moral *plaisir du texte*. Both texts draw their dramatic effects from deception and from sexually connoted pleasure. According to Kilian, the pleasure of being deceived that is suggested by *La Celestina* is a recurrent and crucial issue in early modern theatre. In *La Mandragola*, Machiavelli explores this same issue through a revision of his own political theory as outlined in *The Prince*. Transposing the notion of deceit from politics to dramatic poetics, Machiavelli now associates it with the aesthetics of dramatic illusion.

The dramatic texts reunited in the analytical *inganno* framework of Kilian's essay were at the centre of attention of playwrights who formed one of the earliest Italian academies, the Accademia degli Intronati. Their productive reception can only partly elucidate the origins, the structure, and the dramatic experience suggested by the academy's first staged comedy, *Gl'Ingannati* (*The Deceived*). Unlike Kilian's analysis of dramatic textuality, Katja Gvozdeva's 'Why Do Men Go Blind in the Theatre? Gender Riddles and Fools' Play in the Italian Renaissance Comedy *Gl'Ingannati* (1532)' is focused on the visual effects of the performance. She shows that this cross-dressing comedy was conceived by the academicians as a visual riddle that refers to their own institutional emblem and that mobilises, in two distinct ways, the visual perceptions of the male and female members of the audience. This playful visual strategy is made to function by the academicians themselves acting on stage in order to reinforce their own fragile micro-society, inscribing it symbolically and emblematically into the public space *par excellence*, the Palazzo Comunale, where the comedy was performed.

The issue of academy performance in the late Renaissance is further developed by Déborah Blocker with the Florentine example of the Accademia

degli Alterati that provided, in the last third of the sixteenth century, a sharp contrast to the official Medicean institution of the Accademia Fiorentina, by cultivating its image as a secret society. 'The Accademia degli Alterati and the Invention of a New Form of Dramatic Experience: Myth, Allegory, and Theory in Jacopo Peri's and Ottavio Rinuccini's *Euridice* (1600)' interweaves an analysis of the theoretical positions and aesthetic ambitions of the Alterati in their theatrical experiments with the question of their social positioning and of the relation between the arts and political power. Blocker argues that Peri and Rinuccini's production of *Euridice* (which brought together theatre, music, chant, and dance, and was performed by the academicians in the context of a Medici wedding) was conceived in an allegorical mode that allowed the opera to embody multiple significations simultaneously and to provide a self-reflexive representation of several types of aesthetic and political experience. Transforming an Ovidian myth into a theatricalised 'miracle', the opera's finale both alluded to the immediate social and political circumstances of its production, and directed the spectators towards higher truths. Blocker links the origins of opera in Medici Florence to a complex negotiation of the role of subjects and artists in the new monarchical regime that made a 'private' withdrawal from politics into an optimal form of political selfhood and conformity.

Moving from the late Renaissance to the Baroque, Wendy Heller's '*Il favore degli dei* (1690): Meta-Opera and Metamorphoses at the Farnese Court' continues to explore the relationship between academic aesthetics, the operatic genre, and dynastic celebration. Because of its visual opulence and length, *Il favore degli dei* not only transgressed the earlier aesthetic requirements of the genre in terms of moderation and harmony, but even appeared excessive by Baroque standards. Heller solves the aesthetic riddle of this *drama fantastico*—a spectacle that attracted massive heterogeneous audiences from the city and provinces to the court theatre, the Teatro Farnese—by demonstrating that the opera's design fused three theatrical threads. First, the court's striving for an opulent dynastic celebration. Second, the originality of the Accademia degli Incogniti's playful and fanciful Ovidian poetics, which delighted in entwining multiple tales inherited from classical tradition. Third, the reflection of Venetian public theatre's 'Ovidian dramaturgy', which created, in its irreverent, complex, and sensual exploration of the Arcadian realm, an unstable, chaotic, and changeable universe that was intended to overwhelm the spectator.

Taking a step from courtly Baroque spectacle to public performances in Enlightenment Venice, Tatiana Korneeva's 'Entertainment for Melancholics: The Public and the Public Stage in Carlo Gozzi's *L'Amore delle tre melarance*' further explores the processes of public making, taking as a case study Carlo Gozzi's fairy-tale play *The Love of the Three Oranges* (1761). Given the comedy's allegorical association of Venetian theatregoers with Gozzi's protagonist

prince, this meta-theatrical text offers the opportunity to reflect on the role of audience response in eighteenth-century theatre practice and critical theory. By analysing the motif of the melancholic sovereign (which catalyses the entire action of the comedy), Korneeva reveals analogies between Gozzi's ideas about theatrical entertainment and the *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719) by Jean-Baptiste Dubos, who established that works of art should be evaluated by their effect on spectators, and who attributed an absolute centrality to public judgment. These insights appear to have influenced Gozzi, who espoused the idea that the audience's response should exercise an aesthetic and cultural authority previously reserved only for a monarch.

Logan J. Connors's 'Pierre Nicole, Jean-Baptiste Dubos, and the Psychological Experience of Theatrical Performance in Early Modern France' shifts the discussion from Italy to France, and to the history of the 'theatrical event'. He expands our exploration of the effects of theatre performances on bourgeois spectators by examining several late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century discourses on drama. Tracing the origins of spectator-focused dramatic theories in the works of playwrights and theorists such as Corneille, Racine, Pierre Nicole, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, Jean-Baptiste Dubos, Houdar de la Motte, and Denis Diderot, Connors emphasises that the histories of psychology and theatre overlap, as 'the theatre was a natural venue for discussing essential questions in early modern psychology.' The essay investigates various types of emotional reactions to theatrical performance, the positive and negative effects of emotions, as well as the somatic and psychic mechanisms involved in the theatrical experience—as they were understood in the context of the period's (anti-)theatrical theories.

Four contributions by Kirill Ospovat, Nigel Smith, Hans Velten, and Stanca Scholz-Cionca focus, from distinct and complementary methodological perspectives, on relationships among spectatorship, sovereignty, the theatricality of political power, and the audience's emotional response.

Kirill Ospovat's 'The Catharsis of Prosecution: Royal Violence, Poetic Justice, and Public Emotion in the Russian *Hamlet* (1748)' explores the interaction of absolutist politics and tragic aesthetics in Aleksandr Sumarokov's adaptation of Shakespeare's masterpiece. Shakespeare's final catastrophe was here substituted with a happy ending: the Russian Hamlet triumphs over Claudius and pardons the captive Polonii, who immediately commits suicide. Sumarokov thus turns his play into a celebration of royal triumph—an allusion to Empress Elizabeth's successful *coup d'état* of 1741. Offering an in-depth reading of the play's double ending, Ospovat compares it with the theatrical mechanics of royal violence and judicial terror as they were mirrored and perpetuated by tragedy. By importing the genre of tragedy into Russia, Sumarokov aligned

dramatic introspection and the emotional impact of drama on the audience with the moral discipline imposed by the 'absolute' monarchy in its claim for disciplinary authority.

Nigel Smith's 'The Politics of Tragedy in the Dutch Republic: Joachim Oudaen's Martyr Drama in Context' undertakes a reading of the martyr plays of Rotterdam republican playwright Joachim Oudaen, which took their subject matter from the De Witt brothers' murder during the Third Anglo-Dutch war, in order to reveal how the dramatist used the aesthetic potential of the tragic form to counterbalance the political culture of the period. By comparing Oudaen's plays to English tragedies, Smith's essay raises the question of how the two nations represented each other in their respective dramatic traditions. This essay argues, in explicit and productive resonance with other contributions to the volume's central theme, that Dutch drama embodied and participated in public life 'in a way that seems similar to the development of both consciousness and artistic achievement in the Italian city states of the later fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries'.

Hans Rudolf Velten's 'Devils On and Off Stage: Shifting Effects of Fear and Laughter in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Urban Theatre' investigates the broad field of theatricality that reaches from carnival rituals to religious and secular plays during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. According to Rudolf Schlögl's influential assumption, late medieval communal spaces of 'socialisation among present beings' constituted by corporeal media and cultural performances still lacked a specific medium for explicit self-reflection (later provided by written and printed communication). Velten identifies such a medium of self-observation in the ambiguity of devil performances. Shifting between the effects of fear and laughter, audience response here appears as a kind of shared collaborative commentary constituting a prototype of public sphere construction.

Multiple questions arising in several of our contributions about the early modern audience—its composition, its modes of interaction with actors, its discrepancies in cognitive and emotional response among different groups of spectators—and images of it that emerge from the dramatic texts themselves and from historical reports of performances are brought together in Toni Bernhart's 'Imagining the Audience in Eighteenth-Century Folk Theatre in Tyrol'. Addressing this unexplored area of dramatic text production and theatrical performance, Bernhart aims to fill the 'historical void' in our knowledge about Tyrolean spectators and to provide more precision around the fuzzy and romanticised critical notion of the folk drama. In contrast to the other articles in this collection that are dedicated to eighteenth-century theatre (and deal with the problematic issue of theatrical illusion in relation to demanding

spectatorship characteristic of the cultural spaces of absolutist France and the Venetian Republic), Bernhart explores the rural area of Tyrol and confronts the divergent perspectives of local peasants and occasional upper class members in rural audiences, demonstrating the enormous emotional receptiveness of the former and their agency in solemnising theatrical events. While stressing the magical power of theatrical illusion, Bernhart indicates that illusion contradicts neither the extreme proximity of actors and audience members who belong to the same small rural community nor the interchangeability of their positions.

The discussions of the theatricality of power that are outlined by Smith and Ospovat, and the impact of theatre in creating the early modern public sphere is expanded theoretically and geographically in Stanca Scholz-Cionca's '*Nô* within Walls and Beyond: Theatre as Cultural Capital in Edo Japan (1603–1868)'. By exploring the manifold social and political functions and resonances of *nô* drama in Japanese court and public life from the early modern period to the nineteenth century, Scholz-Cionca highlights how *nô* dramaturgy—investigated in its wide variety of forms, which ranged from court pageants to unofficial amateur practices—served as a leading cultural medium that fostered knowledge transfer across classes and that contributed to the shaping of social cohesion and patterns of cultural identity. Once again, this essay illuminates and explores the fundamental role of early modern theatre in crafting and consolidating public spheres that were equally present in early modern Europe and Asia.

Despite the diversity of their topics, the articles in this collection demonstrate that related, if diverging, conceptions of the 'public' existed in a variety of forms, locations, and cultures across early modern Europe—and in Asia. Together, they highlight the pivotal role of early modern theatre in the construction of public sphere(s) and the shaping of audiences' individual and collective identities in their respective social and political contexts. The case studies presented here are underwritten by an awareness of the crucial significance of theatrical audiences both as sources of social energy and as living bodies and minds subject to manipulation.

This volume is intended to be of use and interest to students and scholars of early modern theatre, but also to reach beyond the framework of theatre history to appeal to anyone interested in the theory of drama, in audience studies, and in current interdisciplinary debates ongoing in the fields of performance studies, comparative literature, and the history of cultural institutions and cultural dynamics.

Katja Gvozdeva, Tatiana Korneeva, and Kirill Ospovat
May 2016

CHAPTER 1

Opening Spaces for the Reading Audience: Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* (1499/1502) and Niccolò Machiavelli's *Mandragola* (1518)

Sven Thorsten Kilian

1

When Niccolò Machiavelli composed his most famous book, *The Prince*, *c.* 1513, he concluded chapter 21 by stating that a prince, in order to make a name for himself and to be held in high esteem ('ut egregius habeatur'), should from time to time entertain his subjects with 'feasts and spectacles' ('feste e spettaculi'). Machiavelli, therefore, put things in a rather traditional way: he associated spectacles with religious or political—in other words exceptional—occasions ('ne' tempi convenienti dello anno') and openly assigned them the function of controlling and canalising popular needs ('tenere occupati e' populi'), a function of spectacle that Juvenal had bitterly ridiculed in his tenth satire, coining the well-known phrase 'panem et circenses'. But Machiavelli's own comedy, *Mandragola* (1518), which figures among the most canonical texts of early modern Italy is, obviously, not to be reduced to this scheme of Realpolitik. It is, instead, a very different type of spectacle—one that is representative of a new generation of texts that Machiavelli and others came to institutionalise within the framework of their particular political and cultural contexts.[1]

One aspect of the early modern theatre's distancing from medieval theatre's religious and political functions—and from the forms of 'pure' entertainment condemned by Juvenal—is textuality, in its most precise and simple sense.

1 One should, of course, keep in mind that Juvenal's perspective is in opposition to that of Machiavelli: the Roman author criticises the public's impassiveness and its abstention from politics, qualifying the prince's 'thirst for glory' ('famae sitis'), which is analysed by Machiavelli as an aberration caused by the all-too-human lack of 'prudentia'. Cf. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, in *Opere*, ed. by Corrado Vivanti, 3 vols (Torino: Einaudi/Gallimard, 1997–2005), vol. I, chap. XXI, p. 182 (all references to Machiavelli are from this edition, and will be indicated by volume and page numbers); Iuvenalis, *Saturae*, ed. by Jakob Willis (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1997), X, pp. 132–50. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

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Whereas medieval feasts and ceremonies consisted of mostly unwritten protocols, theatre during the fifteenth century became more or less a stable text, as it had been in antiquity. In a great majority of cases, dramatic texts became printed books with relatively broad distribution, which makes 'theatre' more than the visual spectacle it had been for ancient Athenian or Roman citizens, namely a written medium that could be read by virtually anyone—anyone, that is, who was literate. Adopting this perspective means that the concept of theatre as a mass medium must be qualified, as people who could read these texts were few. This is why their function can be neither 'circensis' nor propaganda for the illiterate, as was that of the spectacles Machiavelli recommended to his prince and that of the moving pictures used during the twentieth century to educate the people of the newly created Soviet Union, for example. Plays like *Mandragola* were, instead, adapted to the needs of a reading elite rather than designed to entertain the masses. Nevertheless—and as distinct from medieval times—this literate elite can be considered a 'mass' audience insofar as it is heterogeneous, comprising all ages, classes, professions, and of course both sexes. This fact marks a clear shift with regard to monastery-confined medieval literacy. Literacy, so to speak, became secular.

The thesis that I wish to advance in this paper, then, is that early modern dramatic texts should be regarded as books about books in an age when the material abundance of texts as well as their conceptual authority is becoming more and more problematic. In ancient and medieval times (cf. Seneca below) there can be no doubt about who the canonical authors were, but in early modern times this canon is undermined—not only but also because of the *copia librorum* produced by the printers' presses. The protestant slogan *sola scriptura* will be one answer to this problem. It is no surprise that it is specifically dramatic texts, out of the whole range of early modern textual production, that assume this reflective position, as they exist only on the grounds of an ontological paradox: they are texts that do not want to be texts and thus, with regard to other texts, dramatic texts can always stage themselves as other. They may even—implicitly or explicitly—articulate themselves as 'minor' in a Deleuzian sense, that is in a way that gives them claim to an extraterritorial position to which the standards and constraints of the majority do not apply.[2] In terms of exploring how the spectator's and reader's experience of these dramas relates to the public spheres, one could say that they open a new space for a novel kind of reading public, not only by actually staging words in a

2 For the concept of the 'minor' in philosophy and literary studies, cf. Gilles Deleuze, 'Philosophie et minorité', *Critique*, 369 (1978), pp. 154–55; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Minuit, 1975).

performance, but also by outlining a more or less anarchical space—one that is performative as well as typographical and material—for meta-textual reflection and for textual experiment in general.[3]

2

I will consider two well-known plays in order to support and illustrate these all-too-general theoretical observations. Machiavelli's *Mandragola*, the more recent one, has already been mentioned. The earlier one is Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*, which was first published in 1499 as *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* and was then expanded and re-edited in 1502, this latter being the version we still read today as *tragicomedia*. The book immediately became a bestseller in Spain and quickly achieved vast distribution there, not only in the intellectual centres of the time, like Salamanca, but also in the remote provinces of the realm and in the South American colonies. The colloquial title, (*La*) *Celestina*, is documented from 1511 onward, which suggests that a considerable portion of the literate community read it and was confident that others would know

3 The vast bibliography of theoretical studies concerned with the themes of media history, genre, and textuality that are relevant to this study includes the following: Marshall MacLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Frederic John Norton, *Printing in Spain, 1501–1520: With a Note on the Early Editions of the "Celestina"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966); Don William Cruickshank, '"Literature" and the Book Trade in Golden-age Spain', *Modern Language Review*, 73.4 (1978), pp. 799–824; Keith Whinnom, 'The Problem of the "best-seller" in Spanish Golden-age Literature', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 57.3 (1980), pp. 189–98; Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982); *Der Ursprung von Literatur: Medien, Rollen, Kommunikationssituationen zwischen 1450 und 1650*, ed. by Gisela Smolka-Koerdt, (München: Fink, 1988); notably, in this latter volume, Roger Chartier, 'Entre littérature et lecture, la culture de l'imprimé', pp. 51–63; Donald C. Baker, 'When is a Text a Play? Reflections upon What Certain Late Medieval Dramatic Texts Can Tell Us', in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, ed. by Marianne G. Briscoe and John C. Coldewey (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 20–40; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Buchdruck, "Literatur" und städtisches Milieu', in *Eine Geschichte der spanischen Literatur*, ed. by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990), pp. 175–221; Michael Giesecke, *Der Buchdruck in der Frühen Neuzeit: Eine historische Fallstudie über die Durchsetzung neuer Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991); Hans Blumenberg, *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1996); Jane Tylus, 'Theater and its Social Uses: Machiavelli's "Mandragola" and the Spectacle of Infamy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 53.3 (2000), pp. 656–86.

what they meant by phrases like 'el libro de Celestina', which we find in house inventories, for example.[4]

Despite its near-global dissemination, one must point out that the *tragicomedia*'s European success originated in Italy—for obvious reasons of cultural hegemony and technological superiority. There also existed a direct and lively cultural exchange, in a very material sense, between Spain and Italy: some editions of *Celestina* in Spanish are thought to have been printed in Rome. Italy, after all, was mostly Spanish at that time: Milan was, at least temporarily, under Spanish influence; the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily were ruled from 1505 by Fernando II de Aragón; the Papal States were, from 1492 to 1503, under the control of the Valencian Pope Alexander VI. Scholars conjecture that the translator of the first Italian *Celestina* (1506) had some function within the papal court.[5] A later edition of his translation (Venice, 1519) was the first to bear the title *Celestina*; the text then spread, with this title, to France, Flanders, and, finally, back to Spain. But *Celestina* was translated in other European countries (including Germany and England) as well, with the Italian version often being used as a reference. That Italians had access to the text at an early date may be borne out by Emma Scoles's supposition that a first (if incomplete) performance of the play occurred on the occasion of Lucrezia Borgia's (the pope's daughter's) marriage to Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara in 1501/2 in Rome, though no concrete evidence has been found.[6] Nevertheless, *Celestina*'s Italian reception can be dated, significantly, almost contemporaneously with its Spanish reception.

As is generally known, the play tells the story of Calisto, a young nobleman, who falls in love with Melibea, a girl of equal or higher social standing. He is helped to achieve his goal of seducing her by his servants Sempronio and Pármeno, who enlist the further assistance of an old bawd, Celestina. Celestina's negotiations are successful: Calisto and Melibea enjoy several sexual encounters in the garden of Melibea's family—a garden that he enters by climbing over a wall with a ladder. One night, Calisto, disturbed by a noise in the street, falls off the ladder and dies; his servants kill Celestina because she

4 Cf. Steven D. Kirby, '¿Quando empezó a conocerse la obra de Fernando de Rojas como "Celestina"?', *Celestinesca*, 13.1 (1989), pp. 59–62. For more general accounts of the question of the author and of the book's history, cf. Guillermo Serés, 'Fernando de Rojas y "La Celestina"', in *La Celestina: Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, ed. by Francisco J. Lobera (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2011), pp. 361–401.

5 Emma Scoles, 'Note sulla prima traduzione italiana della "Celestina"', *Studj romanzi*, 33 (1961), pp. 153–217.

6 Ibid., pp. 158–59, n. 2.

does not want to share her reward with them, and they themselves are then publicly executed the next day. Melibea commits suicide and the play ends with her father Pleberio's now famous lament.

The two points I will explore over the following pages both relate to what could be called the play's reception history. The aim of these reflections is not, however, the history of reception as such; rather, I seek to functionalise reception history in order to provide a possible answer to the question of why Fernando de Rojas's text, which circulated in material form in relatively high numbers and at an elevated scale of distribution throughout Europe during the sixteenth century, was so immensely popular—and, more specifically, what function it could possibly have served for the contemporary reading public. This theoretical interest, furthermore, points us towards an at least partial account of the *tragicomedia* genre.

Two different spatial possibilities for reception—that is, two 'fictitious audiences' or '*dispositifs* of reading'—are outlined in the play's prefatory letter and prologue, both based on the cultural sphere that the author addresses.[7] In the prefatory letter, the author in fact casts himself, first of all, as a solitary reader, writing 'to one of his friends' ('a un su amigo') that he has often read and reread the first anonymous act of the play in solitary seclusion.[8] Here we find the typical image of a thinker or rather a dreamer, inspired by or at least related to the traditional depiction of melancholy, a motif common to many other early modern reader-authors from Pico della Mirandola to Cervantes. Pico, of course, charges this dispositif with the potential for mystical enlightenment (or at least for reinforcement of faith) that is to be found *mutatis mutandis* in Luther's dogma of *sola scriptura*;[9] in Cervantes we find the same motif in the auto-ironic self-portrayal of the Quijote's preface.[10] At the same time, the

7 By using a variation of Walter Ong's ('fictitious audience') and Michel Foucault's (the French *dispositif*) terms I intend to describe the constitutive rather than accessory function of an implicit or explicit idea of whom a text is made for. This makes imagined audiences an important part of the text itself. Cf. Walter J. Ong, 'The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction', *PMLA*, 90.1 (1975), pp. 9–21; Michel Foucault, 'Le jeu de Michel Foucault' [1977], in *Dits et écrits*, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), III, pp. 298–329.

8 'Asaz veces retraído in mi cámara, acostado sobre mi propria mano, echando mis sentidos por ventores y mi juicio a volar' (p. 5). Page numbers after Spanish quotations of the play refer to the 2011 edition; unless otherwise noted all translations are from Mack Hendricks Singleton, *Celestina* (Madison: University of Madison Press, 1958).

9 Cf. Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio* (*sulla dignità umana*), ed. by Pier Cesare Bori (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000), § 43.

10 Cf. 'estando una suspenso, con el papel delante, la pluma en la oreja, el codo en el bufete y la mano en la mejilla, pensando lo que diría'. The irony consists in the satirical

prefatory letter makes a competitive claim. Its main function is to express that the text that follows—*Celestina*—should help to counter-balance the predominance of Italian cultural products. The metaphor of 'great armories of Milan' ('grandes herrerías de Milán', p. 6), which Rojas employs to describe the manufacturers of Italy's hegemonic 'culture industry', also anticipates the theme of the prologue: textual culture as battlefield.

It is in the prologue that we find a second description of a typical collective reading situation: Rojas tells us that, among a random group of ten people to whom his text is read, there will be 'quarrel' ('contienda', p. 15) concerning its meaning and value. One could, as has often been done, think of author-reader and reading group as emblematic of a medieval and a modern model of reading as such. Following Boccaccio's model, on the one hand, we find a small group of people listening to a storyteller or to a reader (the famous Florentine *brigata*). And, of course, the opening scene of *Celestina* has been interpreted as an indication that Rojas wrote his play not in order to be performed on stage but in order to be read aloud. The modern—that is, the solitary situation—on the other hand, shows a *dispositif* of reading like the one that can be found, for example, in Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (*Ship of Fools*, 1494), a text that opens with the self-ironising remarks of an overtaxed scholar lost in the *librorum copia* of his study. The quotation of both these models—the collective and the solitary one—in *Celestina*'s introductory paratexts induce the reader to think of new types of reading, which allows for the merging and transformation of traditional mechanisms (*dispositifs*) of reading.

Both traditional *dispositifs* of reading (solitary, collective) and both types of audiences (homogeneous, heterogeneous), as well as the possibility for the text to be performed on stage indicate the differentiation of early modern audiences and their respective uses of text. Rojas's fictitious audience differs explicitly in one way from the Boccaccian model: Rojas's *brigata* of ten gathers together people of different views and conditions ('diez personas [...] en quien quepa esta differencia de condiciones', p. 20),[11] whereas for Boccaccio

unmasking of the melancholic state of 'suspensión y elevamiento', since the author's friend, who comes to visit the writer in his study, immediately stigmatises his ruminations as 'sobra de pereza y penuria de discurso'. With regard to *Celestina*, it is important to underscore that the alleged disquiet is due to the lack of pedantic references ('la citación de los autores que los otros libros tienen') in the *Quijote* and its consequent lack of 'improviso autoridad': Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2004), pp. 7–14.

11 Singleton does not translate this phrase. Peter Bush in *Celestina* (Sawtry: Dedalus, 2009) gives it as 'ten people [...] and all have such different views', whereas the commentators of the 2011 Spanish edition explain the word 'condiciones' as 'caracteres o genios de los

the group enjoyed a high degree of intimacy that naturally accompanied the fact that all members of the *brigata* were of 'noble blood' ('sangue nobile') and that their common condition allowed them to be of 'good' and 'pleasant company' ('buona' and 'bella compagnia') for each other.[12] Rojas's parenthetical phrase 'as per usual' ('como suele acaescer', p. 13), however, underlines the hypothetical character of such a heterogeneous group and its experimental status. At the same time, such a group may indicate the social change, a century and a half after Boccaccio, that scholars have noted with regard to *Celestina*.[13] The collective reception of a text, even if bound to a traditional model, had a different meaning in 1500: it points towards an increasingly public space within which words are staged—in more frequent theatre performances, for example—and reach heterogeneous audiences. The solitary *dispositif* of reading does not supplant the collective one. Instead, one *dispositif* reflects the other, solitary reading being nothing more than the spatiotemporal representation of an individual's particular way of understanding—if this understanding is envisioned as an imaginary space where multiple links to other spaces and times exist. I would argue, therefore, that *Celestina* is typical of the poly-functional texts that we see emerging along a particular continuum of social demands that were triggered by relatively new constellations in the institutional context of early modern Spanish universities.

In terms of content, the demand for poly-functional texts like *Celestina* is twofold—which does not mean that the two levels of reception I am going to explore cannot overlap within the perspective of a single reader or within a group of readers or spectators. In fact, the possibility of reading from multiple perspectives is all the more significant because this possibility epitomises the openness and compatibility of different *dispositifs* of reading.

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hombres' ('the character or intelligence of men'). There is no reason, however, why the notion of estate is not also implied, since the origin of the group members' differing views is explained via the traditional frame of the three ages of man, suggesting that interpretations of the text are clearly linked to the physical and social conditions of the reader.

12 Cf. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. by Vittore Branca (Torino: 1980), p. 29 et passim.

13 The authoritative references here remain José Antonio Maravall, *El mundo social de 'La Celestina'* (Madrid: Ed. Gredos, 1964) and Stephen Gilman, *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas: The Intellectual and Social Landscape of 'La Celestina'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972). Newer publications also focus, interestingly, on the linguistic features of the text in relation to the social conditions of the characters. Dialogues devoid of meaning, for instance, are interpreted as symptoms of a precarious state of friendship under the conditions of social change: cf. Vicente Bernaschina Schürmann, 'Las políticas de la amistad en "La Celestina": El caso de Pármeno', *Celestinesca*, 34 (2010), pp. 9–28.

The first of these two levels of reception (academic on the one hand, rather aesthetic on the other) is directly linked to the scientific reading audience described in the prefatory letter. Scholars have convincingly shown that the rapid dissemination of Rojas's text and its numerous editions throughout Spain and Italy must have been supported or commissioned by an institution, and that the only one that could have taken an interest in doing so, at least in Spain, was the university.[14] *Celestina*, in fact, could have been used and promoted by universities as a kind of innovative school book, not only because it consists of an abundance of 'philosophical sentences' ('sentencias filosofales'), motifs, and plot structures from the vast literature on the problems of *bueno* and *loco amor* (good and foolish love) as well as from humanist comedy, but also because the texture of these quotations is such that Rojas's text could speak to new educational models in the first half of the sixteenth century. There is evidence for *Celestina*'s spreading use in Spanish universities that were partial to nominalism, inspired by what was emerging from the faculty of theology in Paris. Innovative Spanish endeavours concerning university education, like those of the rediscovered Ramon Llull, are of particular importance here. Llull's Catalan *Arbre de ciència* was printed in Latin translation as *Arbor scientiae* (Barcelona, 1482), and proposed in its penultimate chapter a so-called *arbor exemplificalis* that was meant to sum up the knowledge provided in the text by means of examples and proverbs. The teaching of morality via sentences and proverbs, on the one hand, and by philosophical reflection upon what is right and wrong, on the other, were pressing topics in Spanish academic programs. *Celestina* at times seems even to explicitly formulate a similar pedagogy when Sempronio recommends to his lovesick master Calisto that he 'read the historians, study the philosophers, heed the observations of the poets. Books are full of the vile and evil activities of women, and we may read many an account of the destruction of men like you who have attributed any value to them' ('Lee los historiales, estudia los filósofos, mira los poetas. Llenos están los libros de sus [i.e., de las mugeres] viles y malos enjemplos, y de las caídas que llevaron los que en algo, como tú, las reputaron', p. 39).

But, of course, if we consider *Celestina* as a whole, this educational program fails. That is why, once again, we cannot assign its function to this level

14 Cf., among others, the studies of José Luis Canet Vallés, in particular, '"La Celestina" y el mundo intelectual de su época', in *Cinco Siglos de Celestina: Aportaciones interpretativas*, ed. by Rafael Beltrán (València: Universitat de València, 1997), pp. 43–59; '"Celestina": "sic et non": ¿Libro escolar-universitario?', *Celestinesca*, 31 (2007), pp. 23–58; '"La Celestina" en la "contienda" intelectual y universitaria de principios del s. XVI', *Celestinesca*, 32 (2008), pp. 85–107.

of reception alone. Rojas's text, after all, is not only a compilation of intertextual quotes; it also questions the educational benefit of all these philosophical maxims. Indeed, it owes more to theological nominalism and scepticism than any teaching of moral philosophy could allow: its many quotations are contradictory and no one in *Celestina* is safe from desire, greed, or stupidity. The textual world of traditional advice, instructions, good models, and bad examples (all of which, in the era of print, are suddenly available to anyone who is able to read texts like the newly edited registers and indices of commonplaces—which Rojas would have used) are qualified by the play as a 'labyrinth of errors' and as 'deceptive' ('labirinto de errores'; 'engañoso', p. 340). In the two final—and gloomy—acts of *Celestina* (XX and XXI), neither Melibea nor her father can remember any consolatory phrase they have read: 'My wounded mind in this affliction has quite forgotten them all' ('La dañada memoria con la gran turbación me les ha perdido', p. 334), says Melibea, before she jumps from the tower of her father's house. And her father searches in vain his 'fatigada memoria'—his reading memory, so to speak—in order to find comfort in an example of 'semejante dolor' (p. 341).[15] The emblematic term designating the failure of reason in the face of the disorder and contingency of the world and of human nature, as well as linguistic attempts to appropriate this failure is, as Celestina says much earlier in the play, *perplejidad* (p. 112)—perplexity, or puzzlement and confusion.

Celestina's parody of this educational model, however, does not refer to the contents of the precepts alone, as we see in the *mise-en-scène*. Some of the most important sources of wisdom thus deployed not by a Llullian tree but by an entertaining play are Seneca's stoic principles—principles meant to provide orientation for the pupil who might find himself lost in the profusion of moral precepts. Self-containment in combination with close supervision by a teacher is what Seneca recommends in order to recognise and follow the moral code of the tried and tested authorities ('probati').[16] Among the

15 The literal translation of the former would be, of course, 'feeble' (Singleton) or 'tired' memory. Neither ancient nor contemporary (moral) literature provides examples of 'such' or 'similar' pain that could 'keep [Pleberio] company'.

16 Seneca, *Ad Lucilium: epistolae morales*, trans. by Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), II, 4, p. 8. The textual transmission of this work was, of course, manifold and complicated. The *epistolae* were not read in comprehensive editions; rather, one would look up isolated quotations in compilations and textbooks. On this subject more generally, cf. Karl Alfred Blüher, *Seneca in Spanien* (München: Francke, 1969), and with regard to *Celestina*, Jacqueline Hamesse, *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis: un florilège médiéval: étude historique et édition critique* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1974); Louise Fothergill-Payne, *Seneca and 'Celestina'* (Cambridge:

numerous quotations from Seneca in *Celestina*, there are two that concern precisely this problem of moral guidance given the superabundance of sentences. In Seneca's text, the precepts read 'It is equally faulty to trust everyone and to trust no one' ('Utrumque enim vitium est, et omnibus credere et nulli', *Ad Lucilium* III, 4; p. 12) and 'Much harm is done by a single case of indulgence or greed [...]. Associate with those who will make a better man of you. Welcome those whom you yourself can improve. The process is mutual; for men learn while they teach' ('Unum exemplum luxuriae aut avaritiae multum mali facit [...]. Cum his versare, qui te meliorem facturi sunt. Illos admitte, quos tu potes facere meliores. Mutuo ista fiunt, et homines, dum docent, discunt', ibid., 7–8; pp. 32–34).

In *Celestina*, these quotations follow each other closely during the first encounter of Celestina and Pármeno that constitutes the last scene of act I. After a dialogue between Sempronio and Calisto that playfully inverts the hierarchy of master and servant, Celestina's ambiguously seductive instruction of her prodigal son Pármeno becomes yet another parody of authority as a social institution that is implied in all moral didacticism. In this context, Seneca's first maxim about trust only reveals the arbitrariness of the teacher's authority, since Celestina purports to provide Pármeno with the *summum bonum* ('buena dicha'), and that this is why he should believe her. It is unnecessary to stress that not even Epicurus plainly identified happiness with sexual satisfaction, as is the case here. Celestina thus epitomises a polemically distorted figure of Epicurean moral philosophy by translating Seneca: 'It is an exaggeration to believe everyone and an error to believe no one' ('Estremo es creer a todos y yerro no creer a ninguno', p. 76). In Celestina's mouth, the philosopher is transformed into what he himself fought against.

The rendering of the second precept is even more interesting because Rojas's—or the *antiguo auctor*'s—translation not only distorts but thoroughly reverses the meaning of the precept within the phrase itself. In response to Celestina's attempt to get him on her side, Pármeno says, 'I have always heard

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Cambridge University Press, 1988); Íñigo Ruiz Arzálluz, 'El mundo intelectual del "antiguo autor": las "Auctoritates Aristotelis" en la "Celestina" primitiva', *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 76.269 (1996), pp. 265–84. Fothergill-Payne provides the most comprehensive information. One cannot but agree with her interpretation of the *tragicomedia* as parody of moral philosophy and her persuasive description of Rojas's technique as an intertextual transformation of erudite quotes into 'small talk' (p. 46). Nevertheless, I intend to show that parody does not necessarily weaken the tragic character. On the contrary, Rojas's mocking of the Senecan model might be said to sharpen the pessimistic tendencies of *Celestina*, and it questions the efficiency of moral philosophy as a remedy to human mischief.

my elders say that if we choose a model of lust or miserliness, it will do us much harm. It is also said that a man ought to be on good terms with someone who can improve him, and desert the company of those he feels he ought to improve' ('¡Oh Celestina!, oído he a mis mayores que un enjemplo de luxuría o avaricia mucho mal hace, y que con aquéllos debe hombre conversar que le hagan major, y aquéllos dejar a quien él mejores piensa hacer', p. 76). Despite scholarly speculation about copying and typographic errors or misunderstandings due to the fragmentary reception of Seneca's works,[17] I think that the intrinsic meanings of both the original and the translation are clear enough that we can see that, intentionally or not, the passage in *Celestina* marks a most significant distance from the Senecan model. Whereas Seneca, understandably, affirms the possibility and the duty of moral teaching, Rojas's *tragicomedia* rejects it on the basis of merciless individual self-determination. Not only must man himself decide the ethical value of his deeds, but also any attempt to improve another person is destined to fail: 'But Sempronio will not improve me by his example, nor shall I be able to help him overcome his defects' ('Y Sempronio, en su enjemplo, no me hará major, ni yo a él sanaré su vicio', p. 76).

If there is a contradiction between the didactic function of the play as claimed in its paratexts (and the repetition of this claim in *Celestina*'s many translations) and its actual content, we should not dismiss the paratexts' stated didactic goals as mere literary camouflage. If we are to conjecture thoughtfully about the kind of pan-European demand Rojas's text met, it is not sufficient, I think, to label *Celestina* as an ingenious allegory of intertextuality and as a straightforward textbook parody. If this were the case, I would argue, the play would not have transcended the immediate milieu of its author. Instead, we might note that the comic display of stupidity and desire-driven behaviour, on the one hand, and the tragic absence—if not the actual negation—of hope, on the other, seem to have been ambiguously attractive to early modern European spectators and readers. The *tragicomedia* could thus be instructive—even, perhaps, edifying—without being pointedly didactic. I would furthermore suggest that the play's Italian reception (whether on stage or in print) may have helped its audience to perceive it as a play in the modern sense—that is, as text destined to be performed—since modern theatrical practice was, as we have seen, clearly more developed in the Italian city states and at the papal court than it was in Spain.

Alongside the somewhat radical nominalist position that there is no escape from the 'labyrinth of errors' in which human reason is imprisoned, *Celestina*

17 Cf. Hamesse, p. 274.

explores a positive *plaisir de texte*, to use Roland Barthes's words. Aside from Melibea's and Pleberio's pain at the end of the play, there are other violent passions that resist linguistic representation throughout the text. At the end of act I, for instance, Calisto affirms the indescribable heat of his desire in front of his servant: 'The fire you are thinking of and the one I was referring to are as different from each other as appearance is from reality, or as a living thing is from its painted image, or as shadow is from substance' ('Como de la aparencia a la existencia, como de lo vivo a lo pintado, como de la sombra a lo real, tanta diferencia hay del fuego que dices al que me quema', pp. 33–34). These words, of course, must be read in the context of the figure of Calisto as parodic courtly lover. He is, like all the other characters in the play, depicted entirely via quotations like these. With regard to the blunt sexual nature of his desire, the Platonic distinctions between 'shadow' and 'substance' can only be interpreted as cynical. We might productively read this assertion in relation to a few others, in which the pleasure of communicating passion and desire is highlighted as the primary means to erotic gratification. For instance, in her ambiguously didactic conversation with Pármeno in act I, Celestina says that 'there is nothing more pleasurable than to enjoy sensual pleasures and to recount them and communicate them to friends' ('El deleite es con los amigos en las cosas sensuales, y especial en recontar las cosas de amores y comunicarlas', p. 77). And Sempronio informs Calisto again, in the second act:

> [S]i perseveras, o de muerto o loco no podrás escapar, si siempre no te acompaña quien te allegue placeres, diga donaires, tenga canciones alegres, cante romances, cuente historias, pinte motes, finja cuentos, juegue a naipes, arme mates, finalmente que sepa buscar todo género de dulce pasatiempo para no dejar trasponer tu pensamiento en aquellos crueles desvíos que recebiste de aquella señora en el primer trance de tus amores. (p. 86)
>
> If you persevere in this manner you will inevitably die or go mad. It is therefore necessary for you to have the companionship of someone who will entertain you, amuse you with jokes and jests, sing merry songs and ballads, paint mottoes, tell anecdotes and stories, play cards and chess—someone who, briefly, will think up all sorts of quiet amusements to drive out of your mind those cruel disdains you have received from that lady in the first stage of your love affair.

Conversation and games are not just an adequate remedy against *loco amor* (foolish love). Instead, love is supposed to be talked about—it is made with the

intent that it be talked about. Discourse on love and sex structures the whole play, from its ironic debates on moral philosophy to its suggestive dialogues. This discourse is simultaneously performed in a very obscene way, as in the famous act VII voyeurism scene with Celestina, Pármeno, and Areúsa, where Celestina induces her young companions to have sex before her eyes; or on the act XIX occasion of Calisto and Melibea's first sexual encounter. The combination of pleasure ('deleite', in its linguistic and bodily representation) and perplexity ('perplejidad', with its philosophical consequences that may lead to nihilist conclusions in the face of the challenge of contingency)[18] in my view constitutes the deep structure that legitimises the play as *tragicomedia*. The parodic relationship between Calisto's behaviour and the abundantly quoted *topos* of courtly love remains as ambiguous as the link that emerges between the Senecan model of didacticism and *Celestina*'s alleged pedagogical function. In both cases, individual judgement and agency are stripped of the restraints imposed by the guiding principles provided by traditional literary genres and textbooks. These models not only (or not even) are explicitly ridiculed, but also (and this, in a moral sense, is worse) are simply put out of reach, submerged in a seemingly unredeemable inflation of authority.

These observations might also lead us to understand another part of *Celestina*'s success, particularly in Italy. I am thinking of the exuberantly creative and exclusively comic use to which authors like Pietro Aretino or Alessandro Piccolomini put the character Celestina as a model for their dialogues with female figures (Nanna in Aretino's *Ragionamento*, 1534; Raffaella in Piccolomini's *La Raffaella. Ovvero Dialogo de la bella creanza de le donne*, 1539). More than Spain, where we have few dramatic imitations and adaptations before the ideological turn of the Counter Reformation, Italy seems to have picked up and capitalised on the joyous core of *Celestina*. The partial functionalisation of the sexual and the more or less explicit misogyny that appears in Italian descendants of *Celestina*—features that withhold the tragic 'nihilism' of their model—would not be comic if the tragic were completely absent from the reader's mind. This fact may be illustrated by the semantic availability of biblical quotations both in *Celestina* and in Aretino's *Ragionamento*. For instance, 'Man shall not live by bread alone' (Matthew 4. 4; Luke 4. 4) is used by Aretino's character in order to justify, if not praise, prostitution. Significantly or not, his

18 Cf. Joachim Küpper, 'Mittelalterlich kosmische Ordnung und rinscimentales Bewußtsein von Kontingenz. Fernando de Rojas' "Celestina" als Inszenierung sinnfremder Faktizität (mit Bemerkungen zu Boccaccio, Petrarca, Machiavelli und Montaigne)', in *Kontingenz*, ed. by Gerhart Graevenitz, Poetik und Hermeneutik, 17 (München: Fink, 1998), pp. 173–223.

text embarks on a kind of hermeneutic regression, the quotation of a quotation: Jesus referring to Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 8. 3) and Deuteronomy referring to the earlier books of law. By re-quoting the gospel, Aretino reveals that the practice of (repeated) reference to an authority has the Bible as its model: the text of *Celestina* reads, for example, 'dijo que la sancta Escritura tenía' (p. 171). Aretino's 'ed ella a me: [...] dice il Vangelo in volgare',[19] among many other similar introductory phrases, corresponds to the New Testament's recurrent anaphorical phrase 'it is written' (*γέγραπται*). Comic relief is produced by parody of this most authoritative model and, at the same time, tragic horror (*φόβος*) emerges from the parodic distancing of the text at hand from the Bible.

The Italian example seems all the more valuable if we compare it to places where *Celestina* has no vibrant reception history—nations in which there was no space for this kind of parodic distancing. In Portugal, for example, Rojas's text was rejected precisely because of its obscenity, which was considered inappropriate for the noble Portuguese language. In Italy there was, in contrast, space for the obscene because of a higher permeability between institutions like local courts, the papacy, and the universities that was due both to political instability and to cultural hegemony. Because of its success in Italy, *Celestina* came to be known in France even before its translation into French since the Italian jurist Giovanni Nevizzano made abundant use of quotations from Rojas's text in his Latin legal treatise on marriage, *Sylva nuptialis* (1521). *Celestina* for Nevizzano seemed to be the single most detestable model for obscene language and imagination. In these circumstances, however, obscenity actually became a positive force in the circulation of material from one nation to another in early modern Europe.

3

The second text I will discuss was originally written—not only popularised—in Italy, and it cannot be situated within the group of obscene and/or misogynist texts mentioned above. Machiavelli's *Mandragola* was likely first written and performed in 1518, though it may have been composed much earlier.[20] It was published immediately after its performance and is one of only three

19 Pietro Aretino, *Ragionamento* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2001), Seconda giornata, p. 160.

20 Mario Martelli, '"La Mandragola" e il suo prologo', in *Il Teatro di Machiavelli: Gargnano del Garda, 30 Settembre–2 Ottobre 2004*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi and Anna Maria Cabrini (Milano: Cisalpino/Monduzzi, 2005), pp. 221–55. Martelli dates the writing of *Mandragola* back to the year 1504, when the plot is said to take place.

Machiavellian works published during his lifetime (*The Prince* was published posthumously, five years after his death, in 1532). One should mention this fact, I think, in order to understand that it is not just that Machiavelli's comedy was popular at the time, but also that the publication of a dramatic text seems to have been a rather secure economic enterprise. This occurs, of course, because the reading public and the play's audience merge such that the fame of the spectacular staging helps promote the book sales.

In the case of *Mandragola*, we lack the descriptions of either the reading (and writing) *dispositif* or of the fictitious audience that appear in Rojas's text. Machiavelli's famed letter to Francesco Vettori, the Florentine ambassador to the Roman court (10 December 1513), which evokes the performance of transgression that was enacted every evening by the exiled diplomat crossing the threshold of his study, applies in all its humanist refinement to the writing of *Il Principe* and to the author's preliminary or simultaneous readings.[21] But the pathos of the conversation with the ancients, which Montaigne and other solitary writers undertake, also seems out of place when we consider a secular production like *Mandragola*. The part of humanist role-playing in adequate costume is more obvious here than it is in Rojas, and its meaning is fundamentally different: whereas Rojas writes about his work on *Celestina* as a distraction from his main occupations—note the parallel participles 'retraído' (p. 5) and 'distraído' (p. 7) in his dedicatory letter—Machiavelli writes in anticipation of a future compensation for his exile. He thus considered *The Prince* to be central to his potential for employment: 'If the manuscript were read, it would become evident that in fifteen years of study of the art of the state I did neither sleep nor gamble' ('Quando la [i.e., 'la cosa', that is, the manuscript of *The Prince*]

21 'Venuta la sera, mi ritorno a casa, et entro nel mio scrittoio; et in su l'uscio mi spoglio quella veste cotidiana, piena di fango e di loto, e mi metto panni reali e curiali; e rivestito condecentemente, entro nelle antique corti degli antiqui uomini, dove, da loro ricevuto amorevolmente, mi pasco di quel cibo, che solum è mio, e che io nacqui per lui; dove io non mi vergogno parlare con loro, e domandarli della ragione delle loro azioni; e quelli per loro umanità mi rispondono; e non sento per 4 hore di tempo alcuna noia, sdimentico ogni affanno, non temo la povertà, non mi sbigottisce la morte: tutto mi transferisco in loro' ('In the evening I go back home and enter my study. In the entrance I take off these everyday clothes full of mud and dirt and I put on royal and courtly robes. Dressed properly I enter the ancient courts of the ancient people and kindly welcomed by them I feast on that food that solely belongs to me and for whom I was born. There I do not feel ashamed to speak with them and to ask them the reason for their actions. And because of their humanity they reply to me; and for a four-hours time I do not feel any concern, I forget about every anxiety, I do not fear poverty, death does not dismay me, I completely move into them'). *Opere* II, pp. 295–96.

fussi letta, si vedrebbe che quindici anni che io sono stato a studio all'arte dello stato, non gl'ho né dormiti né giuocati').[22] Of course, we can find in this letter something of the motive Freud detected in all literature—the compensation for the frustration of everyday life that imagination provides.[23] Here, this compensation is oriented towards the reading *dispositif* rather than towards the fictitious world of a poetic creation. Only when he was about to be 'dressed properly' again—that is, returned to Florence—did Machiavelli compose (or at least launch a first staging of) *Mandragola*, and the public he must have envisioned was more homogeneous than that of Rojas, since Florence already had its theatre scene.[24] At first glance, consequently, *Mandragola* seems to be much more conventional and, in its Florentine institutional context, a rather pleasant textual product. In contrast to Rojas, Machiavelli staked the popularity of his play on a contemporary model of success in order to re-establish his reputation.[25] Apart from the authors' individual interests, then, the differences in form and genre between our two texts can be explained even more convincingly if we consider them in the context of the audience's offers and demands according to the availability of these literary forms in different areas of the contemporary cultural net. The hegemonic culture of Italy's leading city-states had an established tradition upon which an author like Machiavelli could draw with relatively little effort, whereas in Spain the desire to distinguish oneself from the hegemonic model ('the armories of Milan') and the postulation of authenticity (of the *antiguo auctor*'s creation) led to tentative and hybrid forms like the *tragicomedia*.

The plot of *Mandragola* is even more straightforward than that of *Celestina*: Callimaco, a young man, falls in love with Lucrezia, a married Florentine woman. He is helped to achieve his goal of seducing her by a loyal servant and male go-between named Ligurio. By fooling Lucrezia's husband, Messer Nicia, Callimaco introduces himself into their house and persuades Lucrezia of his qualities as a lover. The happy ending consists in a rather lubricious arrangement for all three: Callimaco becomes Nicia's man-friend (and the homoerotic pleasure, at least of his eyes) as well as Lucrezia's lover, with full access to the couple's house.

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22 Ibid., p. 297.

23 Sigmund Freud, 'Der Dichter und das Phantasieren' ['The Creative Writer and Daydreaming', 1907/08], in *Studienausgabe* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1969), x, pp. 169–79.

24 Cf. Ludovico Zorzi, 'Firenze: il teatro e la città', in *Il Teatro e la città: saggi sulla scena italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1977), pp. 61–234.

25 Francesco Bausi, 'Machiavelli e la commedia fiorentina del primo cinquecento', in *Il Teatro di Machiavelli*, pp. 1–20.

The structural parallel with *Celestina* is obvious, even if the connection should not be overstated since the subject is a common one. Indeeed, *Mandragola*'s plot is simply a rearrangement of motifs and narrative fragments that can all be found in Boccaccio's novellas: the *Decameron*'s *innamoramento di fama* (I. 5; IV. 4; VII. 7); the instrumentalisation of greedy and simple-minded clerics for unholy purposes (III. 3); and the consenting cuckold (II. 9; III. 4; and, above all, V. 10). In moral terms, as well, *Celestina*'s joyous cynicism is not precisely Machiavellian. Indeed, the relationship between Rojas's *Celestina* and Machiavelli's *Mandragola* has been probed by very few scholars and with feeble results.[26] Machiavelli might have known *Celestina* and Rojas might explore a kind of Machiavellian reasoning *avant la lettre* in his play, but the decisive difference between the two texts is the tragic failure of reason in *Celestina* and its comic, yet amoral success in *Mandragola*. Or rather, to put it in the terms of *The Prince*: all of Rojas's characters lack the *virtù* they need in order to prevail against *fortuna*, whereas Callimaco and his companions use their *virtù* against *fortuna* with infallible efficacy. On this broader level of moral and political philosophy, Rojas and Machiavelli thus give two opposing answers to the same question.

A closer look at the public Machiavelli envisages for his play reveals another clear reference to Boccaccio. Like the fourteenth-century author (in both the *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* and in the *Decameron*), the speaker of Machiavelli's prologue addresses a female audience with a suggestive undertone:

> Una giovane accorta [Lucrezia]
> fu da lui [Callimaco] molto amata,
> e per questo ingannata
> fu, come intenderete, ed io vorrei
> Che voi fussi inganna*t*e come lei.
>
> He greatly loved a prudent young woman and tricked her, as you will learn, and I hope you'll be tricked as she was.[27]

26 Louise Fothergill-Payne, '"La Celestina" como esbozo de una lección maquiavelica', *Romanische Forschungen*, 81.1 (1969), pp. 158–75; Benito Brancaforte, '"La Celestina" y "La Mandragola": la razón como medio de corrupción', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 47.3 (1970), pp. 201–09.

27 Machiavelli, *La Mandragola*, in *Opere* III, p. 142. For the English translation, cf. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works and Others*, trans. by Allan Gilbert (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), II (emphasis added).

This theatrical and sexual *inganno* comes again into question at the end of act IV, when the monk says that 'tonight nobody will sleep' ('in questa notte non ci dormirà persona'), 'this night' referring to the one during which Callimaco and Lucrezia first have intercourse and to the narrative ellipse between the two last acts of the performance. Much has been written about the rather disproportionate temporal ratio of staging and plot,[28] but the main reason for this imbalance—which is repeated in Machiavelli's second comedy *Clizia*—is that the obscene is indirectly brought on stage by exciting the audience's imagination and by accompanying the narrated event with a performative effect. Here I must stress the gender marking of the prologue because it leads us to the competition among media (novella versus play) inscribed in Machiavelli's text: his female audience is an audience of novella readers that now is meant to be captivated by the sex appeal of the performance. The *philocaptio* acted upon Melibea by Celestina is thus transformed by Machiavelli in a seduction strategy aimed at the not-only-female audience, implying a kind of lascivious gender blurring.

This teasing strategy defines the structure of the play. Messer Nicia, the deceived husband, epitomises the ridiculous *dottore* archetype that is found in *commedia dell'arte*. I would argue, though, that genre-typical mockery (*uccellamento*) in *Mandragola* is not only more subtle, but also corresponds with political philosophy. This brings us to another striking similarity between the two plays: in *Celestina*'s aforementioned voyeurism scene, the old woman pushes Pármeno into bed with Areúsa and tells him: 'Now come here, you backward, bashful boy. I want to see whether you have anything in you before I go. Get in the bed there and play with her' ('Llégate acá, negligente, vergonzoso, que quiero ver para cuánto eres ante que me vaya. Retózala in esta cama', p. 181). At the beginning of act V in *Mandragola*, Messer Nicia tells us what has happened on the night when no one could sleep. He describes how he himself made the young man (whom he didn't recognise as Callimaco) undress, and praises the body he touched: 'You never saw finer skin, white, soft, smooth [...]. Since I'd put my hands into the dough, I wanted to go to the bottom of it; then I wanted to see if he was healthy' ('Tu non vedesti mai le piú belle carni: bianco, morbido, pastoso! [...]. Poi che avevo messo mano in pasta, io ne volsi toccare el fondo; poi volsi vedere s'egli era sano' (V. 2, p. 182). Like Rojas, Machiavelli brings on stage an obscenity with all the more comic effect insofar as it is contrasted with error and deceit. He goes even further, however, by directly

28 Machiavelli, in fact, contravenes the rule of the unity of time, an irregularity that, on the one hand, he and his contemporaries must have been aware of, but that, on the other hand, was often broken. Cf. Bausi, pp. 7–8.

involving his audience in the game, thereby making evident a crucial aspect of early modern theatre that is only latent in *Celestina*, namely the pleasure of being deceived. Both Lucrezia and her husband receive compensation (that is, Callimaco) for having been mocked, just as the audience enjoys the play. Eventually, the epistemological difference between Lucrezia's *dis-inganno* and Messer Nicia's remaining-in-error comes together in the *lieto fine*, the happy end for all.

One can easily observe a superficial link between this final lesson of *Mandragola* and the most controversial eighteenth chapter of *The Prince*, 'How Princes Should Keep Their Promises' ('Quomodo fides a principibus sit servanda'). Two anthropological assumptions are to be found in this chapter. The first regards a critique of popular absent-mindedness that is similar to Juvenal's: 'a prince who deceives always finds men who let themselves be deceived' ('colui che inganna troverrà sempre chi si lascerà ingannare'). The second focuses more on individual psychology: 'Everybody sees what you appear to be; few perceive what you are, and those few dare not contradict the belief of the many, who have the majesty of the government to support them' ('Ognuno vede quello che tu pari, pochi sentono quello che tu se'; e quelli pochi non ardiscano opporsi alla opinione di molti che abbino la maestà dello stato che li difenda').[29] What reading *Mandragola* in this context shows is that deceit may have its utility, even for the person deceived (in this case Messer Nicia),[30] a didactic message that is very different from that expressed by Juvenal. Nevertheless, one must problematise the relationship between drama and political theory rather than take it for granted. Why might this be? The first reason lies within political philosophy itself: if Machiavelli in *Dell'arte della guerra* (publ. 1521) stigmatises frequent theatre visits in ancient Greece as decadent behaviour that leads only to military and political defeat ('Anything that makes men delicate or unwarlike'; 'Alcuna cosa che faccia gli uomini delicati e imbelli')[31] this half-sarcastic, half-mocking representation of a particular historic situation being employed as a biting comment on contemporary

29 *Il Principe*, in *Opere* I, p. 166. For the English translation, cf. Machiavelli, trans. by Gilbert, I. The translation of the Latin title of this chapter seems misleading but, in fact, *fides* refers both to religion and to personal credibility here.

30 Cf. Jean-Claude Zancarini, '"Ridere delli errori delli huomini." Politique et comique chez Machiavel', in *Il Teatro di Machiavelli*, pp. 99–124: 'la tromperie peut servir l'intérêt de tous, trompés comme trompeurs' (p. 104).

31 *Dell'arte della guerra*, VII, in *Opere* I, pp. 688–89. For the English translation, cf. Machiavelli, trans. by Gilbert, II.

Italy should not be mistaken for a verdict on theatre and comedy as such.[32] However, theatre practice in *Dell'arte* as well as in *The Prince* (as noted in the introduction to this essay) is clearly allocated to the realm of *otium*, whereas political philosophy (including the martial arts) deals, obviously, with the most esteemed form of *negotium*, that is the business of the *polis*. The second reason for my pleading in favour of a clear distinction between Machiavelli's political and theatrical writings is that of the obvious and yet often underestimated difference of genre. The tendency of a reader today to pass over this difference originates in eighteenth-century aesthetics of autonomy and, all the more, in the relativist claims of the postmodern era. Prior to our age, cultural and artistic practices were *per se* rooted in institutional and social settings that defined them more fully than the actual form of their products. What I attempt to show here, however allusively, is that Machiavelli, in the writing of his comedies, operates on a field different from political philosophy. He fully adopts the conventions of this field, and *Mandragola* therefore cannot be interpreted as a simple *mise-en-scène* of his political philosophy.[33]

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32 Cf. Zancarini, p. 111. The text of chapter VII of *Dell'arte della guerra* reads: 'interverrà allo stato suo [i.e., to the one who will follow the martial rules expressed in the book] come al regno de' macedoni, il quale, venendo sotto a Filippo che aveva imparato il modo dello ordinare gli eserciti da Epaminonda tebano, diventò, con questo ordine e con questi esercizi, mentre che l'altra Grecia stava in ozio e attendeva a recitare commedie, tanto potente che potette in pochi anni tutta occuparla' ('It will happen to his state as to the kingdom of the Macedonians when ruled by Philip, who learned the method of organizing his army from Epaminondas the Theban. While the rest of Greece sat idle or busied herself in the acting of comedies, Philip by means of this organization and these exercises became so powerful that in a few years he could entirely conquer her', p. 689).

33 It is striking that approaches that try to adopt a *mise-en-scène* presupposition need either neglect or disregard the conventional aspects of the play, whether with regard to plot structures or to characters. Even if some of the findings of these approaches are appealing, they remain precarious because of their ahistoricity. See, for example, Palmer and Pontuso's intriguing proposal that Messer Nicia is the actual mastermind of *Mandragola*'s plot, namely that he is the 'Prince' of the play—an idea that is acceptable only if one discards the (in my view irrefutable) genre-typical nature of this character as originating in the *commedia dell'arte dottore* mask: Michael Palmer and James F. Pontuso, 'The Master Fool: The Conspiracy of Machiavelli's "Mandragola"', *Perspectives on Political Science*, 25.3 (1996), pp. 124–32. A merging of *dottore* and prince and, consequently, of *uccellamento* and *virtù* is, of course, thinkable, but only from an anachronistic perspective. An additional challenge to this hypothesis is that speculations about *Mandragola*'s precise composition date abound, and include dates as wide-ranging as 1504 to 1518. If the play really is meant to be a *mise-en-scène* of the author's philosophy, however, it can only have been written after *The Prince* (cf. for instance Patricia Vilches, 'The Delegate Womb: Lucrezia's Body as

These objections against an all-too-easy parallel between Machiavelli's political and dramatic production are not intended to invalidate every link between *The Prince* and *Mandragola*; they simply make things more complicated. An axiom that holds true in political philosophy might prove unlikely to apply in entertainment practices. This is precisely the case here. Whereas the political use of deception helps the ruler to achieve his goals under the condition that his subjects be deceived positively—that is, unconsciously—aesthetic *inganno* provides pleasure to a conscious audience. Deception in theatre requires the willing suspension of disbelief. Messer Nicia might be the victim of a lewd game (he does, after all, appear as ignorant of what is happening as he was before the play began), but he also seems to get what he wants: not only an heir but also some homoerotic pleasure. The Boccaccian models suggest that a deliberate *ménage à trois* is absolutely envisageable for the contemporary audience. Of course, a Messer Nicia would never admit this in public . . .

4

Celestina and *Mandragola*, then, open spaces for a new reading public in at least three ways: first, with regard to the texts themselves; second, with regard to their imagined audiences; and third, with regard to their onstage performance.

Much has been said concerning the originality of *Celestina*'s form, combining, as it does, aspects both of the novella tradition and of humanist comedy. Even more important, I would argue, is the fact that the text is a compilation of innumerable quotes from tracts on moral philosophy. By reassembling them in the form of a novelistic drama, Rojas implicitly creates a meta-language of moral philosophy that did not previously exist. At the same time, he transforms comedy in a genuinely 'early modern' way by challenging its didactic function. In contrast, *Mandragola* maintains the traditional form of Italian comedy. Nevertheless, it problematises the notion of the *lieto fine* (happy ending) by emptying it of its moral content. What Machiavelli's play seems to suggest is that aesthetic pleasure, which is distinct from political well-being, comprises the audience's consent to be deceived. *Mandragola* proposes, in other words, an early aesthetics of illusion.

What I have tried to show about these authors' imagined public is an assumption about the plays' implicit spectators/readers rather than an account of

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Political Tool in Machiavelli's "La Mandragola"', *American Journal of Italian Studies*, 22.60 (1999), pp. 99–125 (p. 102).

actual reception. Both *Celestina* and *Mandragola* presuppose well-read audiences precisely in order to challenge traditional reading habits. In the case of *Celestina*, this applies primarily to an academic audience of scholars and students, but the fact that the text is without doubt accessible to other audiences as well permits the opening of a new space in which eclectic readings become possible for the whole literate world. *Mandragola*, instead, is performed on everyday occasions. With its quasi-political subtext it informs a most uncommon space within the concerns of men and women, the powerful, and the subordinate. By transposing political practice from the *polis* onto the stage and into the play as text, *Mandragola* furthermore transforms such practice into an aesthetic rather than a political lesson.

Consequently, and this is my final and perhaps most speculative point, dramatic texts (whether witnessed as performances or read as books) are one of the main agents by which these new spaces are opened in the early modern period. Plays are widespread, short, and cheap, and eventually they don't even have to be read. These features make dramatic texts the fitting answer to the *copia librorum* that was often complained about, especially after Gutenberg's invention. *Celestina* and *Mandragola* are thus, in my view, prominent and influential examples of the process of trans-institutional and social mixing that is fundamental for the development of early modern and modern theatre as a mass medium.

CHAPTER 2

Why Do Men Go Blind in the Theatre? Gender Riddles and the Fools' Play in the Italian Renaissance Comedy *Gl'Ingannati* (1532)

Katja Gvozdeva

Historians of theatre emphasise the importance of the visual for Renaissance theatre not only because of its obvious significance in staged performance but also due to 'the greater impact of visual rather than spoken material, arguing that the audience's perception of a play was determined more by what they saw than by what they heard'.[1] One of the most powerful Renaissance stage devices used to attract and to challenge the visual perceptions of the audience was cross-dressing. This theatrical device made possible what contemporary critics call playful 'gender trouble' on the Renaissance stage.[2] Italian, French, Spanish, and English (Shakespearian) comedy presented its audience not simply with men in women's clothing but rather a highly complex gender construct known as double cross-dressing: a male (boy) actor plays a female character who dresses up in men's apparel in order to herself play a male role within the context of the play. In other words, a male actor plays a female character playing a male character. Early modern European comedy's experimentation with gender fascinates us today, and cross-dressing in comedy has therefore been investigated by a wide range of influential theatre historians. These scholars, however, diverge in their critical accounts on one very central point: what did early modern audiences see in the cross-dressed actor/character and what was at stake—and being questioned—in this playful performance: masculinity, femininity, the category of gender, binary thinking? Can we even be sure that all spectators—male and female—saw the same thing when observing a male actor performing a female character dressed as a man? The human eye, to quote anthropologist David Gilmore, 'is both bipolar and bisexual, both masculine and feminine'. The male eye, in traditional Mediterranean

1 Domenico Pietropaolo, 'The Stage in the Text: A Theatrical Stratification of Italian Renaissance Comedy', in *Comparative Critical Approaches to Renaissance Comedy*, ed. by Donald Beecher and Massimo Ciavoletta (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions Canada, 1986), p. 45.

2 Laura Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 47.

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society, was conceived of as an instrument of 'ocular attack'—'an organ of both predation and penetration'. In this sense, a woman who appeared in a public place—in our case, at the theatre—could be '"had" by sight' if she established eye contact with a man.[3] We should ask, therefore, whether the cross-dressed figure elicited the same kind of emotional and cognitive response from both male and female spectators.

Cross-dressing in comedy has its theatrical origins in Italy, and we can identify double cross-dressing in several plays from the first third of the sixteenth century. All of these were originally performed during Carnival and were based on learned and classical as well as on popular and vernacular sources.[4] *Gl'Ingannati* (*The Deceived*), which was written and performed in Siena in 1532 by the Academy of the Intronati, if not the earliest, is certainly one of the most influential Italian Renaissance comedies. Critics recognise in it 'a sort of archetype for subsequent European theatre' because it 'takes the theatrical discourse on gender a step further'.[5] This passage from Laura Giannetti's important work on the Intronati's comedy follows a major current of recent interpretations by stressing that it is a site for the emancipation of gender discourse. Can these discursive interpretations, however, hold up to an analysis of the play's gender work that examines the visual strategies of *Gl'Ingannati* in the context of the carnivalesque rituals in which this Renaissance comedy was embedded?

The first public performance of *Gl'Ingannati* in 1532 was a carnivalesque event, yet the play's dynamics in general—and, especially, its gender dynamics—have been little examined from this perspective. This is due, in part, to misapprehensions (that are shared by nearly all scholarly work on the play to date) of the carnivalesque, which is associated with notions of the popular, the lower body, vulgarity, and roughness, leading scholars to identify and analyse its elements largely on the level of secondary characters, mostly servants. As a carnivalesque technique, therefore, cross-dressing has not been explored in its full semantic richness but has been reduced to the *topos* of 'the world turned upside down'.[6]

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3 David D. Gilmore, *Carnival and Culture: Sex, Symbol and Status in Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 132.

4 See Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss*, pp. 24–75; Louise George Clubb, *Pollastra and the Origins of Twelfth Night: Parthenio, Commedia (1516) with an English Translation* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010).

5 Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss*, p. 50.

6 See, for example, Florindo Cerreta's critical introduction to *La commedia degli Ingannati* (Florence: Leo Olschki, 1980), p. 31; Nino Borsellino, *Rozzi e Intronati. Esperienze e Forme Di Teatro Dal Decameron al Candelaio* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1976), p. 76; the critical introduction of Marzia Pieri to *Gl'Ingannati* (Pisa: Titivillus, 2009), p. 23. On the carnivalesque roots of

To more fully explore the role of the carnivalesque in *Gl'Ingannati*'s performance of gender we must, I would argue, reverse the usual perspective (to borrow from Northrup Frye's methodological reflections in his notebooks and in 'The Argument of Comedy') by considering the ritual matrix of *Gl'Ingannati* not in terms of vestigial traces but rather in terms of its potentiality and teleology.[7] This means setting aside the comedy's 'archaic' Roman comedy stratum,[8] 'which is wholly recognised as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined, or even on occasion to be consciously "revived"', in favour of focusing on the play's 'residual' stratum from late medieval ritual and the theatrical culture of the 'fools' play',[9] which was 'formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process as an effective element of the present'.[10]

1 Three Views on Cross-Dressing in Comedy

To differentiate my approach to cross-dressing in comedy from contemporary scholarship on cross-dressing, I will begin with an overview of the existing interpretations of *Gl'Ingannati* and other plays derived from it (the cross-dressing figure of Lelia, who appears in the first part of the comedy in men's clothing under the adopted name Fabio, is the prototype for the figure of Viola

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cross-dressing in Renaissance comedy, see Maggie Günsberg, *Gender and the Italian Stage: From the Renaissance to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 51, 53.

7 See *Northrop Frye's Notebooks on Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Michael Dolzani (Toronto: Victoria University Press, 2006), p. 101: 'Fundamentally what I want to do is to study ritual & folklore origin of Shakespearean comedy with a reversal of the usual perspective, seeing the folklore not in terms of origins but in terms of teleology, not as vestigial sacrifice but as potential art'; ibid., p. 102: 'theory of drama, considering its social function & its relation to religion and ritual, with a statement of my own plan to look at ritual teleologically instead of drama vestigially.' See also Northrop Frye, 'The Argument of Comedy', in *English Institute Essays*, ed. by Davis Allan Robertson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 58–73.

8 The question of the play's literary sources has been successfully solved by several generations of theatre historians. See Cerreta's critical introduction to *La commedia degli Ingannati*. Additions and precisions have been made by Louise George Clubb in her critical introduction to *Pollastra.*

9 I borrow this definition from the title of the seminal study dedicated to late medieval carnivalesque theatre. See Heather Arden, *Fools' Plays: A Study of Satire in the Sottie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

10 Raymond Williams, 'Dominant, Residual, and Emergent', in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, repr. 2009), p. 122.

in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, for example). These interpretations all focus on the doubly cross-dressed figure of Lelia/Fabio as the key to the comedy's action.

One large group of scholarly studies takes the idea of the dramatic character as the impetus for examining the comedy from the perspective of female gender construction. These studies approach the performance of cross-dressing as a theatrical technique that made visible what was invisible in the sixteenth century as a social reality, namely a young unmarried girl freely circulating in public spaces. Scenic female visibility is interpreted by these scholars in the feminist terms of liberation from patriarchal restriction, and Lelia is characterised as a positive example of feminine agency: 'enterprising, and even heroic, thus offering an alternative to the traditional passive and self-effacing ideal of female behaviour.' Consequently, the position of the play's male authors is understood to be philogynous and is discussed in relation to the academy's mission to open cultural activities to women.[11]

This approach contradicts the view of scholars like Melzi, who see in cross-dressed Lelia a 'self-effacing woman'. This opposite interpretation is symptomatic of the contradictory nature of the figure herself, which has been explored by more recent scholars, for instance Laurie Shepard, who calls Lelia 'the most transgressive character in the comedy as well as the most virtuous'. Various attempts have been made to explain the contradictions inherent in this female character by pointing to Lelia's multiple cultural origins, ludic function, or hidden allegorical meaning. Though they have uncovered multiple facets of this enigmatic character, scholars have not yet succeeded in providing a fully satisfying solution to the play's central enigma.[12]

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11 Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss*, p. 28 and pp. 61–65. For similar interpretations see Cerreta's introduction in *La commedia degli Ingannati*, p. 25; Nerida Newbigin, *'Il Sacrificio* e *Gli Ingannati* nel Carnevale senese del 1532', in *Gl'Ingannati con il Sacrificio e la canzone nella morte d'una civetta*, ed. by Nerida Newbigin (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1984), p. xvii; Patrizia de Capitani, *Du spectaculaire à l'intime: Un siècle de commedia erudita en Italie et en France* (*début XVI^e siècle-milieu du XVII^e siècle*) (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005), p. 89.

12 Robert C. Melzi, 'From Lelia to Viola', *Renaissance Drama*, 9 (1966), p. 70; Laurie Shepard, 'Siena 1531: Genesis of a European Heroine', *Quaderno d'Italianistica*, 26.1 (2005), p. 16. Richard Andrews, praising the innovation of the Intronati 'who brought into "regular" comedy the figure of the faithful and yet enterprising heroine', explains the contradiction with folkloric origins. For him, Lelia/Fabio 'combines elements of the suffering heroine or "rejected bride" of folklore with the mischievous trickster of other types of tale'. See Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 90, 94; Richard Andrews, '*Gl'Ingannati* as a Text for Performance', *Italian Studies*, 37 (1982), p. 40. Laura Giannetti interprets

A second category of studies depart instead from the boy actor and understand cross- dressing as a theatrical means of constructing male gender. They reveal, in the interaction between actor and audience, rowdy masculine joking that is hardly compatible with Castiglione's prescriptions concerning male speech addressed to women.[13] Central to this line of argumentation are not only heterosexual 'frictions' (Greenblatt), but also homosocial and homoerotic dynamics. Both Greenblatt and Günsberg, the most influential representatives of this approach, focus on the performative space created between the real presence of the male actor and the illusory presence of the female character on stage. Greenblatt considers the cross-dressed Shakespearean character, Viola (avatar of Lelia), against the background of Renaissance concepts of masculine individuation. Recognising, in cross-dressing rites, a crucial phase of the process of separation from the opposite sex that leads to the emergence of masculine identity, he interprets cross-dressed female characters as 'projected mirror images of masculine self-differentiation'.[14]

Günsberg, in contrast, examines cross-dressing from the collective perspective of male bonding, attributing to the female character the status of mask: 'For the male actor [...] his female masquerade thinly disguises his identity/subjectivity as member of the dominant set of all-male relations governing patriarchal society, a position which is also occupied by the major addressee of the comedy, the male spectator.' As 'male fantasy object', the female character enables different forms of male bonding in the theatre, which Günsberg examines in terms of commodity fetishism, anthropological fetishism (*trafic de femmes*), and sexual fetishism.[15]

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the play in terms of '*giochi* of cross-dressing'. Her ludic reading serves the discovery of 'a more complex Lelia'. See Giannetti, 'On the Deceptions of the *Deceived*: Lelia and the Pleasures of Play', *Modern Language Notes*, 116.1 (2001), pp. 58, 70. Laurie Shepard argues in favour of political allegory, seeing, in Lelia, a representation of the city of Siena occupied by Spanish troops and, in her cross-dressed performance, a representation of nonconventional strategies by Sienese intellectuals that developed under difficult war conditions. See Shepard, 'Siena 1531', pp. 11, 17.

13 Marie-Francoise Piéjus, 'Les comédies des Intronati de Sienne: un theâtre pour les dames?', in *La mujer: de los bastidores al proscenio en el teatro del siglo XVI*, ed. by Irene Romera Pintor and Josep Lluís Sirena (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2011), pp. 251–64.

14 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Fiction and Friction', in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 92.

15 Günsberg, pp. 68, 72. In many ways, Günsberg's analysis of Italian drama follows the homosocial approach to desire in literary texts that was developed by Eve Kosofsky

The deficiencies of both approaches are revealed by the cultural theory developed in Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests*. Rather than looking through cross-dressing at gender categories, Garber proposes looking at the phenomenon of cross-dressing as 'the third'—not an instantiated, 'blurred' sex but a mode of articulation that questions binary thinking as such and introduces category crisis.[16] We can find traces and repercussions of this critical intervention in recent interpretations of *Gl'Ingannati* that are characterised by multiple approaches to sex and gender and by some contradictions. For example, Gerry Milligan, who wrote of the 'ontological truth of the phallus' in the Intronati's play, also asserted that, 'in a brilliant exchange of scenes, *Gl'Ingannati* anticipates the gender criticism of the twentieth century, where there is an inability to locate gender beyond the putative understanding of discursive reinscription and repetition'.[17] For Milligan, the cross-dressing device is a 'meta-performative tool' that 'exposes the theatricality of gender performance in general' and 'threatens the notion of sexual category'.[18]

These kinds of highly generalising conclusions—that praise early modern dramatic authors as the intellectual predecessors of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, or Marjorie Garber—run the risk of anachronism. Preoccupied with questions that might arise for an audience from the ambiguous performance of a cross-dressed actor or character—questions that open up a space of multiple sexual and social possibilities—recent studies show little interest in the clear answer provided by the comedy to its male and female spectators via its powerful concluding image of marriage. This image celebrates a non-ambiguous conjunction of two polarised gender categories that are conceived in traditional patriarchal terms as 'natural' and as associated with licit sexuality.[19]

In my attempt to historicise the performance of cross-dressing in Renaissance comedy, I will argue that it is articulated, instead, as a question

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Sedgwick. See her *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

16 See Marjorie B. Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 85.

17 Gerry Milligan, 'Behaving Like a Man: Performed Masculinities in *Gl'Ingannati*', *Forum Italicum*, 41.1 (2007), pp. 31, 32.

18 Ibid., pp. 29, 30, 33.

19 On marriage as a 'measure for sex in the Renaissance: it disciplined, organized, and ultimately sanctioned sex', see Guido Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 226, n. 16; Guido Ruggiero, 'Marriage, Love, Sex, and Renaissance Civic Morality', in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. by James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 10–30.

that already contains within it a predetermined answer. In other words, I will interpret the performance of cross-dressing in the comedy as a carnivalesque visual and verbal riddling event[20] that takes place on two levels of interaction: between the dramatic characters on stage and between the actors and their audience. This approach will bring us new insights into the play's dramatic structure, its illocutionary power, and its perlocutionary effect in performance.

2 Academic Institutions, Fools' Societies, and Riddle Structure

Since our anonymous comedy was not only written collaboratively by academy members but also staged as their collective performance, the starting point of my interrogation is a question about the corporate identity of Intronati members in its relationship with carnivalesque culture in general and festive riddling in particular. What kind of group expresses itself through the dramatic medium of the comedy?

The first and most evident answer is, of course, one of the earliest (if not the first) formal Renaissance *accademie*, which were free associations of *litterati* that arose from loose humanist *sodalitates* but took a highly organised form: choosing a specific corporate name, inventing an emblem, adopting statutes, and elaborating a clear program of activities. Founded in 1525, the Academia degli Intronati saw as its cultural mission the revival of ancient cultural tradition in order to adapt it to early modern linguistic, aesthetic, and social conditions, requirements, and aspirations. Thus playwriting came to occupy an important place among academy activities as a means of reviving Roman comedy in new forms, while performing the academy's plays served to disseminate its cultural heritage among large, non-specialist audiences. Choosing to call themselves *gli Intronati* (which we might translate as the 'Deaf', 'Daft', 'Dazed', or 'Stunned'), members of the academy sought to proclaim their separation from 'the world' ('il mondo'), stressing their non-participation in the political life of the city in favor of humanistic concentration on literary studies—in other words, abandoning the *vita attiva* for the *vita contemplativa*.[21]

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20 'A question which contains the answer' is the classic definition of the riddle given by Elli Köngäs Maranda in her seminal article 'The Logic of Riddles', in *Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*, ed. by Pierre Maranda and Elli Köngäs-Maranda (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), pp. 189–232 (p. 192).

21 For the history of this institution, see Lolita Petracchi Costantini, *L'Accademia degli Intronati di Sienna e una sua commedia* (Siena: La Diana, 1928); 'Accademia degli Intronati', in Michele Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1926–1930), III,

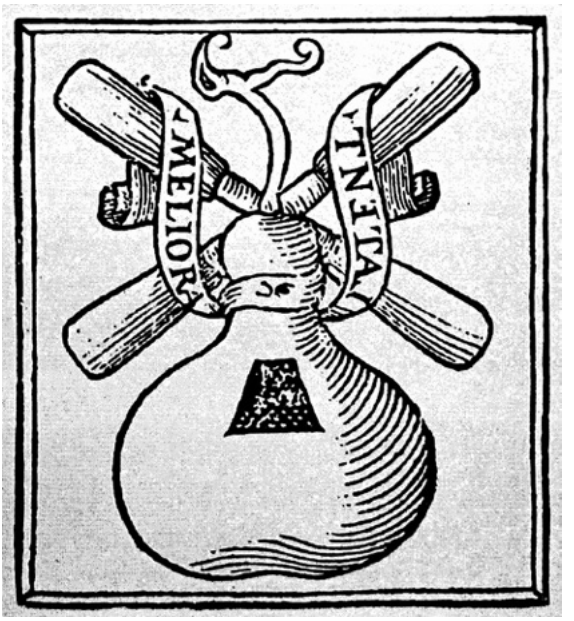

FIGURE 1 *Emblem of the Accademia degli Intronati. Frontispiece. First edition of* Gl'Ingannati *(1537). https://archive.org/stream/glingannaticonniloonewb#page/n23/mode/2up.*

It is also possible to give a second, parallel answer that is less obvious and that deserves a more detailed explanation. Opting for the whimsical collective name 'Intronati', which is also a synonym for 'Fools', the six young men who founded the academy consciously united as a carnivalesque society.[22]

On the Intronati emblem, folly is symbolised by a pumpkin—a carnivalesque metaphor for an empty head. The ribbon wearing the academic motto *Meliora latent* (the best is concealed) is playfully twisted, becoming a sign for

pp. 350–62; Laura Riccò, *La 'miniera' accademica: Pedagogia, editoria, palcoscenico nella Siena del Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2002). The Intronati have long been praised as the first European academy; strictly speaking, they represent one of the earliest institutionalised associations of *litterati*. See Léo Kosuta, 'L'académie siennoise: Une académie oubliée du XVI[e] siècle', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 87 (1980), pp. 123–57.

22 The carnivalesque aspects of the academy that are presented briefly here are more fully developed in my article 'Le monde ludique des académies italiennes: l'exemple des Intronati de Sienne', in *Savoirs ludiques: Pratiques de divertissement et institutions savantes, littéraires et politiques dans l'Europe moderne*, ed. by Katja Gvozdeva and Alexandre Stroev (Paris: Champion, 2013), pp. 49–88.

carnivalesque inversion. The academy, by presenting itself in its programmatic texts as a society 'of Intronati, that is of stupid and foolish [men]' ('Intronatorum, hoc est stupidorum et fatuorum'), revives Socratic ignorance as a new humanist ideal.[23] More importantly for our purposes, however, is that this emphasis on folly emerges from and participates in the late medieval European tradition of fools' societies, which are documented from the twelfth century onwards and were particularly active during the first half of the sixteenth century in various social milieu.[24] Known in Italy under a variety of burlesque names that epitomised folly (*Pazzi, Matti, Stolti, Asini*), fools' societies had the duty and privilege of organising public festivities and of staging carnivalesque plays. Early academic sources list the Intronati as proud organisers of many different festive events: carnivalesque processions, royal entries, weddings, parlour games, and the staging of erudite comedies.[25] All of these belong within the wide range of public performances that were intended, in Richard Trexler's words, 'to upgrad[e] carnival'.[26]

Of particular significance for the construction of a sixteenth-century academic collective identity was its affirmation that carnivalesque folly, combined with serious intellectual pursuits, constituted an ideal of masculine identity. According to one of its most important institutional texts, therefore, the Intronati claimed their just entitlement to the term 'Huomini', employing semantically significant capitalisation in order to name themselves 'Men at every hour of the day' ('Huomini da tutte quante l'ore'), whether in study or in recreation.[27]

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23 See the letter by Mino Celsi in *In haereticis coercendis quatenus progredi liceat; Poems; Correspondence*, ed. by Peter G. Bietenholz (Naples: Prismi; Chicago: Newberry Library, 1982), p. 540. The Latin text has its origins in an Italian letter written by Celsi in May 1570, which is quoted in Leo Kosuta, 'Notes et documents sur Antonio Vignali (1500–1559)', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 89 (1982), p. 132.

24 Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past and Present*, 50 (Feb. 1971), pp. 43, 50.

25 See Scipione Bargagli, *Delle lodi dell'academie: Oratione di Scipion Bargagli da lui recitata nell'Academia degi Accesi in Siena* (Fiorenza: Bonetti, 1569), p. 32.

26 See Richard Trexler, 'The New Ritual Groups', in *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 414.

27 'A trattenimento, a festa, a veglia, a sollazzo intervenissono Accademici intronati: a' quali potevasi senz'alcun fallo, il nome attribuire d'Huomini (come dir si costumava) da tutte quante l'ore' ('the members of the Academy of the Intronati—to whom one could, without error, give the name of Men (as one used to say) at every hour of the day—attended entertainments, feasts, gatherings, amusements'). [Scipione Bargagli], *Oratione in Lode*

By celebrating their academic anniversary on the first of May as 'the "re-greening" of the Dazed Pumpkin' ('rinverdimento della Zucca Intronata'),[28] the Intronati inscribed the birth of their company into the so-called 'green world' of traditional May festivities, which was the domain of youth. And indeed, historical anthropology recognises fools' societies as organised youth groups (*societates adulescentium et juvenum*) that were restricted to young men.[29] According to Taddei, the names of these joyous companies make sense given the premodern perception of youth as an age of deranged senses, in opposition to the wisdom of maturity.[30] If we add to this interpretation the

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dell'Accademia degli 'ntronati dello Schieto Intronato (1603), in *Delle commedie degl'Accademici Intronati*, (Siena: Florimi, 1611), II, p. 519.

28 Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo de' giuochi che nelle vegghie sanesi si usano di fare* (1572), ed. by Patrizia D'Incalci Ermini, introd. by Ricardo Bruscagli (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1982), p. 50.

29 There is currently no comprehensive cultural study of European fools' societies. The work of Giuseppe Cesare Pola Falletti di Villafalletto can be consulted, but it does not hold to contemporary scholarly standards. See Giuseppe Cesare Pola Falletti di Villafalletto, *Le gaie compagnie dei giovani del vecchio Piemonte* (Casale: Maglietta, 1937; repr. Torino: Omega, 1994); *Associazioni giovanili e feste antiche*, 2 vols (Milano: Fratelli Bocca, 1939). Besides the seminal article of Zemon Davis quoted above, I employ as sources on this topic a selection of works dedicated to different national contexts and social milieux: Anne-Marie Lecoq, 'La città festeggiante: Les Fêtes publiques au XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles', *Revue de l'Art*, 33 (1976), p. 95; Illaria Taddei, *Fanciulli e Giovani: Crescere a Firenze nel Rinascimento* (Firenze: Olschki, 2001), pp. 100–03; Illaria Taddei, 'Une sociabilité bien ordonnée: Les *societates puerorum, adulescentium et juvenum* à Florence au XV^e^ siècle', in *Les lieux de sociabilité religieuse à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Actes des journées d'étude (19–20 avril 2002), Université de Grenoble 2, ed. by Pierrette Paravy and Illaria Taddei (Grenoble: CRHIPA-CESAM, 2006), pp. 23–35; Alessandro Barbero, 'La violenza organizzata: L'Abbazia degli Stolti a Torino fra Quattro e Cinquecento', *Bolletino storico subalpino*, 88 (1990); Piercarlo Grimaldi, 'Il corpo e la festa: Strategie sessuali contadine', in *Il corpo e la festa: Universi simbolici e prattiche della sessualità popolare*, ed. by Piercarlo Grimaldi (Roma: Meltemi, 1999), p. 18; Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: A Youth Confraternity in Florence 1411–1785* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Martine Grinberg, 'Carnaval et société urbaine, XIV^e^–XVI^e^ siècles: le royaume dans la ville', *Ethnologie française*, 4 (1974), pp. 215–44; Jacques Rossiaud, 'Fraternités de jeunesse et niveaux de culture dans les villes du Sud-Est à la fin du Moyen Âge', *Cahiers d'histoire*, 21 (1976), pp. 67–102; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Le Carnaval de Romans: De la Chandeleur au mercredi des Cendres 1579–1580* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979); Robert Muchembled, 'Les jeunes, les jeux et la jeunesse en Artois au XVI^e^ siècle', in *Les jeux à la Renaissance*, Actes du XXII^e^ colloque international d'études humanistes, Tours, Juillet 1980, ed. by Philippe Aries and Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Vrin, 1982), pp. 563–79.

30 Taddei, *Fanciulli*, p. 93.

notion that male youth formed a 'liminal group' in early modern Italian urban communities—excluded from government and public affairs for their lack of dispassionate reason but sanctioned as specific 'ritual groups' responsible for festive performances[31]—names of youth societies emblematising folly acquire the dynamic sense of the ritual transformation from silly boy to wise man. The social mission of *societates adulescentium et juvenum*—to lead their foolish adolescent members through festive rites to the age of reason—coincides with the pedagogical goal of the Intronati, which considered itself a school for 'Men'. The academy saw itself as distinct from institutions that were ruled by their fathers' generation—in particular from the Sienese Studio (University)—because the Intronati catered to the 'natural instinct' ('naturale istinto') of young boys who sought pleasure and enjoyment, offering them the ludic and festive framework of 'pleasant studies' ('piacevoli studi').[32] The dynamic relationship between the opposites of study and entertainment, folly and wisdom, youth and maturity that characterised the academy's collective identity must be kept in mind when considering the fourth dynamic opposition, masculine and feminine, that is inscribed in the institutional matrix of the Intronati.

The goal of forming men out of boys placed members of youth society in opposition to women, such that the institution appeared oriented towards the affirmation of masculine power through male bonding. Founded as a society for humanistic intellectual pursuits by students of the Sienese Studio, the academy—at least in its initial phase under consideration here—was closed to women, who did not have access to a university education and its Latin curriculum. The Latin motto of the academy, *Meliora latent*, which figures on its emblem, circumscribes an intensely masculine community. The body of the emblem symbolises this community not only through the Silenic image

31 Trexler, pp. 387–400.

32 'Perciò che ponendosi il più delle volte i *giovinetti* ad una sorte di studio per istimolo e per ordine de'padri, i quali non mettendo cura a quel che li figliuoli sieno atti o inclinati ad essere [...] avviene che gli hanno talora indirizzati a cosa molto dal loro naturale istinto contraria. [...] E però sono in età da potere di loro stessi deliberare, là s'indirizzano dove si sentono dalla loro propria inclinazione tirare. E così seguendo la lor vocazione, singolari e famosi uomini son divenuti' ('Since young men most often undertake a particular kind of study with the impetus and under the orders of their fathers, who care not at all about whatever their sons are suited or inclined to be [...] it happens that [fathers] direct [their sons] towards something that is very much contrary to their natural instincts. [...] And yet [young men] are old enough to themselves determine the direction in which they feel pulled by their own inclinations. And, following their vocation in this way, they have become outstanding and famous men'). Bargagli, *Dialogo de' Giuochi*, pp. 134, 135–36. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

of the pumpkin, foolish in its appearance but containing the salt of knowledge, but also through the image of crossed phallic pestles, masculine *ingegni* (wits) triturating ancient wisdom.[33] In their homosocial journey towards ever-increasing knowledge, members of the academy could emphasise their own and other community members' masculinity in many ways, including producing misogynous discourse and homoerotic fantasies, as well as staging themselves as a homosexual network, as is the case in the famous playful academic dialogue *La Cazzaria*.[34]

While highlighting *piacevoli studi* conforms to the 'natural instincts' of young boys, the programmatic texts of the Intronati imply not only the homosocial pleasure of the acquisition of knowledge in the familiar atmosphere of male friendship and love that reigned behind the closed doors of the academy—that is, in the depths of the *zucca intronata*—but also the heterosocial pleasure of the dissemination of acquired knowledge in playful forms adopted for large non-specialised audiences that are represented by the noblewomen whom the Intronati met in public spaces of carnivalesque entertainment. Literary parlour games and comedies by academicians were thus expressly dedicated to noblewomen, a phenomenon that displays the philogynous facet of the Intronati.

These two apparently contradictory aspects of the society—misogynous and philogynous—are not only problematic for us today. They were equally so for the contemporaries of the Intronati, based upon what we can deduct from the repeated attempts of their representatives to defend this new conception of the cultural institution of the *accademia* from severe criticism—a defence that was carried out in several institutional texts by the Intronati. First among these are the apologetic fragments of the *Dialogo de' Giuochi*, where Girolamo Bargagli (1537–1586), praising the Intronati as a school of men, also insists on

33 The intriguing emblem of the Intronati was the object of numerous interpretations during the sixteenth century. The most informative of these is the dialogic exegesis in an academic treatise first published in 1594. See Scipione Bargagli, *Dell'imprese* (Venetia: Francesco de' Franceschi, 1621), pp. 520–25.

34 See Antonio Vignali, *La Cazzaria: The Book of the Prick*, ed. and trans. by Ian Frederick Moulton (New York: Routledge, 2003), and the editor's insightful introduction. I will leave aside the question of whether this playful text refers to the actual homosexual practices of academy members or is a product of pure imagination, following Gregory Bateson's reflection on the subject in terms of his theory of play framing: 'pseudohomosexuality of the fantasy does not stand for any real homosexuality or feeds its etiological roots. The symbols do not denote homosexuality, but do denote ideas for which homosexuality is an appropriate symbol'. See his 'Theory of Play and Fantasy', in *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology*, ed. by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), p. 320.

their explicit intention to please noblewomen.[35] In such texts, the academic institution, symbolised by the pumpkin, appears as a dynamic relationship between its misogynous inside and philogynous outside—between the acquisition of knowledge, which concerns only men, and its dissemination, which is addressed to women. The notion of pleasure here has a clear erotic and heterosexual connotation: it is in connection with these female 'recipients' that the pumpkin on the academy's emblem reveals its second meaning as a carnivalesque symbol of the female lower body, and that the emblem's phallic pestles, representing the academic idea of knowledge dissemination, acquire a playful association with insemination.

This emblem thus appears as a pictorial riddle with two different solutions, corresponding in its basic semiotic structure to the definition of the verbal riddle—*il giuoco degl'Indovinelli*—which was supplied by the Intronati in the treatise on parlour games, *Il Dialogo de' Giuochi*.[36] According to the treatise's author, a riddle should show at first glance something indecent or obscene ('qualcosa poco onesto') in order to increase the viewer's pleasure of discovering in it a decent thing ('convenevol cosa') that is very different in sense from the riddle's initial appearance. *Il Dialogo* thus presents a description of the ludic genre of erotic riddles that was widespread as a social custom in Italy during the sixteenth century (before the beginning of the Counter-Reformation campaign against carnivalesque abuses) not only in popular settings but also within the framework of aristocratic and academic carnivalesque gatherings. But our Sienese author does not give any examples of the riddling game in his treatise. The only sources that can inform us today about various aspects of the game's process ('il processo del giuoco', in Bargagli's words) are literary representations of aristocratic and academic riddling sessions.

Let us therefore very briefly consider, from the trifold perspective of social norms, gendered interactions, and academic culture, the famous collection *Piacevoli Notti* (1550–1553), which was composed by the Venetian author Straparola and is from the same period that Bargagli evokes in his *Dialogo de' Giuochi*. The *Notti* include numerous depictions of riddling sessions arranged among Venetian *litterati* and young noblewomen, all of which follow the same rule: the riddle with a double solution, by suggesting something obscene, performs a playful transgression of social convention and engenders laughter

35 'Né biasimino gli Accademici, perché abbiano oggetto di piacere a pregiate donne' ('The Academics should not be blamed, because their purpose is to please precious women'). Bargagli, *Dialogo de' giuochi*, pp. 135–36.

36 Ibid., p. 62.

among the players that exposes, then dissipates, erotic energies. The suggested but never verbalised obscene solution is immediately chased from the aristocratic community of players when another, entirely decent, solution is found. Declaring this decent solution not only serves to demonstrate the intellectual capacities of the players but is simultaneously a performative act that reestablishes social order as well as behavioral norms. What is described by the riddler in a way that suggests a penis, for example, might reveal itself in the solution to be a pen, the instrument used to create *concetti*.[37] This playful connection between the masculine body and masculine wit is particularly relevant for an academic culture centred on the construction of learned masculinity.

The academic play with masculine and feminine sexual symbols that was transposed into the Intronati emblem in the form of an erotic riddle not only refers to the concept of procreative masculinity that developed in early modern learned discourse on medicine and law.[38] Its roots are also to be found in traditional fertility rituals that were engaged in by male Sienese youth during Carnival. Reflecting on the ritual origins of carnivalesque entertainments conceived by the Intronati for noblewomen, Bargagli refers to the following custom: young boys run through the city armed with phallic ladles, using them to strike women who want to get pregnant. Here the role of young foolish males is dominant and aggressive, and the role of young women is passive and receptive.[39] This carnivalesque ritual is helpful in interpreting the composition of an academic emblem that shows us not only the relationship between the inside and outside of a pumpkin but also the hierarchical construction of a pumpkin surmounted by pestles. As a pictorial transposition of the collective purposes of the Intronati, their emblem—conceived in the form of a riddle with a double solution—unites two different levels of the academic body, representing the community as a collective masculine head oscillating between apparent folly and hidden wisdom, and rendering its relationship with women

37 For more extensive consideration of this literary example in relation to the social functions of riddling and for the historical evolution of the riddle as a literary genre, see my 'Spielprozess und Zivilisationsprozess: Emotionales Rätsel in Italien und Frankreich zwischen 1475 und 1638', in *Scham und Schamlosigkeit. Grenzverletzungen in Literatur und Kultur der Vormoderne*, ed. by Katja Gvozdeva and Hans Rudolf Velten (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), pp. 363–95.

38 For procreative masculinity in the early modern period, see Valeria Finucci, *The Manly Masquerade: Masculinity, Paternity, and Castration in the Italian Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Patricia Simons, *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

39 See Bargagli, *Dialogo de' Giuochi*, p. 61.

as an androgynous lower body in which the masculine symbol of the pestles dominates the feminine symbol of the pumpkin.

Carnivalesque youth rituals allow us, therefore, to examine the relationship between the Sienese academicians and noblewomen in a broader context—one that reveals the dynamic relationship between misogyny and philogyny. The philogynous facet of the academy is usually deduced solely from 'early sixteenth-century Humanism and its pro-feminist sensibility'.[40] The embedding of the Intronati's philogynous discourse in carnivalesque contexts, however, makes it necessary for us to consider this aspect of the academy through the prism of traditional fools' societies. As a company of bachelors in transition from boys to adult married men, it is only logical that carnivalesque fools' societies were charged with creating festive and ludic spaces in which their members could approach young girls who could potentially become future spouses, which shows us the ritual origins of the special attention paid to women by the young Intronati. In the liminal spaces of carnivalesque entertainment, fools' companies uniting unmarried young men also expressed their collective attitude to the patriarchal institution of marriage. This occurred in two different ways. While carnivalesque fertility rites performed at wedding celebrations by fools' companies projected a positive image of marriage and served to affirm young males' availability on the marriage market, charivaris performed by the same young men simultaneously stigmatised negative images of marriage—ill-assorted couples, husbandly impotence, or the submission of men to their wives—as deviations from reproductively successful and male-dominated models of the conjugal state. Charivaris supported normative marriage by revealing negative instances of it.[41] These performances of carnivalesque folly were based on the dialectical relationship between the laughter of inclusion and the laughter of exclusion; between unmarried youth as subjects of laughter and deviant married couples as objects of derision.

Following the thread of carnivalesque youth rituals, we are led more deeply into an understanding of the Intronati's origins, of their emblem's meaning, and of the structure of their famous comedy. One Sienese historiographic source deserves special attention because of the relationship it demonstrates between the carnivalesque folly of youth, gender play that includes cross-dressing, and marriage. The Latin chronicle by clergyman Sigismondo Tizio describes a wedding celebration that took place in 1519 during Carnival:

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40 Alexandra Coller, 'The Sienese Accademia degli Intronati and its Female Interlocutors', *The Italianist*, 26 (2006), p. 227.

41 See the socio-anthropological work on fools' societies referred to in note 29.

> Die interea eadem nuptie Julii Angeli Benassai, juvenis Senensis, celebrate sunt. Vespere diei sex juvenes ad eas accessere genitalia hominum membra ex subere confecta, plumbo testibus intromisso, ut in tabula posita protinus erigentur et starent; probrosa alia et obscena iuvenes illi personati ibidem admiserunt; priapos dabant puellis et vestibus eorum appendebant.
>
> Meanwhile on the same day [29 January 1515] the wedding of the young Sienese citizen Angelo Benasao was celebrated. In the evening six young men barged in on the feast. They fabricated phalluses made of cork, with lead in the testicles, so that they sat erect when placed on the table; these masked youngsters did other obscene and shameful things. They gave *priapi* to young girls and hung them on the girls' clothes.[42]

I begin my commentary of this rather laconic fragment and its myriad details with the number of performers—six—which is interpreted by Leo Kosuta as a sacred number for carnivalesque fraternities and which will, a few years later, be the number of *juvenes* to found the Academy of the Intronati. The source does not spell out what kind of mask or covering the boys wore, so we cannot be sure that they donned fool's caps, but the phallic devices the boys carried allow us to consider this carnivalesque performance a fools' play.[43] We can only approach the original meaning of the youth ritual (given its transformation in the moralistic commentary of a clergyman) if we consider the phallus as a multivocal and multifunctional ritual symbol characteristic of liminal performance.[44] The cork phalluses function here in a number of ways. First, they are symbols of masculine power that serve the institution of youth power in a festive context, opposing it to the patriarchal power of the official wedding celebration. Second, they are symbols of male bonding that also contribute to the growth of the phallic community, which would acquire new members

42 This testimony is part of the unedited chronicle of Sigismondo Tizio, *Historiae senenses* (t. VII. £ 333). It was reproduced in Paolo Piccolomini, *La vita e l'opera di Sigismondo Tizio (1458–1528)* (Siena: Lazzeri, 1903), p. 26, and is quoted in Kosuta, 'Notes', p. 131, n. 63.

43 For the phallic sceptre and other phallic attributes, I refer to the abundant late medieval and early modern iconography of the fool. For the original phallic form of the fool's cap and its subsequent modifications, see the analysis by Claude Gaignebet and the graphic evidence he presents in *A plus hault sens: L'ésotérisme spirituel et charnel de Rabelais* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986), II, pp. 213–16.

44 See Victor Turner, 'Liminal to Liminoid in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology', in *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), pp. 21–23, 27.

from the boys present at the feast. Third, they express two different forms of conjunction between the masculine and the feminine: detached from boys and appended to girls' dresses, the phallic attributes symbolise gender fluidity related to the liminal status of youth. Placed in a girl's hands, the phallus becomes a priapic object. It translates the sexual ambitions of the boys and projects the young people present at the wedding celebration into their future as married couples.

In the context of this carnivalesque youth ritual, the oppositions folly/wisdom and feminine/masculine that determine the structure of the Intronati emblem acquire the transformational potential of rites of passage that folklorists and anthropologists have discovered in riddling.[45] The conjunction of masculine and feminine symbols on the Intronati's riddle emblem can be interpreted in two different ways: as a hermaphroditic image of youthful gender fluidity and as an androgynous image of marriage leading to adult status. To conclude: the ludic performance of the emblem as a riddle with a double solution enables the Intronati to appear both as an intellectual community of humanist *litterati* and as a fools' company—a liminal group of young men in ritual transition from boyhood to adulthood.

3 The Intronati in *Gl'Ingannati*

Having examined the broader intellectual, social, and ritualistic context in which the Intronati arose, we now turn to the collective expression of this company in one of its first and most famous comedies: *Gl'Ingannati*. The play was first performed in the Sala Grande of the Palazzo Comunale on the last day of Carnival, 1532 (or 1531, for the sixteenth-century audience, because Siena's year began on March 25 as per the calendar *ab incarnatione*). *Gl'Ingannati* was published in 1537 and constitutes the first public manifestation of the academy in the medium of print; the first edition was decorated with the Intronati emblem.[46]

45 See Don Handelman, 'Traps of Trans-formation: Theoretical Convergences between Riddle and Ritual', in *Untying the Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*, ed. by Galit Hansen-Roken and D. Schulman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 37–61.

46 *Comedia del Sacrificio degli Intronati* (s.l., s.n., 1537). The confusing title of this publication that includes *Gl'Ingannati* is due to the other burlesque text appearing with it: *Il Sacrificio d'Amore*, which was performed by the Intronati at the beginning of the same Carnival season. Quotations of our comedy are from Nerida Newbigin's online edition, which is based upon the 1534 manuscript: *Ingannati: Commedia degli Intronati recitata*

3.1 *Prologo's Riddle*

I will forego a summary of the play's intricate plot for three reasons. First, the play lacks originality, its formulaic structure being characteristic of sixteenth-century Italian comedy: beginning with the separation of family members and young lovers, the narrative leads us through a series of challenges and twists of fortune to end with the stability of family reunion and marriage. Second, I wish to avoid the inevitable simplifications that occur when transposing non-linear dramatic action into a narrative. Last but not least, I mirror the approach that is taken by the play itself via the ostentatious refusal of Prologo, the character who introduces the play to the audience, to provide an *argomento*—the standard introductory plot description that would normally facilitate an audience's understanding of the intricate plot about to be performed.[47] This omission is quite unusual for sixteenth-century comedy, which almost always included both a *prologo* and an *argomento*. As we shall see, the absence of the latter can be understood as part of the play's riddling strategy and as significant for the onstage performance of gender that follows.

At the outset of the play, Prologo appears and presents himself to the audience as the ambassador of the Intronati.[48] We can assume that this academy member wore some kind of fool's disguise since he stresses his extravagant dress, explaining that it reflects the purpose of the Intronati, which is to perform a comedy.[49] In this opening speech he explicitly refers to the society's emblem, stating that the comedy emerged from no source other than the

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ne' giuochi publici del carnivale in Siena (http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century_Siena_files/IntronatiIngannati.pdf). English translations of the text are from *The Deceived*, in *Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance*, trans. and ed. by Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), pp. 205–84. Page references to these editions (Italian and English) are given in parentheses after each quotation.

47 'Non vi aspettate altro argumento perché quel che ve l'aveva a fare non è in ponto. Fatevi senza, per ora' (p. 6); ('Now that I think about it, don't expect any explanation of the plot, because the person who was supposed to do it isn't up to it. For now you can do without an explanation', p. 209).

48 'Questi Intronati [. . .] m'hanno spinto qui per imbasciatore, oratore, legato, o procuratore o poeta' (p. 3); ('These Intronati [. . .] shoved me out here as their ambassador, orator, legate, lawyer, or poet', p. 206).

49 'Io vi veggio fin di qua, nobilissime donne, maravigliare di vedermivi così dinanzi in quest'abito [. . .] come se noi avessemo proprio a farvi qualche comedia' (p. 3); ('I can tell even from here, most noble ladies, that you are amazed to see me here before you in these clothes [. . .] as if we were about to present some comedy to you', p. 206).

Intronati's 'industrious pumpkin'.[50] This statement, which attests to the collective authorship of the Intronati, also implies a playful attitude of the authors towards their audience. We cannot be sure to which aspect of the pumpkin—the symbol, we recall, of the collective head of the Intronati—Prologo is referring: folly or wisdom. By emphasising that the comedy arose from the same pumpkin the Intronati used not only as their symbol but also as a prop in the guessing games they organised for the night of the Befana,[51] Prologo leaves this riddle's solution to the audience.

In his introduction, Prologo also establishes a playful relationship between male and female. His speech's basic gendered strategy—one that occurs in the prologues of numerous Intronati comedies—consists of clearly dividing the audience into two parts: women and men. The interaction of Prologo with men in the audience is based on masculine notions of cooperation and competition, while his interaction with women in the audience is based on seduction. Men are addressed as potential holders of knowledge, their vision of the comedy oriented towards the all-male world of dramatic production. This is an echo of the earliest Intronati prologue (to the play *Prigioni* based on Plautus's *Captivi*), in which male spectators are cast as members of an intellectual community that can 'see the comedy in Plautus'—that is to say, a community of readers that has access to and familiarity with the Latin original.[52] The Intronati consider men either to be learned (and severe) critics of dramatic production or to be ignorants who are invited to join the academy in order to acquire the intellectual vision they are lacking.[53] The Intronati's Italian

50 'La favola è nuova e non altronde tratta che de la loro industriosa zucca, onde anco la notte di beffana si cavaro le sorte vostre' (p. 4); the loose English translation modifies the literal meaning of this statement by substituting 'industrious pumpkin' with 'fevered brains': 'The story is new and not taken from any other source outside of their fevered brains—the same place where on the night of the Befana they decided your fate' (p. 207).

51 See Laura Riccò, *Giuoco e teatro nelle veglie di Siena* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1993), pp. 72, 170.

52 'La commedia, la quale e fatta solo per voi Donne; gli uomini se la potran vedere in Plauto, donde costoro [gl'Intronati] l'hanno tratta' ('the comedy, which is made only for you Women; men can see it in Plautus, from which it was drawn [by the Intronati]'). *I Prigioni di Plauto tradotti da l'intronati di Siena*, ed. by Nerida Newbigin (Siena: Accademia degli Intronati, 2006), p. 6.

53 'Oh, poveri uomini. Dove li conduce la loro ignoranza [...] ma questi cotali venghino all'Accademia, ove gli faremo vedere a voler dar giudizio di simil cose'. *Comedia intitolata Alessandro del signor Alessandro Piccolomini. Con duo prologi, non più impressi, e composti dal medesimo Autore per la prima e per la seconda volta ch'è stata recitata in Siena* (based on the undated Ruffinelli edition and MS Escorial IV.b.12 / Est. 16.5), 2010: http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century_Siena_files/

adaptation of the Plautus comedy, however, is instead addressed to women. Women are not invited into the all-male academy to learn how to write and to stage a comedy, however. Instead, they are encouraged only to enjoy the product of the Intronati's phallic pestles—that is to say, the performance of the carnivalesque comedy on the public stage, an entertainment that is conceived especially for female eyes and for their pleasure. The Intronati use both explicit statement and punning suggestion to make clear that their comedy is aimed exclusively at women. In *Gl'Ingannati*, at first it seems that Prologo does not see any men at all when he first appears on stage ('I see you from here, most noble ladies', see note 49), and he continues for some time to address only women. The joking masculine discourse of the prologue abounds in sexual innuendos that establish a metaphorical relation between 'making a comedy' ('farvi [alle nobilissime donne] qualche comedia') and making love. The *commedia* is offered to its female audience not only as food good for pregnancy but also as representative of the male organs of the Intronati themselves: women are asked to evaluate, while watching the comedy, the size of the authors' *ingegni*.[54] By insisting on the pleasure that the comedy—an entertaining product of phallic pestles—is intended to provide its female audience, the Intronati conceive the dramatic experience of women in explicitly erotic terms.

When the Intronati finally address their male audience, towards the end of Prologo's speech, they exclude any possibility of homoerotic allusions: 'As far as the men in the audience are concerned, we really don't care whether they like it or not'.[55] This does not mean, however, that their speech strategy excludes male spectators from the erotic interaction. In order to create the conditions for this interaction, Prologo formulates what sounds like an enigma for men, pointing out paradoxically that

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PiccolominiAlessandro.pdf, pp. 8–9 ('Oh, poor men. Where they are driven by their ignorance [. . .] but these men should come to the academy, where we will make them see how to want to judge/give judgment of such things').

54 *Gl'Ingannati*, p. 4; *The Deceived*, p. 207. The sexual metaphor of *ingegno* is widespread in the academy's playful texts and is here intimated as follows: 'Ditemi [Donne] per vostra fé: che credete però che e' voglino [gli Intronati]? E' non chieggono e non domandano altro da voi che la grazia vostra e esser amati da voi (oh, è però questa così gran cosa?) e che voi cognosciate l'ingegni loro (e chi l'ha grosso e chi l'ha sottile)' (p. 5); ('Tell me, honestly [ladies] what do you think they [the Intronati] really want? They aren't looking for anything from you beyond your graces, and when you come to know their penetrating wit—whether it be large or small—you can say "I like this" or "I don't like this"', p. 209).

55 'Agli uomini non importa che la piaccia o no' (p. 4).

> l'Intronati hanno ordinato un modo che nessun di loro [uomini] la potrà né vedere né udire, se già non è cieco. E però, se qualche sacciuto maligno, tirato dal desiderio che egli had'appontarci, avessi pure una gran voglia di vederla o udirla, cavisi gli occhi, altrimenti (io glielo dico prima) e' non la corrà. Io so che vi parrà strano che i ciechi la veghino, e pur sarà vero; e intendarete come, se voi arete tanta pazienzia ch'io vel mostri. (p. 5)
>
> The Intronati have ordered that none of them [men] may see or hear this [comedy] unless they're already blind. Still, if there's some stuck-up scumbag of a man, drawn by an uncontrollable urge to criticize us, who is here and who really wishes to see and hear it, he'll have to cut out his eyes if he wants to understand it. I imagine you think it's strange that only blind men should watch this comedy. But it's true, and if you just have a little patience you'll understand it, for I'll show you why. (pp. 207–08)

The enigma's solution, for men, is given by the riddling Prologo in the following sentence, which is addressed to women. It is this sentence that establishes a relationship between the male and female audience members:

> Come volete voi [donne], adunque, che costoro [uomini] stiano a mirar scene o comedie, o sentino, o vegghino cosa che noi [Intronati] facciamo, o diciamo, essendoli voi [donne] dinanzi? Che più bel giuoco, che più bello spettaculo, che cosa più piacevole o più vaga si può veder di voi? Certo, nissuna. Eccovi adonque mostro come gli uomini non vedranno né udiranno questa comedia, se non son ciechi [. . .]. Ma voi, donne, la vedrete ed udirete benissimo perché, in vero, non vi cognosciamo così cortesi che vi siate per perdervi o per uscir di voi stesse nel mirarci. (p. 5)
>
> How do you imagine men could come here to marvel at scenes or comedies, or to listen or to watch what we do or say, with you beautiful women here before them? What more beautiful game, what more beautiful spectacle, what more pleasing or beautiful thing could a man see than you ladies? Nothing, certainly. So now I have shown you why men may not see or hear this comedy unless they are blind [. . .]. But you ladies will see and hear it just fine because we know you well enough indeed to know that you're too well-mannered ever to get carried away or lose self-control from looking at our beauty. (p. 208)

By deflecting the male gaze from the comedy performed by men and orienting it towards the female audience, the Intronati produce more than a paradoxical

joke for men and a compliment for beautiful ladies. Playfully suggesting to men that comedy performance is an occasion to satiate their eyes with the sight of the beautiful young women present in the theatre enables Prologo to generate erotic tension and 'friction' on the heterosexual axis of visual interaction with the effect of erotic pleasure. This rhetorical strategy is of course based upon the spatial convention of gender segregation in Renaissance theatres: young, beautiful, and noble women occupied the first tiers of the theatre while men were positioned behind them.[56] The Intronati thus establish, in the prologue, a heterosexual mode of visual interaction in the theatre: women should look at the men on stage (the Intronati), and men (both actors and spectators) should look at women in the audience.[57]

Curiously, this unambiguously heterosexual visual strategy on the level of actor-audience interaction is structured analogously to the ambiguous cross-dressing figure that will appear in the space of the dramatic action. In the theatre, real women are placed between two groups of real men: actors and spectators. In the double cross-dressing on stage, the fictional female character is positioned in the performative space between the male body of the actor and his male dress. How does this structural affinity between two apparently opposed theatrical strategies—one separating gender categories and the other blurring them—condition the comedy's performance?

In order to answer this question, I will begin by looking beyond the formal division of this comedy (and of Renaissance comedy in general) into five acts. While this division is relevant as an indicator of the erudite play's revival of the classical tradition of Roman comedies, its structure is not pertinent to the survival of a residual 'fools'-play' stratum that was influenced by both festive ritual and medieval dramatic forms of carnivalesque plays on the Renaissance stage. This approach enables us to reveal another, deeper structural principle of *Gl'Ingannati*, namely its tripartite configuration of a rite of passage composed of three phases—separation, liminality, and reintegration—that underlies our fools' play and conditions the arrangement of its enigmatic images.

56 Günsberg, p. 63.

57 In the prologue of another collective work by the Intronati, *Amor costante* (1540), which was signed by Stordito Intronato (Alessandro Piccolomini), the academicians stress the visual abilities of women spectators in particular, playfully remarking that without their visual attention the comedy risked invisibility. See the online edition revised by Nerida Newbigin in 2010: http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century_Siena_files/PiccolominiAmorCostante.pdf, pp. 7–8.

3.2 *Separation*

In the two initial scenes (I. 1 and I. 2)[58] that, I argue, constitute the first part of this tripartite 'rite of passage' play, the Intronati display the older generation on stage but evoke the younger by keeping it entirely absent. The play begins with the entrance of two old friends, Virginio and Gherardo, who have just concluded a marriage contract that benefits both of them: Lelia, Virginio's young and beautiful (but poor) daughter, should marry the old (but rich) widower Gherardo. Virginio's situation as *pater familias* is complex: his son has disappeared, some years earlier, and thus old Virginio seeks to use his daughter as a means of replacing the feeble masculine potency of his family with the virile financial potency of her future husband.

From the very beginning of the play, the Intronati also confront their audience with an image that stands, in mythological and literary tradition, for a dark and unanswerable enigma: the labyrinth. Gherardo characterises his own situation with the help of this metaphor, asking Virginio to help him out of the intricate labyrinth where he walks as if blind: despite the matrimonial arrangement he has with Lelia's father, the old man cannot manage to see his fiancée, who somehow constantly escapes his sight.[59]

In this first section of the play, the Intronati's representation of old men as foolish theatrically re-enacts the real ritual of young fools staging a charivari to stigmatise the folly of an ill-matched couple, providing an image of what we might well recognise as a mock or grotesque wedding.[60] Behind the marriage preparations that the characters discuss, we can therefore easily espy a biting

58 Roman and arabic numerals refer throughout to act and scene, respectively.

59 'Fa' adunque, Virginio, se desideri in questa cosa farmi piacere, com'hai detto, che quanto più presto sia possibile si faccino queste benedette nozze; e cavami una volta di questo così intricato laberinto nel quale non so come disavvedutamente sonno incorso' (p. 7). In this modern English translation, the highly significant image of the labyrinth disappears, to be replaced with the much less resonant term 'mess': 'Virginio, if you want to make me happy, as you've promised, let's arrange this holy matrimony and get me out of this hopeless mess that has somehow overwhelmed me' (p. 210).

60 The literary, dramatic, and iconographic motif of the 'grotesque wedding', which was widespread in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European culture, is an artistic transposition of the charivari ritual performed by male youth. See Jean-Claude Margolin, 'Charivari et mariage ridicule au temps de la Renaissance', in *Les fêtes de la Renaissance*, ed. by Jean Jaquot (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1975), III, pp. 579–60; Walter S. Gibson, 'Verbeeck's Grotesque Wedding Feasts: Some Reconsiderations', *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 21.1/2 (1992), pp. 29–39; for literary stagings in German and French narrative texts, see my article 'Groteske Ehe in der Frühen Neuzeit und ihre medialen (Re-)Inszenierungen', *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, NF 3 (2004), pp. 476–90.

satire. It is not male bonding through the possession and commodification of a woman's body, as stressed by contemporary critics of the play—inspired by the ideas of Lévi-Strauss and Gale Rubin[61]—that provokes the Intronati's mockery. On the contrary, the young academicians totally adhere to the fantasy of physical and symbolic sharing of the female body that is part of their juvenile masculine poetics, as displayed in their other bawdy and playful texts.[62] The Intronati act here not so much as social critics but as representatives of young men and their sexual and marital ambitions. The marriage transaction that is concluded between these two old friends is disruptive because it allows the older generation to secure their own masculine performance in marriage by substituting sexual impotency with financial potency. This gives them the opportunity to rival young, sexually potent (but financially poorer) men and creates an inappropriate age discrepancy between the wedding partners. It is thus unsurprising that the two initial scenes of the play are full of jokes and innuendo that reveal the sexual impotency of both old men, who try to affirm themselves with sexual bravado but appear only as old fools. The foolishness of old men, their lack of sexual potency, and their blindness are thus intimately interrelated in this first section of the play, which is entirely focused on the question of masculine performance in matrimony.[63]

Transgressive and deficient marriage between an old impotent man and a young beautiful woman is only one of the two images of the marital bond that the Intronati introduce to their audience at the very beginning of the play. While the girl remains absent from the sight of her future husband (as well as from the stage) in the following scene, her interests are represented through her nursemaid Clemenzia, an elderly woman who continues the enigmatic discourse of the play in the form of a dream (I. 2). Clemenzia tells her master Virginio that the night before she dreamt of a cat that, playing with a mouse, broke a bottle of wine. This ambiguous dream image, which is based on sexual symbols, is understood by both as a 'sign of marriage' ('segno di nozze', p. 10), but is interpreted in two different ways. While Lelia's old father, who shares the masculine blindness of his old friend, imagines that the dream is a sign

61 And first, of course, by Günsberg, in *Gender and the Italian Stage*, whose interpretation is discussed above. For discussion of the present scene, see p. 32.

62 See, for example, the priapic dialogue written in 1527 by founder of the Intronati Antonio Vignali, *La Cazzaria*, ed. by Pasquale Stoppelli, introd. by Nino Borsellino (Rome: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1984).

63 On the anxious relationship between male potency, generative capacity, and masculine cultural power in early modern culture and on the Renaissance stage, see Finucci's insightful study, *The Manly Masquerade*.

of the transgressive marriage he has arranged for his daughter and Gherardo, the nursemaid suggests another solution—one that would be socially normative and would satisfy the ambitions of the younger generation. That is, Lelia should marry a young man who would be able to provide her with both sexual pleasure and children. At the beginning of the play, therefore, the Intronati confront their audience with an image of marriage that is conceived as a riddle with two different potential solutions: one imagined by men and the other suggested by a woman. In Bargagli's riddling-game terms, while the men imagine *una cosa poco onesta*, the woman visualises a *convenevole cosa*. This double image of marriage—represented through the labyrinth and the dream, and predicated upon the conflict between the older and younger generations—presents itself as a riddle because of a block element it contains.[64] This element is the absence of the young girl who is hidden from our sight and the absence of the young boy who would ideally suit her as a husband. What is worth noticing here, for the further development of the dramatic action, is this initial contraposition of the men's blindness in the labyrinth of their illicit desires with the clairvoyance of the woman's capacity for prophetic dreaming.

If we consider this enigmatic interaction from the perspective of the rite of passage—and, more precisely, its first separation phase—we might notice that the two opening scenes, by putting forward the tricky question of marriage, develop the theme of children's separation from fathers.[65] Virginio's son (Lelia's brother, the young Fabrizio) is declared missing and is mourned as the missing link in the patriarchal continuity of the family; his daughter Lelia is absent from the sight of her father, the patriarch, and of her future husband. The fact that both Lelia and Fabrizio are also absent from the sight of the audience in these two initial scenes is significant for the next phase of the play.

3.3 *Liminality*

In the opening scenes of *Gl'Ingannati*, the Intronati playfully confront their audience with two different understandings of the conjunction of masculine and feminine: the marital union that is planned from the outset, on the one hand, and the gender fluidity of youth that follows from the separation of

64 Enygmatology defines a block element as 'the element which impedes solution of the riddle question', thus a 'block' to the solution that is a 'central notion in riddling'. Thomas A. Green and W.J. Pepicello, 'The Riddle Process', *Journal of American Folklore*, 97.384 (April–June, 1984), p. 189.

65 Although I don't discuss here the issue of separation in *Gl'Ingannati* as a literary motif in its multiple relations to ancient drama and romance, or to vernacular literary and folkloristic sources, this topic is explored by Cerreta in the introduction to his edition of the play.

individual from family structure, on the other. Act I scene 2 offers the audience a new riddle via the monologue of a male actor dressed as a boy but speaking as a girl, who enters indirectly, asking the viewers to guess whether they see a boy or a girl:

> Leaving the house alone at this hour requires real courage when one considers the evil ways of the rowdy young men of Modena! Oh, it would serve me right if one of those young rogues forced me into one of these houses to see for himself whether I was a boy or a girl! (p. 214)

In the Italian original, the speech of this male actor in male apparel is grammatically marked as feminine:

> Gli è pure un grande ardire il mio, quando io 'l considero, che cognoscendo i disonesti costumi di questa scorretta gioventù modanese, mi metta *sola* in quest'ora a uscir di casa! Oh, come mi starebbe bene che qualcun di questi gioveni scapestrati mi pigliasse per forza e, tirandomi in qualche casa,volesse chiarirsi s'io son maschio o femina! (p. 11, my emphasis)

I would argue that this performance of gender ambiguity arises as liminal from the anthropological opposition between young and old: as we can see from the negative mention of 'young rogues', the allusion to rape, and the lesson the character should learn from the danger of being raped, this performance develops within the framework of the social opposition of norm and transgression. (We shall see, too, that this opposition will be further transposed into the moral categories of honour and shame, and will lead us back to the allegorical images of wisdom and folly—all of which were, of course, commonplace binaries in late medieval and early modern discourse.) It is particularly significant that riddle's solution is provided not by men (who are presented here as deviant 'young rogues' who might discern sexual invitation—or *cosa poco onesta*—in the appearance of a figure met alone in the street at an unusual hour) but by women who incarnate moral vision and who are able to find a decent explanation—or *convenevole cosa*.

After producing her mysterious and gender ambiguous effect on the audience, the figure explains that she is Lelia and is pursuing an honest marital purpose. She has escaped from the convent where she was locked during the preparations for her marriage and she has disguised herself as a male servant (Fabio) in order to win back the young lover who had abandoned her for another young girl (Isabella, Gherardo's daughter). Lelia claims that all she, an

honest unmarried woman, wants is to see the object of her love.[66] By providing the audience with the solution to the riddle of her appearance, Lelia introduces the first part of the *argomento* that was hidden by the Intronati in their prologue. This decent explanation of the cross-dressing performance is given in monologue form to the audience and in dialogue form to the clairvoyant nursemaid Clemenzia, who is reintroduced in this scene in order to recognise Lelia behind the appearance of the young man met by chance in the street.

As noted above, recent scholarship reads double cross-dressing performance as an imaginative field with numerous sexual possibilities. Yet these illusory sexual alternatives, as projected by the onstage construction of ambiguous gender, can be reduced to only two social options: normative and transgressive. Lelia's wise speech—which provides the solution to the riddle—formulates the social norm of licit sexuality that is possible only within the marital bond. In scenes where Lelia encounters new characters who cannot discern her identity, however, the Intronati perform folly via a series of transgressive visual images. To the 'rowdy young men' in the street, Lelia could appear as someone who would like to be raped—either as an adolescent boy (object of homoerotic desire) or as a young woman (object of heterosexual desire). Before Clemenzia recognises Lelia, the nursemaid believes that she is being sexually assaulted by an anonymous boisterous boy. And even after revealing Lelia's identity as a woman in men's clothes, Clemenzia labels the young woman as disorderly. Given that she leaves a convent in masculine disguise, Lelia evokes the image of a nun of loose morals pursuing sexual pleasure; when appearing in men's clothing in the street, she further suggests the image of a female prostitute who attracts her clients by rivalling male representatives of the same profession.[67] Through this suggestive performance, the Intronati stimulate the sexual fantasies of young men in the audience (who, in reality, did not have access to upper class women before marriage), exposing to these viewers a young girl from a good family who might tantalisingly appear as sexually available.[68] In her interactions with her unfaithful lover, Fiamminio, and his new fiancée, Isabella, Lelia appears simultaneously as Fiamminio's potential male lover, serving him not only at table but also in bed, and as a friend who betrays him by trying to seduce his beloved. For an audience that already

66 '. . . senza altra speranza che di poter saziare questi occhi di vederlo un dì a mio modo' (p. 11); ('without any other hope that to satisfy my desire to see him one day at a time', p. 215).

67 See the analysis of this scene by Giannetti and her references to work by social historians of the early modern city, in *Lelia's Kiss*, pp. 51–53.

68 Ibid., pp. 156, 199.

knows both the sex of the actor and the sex of the character, Lelia/Fabio could provoke both male-male and female-female desire. More specifically, in the kiss our double cross-dresser gives to Isabella, the audience could see an illicit kiss between either two female characters or two male actors behind the normative heterosexual kiss of the young boy Fabio and the desirable Isabella.

According to traditional patriarchal views on sexuality, these suggestive images were at the very least theoretically condemnable and were stigmatised in normative discourses on sexuality and public behaviour (if not prosecuted in court). At this phase of the dramatic action, it remains unclear how this performance of transgression, which is made possible through the destabilisation of visual perception, is related to the normative heterosexual discourse that is developed by the Intronati in their prologue and by their female characters in the first part of the play. This opacity can be maintained because Lelia's riddle, as it turns out, is only the half of the dramatic riddle conceived by the Intronati.

While, in the first half of the play, cross-dressed Lelia substitutes for the missing Fabrizio in her performance of the phantasmatic phallus, from the third act on the same actor who plays the role of Lelia appears on stage as her twin brother, Fabrizio, who substitutes for the sister character in the second half.[69] This actor's performance in the first half interrogates notions of femininity; in the second, it serves to interrogate and to construct masculinity. With the entrance of Fabrizio, the Intronati introduce two scenes (III. 1 and 2) that have special symbolic status, positioned as they are precisely in the middle of the five-act comedy. According to Andrews, spectators could recognise Fabrizio as 'a real male' from his initial appearance on stage (p. 43). If we share this vision, the meaning of these two scenes, the connection between them, and their function escapes us completely. A more differentiated gender approach that is being developed in recent studies (but that has thus far ignored the central part of the play) constitutes, therefore, an alternative point of departure for my analysis.[70]

69 This performative trick was reconstructed in Andrews, '*Gli Ingannati* as a Text for Performance'. Further references to this work appear in the text.

70 I refer here, in particular, to Giannetti's analysis of the construction of masculinity in *Gl'Ingannati* in the dynamic terms of maturation and 'phallic revelation': *Lelia's Kiss*, pp. 18–19, 55, 143), and to Milligan's performative approach to masculine identity in *Gl'Ingannati*. In his analysis of the play, he demonstrates that the 'possessing of the phallus is not enough. For the boy Fabrizio to assume his role of manhood, he must also perform as a man'. See Milligan, p. 34.

The first scene (III. 1) shows Fabrizio coming to Modena, where the Intronati situate the main action of their comedy. Why Modena?[71] Special attention to 'landmarks and characteristics of the city', as well as 'references to topography and heraldry' prompts Andrews to conclude that 'altogether this is a nicely written scene in a realistic vein' that is significant for the Renaissance poetics of drama (p. 28). Yet we can find a more productive interpretive angle via a symbolic reading of the scene in its relation to the construction of masculinity. Two figures accompany Fabrizio to look for his father during the young man's journey to Modena: a fool, Stragualcia, and a teacher and pederast, Messer Piero (Pedante). This trio suggests to the audience that Fabrizio is not yet a 'real man': the fool indicates the youth's lack of wisdom; the teacher, who is characterised as a 'sodomito', makes his young pupil appear effeminate.[72] The city to which they bring Fabrizio is evoked as a land of transit or passage (a 'terra' of 'transito'),[73] suggesting the initiatory nature of the young man's journey.

The city's curiosities are transformed into sexual symbols via a succession of *double entendres* in the discussion among the three characters. The order in which these symbols appear is not arbitrary. First, the teacher shows the adolescent Fabrizio what is presented as the city's main curiosity: a hermaphrodite on the side of the Modenese cathedral, medieval drollery that can still be seen today and that is known as the *potta da Modena*.

While the decent interpretation of this name suggests that we understand *potta* as *podestà* (chief magistrate), *potta* is also a euphemism for vulva.[74]

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71 Since the collective authorship of *Gl'Ingannati* by the Sienese Academy of the Intronati is now generally accepted, I will not consider the speculations of earlier scholars who attempted to identify a supposed Modenese author of this anonymous play.

72 In her chapter 'Pedants, Candlemakers, and Boys: Sodomy and Comedy', Giannetti does not analyse *Gl'Ingannati*. Instead she examines a wide range of Italian Renaissance comedies from the perspectives opened up by the works of social historians Michael Rocke and Guido Ruggiero, who have demonstrated that in Italian sixteenth-century cities, 'in their early to mid-teens young males were often seen as highly androgynous, with feminine looks and manners'. Their historical sources testify to 'a tacit acceptance of passive sodomy when it involved male youth up to about the age of eighteen, apparently because this was seen as a temporary and passive/feminine stage in male development towards adulthood'. Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss*, pp. 33, 157.

73 'Pedante: Questa *terra* mi par tutta mutata poi ch'io non vi fui. Vero è ch'io non vi fui se non per *transito*' (p. 38, my italics). In the English translation, the second meaning has disappeared: 'This city seems completely changed since I was last here. Actually I was here only briefly' (p. 242).

74 On the linguistic and literary developments of the image of the *potta da Modena*, see Andrea Lazzarini, 'Il Potta da Modena: Precisazioni storico-linguistiche attorno a un personaggio della "Secchia Rapita" di Alessandro Tassoni', *Nuova Rivista di Letteratura*

FIGURE 2 Potta da Modena, *by Master of the Metopes,* (*Twelfth century*). *Modena, Cathedral Lapidary Museum. I. Sailko.*

The foolish and ignorant boy does not understand the symbolic reference of this image to his own ambiguous sexual identity as an effeminate boy and his passive, woman-like role. Instead, he bursts into laughter, simplistically seeing the obscene image as nothing more than a joke.

The visitors then examine the Modenese coat of arms, which features crossed drills—phallic symbols that, in their pictorial affinity with the crossed pestles on the Intronati emblem, evoke a phallic community of young men.

Finally, the teacher and the fool discuss the 'most egregious bell tower that exists in the whole structure of the universe [. . .] and whose shadow they claim

Italiana, 16.1–2 (2013), pp. 61–94. For the relationship between *potta* and *puttana* (whore), especially in the context of playful Renaissance pseudo-academic etymology, see Courtney Quaintance, *Textual Masculinity and the Exchange of Women in Renaissance Venice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), pp. 18–19.

FIGURE 3 *Modena coats of arms, Sala del Fuoco, Palazzo Comunale.*

makes a man go crazy',[75] projecting the visual experience of this symbol of triumphant virility into the boy's future: 'You will see' ('Tu vedrai'). This scene is clearly not just a 'casual chat' establishing an 'illusion of a real contemporary setting', as Andrews would have it (p. 29). Instead, it is an ideogram of the play's symbolic trajectory that depicts the transformation of an effeminate, foolish boy into a wise and powerful adult man through a succession of initiatory riddles.

The symbolic texture of the Modena landscape allows us to build a bridge to the second scene, which Andrews opposes on the grounds of its 'more "medieval" structure of generalizing symbolism', and which he excludes as an interlude in the comedy's structure. In his view, the scene falls out of the

75 'Pedante: Tu vedrai qui il più solenne campanile che sia in tutta la machina mondiale. Stragualcia: È quello al qual i modanesi volevon far la guaina? E che dicono che la sua ombra fa impazzar gli uomini? Pedante: Sì, cotesto' (p. 39); ('Pedant: There you see the most egregious bell tower that exists in the whole structure of the universe. Stragualcia: Is that one the people of Modena wanted to put a sheath over and whose shadow they claim makes a man go crazy? Pedant: Yes, That's it', pp. 243–44).

dramatic whole of the play, which otherwise strictly obeys in all its parts 'the mode of dramatic realism' that is characteristic of Renaissance theatrical aesthetics (pp. 32–33). One can object to this claim by referring to the very clearly formulated aesthetic position of the Intronati, who were against spoken interludes and never included them in their dramatic performances.[76]

If III. 2 is not an interlude, then, what is its place in the comedy's structure, its meaning, and its function in the performance? The scene opens with the travellers seeking a place to spend the night and facing a choice between two inns: lo Specchio (the Mirror) and il Matto (the Fool). Andrews insightfully suggests that 'the two inns are not just functional locations in a fictional space: they are also symbolic locations which morally categorise those who pass in and out of them. They assume temporarily something of the character of "mansions" in medieval drama, where the audience would attach a label to a character according to whether he or she came from Heaven or Hell' (p. 32). While the sign of the Fool speaks for itself, the sign of the Mirror is interpreted for Fabrizio by his teacher as follows: 'The Mirror corresponds to wisdom' ('Speculum prudentia significat'). Not only are the characters faced with the choice between folly and wisdom, as 'the whole of humanity is being divided [by two rival innkeepers] into two categories: those who stay at "lo Specchio" and those who patronise "il Matto"' (p. 33). Andrews leaves two questions unanswered, however: what affinity is there between the inns' signs and the 'sophisticated invention of *imprese* or emblems, which was a common pastime among sixteenth-century courtiers' (p. 31)? And why did the Intronati have their characters opt for il Matto over the patently better choice of the Inn of Wisdom?

The answer to the first question resides in the earliest Intronati emblem, which was composed of the same paradoxical image of wise folly described above, but which included a second motto: *sic sapere prudentia est* (thus knowledge is prudence).[77]

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76 'Intermedi non aspettate in altro modo, che in musiche fatte dentro, che così è stato sempre costume degli Intronati' ('Don't expect interludes in [the comedies] in any mode other than made of music, which is what has always been the custom of the Intronati'). Prologue to *L'Ortensio Comedia degl'Academici Intronati rappresentata in Siena alla presenza del serenissimo gran duca di Toscana il dì xxvi di gennaio M D L X*, online edition by Nerida Newbigin, 2010, p. 8: http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century_Siena_files/IntronatiOrtensio.pdf. This critical edition is based on the editio princeps (Siena: Luca Bonetti, 1571) and takes into account the manuscript conserved in Florence (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magliabechiano VII.196).

77 See Kosuta, 'Notes', p. 132 for the description, and p. 138 for the reproduction of the emblem.

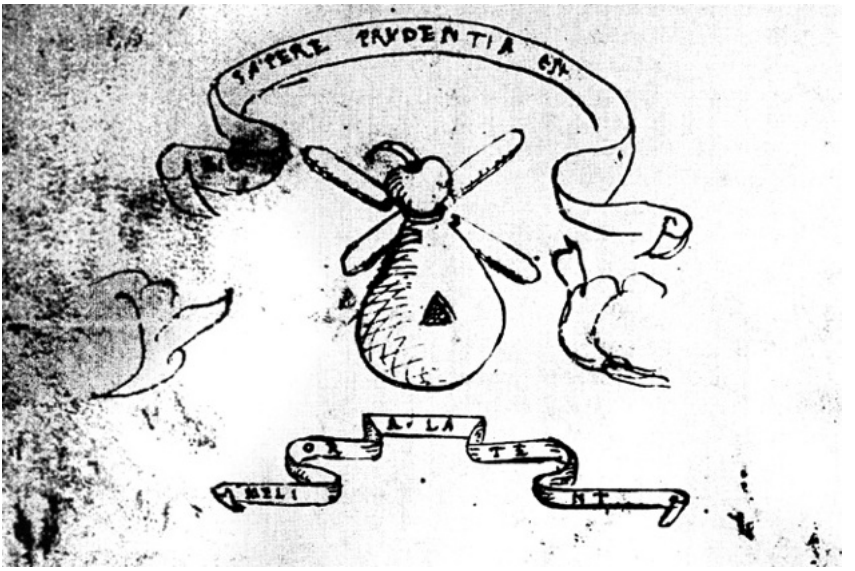

FIGURE 4 *Emblem of the Accademia degli Intronati (1533). Drawing. Archivio di Stato, Siena, Consistoro 1003.*

In this context, Messer Piero's question to Fabrizio following his Latin interpretation—'Do you understand, Fabrizio?'[78]—can be understood in two senses: first, as a playful self-reference by the Intronati to their academy; second, as a formulation of their fools' society's mission to transform silly boys into wise men.

The answer to the second question resides in the late medieval literary and dramatic genre of the fools' play that was imported into Renaissance comedy. By universalising folly in *Gl'Ingannati*, the Intronati position themselves alongside the cultural tradition of the *Ship of Fools*, the *Inn of the Blue Boat*, and numerous other imaginative depictions of the reign of Folly, all of them arising from the ritual and theatrical performances of carnivalesque youth companies.[79] By permitting folly to triumph over wisdom on stage, act III

78 'Pedante: Speculum prudentia significat iuxta illud nostri Catonis "Nosce teipsum". Intendi, Fabrizio?' (p. 40); ('The mirror signifies prudence, according to the proverb of our Cato: "Know thyself"', p. 245.)

79 For Brant's *Ship of Fools* in the context of European charivari culture, see my 'La procession charivarique en texte et image: Les recueils lyonnais de la chevauchée de l'âne—La Nef des fous de Sebastian Brant—Le Quart Livre de François Rabelais—Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel', in *Medialität der Prozession: Performanz ritueller Bewegung in Texten*

scene 2 of our comedy demonstrates striking analogies with the late medieval *sottie*, a satirical-allegorical carnivalesque play that presents to its audience a company of fools who institute a reign of Folly in order to transform everyone into a fool. Even the title chosen by the Intronati, *The Deceived*, becomes clearer within the context of the titles of *sotties* performed in late medieval France during the last third of the fifteenth century: *Sottie nouvelle des trompeurs* (*New Fools' Play of Deceivers*) or *Sottie des sots triumphans qui trompent chascun* (*Play of Triumphant Fools Who Deceive Everyone*).[80] Although we have no proof that French *sotties* constituted direct literary sources for Italian comedy, they were 'material floating in the cultural net'[81] in terms of their generic pattern, which was common across several European countries, and in terms of their textual and performative tropes, which circulated throughout European theatre in modes that have still to be explored.

The oppositions folly/wisdom, feminine/masculine, and boy/man, which determine the structure of the fools' play in *Gl'Ingannati*, are actualised when the travellers choose the Inn of Folly. Stragualcia belongs to the inn in his emblematic status of the fool; Messer Piero (Pedante) is sent there as a *sodomito* who lustfully follows the adolescent son of the innkeeper, who is entering the Matto. Here, the fools' play develops its social satire, rooted in charivari, by placing the fool's cap squarely on the adult who transgresses heterosexual norms, while Fabrizio passively follows his teacher, suggesting his submissive feminine gender role. Instead of stigmatising Fabrizio's folly as a transgression, therefore, the Intronati associate it with youth itself—a temporary status of non-differentiated identity—which makes possible the connection between the fools' play and the liminal phase of the rite of passage.

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und Bildern der Vormoderne, ed. by Katja Gvozdeva and Hans Rudolf Velten (Heidelberg: Winter Universitätsverlag, 2011), pp. 323–57. On the relationship between the historical form of the carnivalesque fraternity and the allegorical meanings of the Blue Ship, see Herman Pleij, *Het gilde van de Blauwe Schuit: Literatuur, Volksveest en burgermoraal in de late Middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1979). For an ethnocritical analysis of the Inn of the Blue Ship in Bruegel's carnivalesque painting, see Claude Gaignebet, 'Le combat de Carnaval et de Carême', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 2 (1972), p. 334.

80 These two titles appear in two different collections containing the same dramatic text. See *Recueil Trepperel*, ed. by Eugénie Droz (Geneva: Slatkine, 1974), nr. 3; *Recueil général des sotties*, ed. by Émile Picot (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1902–1912), III, nr. XIX.

81 See Joachim Küpper, *The Cultural Net—Early Modern Drama as Paradigm* (forthcoming, 2017).

3.4 *Reintegration*

The next morning, Fabrizio leaves the Matto. He is now dressed in white, the symbolic colour of masculine initiation,[82] following the trajectory indicated by the masculinising symbols of Modenese topography. Determined to find his father, he is on his way to reintegrate himself within the family structure as an adult man. He is not a fool anymore, yet to become a man one must be recognised as such by others. Not only is Fabrizio played by the same actor who interprets Lelia, but also his new white costume is the same as the one that had been worn in the first half by cross-dressed Lelia, which is (of course) absent from the stage but present in the spectators' memory. Coinciding in both physical appearance and costume with his cross-dressed twin sister, Fabrizio's performance completes the riddle offered by the Intronati to their audience, inverting the relationship between the *cosa poco onesta* and *convenevole cosa*. If, in the first half of the play, the *convenevole* solution of the riddle was feminine, in the second half this solution would be not only false but also regressive and transgressive, since a grown man must be free of any youthful effeminate appearance.

The fools' play continues by transposing the stigma of folly from young men who have found the way to wisdom onto those who are deceived by Fabrizio's appearance. Characters who mistake Fabrizio for cross-dressed Lelia (or for her alter ego Fabio) are contrasted with Fabrizio, who now affirms his folly-less status as a real man and as the son of his father. The former appear to Fabrizio as *pazzi* (mentally deranged, literally 'crazies')—first among them old Virginio, who takes Fabrizio for his daughter Lelia instead of recognising him as his son, and is therefore the perfect example of a fool—an object of carnivalesque derision.[83] Trying to leave the liminal space marked both by folly and

82 On white as the ritual colour of male adolescence in Tuscany (and, particularly, Florence), see Trexler, p. 372; Amedeo Pellegrini, 'Per l'arrivo di Cosimo I a Siena', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 10 (1903), pp. 174–75.

83 For the first mention of *pazzìa* in *Gl'Ingannati*, see III. 5; as associated with carnivalesque derision, see III. 7: 'Fabrizio: Io ho conosciuti molti modanesi pazzi, li quali non contarei per nome, ma pazzi come questo vecchio, che non stesse o legato o rinchiuso, non viddi alcuno mai. Guarda che bello omore! È impazzato in questo (per quanto mi sono accorto) che i gioveni gli paion donne. [. . .]. E non vorrei per cento scudi non poter contar questa pazzia alle veglie, al tempo dei carnovali' (p. 49); ('Fabrizio: I've known many crazies from Modena, whom I'll not name, but I've never seen any like this old man who weren't tied down or locked up. What a strange humour he's in! He is out of his mind, at least from what I can tell, because he seems to think that young men are young women. [. . .] And not for a hundred scudi would I want to miss the chance to tell the tale of this madness during carnival', p. 255).

by the symbolic figure of the hermaphrodite *potta da Modena*, which reunites the two opposite-sex twins in a sophisticated riddle, Fabrizio does not only act as a test case for adult characters who risk being trapped under the reign of Folly but also is himself exposed to an initiatory test. Mistaken for transgressive Lelia (who escaped from her father) by the two old fools, Fabrizio is locked away in a dark room with another girl, Gherardo's daughter Isabella. The darkness of the room mirrors the obscurity of the riddle to be solved and creates a space for sexual encounter between the two young people. This dark place is a space of testing and transformation; what is hidden from the audience's eyes is represented indirectly through the voyeuristic monologue of the servant who reveals Fabrizio's virility to the listeners.

Recent studies on Renaissance comedy argue that phallic revelation is a means of constructing a heterosexual, aggressive, dominant, and triumphant masculinity.[84] It is important to stress the exact mode of phallic revelation that is conceived here by the Intronati. It is neither the father nor any other man who reveals the sexual identity of Fabrizio—a mode that would continue to project homosexual fantasies—but a female servant, Pasquella. Her monologue (IV. 5) implements the same heterosexual ocular strategy of the Intronati that was constructed in the prologue for actors and audience members alike, this time in order to make possible the *dénouement* of the play. Expressly rejecting men in the audience and addressing only women, Pasquella says she wants to share with this female audience her visual experience: she entered the room into which the supposed girl was locked with another girl, only to discover what she calls a 'large pestle' ('pestaglio'). The male organ she sees acquires, in her eyes, the disproportionate dimensions we recall from the central symbolic scene as the dimensions of the bell tower of triumphant phallic masculinity. Humorously stressing its impressive size, Pasquella, witness to the phallic revelation, offers the key (another phallic symbol)[85] to the room containing the riddle's solution to the female audience, inviting them to join her and to evaluate the *pestaglio* themselves. In playfully erotic terms, this speech permits the women present to participate in sexual pleasure; in socio-anthropological terms, Pasquella's words are a performative act that consecrates the transformation of boy into man.

By performing this transformation on stage, the Intronati fulfill their real ritual mission as a youth society, displaying the right course for young male

84 See Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss*, pp. 114, 142–52.

85 Patricia Simons illustrates the pictorial and literary representations of the key as a 'well-known metaphor for the penis', particularly in Italian carnivalesque songs. See her *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe*, pp. 170, 187.

audience members to follow. Thus men go blind in the theatre only to be revealed as holders of the phallic pestles of masculine potency and domination—created, in a sense, by women who never lose their vision.

Phallic revelation solves not only the riddle of non-differentiated youthful identity but also the riddle of marriage that is presented to the audience at the beginning of the comedy. When Fabrizio, separating himself from his feminine appearance, forms a couple with Isabella, Lelia reveals her true female identity to her beloved Fiamminio in order to be married to him. The comedy, which starts with a transgressive image of a marital union between a too-old man and a lovely young woman thus ends with a normative and harmonious resolution via two marital engagements between young partners that are eventually approved as good matches by the initially reluctant fathers—a decision that reintegrates the old men into social normativity.

In its ritual movement from youth to maturity and from transgression to norm, this carnivalesque fools' play aims at the licit and normative conjunction of male and female,[86] doing away, at the end, with folly—both in terms of the image of the grotesque wedding projected at the beginning and in terms of the deviant possibilities the play opens up in the liminal space of the cross-dressing performance of the youths.[87] In its ritual logic, the comedy shows us that the enigmatic uncertainty created in the performance of cross-dressing is the 'controlled uncertainty' of public events that, according to social anthropologist Don Handelman, have the same transformative ritual power and modelling social function as do rites of passage.[88] Revealing analogies between rites of passage and riddles in their shared nonlinear structure and teleology, Handelman defines the latter in their ritual functioning as 'traps of trans-formation'.[89]

As we have seen, our comedy proceeds via multiple riddles that arise along a youth's path from childhood to maturity and from folly to wisdom. At the same time, the comedy's structure, as a whole, can be described as a single significant riddle that was offered by the learned fools' society to its audience

86 For the anthropological and social significance of the unity of opposites as ritual symbols, see Bourdieu, 'Le sens pratique', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 2.1 (Feb. 1976), pp. 69, 70.

87 In a narrow sartorial sense, the term 'cross-dressing' cannot be applied to the twin brother; however, his feminine performance and his likeness to his cross-dressed twin sister, all considered within the context of the cross-dressing rituals of Sienese young males considered above, allow me to use the term loosely to describe both Lelia and Fabrizio.

88 Don Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), p. 66.

89 Handelman, 'Traps of Trans-formation'.

through *Gl'Ingannati*'s playful handling of two cultural symbols that cannot be clearly differentiated and that fashion, in Renaissance culture, a contradictory field of similarities and oppositions, namely the hermaphrodite and the androgyne.[90] Visually, this enigma is represented by the *potta da Modena*, a visual sign that remains part of the stage scenery and thus before the eyes of the audience from the beginning to the end of the play, but that changes its meaning as the scenes progress. Apotropaic drollery of the medieval cathedral, the Modenese hermaphrodite is used by the Sienese authors as a symbol of youthful non-differentiated sexual identity that is enacted through cross-dressing performance in the liminal phase of the play. This enigmatic figure represents a 'trap of trans-formation' for a young man, menacing him with the threat of regression should he fail to solve the riddle. The riddle's solution, of course, is found at the end in the harmoniously married couples that evoke a non-transgressive instantiation of the androgyne as a Renaissance symbol of Christian marriage.[91] The discrepancy between the gravity of the religious building and its medieval drollery disappears in the eyes of the Renaissance audience in the moment when the transformation of deviation into norm and non-differentiated masculine/feminine identity into married couple is achieved in the play. It is this heterosexual and normative conclusion that allows the transformation of the monstrous hermaphrodite (which fulfilled an apotropaic function) into the divine androgyne that is represented precisely on the church where the Christian marriages take place.

4 Epilogue

In its association with the playful enigmatic emblem of the Accademia degli Intronati, *Gl'Ingannati* has an important self-referential dimension for academy members—in other words, the phallic revelation on stage has a particular

90 For the relation between these mythical images, beginning with their ancient origins to their transformations in Renaissance culture, see Marian Rothstein, 'Mutations of the Androgyne: Its Functions in Early Modern French Literature', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 34.2 (2003), pp. 409–37; Kathleen P. Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe: Women and Gender in the Early Modern World* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006); Sophie Comarmond, 'Le mythe de l'hermaphrodite dans la Renaissance', in *Métamorphoses du mythe: Réécritures anciennes et modernes des mythes antiques*, ed. by Peter Schnyder (Paris: Orizons, L'Harmattan, 2008), pp. 304–05.

91 For hermaphroditic and androgynous imaginings in the comedy that represent one of the major literary sources of *Gl'Ingannati*, see the chapter 'Androgynous Doubling and Hermaphroditic Anxieties: Bibbiena's Calandria', in Finucci, pp. 189–223.

meaning for the group of young performers who enact it. While, in the prologue, the actors present the comedy as a riddle that was drawn from their academic pumpkin, in the *dénouement* they define the triumphant phallus in the comedy's action as a *pestaglio* in playful reference to the second masculine element of their emblem. Asking women, during the prologue, to verify whether the Intronati's phallic pestles are big or small, they are revealed in all their magnitude, in the *dénouement*, in the concave mirror of a woman's eye. Through the dramatic enactment of their collective emblem (on which phallic pestles dominate the feminine symbol of the pumpkin), the Intronati thus appear, at the end of the play, as a dominant community of young men, confirming through women's eyes their masculine value. The receptiveness of women's eyes—which are modelled by the Intronati in their prologues, through numerous sexual allusions, as analogous to the vagina—is a necessary condition of the social visibility that the Intronati attempt to obtain in Siena by means of their carnivalesque performances. This liminal group of young Sienese *litterati* that is obliged to declare in institutional texts their detachment from a world ruled by fathers, projects itself into this same world on festive occasions, parading—through the public performance of the comedy—the power of their youthful academic pestles in a central locus for civic life in Siena: the Palazzo Comunale. Academic pestles thus coincide in this performative moment with the magnificent phallic tower (La Torre del Mangia) of the Palazzo Comunale that dominates the city's *piazza* to this day.

The epilogue of the play, however, shows us that the young Intronati do not really hope to occupy the central and dominant public position in Siena, which is, of course, reserved to the powerful adult men who rule the city. Let us then examine, in conclusion, where the epilogue sends the actors after the comedy is over, and whom they invite to follow them.

Not only the church decorated with the *potta da Modena* but also the two symbolic inns displaying the opposition between folly and wisdom remain on stage as part of the scenery until the end of the play.[92] From a multitude of Renaissance comedies, we know the commonplace of inviting the audience to celebrate the concluding marriage(s) with the characters in the epilogue. Can we be sure that in this play all the male and female 'figures' involved in the theatrical performance—actors, characters, and audience—are united to celebrate the social wisdom of marriage in lo Specchio, the inn that reflects back to society its own normative representation? Since the space of il Matto is enacted in only one scene of the play—and decidedly not in the final scene—we can affirm this for the characters. The metaleptic discourse of the epilogue

92 See Andrews, '*Gl'Ingannati* as a Text for Performance', p. 34.

FIGURE 5 *Palazzo Comunale, Siena. Myrabella, CC BY-SA 3.0.*

shows us, however, that the fools' play is not finished. Instead, it is transferred from the *favola* of the comedy to the space of direct interaction between actors and audience.

The epilogue is spoken by the fool Stragualcia, who appears here as the actors' representative. In the name of the Intronati, he announces that the academicians are leaving the Palazzo Comunale and going for dinner at il Matto, the Inn of the Fool, and he invites the *spettatori* to join them: 'Spectators, [. . .] if you want to come to dinner with us, I'll be waiting for you at the Joker [il Matto]. And bring along some money, because no one's treating. But if you don't want to come—and it looks to me like that's the case—be happy and enjoy yourselves. And you members of the Intronati, how about some applause?' ('Spettatori, [. . .]. Se volete venire a cena con esso noi, v'aspetto al Matto. E portate denari, perché non v'è chi espedisca *gratis*. Ma se non volete venire (che mi par di no), restativi e godete. E voi, Intronati, fate segno d'allegrezza', p. 248).

According to Giannetti's feminist reading of *Gl'Ingannati*, the Intronati invite the ladies of the audience, associating them with the enterprising Lelia, to

enjoy 'their liberating ludi at the Matto'.[93] For purely grammatical reasons, the apostrophe *spettatori* cannot be applied only to women. It could, theoretically, include men and women, but such a reading would contradict the Intronati's consequent rhetorical practice of gendering the audience and addressing female audience members with the ritualised and emphatic apostrophe *nobilissime donne*. Besides these grammatical and rhetorical arguments against the association of *donne* with *spettatori*, we must also take into consideration that the kind of sociability associated with the image of the inn is incompatible with the noble ladies who formed the female part of the audience. Giannetti, who does not miss this point, insists nevertheless that the invitation to the inn (an invitation that, in my opinion, could only have offended noblewomen) should be understood as a philogynous statement indicative of the Intronati's striving to include women in their circle. I would argue, instead, that the inn is constructed in the play not as an imaginary field of feminine emancipation but as a traditional urban space of masculine sociability. Let us recall that, among the myriad visitors to both inns, the Intronati do not mention even one woman. The epilogue confirms this masculine configuration of the inn, presenting it as an egalitarian space where no one has a privileged position but all contribute to expenses—in other words, a space of male friendship incompatible with the Intronati's courtly attitude towards noblewomen. Departing from this social construction of the inn, il Matto is elaborated, in the epilogue, as a symbolic construction with two different meanings, both of which are evident in the plot via the device of sending to the inn both a deviant adult man and an innocent young boy. These meanings arise from the dialectics of carnivalesque laughter and from the double ritual function of the figure of the fool.

By forming fools' societies, unmarried male youths united under the positive sign of folly that corresponds to the laughter of inclusion and to carnivalesque enjoyment. Il Matto therefore appears in the epilogue first as a utopian space for foolish youth, where the Intronati retire as young men who don't yet belong to the seriousness of the adult world of marriage—a world to which they have brought their characters, thus fulfilling their traditional mission as a youth society that not only enjoys the pleasures of juvenescence but also reveals the right path to its young members. Among the *spettatori* who are invited to join the actors, we must include adolescents and young unmarried men from the audience who identify themselves with young Fabrizio as he appears at the beginning of the play when he enters the Matto—potential members of

93 Giannetti, 'On the Deceptions', p. 68.

their fools' company, a company that is here constructed via the carnivalesque laughter of inclusion.

By suggesting that their invitation to il Matto might not be accepted, the Intronati confront their male audience with the negative side of Folly that fools' societies ritually enact in their charivaris (putting fool's caps and other signs of reproach on the heads of deviant adult men) and that appears in the comedy when the sodomite chooses to enter il Matto. In its second symbolic meaning, il Matto is thus modelled as a satirical space of deviance to which the Intronati 'invite' their potential victims: adult male audience members whose virility and morals might be endangered for whatever reason and who become objects of the laughter of exclusion.

We might thus consider the ambiguous invitation to il Matto by the young playwright-actor-fools as a concluding riddle addressed to male audience members in order to test their social vision and to teach them to recognise the important distinction between the licensed foolishness of youth and the condemnable folly of adult members of sixteenth-century Sienese society.

CHAPTER 3

The Accademia degli Alterati and the Invention of a New Form of Dramatic Experience: Myth, Allegory, and Theory in Jacopo Peri's and Ottavio Rinuccini's *Euridice* (1600)*

Déborah Blocker

On the evening of 6 October 1600, as part of the week-long festivities celebrating the wedding by proxy of Maria de' Medici and Henry IV of France, a new type of *divertimento* was staged inside the Pitti Palace in Florence. The performance was given in the apartments of Don Antonio de' Medici (1576–1621) for the enjoyment of the official wedding guests of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici (1549–1609), as well as a small number of Florentine courtiers. The piece was a poetic text set to music, staging a happy-ended version of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice in *stile recitativo*. It bore the title *Euridice* and is often considered today to have constituted the first courtly opera. The performance also included an element that is usually absent from most modern operas: it was enhanced by ballets, sometimes involving the whole cast, as during the finale.[1] *Euridice*'s libretto had been composed by the poet Ottavio Rinuccini (1562–1621), while the music was a creation of Jacopo Peri (1561–1633), both artists having worked in close collaboration with their patron, the Florentine merchant and music lover Jacopo Corsi (1561–1602). Corsi had financed and organised most of the court performance and went so far as to play the harpsichord to support the efforts of his *protégés* during the event. These men were not only tied by bonds of patronage and friendship; they were also tightly

* I am very grateful to Tim Carter for his thorough comments on one of the last drafts of this essay. I also thank Anne Piéjus for her detailed remarks on the initial conference paper.

1 Tim Carter, 'Epyllia and Epithalamia: Some Narratives Frames for Early Opera', forthcoming, p. 17, also underscores that the performance was followed by two hours of communal court dancing. See Angelo Solerti, *Musica, ballo e drammatica alla corte Medicea dal 1600 al 1637; notizie tratte da un diario, con appendice di testi inediti e rari* (Florence: R. Bemporad & Figlio, 1905), p. 25, n. 1, where the Ambassador of Parma is quoted as having reported that after the performance 'poi si ballò piu di due ore, mesticate la Regina e l'altre principesse con le private, et si fini la festa'.

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connected by their links to one of the major learned societies of late Renaissance Florence, the Accademia degli Alterati (1560–*c.* 1625), whose discussions on the pleasures of art and on the effects of dramatic spectacles may well have been the basis for many of the novelties of *Euridice*.

In what follows, the central aim is to better understand what these three men were trying to accomplish, both at the artistic level and in social and political terms, with the production of this new type of dramatic experience at the Florentine court. The study begins by documenting the particular circumstances in which the work was originally produced in order to support the subsequent investigation of two main lines of inquiry. The first of these is the question of what types of pleasure(s) this spectacle attempted to generate as well as that of what forms of both sensual and spiritual experience the *divertimento*'s creators sought to make accessible to their audience. Because *Euridice* proposes nothing less than a self-reflexive representation of the types of experience it strives, as a performance, to offer, these questions can be elucidated by studying how the primary features of the spectacle created by Rinuccini, Peri, and Corsi were exhibited, in an allegorical mode, within the work itself. Once the nature of the new artistic experience being experimented with in *Euridice* is defined, it becomes possible to ask a second question, which is equally central to the work's allegorical plot: what is the place of the pleasures generated by art in a well-ordered polity? Because of the particular circumstances of *Euridice*'s performance, this question is, more specifically, how the spiritual pleasures of art's materiality can be both produced and enjoyed in the context of an authoritarian regime, such as that of the Medici. The responses *Euridice* ventures to these two sets of questions shed new light on our historical understanding of Renaissance drama and poetics alike—showing how, in specific circumstances, reflections on the pleasures of art could reflexively constitute the core of a dramaturgical production as well as how, within court culture itself, forms of autonomy were experimented with and even asserted within such productions, despite the constraints the patronage system is sometimes believed to have imposed upon artists.

1 Was *Euridice* the Covert Dramaturgical Manifesto of a Nonconformist Academy?

Peri's and Rinuccini's *Euridice* has recently received quite a bit of scholarly attention,[2] but many of the most central elements in the history of its creation

2 Angelo Solerti, *Gli Arbori del Melodramma*, 3 vols (Milan: R. Sandron, 1904), II (on Ottavio Rinuccini), pp. 105–42 offers the first modern printing of the libretto. Claude Palisca's work

remain unclear. Particularly puzzling is the fact that the work, despite having been staged as part of the festivities celebrating Maria de' Medici's wedding, seems to contain very little explicit praise of the Medici. One of the work's most recent interpreters, music historian Gaspare De Caro, suggests that although it may not directly eulogise the Medici, the opera does celebrate Florence's new alliance with France, which the Florentine patriciate had enthusiastically welcomed. He also brings to light a historical element that had hitherto been neglected, by strongly emphasising Rinuccini's and his patron Corsi's ties to the Accademia degli Alterati, whose attitude towards the Medici regime was frequently ambivalent.[3] However, because no full-length study currently exists on the Alterati,[4] whose activities were so secretive that very few of their writings

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was instrumental in bringing to light the context in which the work was first performed, in particular in his 'The First Performance of *Euridice*', originally published in *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Festschrift*, ed. by Albert Mell (New York: Queens College Press, 1964), pp. 1–24, and republished in his *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 432–51. (Page references to this essay are to the 1964 original publication.) Tim Carter, 'Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* (1600): A Contextual Study', *The Musical Review*, 43 (1982), pp. 83–103, proposes a contextual analysis of the creation of *Euridice* which highlights the intense artistic rivalries of which this work was a product; reprinted in Tim Carter, *Music, Patronage and Printing in Late Renaissance Florence* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), part III. Bojan Bujic, '*Figura Poetica Molto Vaga*: Structure and Meaning in Rinuccini's *Euridice*', *Early Music History*, 10 (1991), pp. 29–64, prefers to understand this opera as an allegorical representation of Florence's success in renewing its alliance with the French crown. *La Naissance de l'opéra: Euridice, 1600–2000*, ed. by Françoise Decroisette, Françoise Graziani, and Joël Heuillon (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), focuses on *Euridice*'s contributions to the development of modern musical spectacle via a post-humanist reworking of the tragic model inherited from Greek antiquity. Kelley Harness, 'Le tre Euridici: Characterization and Allegory in the *Euridici* of Peri and Caccini', *Journal of Seventeenth Century Music*, 9.1 (2003): <http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v9/no1/harness.html>, concedes that *Euridice* 'did not follow the traditional path of encomiastic spectacle', making no 'direct references to the bridal couple' and offering no explicit praise of Ferdinando; she nonetheless persists in reading the opera as an allegory of Medici power (§7.1 to 7.5).

3 Gaspare De Caro, *Momenti dell'umanesimo civile fiorentino* (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2006), pp. 117–84.

4 Scholarship on this institution remains scattered. See in particular Bernard Weinberg, 'The Accademia degli Alterati and Literary Taste from 1570 to 1600', *Italica*, 31.4 (1954), pp. 207–14, and 'Argomenti di discussione letteraria nell'Accademia degli Alterati (1570–1600)', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 131 (1954), pp. 175–94; Claude Palisca, 'The Alterati of Florence: Pioneers in the Theory of Dramatic Music' (1968), in *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 408–31; Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 93–161; Michel Plaisance, *L'Accademia e il suo Principe: cultura e politica a Firenze al tempo di Cosimo I e di Francesco de' Medici. L'Académie et le Prince: culture et politique à Florence au*

made it into print during the lifetime of the institution, De Caro's book falls short of uncovering just how closely related the plot of *Euridice* might have been to many of the central interests and theories of the academy's members. This essay picks up where De Caro left off, with the aim of providing a carefully historicised framework within which the stakes of *Euridice*'s allegorical discourse can be exposed.

1.1 *Corsi, Peri, and Rinuccini: Providers of a New Type of Court Spectacle*

It has long been established that the driving force behind the staging of *Euridice* during the celebration of Maria de' Medici's elevation to the throne of France was the very same man whose money and social connections had made the prestigious alliance possible in the first place, namely the powerful Florentine merchant and patron Jacopo Corsi.[5] Corsi came from a family that had had ties to anti-Medici factions during the fall of the Florentine Republic. His forefathers had, at one time, been in a rather mediocre financial situation. By the end of the sixteenth century, however, they were among the wealthiest merchant families in town. Corsi's wealth put him in a position to play a major role in the diplomatic negotiations which led to the marriage of Maria de' Medici. Indeed, it was he who rallied the Florentine *nobiltà* around Ferdinando's marriage project, convincing his peers to help finance the enormous dowry Henry was demanding, and presumably himself volunteering a large sum to make the wedding possible.[6] Once the marriage had been agreed to, Corsi

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temps de Côme Ier et de François de Medicis (Manziana, Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2004), pp. 363–404; Anna Siekiera, 'Il volgare nell'Accademia degli Alterati', in *Italia linguistica: discorsi di scritto e di parlato: nuovi studi di linguistica italiana per Giovanni Nencioni*, ed. by Marco Bifi, Omar Calabrese, and Luciana Salibra (Siena: Protagon, 2005), pp. 87–112; and Henk Th. van Veen, 'The Accademia degli Alterati and Civic Virtue', in *The Reach of the Republic of Letters: Literary and Learned Societies in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Arian Van Dixhoorn and Susie Speakman Sutch, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2008), II, pp. 285–308.

5 On Jacopo Corsi, see in particular Tim Carter, 'Music and Patronage in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence: The Case of Jacopo Corsi (1561–1602)', *I Tatti Studies in the Renaissance*, 1 (1985), pp. 57–104 (reprinted in Carter, *Music, Patronage and Printing in Late Renaissance Florence*, part VII). See also Paolo Malanima's article in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, or *DBI* (vol. XXIX, 1983): <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/iacopo-corsi_res-5512502d-87eb-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)>.

6 The source most often cited is Jacopo Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana sotto il Governo della Casa Medici* (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1781), V, p. 321: 'informato delle pendenti contestazioni sulla quantità della dote, ebbe il coraggio di supplicare il Gran Duca a nome dei suoi concittadini di desistere dalle opposizioni e offerire le ricchezze di ciascheduno per contribuire alla dote richiesta.' Archival sources probably exist but do not seem to have yet been brought to light.

continued to display his support for the Medici's hard-won new alliance by financing a large share of the staging of *Euridice* during the celebrations. The official *descrizione* of the festivities underscores this fact, portraying *Euridice* as the sumptuous gift of a private nobleman to the newlyweds.[7] Archival research has however shown that the court provided some of the musicians and part of the scenery.[8] It is nonetheless clear that not only did Corsi fund the performance in a substantial way, in particular with regard to the costly costumes: he also coordinated its creation and production. One could therefore compare his role in the celebrations to that of the *chorêgos* in ancient Athens—that is of the wealthy citizen who assumed the public duty of financing the preparation for the chorus and other aspects of a dramatic production that were not paid for by the government of the *polis*. As such, it would have been uncivil and even inhospitable for the Medici household not to assist him financially and even artistically: they needed to show their munificence in this association, as they would have in any other court activity. But Corsi was clearly given the high hand on the form and contents of the performance, which was thought of and advertised as his *private* contribution, and not treated on par with those parts of the celebrations which were funded exclusively on court funds and

7 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Descrizione delle fellicissime nozze della cristianissima maestà di madama Maria Medici regina di Francia e di Navarra* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1600), [p. 22]: 'Il perche appresso le nozze in tutti quei giorni, che precederono alla partenza del Legato, e della Regina, vari trattenimenti si tennero, e della corte non solamente. Ma mentre che i più magnanimi spettacoli si andavano apprestando: per maggiore contentezza, e più universale mostrarsi, eziamdio de i nobili, e suntuosi da' particulari, e magnanimi gentilhuomini ne furono ordonati. La onde avendo il Signor Jacopo Corsi fatta mettere in musica con grande studio la Euridice affetuosa, e gentilissima favola del Signor Ottavio Rinuccini, e per li personnagi, richissimi, e belli vestimenti apprestati; offertala a loro Altezze; fu ricevuta, e preparatale nobile scena nel Palazzo Pitti: e la sera seguente a quelle delle reali nozze rappresentata.'

8 Richard A. Goldthwaite and Tim Carter, *Orpheus in the Marketplace: Jacopo Peri and the Economy of Late Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 112, stress that Ferdinando de Medici assisted generously with the performance: 'Yet, in the case of *Euridice*, despite Buonarroti's emphasis on Corsi as its provider, it is now clear that the court was significantly involved in the production and therefore in some sense supported Corsi's intentions for it. Not only did the court allow the participation of its singers, and those invited from the outside [. . .]; it also contributed by way of the grand-ducal Guardaroba (the Wardrobe), which among other things paid for the scenery designed by the Florentine artist Lodovico Cardi-Cigoli.' Tim Carter was also able to document at least some of Corsi's contribution to the costumes: see Tim Carter, *Jacopo Peri, 1561–1633: His Life and Works*, 2 vols (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), I, p. 43, n. 114.

placed under the direction of Ferdinando's superintendant of the arts, Emilio de' Cavalieri (1550–1602).

As a consequence, though the opera was part of the official series of wedding festivities, its function within them remained to a certain extent marginal. In particular, *Euridice* had a much more restricted audience than Giulio Caccini's *Il Rapiamento di Cefalo*, which was paid for in full by Ferdinando and was scheduled as the central *divertimento* of the series.[9] This hierarchy was materialised by the venues attributed to each spectacle: *Euridice* was performed in a reception room of Don Antonio de' Medici's apartments in the Pitti Palace,[10] while the *Rapiamento* was staged in the Uffizi theatre, the court's formal playhouse.[11] Don Antonio was the son of Francesco I de' Medici (1541–1587) and his mistress (and soon to be wife) Bianca Cappello (1548–1587). He had been legitimised and could possibly have become Grand Duke after the death of his father, had Ferdinando not managed to impose himself as Francesco's legitimate successor. Don Antonio's position at court was in many ways a marginal one[12] and the choice of his apartments to stage *Euridice* suggests that, at Ferdinando's court, Peri, Rinuccini, and Corsi were somewhat eccentric themselves. Had they not been, they might have been allotted a more central venue with more decorum. It is possible that, given Corsi's pivotal role in finding the funds necessary to finalise the wedding arrangements, the Medici could not have turned down his gift of a performance: in exchange for his financial support, this patron of the arts may therefore have been given the opportunity to introduce the music he favoured into the Medici court—on the condition that it not occupy centre stage.

Peri and Rinuccini had been under Corsi's patronage for several years when *Euridice* was conceived. Rinuccini came from a wealthy and powerful patrician family that had long opposed the Medici's rise to prominence. His career as court poet and librettist was launched in 1589, when he was called upon to write several of the *intermedi* of *La Pellegrina*, the splendid spectacle performed in celebration of the marriage of Ferdinando with Christina of

9 Unlike *Euridice*, the music of *Il Rapiamento di Cefalo* is mostly lost. See Tim Carter, 'Rediscovering the *Rapiamento di Cefalo*', *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music*, 9.1 (2003), available at <http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v9/no1/carter.html>.

10 The rooms assigned to Don Antonio were in the southern wing of the second floor of the Pitti Palace. His apartment was adjacent to what later became known as the Salone delle Commedie (a large chamber housing the Grooms' Chamber, the small Ballroom, and the Music Room), in which *Euridice* was most probably staged.

11 Claude Palisca, 'The First Performance of *Euridice*', p. 4.

12 Filippo Luti, *Don Antonio de' Medici e i suoi tempi* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2006).

Lorraine (1565–1637).[13] Peri came from a less prestigious family but could claim to be a *nobile fiorentino* by birth.[14] He had worked as a musician since his earliest years, mainly as a composer and singer of devotional music.[15] It is only from 1588 that we find him mentioned in Ferdinando's household records as a court musician.[16] His first noted appearance as a singer in a court *divertimento* was during the performance of *La Pellegrina*, where Peri—known as Il Zazzerino when performing—sung the role of the dithyramb Arion, an incarnation of the power of poetry and music, and a prefiguration of Peri's triumph as Orfeo in *Euridice.*

Euridice was conceived of and performed at a moment where rivalries amongst musicians and performers at Ferdinando's court were at their height. The central issue was the Roman Emilio de' Cavalieri's domination over the production of court festivities. Cavalieri's prior experience had primarily involved the production of devotional music for the Roman Oratory. After following Ferdinando to Florence in 1588, Cavalieri became the superintendent of artists, craftsmen, and musicians at court.[17] As such, he organised the 1589 festivities and was also the overseer of the annual carnival productions. By 1600, however, Cavalieri's position was threatened by a number of rivals—in particular Giulio Caccini (1551–1618), another musician of Roman origin, who had regularly laboured for the Medici since the mid-1560s. Caccini was fired from the court musicians in 1593 (because of a dispute with Antonio Salviati) and used the 1600 festivities to get back into service. During these celebrations, he seems to have attained both his reintegration and Cavalieri's departure, which he achieved not only by intervening heavily in the staging, singing, and even

13 On this production and on Peri's and Rinuccini's participation in it, see Nina Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court: The 1589 Interludes for 'La Pellegrina'* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 157–58, 209–14.

14 On Peri, see Tim Carter, 'Jacopo Peri', *Music & Letters*, 61 (1980), pp. 121–35, reprinted in Carter, *Music, Patronage and Printing in Late Renaissance Florence*, part II; Carter, *Jacopo Peri, 1561–1633*; and Goldthwaite and Carter, *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, in particular pp. 2–10, which contain a survey of the historiography on Peri.

15 At court, Emilio de' Cavalieri attempted more than once to reduce Peri to the status of singer and writer of devotional music: see Goldthwaite and Carter, *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, p. 257.

16 However, Peri is found associated with the court and the Medici princesses as early as 1583 (under Francesco I), as an occasional musician, paid from the private funds of various members of the ruling family.

17 See Warren Kirkendale, *Emilio de' Cavalieri 'Gentilhuomo Romano': His Life and Letters, His Role as Superintendent of All the Arts at the Medici Court and his Musical Compositions* (Florence: Leo Olschki, 2001), pp. 85–120.

musical composition of *Euridice*,[18] but also by manoeuvring to be entrusted with the writing and production of the high point of the week-long festivities, *Il Rapiamento di Cefalo*. Although he oversaw the stage production of *Euridice*, Cavalieri saw little of his own music performed during the 1600 festivities.[19] His gradual eviction (or, possibly, retirement) from the Medici court did not, however, prevent him from almost simultaneously triumphing on another stage. Indeed, his devotional oratorio *Rappresentatione di Anima e di Corpo*, performed a few months earlier in the Roman Oratory, was extremely well received, and the music of this innovative piece had already started to circulate in print by the time *Euridice* was staged in celebration of Maria's wedding.[20]

1.2 *The Accademia degli Alterati: From Counterculture to Court*

These rivalries among the musicians and patrons operating at Ferdinando's court are well known. But the role played by the Accademia degli Alterati in the conception of *Euridice* has hitherto received little attention, though the intellectual importance of the academy has long been recognised. The group was created in 1569.[21] At first, their informal gatherings brought together only a handful of Florentine patricians.[22] Many of these men belonged to lineages

18 As a result of this rivalry, Caccini chose his own singers for the first performance of *Euridice* and even rewrote some of Peri's music for them: see Palisca, 'The First Performance of *Euridice*', pp. 11–13, 17–18. The competition between the two composers also resulted in the publication of a separate score for the work by Caccini, *L'Euridice composta in musica in stile rappresentatiuo da Giulio Caccini detto Romano* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1600). This score was performed in the Pitti Palace on 2 December 1605.

19 It seems that Cavalieri restricted himself to composing music to accompany a dialogue in praise of the newlywed which was written by Giovanni Battista Guarini. The work was performed on the first evening of the festivities: see Palisca, 'The First Performance of *Euridice*', p. 2.

20 Cavalieri's work was published at the beginning of fall 1600: see *Rappresentatione di Anima et di Corpo, nuovamente posta in musica dal Signor Emilio del Cavaliere, per recitar cantando, dato in luce da Alessandro Guidotti Bolognese* (Rome: Niolò Mutii, 1600), reproduced in facsimile in *'Rappresentatione di Anima et di Corpo', reproduzione dell'unica edizione romana del 1600 a cura di Francesco Mantica, preceduta si un saggio di Domenico Alaleona* (Rome: Casa Editrice Claudio Monteverdi, 1912). The book was originally dedicated to Cardinal Aldobrandino, and the dedication, signed by Guidotti, is dated 3 September 1600.

21 The creators of the sodality appear to have been Giulio del Bene and Tommaso del Nero. For Giulio del Bene's rendering of the academy's origins, see his *Historia del principio della Accademia*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Fondo Rossianio, 901, fols 1^{r}–6^{v}.

22 These included Vincenzo Acciaiuoli, Antonio degli Albizzi, Alessandro Canigiani, Renato de' Pazzi, and Lorenzo Corbinelli.

with a more or less pronounced anti-Medicean past. The coming to power of the Medici in 1537 had marginalised their families, who were left with diminished access to what remained of Florence's civic life. With little else to do but take care of their investments and tend to their villas—which they generally did diligently—their male offspring turned to intellectual activity. Yet, in doing so, they were not seeking to retire from public life. Rather, in search of reputation and prestige, they intended their academic activities to provide them with an alternate path to civic recognition, if not with targeted access to the Medici's entourage. As such, the academy was both the locus of an intellectual counter-culture and an institution designed to help its members find an acceptable place for themselves within the Medici court.[23]

This is no doubt why the group's institutional practices, as first set forth it its *capitoli* (statutes) made it the most secretive academy in Florence—in sharp contrast with the by-then mostly Medicean Accademia Fiorentina, whose public lessons were circulated widely in elegant books produced by Cosimo's official printer, Lorenzo Torrentino.[24] The Alterati, on the other hand, far from publicising their gatherings, constantly attempted to hide their activities from everyone who was not part of the small circle of like-minded people they trusted. According to the academy's statutes, no *forestiero* (i.e., stranger to the academy) was allowed to attend its sessions; new members were only admitted with a unanimous vote of all academicians in their favour (and even those who were absent had to cast their vote in writing); and the circulation or publication of manuscript work produced in the academy without the explicit consent of the regent was strictly forbidden.[25] This is not to say that the Alterati

23 For further analysis of the political positioning of the academy, see Déborah Blocker, 'Pro *and* anti-Medici? Political Ambivalence and Social Integration in the *Accademia degli Alterati* (Florence, 1569–ca. 1625)', in *The Italian Academies 1525–1700: Networks of Culture, Innovation and Dissent*, ed. by Jane Everson, Lisa Sampson, and Denis Reidy (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 38–52.

24 On the practices of the *Humidi* and the public and private lessons within the Accademia Fiorentina, see Plaisance, *L'Accademia e il suo Principe*, pp. 113–16, 271–80, as well as Massimo Firpo, *Gli Affreschi di Pontormo a San Lorenzo: eresia, politica e cultura nella Firenze di Cosimo I* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1997), pp. 155–290. The partially public meetings of la *Fiorentina* were circulated in print ex post via the printing of scores of academic orations in the workshop of Lorenzo Torrentino: see Antonio Ricci, 'Lorenzo Torrentino and the Cultural Programme of Cosimo I de' Medici', in *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*, ed. by Konrad Eisenbichler (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), pp. 103–20.

25 Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (hereafter BNCF), Magl. IX, 134, fols 8^{r}, 9^{r}, 12^{v}, and 15^{r}. The academy's *atti* (preserved as Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (hereafter BML)

are to be viewed as active conspirators of any kind. Evidently, their institution could not have existed without tacit Medici approval. Yet it did not function as the regime's public academy—that is, as a carefully calibrated display of Florentine literary and philosophical talent—but rather as a private locus (*accademia privata*), in which it was possible to speak and write somewhat more freely, away from the tight constraints of ideologically-minded scrutiny. The Medici initially tolerated such a group because it was a way to keep a portion of the city's patrician elites occupied without giving it full access to the political positions that the ruling family reserved for those they trusted.

Among the Alterati, secrecy and nostalgic republicanism were mostly an ethos: the academy's procedures for keeping its activities private were real and, for the most part, effective, but on the whole the institution had little to hide, except for the fact that its members cultivated, both intellectually and in practice, a distant memory of the Florentine Republic, as well as non-conformist views on art, knowledge and politics. To a certain extent, these strategies of secrecy, associated with the cultivation of republican *mores* and values (such as equality, honesty, or humanism), were strategies of distinction, and can be viewed as a form of elitism in as much as they delineated not only a restricted form of intellectual sociability, but also the frontiers of a class (the Florentine patriciate). Yet these very practices did—albeit in a burlesque manner, at times—take loosely after the secretive manners of anti-Medicean activism, though such a reenactment was, by the last third of the 16th century, more folkloric than anything else.

The academy's daily occupations are a good example of how its members cultivated the memory of republican *mores* in practice. These activities, which only members could attend, centred on the production of judgments and the voicing of opinions, whether in prepared contradictory debates, in improvised confrontations or in the careful evaluation and editing of the productions of other members of the institution. Furthermore, they were carried out collectively, with the orator—often selected at random—having to convince his peers of the validity of his judgments or evaluations in elaborate academic orations. Thus, the ritualized academic exchanges of the Alterati were in many ways similar to the established practices of Florence's late oligarchical regime, in which *pro et contra* debates on policy issues, the drawing of speakers and officeholders through lots, and the public evaluation and censorship of policies (as well as of those that carried them out) were all central elements of the political culture. In the secluded space of the academy, the expounding

Ashb. 558.1 and 2) show that these rules were fairly strictly enforced: infractions were often sanctioned, for instance, if in a burlesque mode.

of judgments and the voicing of evaluations on issues of art and learning prolonged, in the private sphere, the practices of public speech that characterised Florence's republican regime, transferring them to a newly established sphere of activity (aesthetics and, to a lesser extent, erudition) which—though certainly not without far-reaching political stakes—could, when needed, be passed off as politically innocuous.

The Alterati did not, however, only keep to themselves. They also engaged in activities that put them directly in contact with the Medici court, thereby using their academy not only as a place to interact among themselves, but also as a means to gain access to the political elites. In this respect, participating in the organisation of court festivities served the academy's contradictory goals extremely well, offering them an outlet for their erudition and creativity while also providing them with occasions to court the Medici. The academy was therefore frequently involved in preparing court festivities after the death of Francesco I in 1587[26]—though, after the arrival of Cavalieri and the subsequent departure to Rome of two of its most central members, Giovan Battista Strozzi and Giovanni de' Bardi, the Alterati's influence on court spectacles dwindled.[27] However, during the celebrations of 1600, with Cavalieri's power in decline, many members of the academy were once again involved in the preparations. They were particularly active, in fact, in the creation of *Euridice*, and many of the aesthetic and ethical questions raised in the work can be traced back to their collective endeavours.

Ottavio Rinuccini was a recent member of the academy, in which his elder brother Alessandro (1555–1622) had been an active participant since 1573. Ottavio was formally accepted in 1586.[28] The academy's diary shows that the

26 Giovan Battista Strozzi and Giovanni de' Bardi were the two Alterati members who were most involved in such events. They worked in particular on the fourth *intermedio* of *La Pellegrina*: see Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court*, pp. 113–34.

27 Bardi was in Rome from 1592 to 1605. Giovan Battista Strozzi left Florence in 1590 and seems to have returned in 1599.

28 See the academy *atti* in BML Ashb. 558.1, fols 49^{v} and 50^{r}, in which Alessandro Rinuccini is introduced into the academy, taking on the pseudonym l'Ardito, on 3 December 1573. Alessandro Rinuccini, who was, among other things, an accomplished scholar of both Latin and Greek, was subsequently elected three times to the regency of the Alterati, becoming the sixteenth, twenty-seventh, and forty-second regent. See BNCF Magl. IX, 134, fol. 1^{v}. He is also the author of a Latin poem on Saint Catherine, *Diua Catharina martyr Alexandri Rinuccinii ad serenissimum Cosmum secundum magnum ducem Etruriae quartum* (Florence: Cosimo Giunti, 1613). On l'Ardito, see Salvino Salvini, *Fasti consolari dell'Accademia Fiorentina* (Florence: Giovanni Gaetano Tartini, e Santi Franchi, 1717), pp. 326–29. Like several other Alterati members, Alessandro Rinuccini later occupied

poet was in diligent attendance at its meetings in the late 1580s, throughout the 1590s, and in the early 1600s.[29] Indeed, the posthumous edition of Rinuccini's *Poesie*, prepared in 1621 by his son Pier Francesco, clearly acknowledges his intellectual debt to the institution.[30]

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administrative positions at court. He was *depositario generale* from 1612 to 1621; several hundred of the official letters he wrote while in this position are preserved in Archivio di Stato di Firenze (hereafter ASF), Miscelleanea Medicea 136 and 137.

29 Concerning Ottavio Rinuccini's early years in the academy (1587–1590), see BML Ashb. 558.2, fols 60^{v}, 65^{v}, 73$^{r–v}$, 74^{r}, 76$^{r–v}$, 78$^{r–v}$, 79^{v}, 81^{r}, and 85^{r}. He was admitted at the age of twenty-four after being formally presented on 28 March 1586. His formal introduction as a *nuovo academico* took place on 16 April 1587. The statutes of the academy, including a list of its members (BNCF Magl., IX, 134, fol. 2^{r}) reveal his pseudonym, which he seems to have determined only after several years as a member, as he appears earlier in the *atti* as 'Rinuccini'. Immediately preceding the staging of *Euridice*, Rinuccini was frequently present at Alterati meetings, now under the name of il Sonnachioso (BML Ashb. 558.2, fols 102^{v}, 103^{v}, 105$^{r–v}$, 108^{r}). His last recorded appearance at a meeting during that second period was during the General Council of 3 August 1600, two months before the performance of *Euridice*. After Maria's wedding, Rinuccini followed the new queen to France, but a few years later, shortly after his return to Florence, at the General Council held on 31 August 1603, il Sonnachioso is once again listed as present (BML Ashb. 558.2, fol. 121^{r}). He is last mentioned in the *atti* (which have been preserved only through early 1606) on 20 December 1604, in attendance at a lesson on the subjects appropriate to tragedy and epics according to Aristotle's *Poetics* (BML Ashb. 558.2, fol. 127^{v}). On Rinuccini among the Alterati, see also the notations in Palisca, 'The Alterati of Florence', p. 15, and Gary A. Tomlinson, 'Ottavio Rinuccini and the Favola Affettuosa', *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 6 (1975), pp. 2–27 (p. 3). Several codices containing poems by Ottavio Rinuccini, including some in his hand, are preserved in BNCF Palat. 249, 250, and 251; BNCF Magl. VII, 562 and 563 (now listed as BNCF Fondo Nazionale II.IV.17); and BNCF Magl. VII, 907.

30 Ottavio Rinuccini, *Poesie alla Maestà Cristianissima di Luigi XIII, Re di Francia, e di Navarra* (Florence: Giunti, 1622), "Ai Signori Accademici Alterati," no pagination. The Alterati's statutes required that texts produced within the academy by one of its members be published only with the approval of the institution. Accordingly, in the opening pages of this luxurious volume of poems (which contained a reprinting of *Euridice*), Pier Francesco published a letter in which he claimed that if he had not formally requested a formal authorisation to publish his father's complete extant poems, it was only because he felt that the poet's great talents allowed him to dispense with it. By alluding to this rule and by expressing the hope that, at the sight of the volume, the academy would approve retrospectively of his efforts, Pier Francesco was indirectly acknowledging that many of his father's most celebrated works, including *Euridice*, were produced in connection with debates having taken place among the Alterati. Given that the academy was by then clearly in decline, this public acknowledgment is all the more striking.

Corsi also had ties to the Alterati. Like many other Florentine patricians, he actively courted the academy and is mentioned at least twice in its records as a *forestiero* (visitor) whose name was put up for a vote.[31] Corsi, apparently, was never formally admitted,[32] but he did sporadically attend meetings even after his two failed election processes, including one in the months immediately leading up to the production of *Euridice*.[33] His eldest son Giovanni Corsi (1600–1661) was, however, admitted into the institution after 1606.[34]

Like Corsi, the musician and singer Peri was never a member of the Alterati, possibly because he was not considered sufficiently learned to gain entry, but many of the other individuals associated with the wedding celebrations were, such as Giovanni de' Medici (1567–1621), who supervised the decorations as well as the *intermedi* and staging of *Il Rapiamento di Cefalo*.[35] Michelangelo Buonarroti, who wrote the official *relazione* (narrative) of the celebrations, was a regular visitor to the academy, though he too does not seem to ever have been a full member.[36]

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31 BML Ashb. 558.2, fols 65^{v} (Corsi and Rinuccini were candidates together, but only Rinuccini appears to have been fully admitted) and 105^{v}.

32 It is possible that Corsi never obtained the unanimous vote that was required, either because he was not enough of a scholar to convince some of the academy's *letterati* or because, at the time of his candidacies, his links to the Medici were too strong for the taste of at least one member. It is also possible that Corsi himself did not wish to become a full member—which would have demanded an important commitment of time and effort—but preferred instead to remain an unofficial sympathizer.

33 For instance, on 31 January 1599 (1600), nine months before the staging of *Euridice*, Corsi heard a lesson on Virgil's *Aeneid*: see BML Ashb. 558.2, fol. 105^{r}.

34 BNCF Magl. IX, 134, fol. 3^{v}. This election likely took place between 1615 and 1620, when the academy was dwindling and eager to admit young and promising new members. No records are extant after January 1606.

35 Giovanni de' Medici, in particular, was responsible for the *giardino* (garden) and the *giglio* (buffet in the shape of the Florentine fleur-de-lis). He also designed the decorations for the banquet during which a dialogue by Giovan Battista Guarini was performed. See Kirkendale, *Emilio de' Cavalieri*, pp. 368 and 372, as well as Palisca, 'The First Performance of *Euridice*', pp. 2–3. Giovanni was inducted into the academy in February 1587 and was frequently present thereafter: see BML Ashb. 558.2, fols 68$^{r–v}$, 70^{r}, 71^{v}, 73^{r}, 101$^{r–v}$, and 102^{v}. He was particularly close to Giovan Battista Strozzi, who helped him gain admittance into the academy.

36 See BML Ashb. 558.2, fols 103^{r}, 105^{r}, and 129^{v}. Full members were those who had been elected in due process (i.e., within the Alterati, unanimously). Buonarroti never reached that point, according to the *atti*. But he was frequently marked as present as a *forestiero* (visitor to the academy).

1.3 *Pleasure, Utility and the* Poetics *of Aristotle*

Obviously, some of these men participated much more closely in the intellectual labours of the academy than others. Yet since both secrecy and collective discussions were central to the institution's ethos it is sometimes difficult to determine which members were particularly involved in a given debate.[37] We do, however, know with certainty that, throughout the life of the academy, Aristotle's *Poetics* was intensely discussed among its members, who most often approached the original via Piero Vettori's (1499–1585) translation and commentary.[38] Indeed, the Alterati's reading of the *Poetics* adopted several of the key interpretations proposed by this Florentine scholar. Like Vettori, many Alterati stressed that, according to Aristotle, the main goal of tragedy and music should be pleasure, though moral utility was not to be excluded.[39] In particular, they refused to subordinate pleasure to utility, which would have

37 For an in-depth analysis of the academy's collective activities, see Déborah Blocker, 'S'affirmer par le secret: anonymat collectif, institutionnalisation et contre-culture au sein de l'académie des Alterati (Florence, 1569–ca. 1625)', *Littératures classiques*, 80 (2013), pp. 167–90.

38 See Weinberg, 'The Accademia degli Alterati and Literary Taste' and 'Argomenti di discussione letteraria nell'Accademia degli Alterati'. Vettori's translation of and commentary on the *Poetics* was published twice: *Petri Victorii Commentarii in primum librum Aristotelis de Arte poetarum* [...] (Florence: Giunti, 1560 and 1573). While in Pisa in 1573, Giovan Battista Strozzi and Filippo Sassetti annotated together a manuscript copy of Vettori's Latin translation of the *Poetics*, currently preserved as BNCF Magl. VII, 1199 with the added title: *Aristotelis Poetica cum notis Petro Victorio Interprete*. Over the years, other academicians entered their own annotations into this manuscript, turning it into a reference book for their collective internal discussions on the *Poetics*. Finally, in 1617, Strozzi had this manuscript printed by the Giunti without the annotations, with the aim of furnishing younger academicians with a study tool that they could use to work on the glosses penned into BNCF Magl. VII, 1199. The only surviving copy of this limited edition is currently preserved at the BNCF under the title *Aristotelis Poetica Petro Victorio Interprete* (BNCF Magl. 5.9.119). In the Biblioteca Riccardiana (hereafter BR), an unfinished vernacular commentary on the *Poetics* in Sassetti's hand can also be found (BR 1539, fols 80^{r}–126^{v}). It is similarly indebted to Vettori. Finally, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze holds a copy of Vettori's edition of the *Poetics* in Greek, *Aristotelous Peri poiētikēs. Aristotelis De arte poetica. Ad exemplar libri à Petro Victorio correcti* (Florence: Giunti, 1564), with extensive annotations that were probably penned in by a hitherto unidentified member of the academy (BNCF Postillati 39). On the academy's annotations and commentaries on the *Poetics*, see Déborah Blocker, 'Le lettré, ses *pistole* et l'académie: comment faire témoigner les lettres de Filippo Sassetti, *accademico Alterato* (Florence et Pise, 1570–1578)?', *Littératures classiques*, 71 (2010), pp. 31–66 (in particular pp. 57–62).

39 On Vettori's hedonistic poetics, see Donatella Restani, 'Girolamo Mei et l'héritage de la dramaturgie antique dans la culture musicale de la seconde moitié du XVI^{e} siècle', in *La*

been the norm in Florence at the time of Cosimo I.[40] Instead, they claimed that poetry's most central moral benefits stemmed precisely from the very pleasure it provoked.

For instance, a manuscript transcription of Vettori's Latin translation of the *Poetics* (currently preserved as BNCF Magl. VII, 1197), which was collectively annotated over forty years by at least half a dozen Alterati members, discusses Aristotle's claim that in order for tragic poems to produce the pleasure that is specific to them, they must be composed of a single, whole, and complete action (1459a 15–20). On folio 74^{r}, one of the annotators, Filippo Sassetti (1540–1588), who was officially admitted to the Alterati in early February 1574, rephrases this assertion in a way that indicates he is interested in stressing the importance of action in the creation of tragic pleasure, and wants to distinguish this pleasure from issues of morality. To this aim, Sassetti underlines that the pleasure arising from what Aristotle declares to be the appropriate type of tragic action is the pleasure of the play's own beauty, not that which arises from the purgation of the passions.[41] This is a telling interpretation because, since the mid-sixteenth century, the clause in which Aristotle defines tragedy as an action that provokes a type of *catharsis* (1449b 23–29) had played a central role in readings of the *Poetics* that attempted to restrict tragedy's goals to a moral aim, with the notion of 'purgation of the passions' mostly being the result of the interpretations, translations, and commentaries that this interpolated passage gave rise to.[42] In contrast, by stressing the importance of action and the specific beauty it generates, Sassetti appears to be much more interested in defining a poetics of tragedy that is based centrally on pleasure.

Naissance de l'opéra, ed. by Decroisette, Graziani, and Heuillon, pp. 57–96 (in particular pp. 76–94).

40 See Déborah Blocker, 'Dire l'"art" à Florence sous Cosme I de Médicis: une *Poétique* d'Aristote au service du Prince', *AISTHE*, 2.2 (2008), pp. 56–101.

41 BNCF Magl. VII, 1199 (added title: *Aristotelis Poetica cum notis Petro Victorio Interprete*), fol. 74^{v} (annotation in Sassetti's hand): 'Mostra [Aristotile] perchè conto l'attione per esser bella debba havere l'unità con l'esempio delle cose naturali belle, le quali hanno unità e integrità le quali dua cose fanno la bellezza dalla quale nasce il piacere però è da avvertire che egli [Aristotile] intende qui il piacere della sua propria bellezza e non quello che nasce dalla purgatione. Se uno dirà che all'historia ancora fa di mestiere questa bellezza, gli risponderemo esser vero che ell' è una e intera ma non ricerca la bellezza della poesia che consiste in'imitare una verità.'

42 On the place of catharis in Aristotle's text, see Claudio Veloso, 'Aristotle's *Poetics* without Katharsis, Fear, or Pity', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 33 (2007), pp. 255–84. On Renaissance reworkings of this obscure clause, see Blair Hoxby, *What Was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 62.

In a similar way, the Alterati held in high regard the Aristotelian notion of *meraviglia* (wonder) as well as the *stupore* (astonishment) it produces, emphasising that both were key to poetry because they work to create pleasure in the spectator. Even while giving great importance to the seductions of *meraviglia*, however, the Alterati did not exclude the possibility of moral utility emerging from the workings of *stupore*. From this point of view, some of the notations on fols 82^{v} to 84^{r} of their annotated manuscript of Vettori's translation of the *Poetics* are revealing. They show how Sassetti and another annotator, probably his cousin Lorenzo Giacomini (1552–1598),[43] work to distinguish poetical goals from political ones, while also underscoring that *meraviglia* can serve moral ends. Sassetti begins by stressing that, according to Aristotle, poetry and politics concur in that they both aim at making the body politic happy. In response, Giacomini focuses on the importance of pleasure, insisting that tragic poetry must primarily delight its audience by means of the unexpected events it stages. In the conclusion of this exchange, Giacomini adds a note to a remark previously penned in by Sassetti. In this note, he designates wonder (*meraviglia*) as tragedy's main goal precisely because, in delighting the spectators, it generates good habits in them ('la maraviglia è il fine della Poesia, e questa per poter in altrui generar buon costumi'). He also stresses that 'it is not unbefitting that one end [pleasure] concurs with the other [utility]' ('non è inconveniente che un fine riguardi l'altro'), thus agreeing *in fine* with Sassetti.[44]

43 Lorenzo Giacomini officially became a member of the Alterati in 1583, but had been active within the group since the early 1570s. His hand seems to be present in BNCF Magl. VII, 1199, fols 74^{v}, 75^{r}, 77$^{r–v}$, 79^{r}, 80^{r}, 83^{r}, 84^{r}, 85^{v}, 86^{r}, 86^{v}, 92^{v}. These occurrences can be compared with a copy of Annibal Caro's Italian translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* (Venice: Al segno della Salamandra, 1570), which Giacomini annotated extensively and signed with his monogram on the title page of the first volume (Biblioteca Universitaria di Pisa, MSS 551 and 552). I am most grateful to Anna Siekiera for having brought these volumes to my attention.

44 The dialogue unfolds on several fols of BNCF Magl. VII, 1199. On fol. 82^{v}, Sassetti stresses the articulation of poetics and politics: 'Hora è da sapere che di quelle due poesie in fino sono duoi, un prossimo, et uno ultimo, il prossimo eccita misericordia e terrore, l'ultimo il purgare. I mezzi loro sono le cose terribili e compassionevoli. Hora la rettitudine dell'arte poetica consiste nel conseguire questo fine mediante questi mezzi. Aristotile fece mentione dell'arte Politica perche ella concorre con la Poetica: [in ?] trattare attioni humane per il suo fine è il fare tutta la citta felice et i suoi mezzi sono le buone leggi però la sua rettitudine consisterà in conseguire questo fine mediante questi mezzi.' On fol. 83^{r}, in contrast, Giacomni insists on pleasure and surprise: 'Ma la dirittura della Poetica consiste in rassomigliar con parole harmonizzate una attione humana possibile ad avvenire, dillettevole per la novità delle accidente.' On fol. 84^{r}, however, both men write a joint annotation (of the underlined Latin text) and seem to compromise: '[Sassetti] Si quæ adversus,

Because the Alterati carefully cultivated dissension rather than consensus, these positions cannot be attributed to the entire academy without qualification. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that pleasure in a variety of guises (not just aesthetic pleasure) was generally conceived as conducive to moral betterment by many of the most active Alterati.[45]

The Alterati's fascination with *diletto* (delight) and *stupore* (astonishment) in spectacle is also evident in many of the creative texts they authored (dialogues, poems, and even orations), where they are frequently associated with cognitive or moral benefits. Most of the Alterati's writings had a very limited audience because, like their annotated manuscript of Vettori's Latin translation of the *Poetics* (BNCF Magl. VII, 1199), many remained in manuscript and circulated only among members and associates of the academy. With *Euridice*, however, the Alterati's positions on theatre, music, and the pleasures to be derived from them came to life for the first time in a fully-fledged spectacle—one that was widely publicized and heavily legitimized by its inclusion in the week-long celebrations of Maria and Henry's wedding. Via the courtly performance and by way of separate printed editions of the musical score as well as the libretto, the opera reached an audience that none of the Alterati's other productions had ever had before.[46] In this respect, *Euridice* offered the academy an exceptional opportunity, allowing it to showcase and disseminate its points of view on poetry, love, and pleasure without the need to divulge its identity as an institution or the obligation to publish widely the theoretical debates it had spent quite a bite of energy keeping private for decades. With the creation and performance of *Euridice*, the contours of a new kind of dramatic experience were defined and even exemplified, one in which the pleasures available in the material world (those of art, but also those of love) were extolled,

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ipsam artem: qui coniunge l'impossible e'l peccar in un arte e dice cosi se il poeta fa cose impossibili e pecca ancora in qualche arte egli ha peccato, ma non dimeno hà fatto bene perche [e'] l'ha fatto per conseguire il suo fine e se bene hà tolto mezzi non buoni e da salvarlo perchè cosi l'ha conseguito maggiormente. [Giacomini] Il M[aggi] pon per fine della Poesia homines virtutibus exornare, ma non è inconveniente che un fine riguardi l'altro, comme nella medicina, la sanità è il fine, e questo per potere operare, così la maraviglia è il fine della Poesia, e questa per poter in altrui generar buon costumi.'

45 I am thinking in particular of Strozzi, Sassetti, Rinuccini, and Giacomini.

46 *Le Musiche di Jacopo Peri, nobil fiorentino, sopra L'Euridice, del Signor Ottavio Rinuccini, rappresentate nello Sponsalizio della Christianissima Maria Medici Regina di Francia e di Navarra* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1600). Rinuccini's text was printed in a standalone edition in 1600 as *L'Euridice d'Ottavio Rinuccini rappresentata nello sponsalitio della christianissima regina di Francia, e di Nauarra* (Florence: Cosimo Giunti, 1600), and was subsequently reprinted in the sumptuous edition of his *Poesie* in 1622.

while at the same time their moral value was underscored. As befit a spectacle that constantly reflected upon the relationship of the material to the spiritual, the experiment of creating this new theatrical genre included an elaborate questioning of the group's understanding of the relationship of art to political power, by way of an allegorical representation of the Alterati's current (and very concrete) positioning at court.

2 The Spiritual Spectacle of Love and Art: From Pleasure to Transcendence in *Euridice*

Euridice's formal novelty is frequently characterised, among historians of music, as residing in its attempt to blend poetry, music, and dance into a spectacle that remained dramatic at its core—inasmuch as it represented an action inspired by a myth. The major difference between *Euridice* and a court play was that the former's dialogues were sung instead of declaimed, with the occasional intervention of choruses and/or dancers. Of course, this type of spectacle (one that brought together theatre, music, chants, and dance) was not new in itself, nor did its inventors ever claim that it was, insisting rather that their work was inspired by the mixture of declamation, music, and dance that they (and many other Italian humanists) believed had originally characterised classical Greek drama.[47] But, at the court of Florence *Euridice* represented a novelty with respect to the *intermedi* that had been developed under Medici rule—as *divertimenti* to be performed during the intermissions of a court drama—because it associated poetry, music, and dance to produce a more dynamic, developed and complete type of dramatic action than the lavish *tableaux* that had become customary during these intervals.

Yet *Euridice*, despite its innovations, shared one central characteristic with most early modern court performances, including the Florentine *intermedi*

47 *Le Musiche di Jacopo Peri, nobil fiorentino, sopra L'Euridice,* 'Ai Lettori': 'Onde veduto, che si trattava di poesie Dramatica, e che però si doveva col canto chi parla (e senza dubbio non si parlò mai cantando) stimai, che gli antichi Grei, e Romani (i quali secondo l'openione di molti cantavano su le Scene le Tragedie intere) usassero un' armonia, che avanzando quella del parlare ordinario, scendesse tanto della melodia del cantare, che pigliasse forma di cosa mezzana' (for a translation, see Jacopo Peri, *Euridice: An Opera in One Act, Five Scenes, Libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini*, ed. by Howard Mayer Brown (Madison: A-R Editions, 1981), 'To my readers', plate 11). On the rediscovery of classical tragedy by Renaissance humanists, see, for instance, Maria Cecilia Angioni, 'L'Orestea nell' edizione di Robortello da Udine (1552)', *Lexis*, 28 (2010), pp. 465–78.

and the English court masques: it was designed to be enjoyed and deciphered as a multi-layered allegorical spectacle.[48] As such, it pointed in two different but complementary directions. On the one hand, it invited spectators to understand its plot in relation to the immediate social and political circumstances in which the drama was being represented. But it also simultaneously aimed at directing the spectator's attention to higher truths, be they aesthetic, moral, or spiritual. These types of spectacles embodied multiple significations at once, even managing at times to use one level of allegorical meaning to reinforce or deepen the other. This sometimes restricted the understanding of the performance to a handful of insiders, but it did offer the benefit of allowing the spectacle to become a vehicle for complex equivocal insinuations—thereby facilitating, when needed, the discreet voicing of non-conformist points of view.[49]

Euridice's plot is loosely based on the myth of Orpheus, as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (X. 1–85). The sources mediating between the Ovidian text and Rinuccini's plot are of course numerous and complex, as is often the case with early modern operatic adaptations of Ovid[50]—though, in the case of Rinuccini's libretto, Angelo Poliziano's *Fabula d'Orfeo* (1478–1483?) was clearly an important locus of inspiration.[51] Yet, while Poliziano respected the Ovidian outcome—in which Orpheus loses Eurydice for the second time as he is leading her out of Inferno—Rinuccini's libretto departs from this well-established tradition and provocatively reverses the ending from tragic to happy, opening the way for other operatic reconfigurations of the myth in which Orfeo and Euridice are blissfully reunited at the end.[52] *Euridice* consists of a prologue followed by five scenes, during which the action leads from a joyous beginning (the celebrations of Orfeo and Euridice's wedding) to a sorrowful event

48 For a general overview of allegorical drama in the Renaissance, see Blair Hoxby, 'Allegorical drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. by Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 191–210.

49 I have investigated the two-fold allegorical nature of early modern court performances in greater depth in a prior study: Déborah Blocker, *Instituer un 'art': politiques du théâtre dans la France du premier XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2009), pp. 185–203.

50 On these mediations, see Wendy Heller's forthcoming study, *Animating Ovid: Opera and the Metamorphoses of Antiquity in Early Modern Italy*.

51 Angelo Poliziano, *Stance / Stanze et Fable d'Orphée / Fabula di Orfeo*, introd. and trans. by Émilie Séris, texts and notes by Francesco Bausi (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006).

52 On these subsequent works, see Jeffrey Buller, 'Looking Backwards: Baroque Opera and the Ending of the Orpheus Myth', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 1.3 (1995), pp. 57–79.

(Euridice's sudden accidental death), and ends in a final reversal in tone and mood (after Orfeo manages to convince Pluto to let him take Euridice back to the world of the living). The last scene of the opera stages the miraculous reappearance of Euridice on earth, followed by Orfeo's triumph, in the presence of the whole cast. In keeping with the long tradition of the moralisation of Ovid's tales, the signification of this action is however far more complex than this brief summary can suggest, for, in Rinuccini's libretto, the plot primarily serves to investigate the dual nature of art, in the enjoyment of which sensual pleasure is shown to lead to a form of spiritual enlightenment.

2.1 *Suggesting a Continuity Between Sensual Pleasure and Spiritual Bliss*

Euridice famously opens with a prologue in which a personification of tragedy announces, with majesty and poise, that she no longer intends to spin tales of bloodshed and tyranny with the aim of arousing pity or fear. Rather, displaying 'changed forms' ('cangiate forme') in honour of the joyful occasion provided by the royal wedding, Tragedy promises to generate 'astonishment' ('stupore') and 'sweet delight' ('dolce diletto').[53] While Rinuccini and Peri's intention to create a *lieto fine* (happy ending) has been much commented upon, their affirmation of their desire to create both wonder and pleasure has received far less attention. Yet this last assertion embodies most of the aesthetic and moral goals of the work, tying their project to the notion of *meraviglia* and, more generally, to that of moral and spiritual enjoyment. For sensual pleasure—via the creation of musical harmony, as much as through the production of a sumptuous spectacle—is constantly associated in the opera with the idea of moral betterment, and even with the spiritual elevation of the 'noble heart' ('nobile cor').[54]

In fact, from the opening scene onward, sensual and spiritual pleasure are depicted as so closely intertwined that they appear to be almost indistinguishable. This first scene displays a pastoral spectacle of joy and happiness, in celebration of Orfeo and Euridice's wedding: shepherds and nymphs express their 'joy' ('gioia') and 'delight' ('diletto'), while Euridice voices her 'pleasures' ('i miei diletti'). But, during the celebration, the chorus sings and dances to celebrate this 'blessed day' ('beato giorno'), an expression that begins to suggest to the spectator or reader that a correlation between sensual pleasures and spiritual ones is being elaborated.[55] Simultaneously, the association of material and immaterial joys, as generated by the spectacle of the lovers' happiness,

53 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, prologue, p. xvi.

54 Ibid., scene 1, p. xvi.

55 Ibid., scene 1, pp. xvii–xix.

is underscored by a chorus nymph, who stresses that only an 'ignoble heart' ('rozzo core') would not 'be filled with delight and sweetness' at the sight of the 'rare fortune of such a beautiful love' ('Che di si bell'amor l'alta ventura | Non colmi di diletto e di dolcezza?').[56] The love that Orfeo and Euridice share thus becomes not only a symbol of a form of spiritual sensuality, but also the emblem of an aristocratic ethos in which pleasure, beauty, and ethics are tightly intertwined. This ethos was in many ways similar to that of the Alterati, who, as a patrician academy, strove to enact and perpetuate—via the production and appreciation of art—an ideal form of *nobiltà*.[57]

Scene 2 makes these allegorical associations between sensual pleasure and celestial bliss even clearer. It starts with Orfeo's own song of joy, performed as he impatiently awaits his wedding night, anticipating the pleasures soon to come. In his response, Tirsi, a shepherd, stresses that this newly found amorous happiness is in fact as much a spiritual joy as a sensuous one, since the lovers will share angelic beatitude, wearing on their faces a 'smile from Heaven' ('un riso di Paradiso').[58] Though this image may seem to borrow mainly from Ficino's neo-Platonic conceptions of love, the spiritual connotation is counterbalanced by Orfeo's voicing of his *fiamme* ('flames') and *ardori* ('desires') in the same scene—that is, by the explicit expression of his carnal desire for Euridice.[59] While certainly commonplace in early modern Italian love poetry, these words of sexual desire and emotional upheaval probably also evoke another tradition of Renaissance discourses on pleasure, namely the one initiated by Agostino Nifo's *De amore et pulchro liber* (1531). In this text, the Campanian philosopher stresses the legitimacy of sensual pleasure, whether in the appreciation of love, beauty, or art.[60] His work circulated throughout sixteenth-century Italian court culture and was, for instance, well known to Torquato Tasso, who stages Nifo as the central interlocutor of his dialogue *Il Nifo ovvero del Piacere* (*The Nifo, or on*

56 Ibid., scene 1, p. xvii.

57 A similar ideal was simultaneously being defined across much of the Florentine patriciate: see, for instance, Paolo Mini, *Discorso della nobiltà di Firenze e dei Fiorentini* (Florence: Domenico Manzani, 1593).

58 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 2, p. xx.

59 Ibid., scene 2, p. xix. Carter, 'Epyllia and Epithalamia', stresses that explicit expressions of carnal desire are habitual in courtly wedding entertainments. However, the constant association of sexual arousal and spiritual bliss seems to be a specificity of this particular *divertimento*.

60 See Agostino Nifo, *De Pulcro et amore I—De Pulchro Liber. Du Beau et de l'amour I—Le Livre du Beau*, ed. and trans. by Laurence Boulègue, 2 vols (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003–2011).

Pleasure, *c.* 1580).[61] Several central Alterati members, including Rinuccini, were close to Torquato Tasso both personally and intellectually during the last two decades of his life.[62] There is therefore little doubt that, either directly or via Tasso, many of them had come into contact with the writings of Nifo.

In scene 2 of *Euridice*, however, Tirsi's serene evocation of the pleasures of love, in which sensuality and spirituality appear united, is short lived. He is immediately interrupted by the arrival of Dafne, who declares her heart to be full of 'pity' ('pietate') and 'terror' ('spavento'), and the musical mode changes from joyful to lugubrious, marking the first reversal in the action. Dafne goes on to recount pitifully the death of Euridice. Her narrative is particularly interesting because a number of its details depart from the Ovidian myth, thus allowing us to better understand the ways in which Rinuccini tweaks the original tale in order to serve the elucidation of his views on the dual nature of the pleasures of both love and art. Dafne explains that Euridice was taking 'sweet delight' ('dolce diletto') in the proximity of a stream, singing and dancing to her own songs, when a snake bit her.[63] Ovid, in contrast, does not mention that Euridice was singing or dancing when the viper struck her. These added details are telling because they allegorically associate the character of Euridice with music and dance, two activities often described in the Renaissance as sensual and therefore impious.[64] In Rinuccini's libretto, it is precisely while engaging in these worldly pastimes that Euridice is mortally struck, as if to remind the spectator of such accusations. These accusations will, however, be refuted in the finale, when Orfeo celebrates his victory over death thanks to the power of both music and love, in a display of joyful melodies and dances involving the whole cast.[65] Meanwhile, however, upon learning of Euridice's death in

61 Torquato Tasso, *Dialoghi*, ed. by Giovanni Baffetti, 2 vols (Milano: Rizzoli, 1998), I, pp. 230–303.

62 The Alterati protected Tasso while he was in Florence during the late 1580s and early 1590s, and staunchly defended his work after his death, most notably in a funeral oration delivered by Giacomini to the academy and published in 1595 with its approval. See Lorenzo Giacomini, *Oratione in lode di Torquato Tasso fatta ne l'Academia degli Alterati da Lorenzo Giacomini Tebalducci Malespini* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1595; second edition in 1596).

63 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 2, p. xxii.

64 On these issues, see Alessandro Arcangeli, *David o Salomè? Il dibattito europeo sulla danza nella prima età moderna* (Treviso: Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche, 2000); *Recreation in the Renaissance: Attitudes towards Leisure and Pastimes in European Culture, c. 1425–1675* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and *Passatempi rinascimentali: storio culturale del divertimento in Europa, secoli XV–XVII* (Rome: Carocci, 2004).

65 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 5, p. xxxvii.

scene 2, Orfeo laments the transient nature of all earthly pleasures and exits vowing to join his beloved in death.

A second reversal begins to take shape immediately thereafter, however, with the recounting of a mysterious apparition in scene 3. Orfeo's companion, Arcetro, tells of his friend's despair in discovering Euridice's lifeless body and of the subsequent descent from the heavens of a 'lady of celestial appearance' ('donna viddi celeste'), who offers the disconsolate lover her 'heavenly help' ('celestio soccorso').[66] This figure, who makes her stage entry in the next scene, is identified in the cast as Venus, but her identity remains mysterious throughout Arcetro's narrative. When Orfeo refers to her as '(bella) madre d'Amore' ('beautiful mother of Love'),[67] the primary image evoked is that of the Virgin Mary, a figure of attention, care, and generosity who embodies the highest forms of human love. For this reason, *Charitas* (Charity) also comes to mind, especially since this mysterious allegorical figure holds out her hand to Orfeo and vows to assist him in his quest to retrieve Euridice from the underworld. Because the figure of Orpheus had been associated with that of Christ throughout the Middle Ages,[68] these Christian readings would have been particularly obvious to a sixteenth-century Florentine audience. Thanks to this complex set of allegorical superimpositions, the pagan and sensuous image of Venus assisting a lover opened, in *Euridice*, onto that of the Virgin Mary lovingly assisting a Christlike figure in his terrestrial woes and in his ascension, through the resurrection of his lover, to the status of a pagan demigod. These associations further suggested that amorous pleasures and, more generally, all material ones, can have spiritual value and should be understood (and appreciated) as capable of leading to the beatific apprehension of transcendent truths. This would of course be true of music itself, the spiritual power of which Rinuccini's libretto also underscores quite clearly. Indeed, the figure of Venus/Mary/*Charitas* is also indirectly associated, in *Euridice*, with artistic creation and, more specifically, with music. For, it is Venus who invites Orfeo to go to Inferno 'to display [his] noble song to the sound of [his] gilded lyre' ('Sciogl'il tuo nobil canto | Al suon dell'aureo legno').[69] As the figure of Orfeo goes from bereavement and grief to a quasi-apotheosis in the company of his resurrected beloved, thanks to the transcendent power of his lyre, the carnal

66 Ibid., scene 3, p. xxvi.

67 Ibid., scene 2, p. xix, and scene 4, p. xxviii.

68 On this tradition, see John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

69 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 4, p. xxviii.

pleasure of music is allegorically depicted as leading to spiritual bliss through the arousal of our emotions and senses.

2.2 Euridice: *A Material Incarnation of Transcendence*

The continuity postulated, in *Euridice*, between the material world and the immaterial one is, however, most clearly depicted in the figure of Euridice herself. This is particularly evident in the last scene of the opera, which recounts Euridice's return to earth. Only a handful of Peri's and Rinuccini's courtly spectators would have been unaware that this outcome was entirely contrary to Ovid's.[70] In contradicting Ovid's tale, Rinuccini was also going against the grain of the allegorical readings of *Metamorphoses* that had been produced during the late classical period, most notably by Boethius. Indeed, in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, Orpheus is said to lose his access to the spiritual world (represented by daylight) when he indulges in his carnal desire for Euridice and turns his head back towards the Inferno in order to catch a glimpse of her.[71] By transforming this famously tragic episode into a happy ending, Rinuccini is suggesting a morality that directly contradicts Boethius's allegorical reading. In showing how Euridice is brought back to life thanks to the pleasures of music and dance, the Florentine poet is indirectly asserting that a form of spiritual satisfaction can—and in fact should—be found on earth, among the carnal pleasures of love and art. This is undoubtedly why, in Rinuccini's libretto, what initially kills Euridice (her enamoured chanting and dancing in the vicinity of a stream, during which she is bitten by a snake) is also what brings her back to life (thanks to the enamoured chanting of her lover).

The entire *dénouement* of the opera—from the resuscitation of Euridice, which makes her beautiful body seem like a divine apparition, to the elevation of the Apollonic figure of Orfeo to the status of a 'demigod'[72]—seems designed to illustrate and embody a continuity between the enjoyment of sensual pleas-

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70 Rinuccini acknowledges this fact in the dedication to Maria that he placed at the beginning of the 1600 edition of his poem: 'Potrà parere ad alcuno che troppo ardire sia stato il mio in alterare il fine della favola d'Orfeo, ma così mi è parso convenevole in tempo di tanta allegrezza, havendo per mia giustificatione esempio di Poeti Greci, in altre favole, & il nostro Dante ardi di affermare essersi sommerso Ulisse nella sua naviguatione, tutto che Omero, e gli altri Poeti havessero cantata il contrario. Così parimente ho seguito l'autorità di Sofocle nell'Aiace in far rivolger la Scena non potendosi rappresentar altrimenti le preghiere, & i lamenti d'Orfeo.' For a full translation of this dedication, see Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History: The Baroque Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), pp. 7–9.

71 Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, book III, part XII, lines 45 to 58.

72 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 5, pp. xxxv and xxxvi.

ure and the attainment of spiritual bliss. This idea is expressed in Aminta's *versi sciolti* ('Only the person who can count the stars in Heaven'; 'Chi può del Cielo annoverar le stelle'),[73] which seem to answer Tirsi's lyrical description of the lovers' bliss in scene 2 ('With the pure ardour of the most beautiful star'; 'Nel pur ardor della piu bella stella'). Aminta's verses underscore that the newly reunited lovers share the blissful 'joys of paradise' ('i ben di paradiso'), first alluding quite clearly to a form of sexual fulfilment by underscoring the rosiness of Euridice's cheeks, a sign of her moral happiness and physical well-being, and a possible allusion to the consumption of her marriage with Orfeo.[74] But Aminta's lines also link the happiness of the newly-wed couple, presumably found in sensual enjoyment, to the creation of universal harmony: as the lovers reunite, 'All souls and hearts are made happy', boasts Aminta, 'And through the serene air | Harmonious choirs are heard, | The sweet songs of winged cupids.'[75] In fact, as the resurrection of Euridice is in process, it is this very 'heavenly harmony' ('alt' armonia')—by which Aminta himself confesses to have been made supremely 'happy' ('lieto')—that, he believes, is his primary duty to proclaim to the world. This repeated insistence on that the fact that universal harmony is created through the sensual love of two worldly creatures is only superficially Ficinian in its connotations, for it does not suggest that spiritual bliss will or should always overcome and undo material pleasure. Rather, the aria points audaciously to a kind of spiritualisation of the material (in this case physical beauty and sensuous enjoyment, be it in the body of Euridice or in the sound of music itself), going so far as to suggest a sacralisation of the central physical pleasures of men's mundane lives. Indeed, not only sensual experience but also mundane existence gain a form of legitimacy and authority through Euridice's resurrection, precisely because the pleasures they have to offer (in love, art, and friendship) can sometimes make them comparable to true spiritual bliss.

This attempt to sacralise the material world and the experiences it provides is also most probably what was being staged in the final triumph of Orfeo, which would have simultaneously appeared to the opera's original audience

73 Ibid., scene 5, p. xxxiv.

74 Ibid.: 'Qual pallidetto giglio | Dolcement'or languia la bella sposa, | Or qual purpurea rosa | Il bel volto di lei venia vermiglio.' On the coded significance of the rosy cheeks of the bride in epithalamia, see Carter, 'Epyllia and Epithalamia', p. 11.

75 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 5, p. xxxiv: 'Ma sempre' o che il bel ciglio | Chinasse a terra, ò rivolgess'in giro | L'alme beava, e i cor d'alto martiro, | Ardea la terra, ardean gl'eterni giri, | Ai gioiosi sospiri | Dell'uno, e l'altro innamorato core | E per l'aer sereno | S'udian musici cori | Dolci canti temprar d'alati amori. | Io fra l'alta armonia | Per far liet' ancor voi mi mess'in via.'

as the triumph of Il Zazzerino, since Jacopo Peri (whose stage name this was) was singing Orfeo's dazzling part. For, in *Euridice*'s last scene, Peri not only performed the role of its central male character; he also appeared as the principal virtuoso singer of the work as well as its main composer, skilfully uniting all three of these personae into a single figure in which the real or material could not be distinguished from the allegorical or spiritual. In Orfeo's elevation to the status of a demigod, moreover, his close association with both Apollo and Venus—the most worldly of all the pagan gods—played a central role. As such, Peri/Orfeo's triumph was the apotheosis of his very materiality, humanity, and sensuality (as character, singer, and composer).

2.3 *A Metadiscourse on the Spirituality of Spectacle*

In this respect, Rinuccini's allegorical discourse on the spirituality of pleasure can also be read as a meta-discourse on the pleasures and spiritual value of the *divertimento* itself. Rinuccini dwells at length, in his work, on the various reversals he has introduced into his plot, most probably following the example of the Alterati who, in their work on Aristotle's *Poetics*, had often foregrounded the role of reversal in the creation of dramatic pleasure. The last scene of the opera is particularly revealing from this point of view, as it works carefully to bring the spectator back to the pastoral scene of joyful pleasure with which the opera had opened. At first, the shepherds are still worried about the fate of Orfeo and Euridice, but Aminta soon announces happily that *dolcezza* (sweetness) and *gioia* (joy) are once again in Orfeo's heart and that Euridice will soon reappear.[76] The shepherds initially remain incredulous, but, as Aminta further tells of the miraculous return of Orfeo and his bride to earth, they voice simultaneous 'stupore' and 'diletto' ('Think, by what stupor, what delight | Our souls and our hearts are engulfed | At the sweet sight of the happy couple'; 'Pensa di qual stupor, di qual diletto | Ingombrò l'alm'e, e i cori | Della felice coppia il dolce aspetto').[77] Neither the audience nor the shepherds on the stage initially see this spectacular miracle, however—much in the same way that, earlier in the libretto, Rinuccini had refrained from explicitly staging the descent of Venus to earth to assist Orfeo in his voyage to Inferno, in order to leave room for the audience to imagine the deity and to contemplate the complex allegorical meanings attached to her in the plot. In scene 5, similarly, the shepherds' words do not only express their own astonishment and pleasure at imagining the couple's return to life; they also meta-discursively point to—and therefore simultaneously work to frame—the audience's experience of the melodrama,

76 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 5, p. xxxiv.

77 Ibid.

by asking the spectator to imagine the effect produced by an event that he or she cannot (yet) witness.

Although these ostensive delays in the actual representation of a miraculous action may have been intended at first to make the use of staging machines unnecessary, since *macchine* were probably not available in the room in which *Euridice* was performed, they also point to meta-theatrical meanings. For example, when Euridice appears at long last on the scene, she seems at first the product of a collective effort, both on stage and among the spectators, to envision her glorious return to life. As such, *Euridice* implicitly becomes the emblematic incarnation of a communion in pleasure, imagination, and belief, during which the audience is constantly called upon to indulge in the experience of its own senses, thereby participating actively in the creation of the power and fascination of the drama's most central scenes. In scene 5, the collective production of this dramatic experience continues to be allegorically underscored in the action by the way the nymphs greet Euridice upon her return: they at first doubt that she is real, touching her to make sure is not simply a spirit. Faced with their incredulity, Euridice insists that she is a body:

> Per quest'aere giocondo
> E vivo e spiro' anch'io
> Mirate il mio crin biondo
> E del bel volto mio
> Mirate, donne, le sembianze antiche
> Riconoscete omai gl'usati accenti,
> Udite il suon di queste voci amiche.
>
> This happy air
> I, too, live in and breathe:
> Look at my blond locks,
> Look, ladies, at the familiar features
> Of my beautiful face;
> Recognise again the accents of my speech,
> Listen to the sound of my friendly words.[78]

As she comes to embody the intermingling of literal and figurative meanings in the opera's intricate plot, Euridice is not only portrayed as being as believable (and verisimilar) as the miracle she incarnates. She is also depicted as

78 Ibid., scene 5, p. xxxv.

simultaneously carnal and spiritual—just like, one suspects, the spectacle itself would be understood to be, in the eyes of both Peri and Rinuccini.[79]

In other words, the apparition of Venus and the resurrection of Euridice were also meant to be read, in meta-theatrical terms, as an affirmation both of the spiritual value of spectacle and of the sensual pleasures it provokes (sight, hearing, imagination, etc.). Interestingly enough, a number of the remarks contemporary spectators are reported to have made about *Euridice* suggest that its daring stance on the spirituality of worldly pleasures was clearly perceived (though not always approved of) by its contemporary audience(s). We know of such remarks through two letters that Emilio de' Cavalieri wrote from Rome to Grand Ducal Secretary Marcello Accolti in the year 1600. On 7 April 1600, Cavalieri reported that many Florentines in Rome had heard word of 'a new pastoral which Jacopo Corsi has in preparation' and which promises to be a 'heavenly thing'. Cavalieri adds, with some irony, 'I pity the Heavens and the angels for being submitted to such parallels!'[80] These words suggest that rumour had it in Florence that Peri was trying to write a work of a new type—a form of courtly *divertimento* that could rival in beauty devotional music itself, and that had the implicit aim of emphasising the spiritual value of the pleasures that were understood to be at the centre of courtly life (love, music, and dance). A similar conclusion can be drawn from a set of remarks Cavalieri made after the wedding ceremonies had ended, at a moment when it had become increasingly evident that he was losing the favour of Ferdinando. These remarks are contained in a *post scriptum* to a letter Cavalieri sent to Accolti on 24 November 1600, and were marked as intended for the secretary alone, rather than for his master.[81] In this *post scriptum*, Cavalieri compares what he characterises as the failure of Peri's *Euridice* and Caccini's *Cefalo* with the success of his own *Rappresentatione* in the Oratorio della Vallicella at the beginning of 1600, listing two causes for his rivals' difficulties. First, some of their wording was unsuitable for a proper 'tragic' plot, and this led to the staging of inappropriate topics ('quelle parole poche che lui ha fatte portano

79 Ibid., scene 5, p. xxxviii.

80 This letter was transcribed and published by Kirkendale, *Emilio de' Cavalieri*, pp. 365–66: 'Si è dato conto già a molti fiorentini di une pastorale nuova che fa il S.r Jacomo [*sic*] Corsi, che dicono che sarrà cosa celeste. Scrivo le stesse parole che me vien detto. Poveri cieli et angeli a che pararelli [=paralleli] si mettono.'

81 The complete text is in Kirkendale, *Emilio de' Cavalieri*, pp. 371–73. An English translation can be found in Claude Palisca, 'Musical Asides in the Diplomatic Correspondence of Emilio de' Cavalieri', *Musical Quarterly*, 49.3 (1963), pp. 339–55, (pp. 351–52). This article is reprinted in Palisca, *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory*, pp. 389–404.

l'honore di tutte, et non intrare in parole tragiche, e soggeti da potervi appore'), by which Cavalieri clearly meant subjects that could not suitably allegorize the Medici or the event at hand. Second, the tonality of their works was an issue. Cavalieri claimed, in particular, that, among the Roman spectators he had questioned, the manner of these *divertimenti* had been thought unbefitting to the circumstances because they reminded courtly audiences too much of the ring and feel of devotional music:

> In Roma non si adula. Et con quanti ho parlato, di ogni grado di persona, tutti me hanno detto che le comedie non sono riuscite, et in particolare la grande, et che le musiche sono state tediose, et che lì è parso sentire cantare la Passione. Et in particolare è stato detto del Marchese de Riano, di questa Passione.
>
> In Rome, one does not adulate. As many people of all ranks I have spoken to have said to me: the comedies [i.e., *Euridice* and *Cefalo*] did not succeed, and in particular the big one [*Cefalo*] did not. They said that the music was tedious and seemed like the chanting of the Passion. The Marchese di Riano, in particular, mentioned the Passion.[82]

According to Cavalieri, Peri (just as much as Caccini) was misguided in his efforts to adapt the tonalities of devotional music in *stile recitativo* to court culture, succeeding only in producing a spectacle that felt completely out of place. It is, however, highly probable that, given his rivalry with both composers, Cavalieri rephrased what he had heard to his own advantage in order to insist that—as the success of his *Rappresentatione* suggested—the tonalities of devotional music were best left to churches and religious institutions, where their spiritual aims could be adequately fulfilled. Cavalieri, whose sacred *Rappresentatione* unequivocally rejected worldly pleasures, was probably fundamentally in disagreement with Peri's efforts to spiritualize the *diletti* of love, music, and dance. Indeed, act I, scenes 4 and 5 of his *Rappresentatione* stage an exchange in which the Soul invites the Body to reject all forms of terrestrial *diletto*, which is denounced as vain and false, while *Piacere*, an allegory of pleasure, parades lasciviously with two of his minions to the sound of overtly profane Neapolitan dance melodies.[83] Such elements suggest that Cavalieri

82 The translation is mine, using the more accurate transcription by Kirkendale, *Emilio de' Cavalieri*, p. 372.

83 The text of Cavalieri's libretto is reprinted in Kirkendale, *Emilio de' Cavalieri*, pp. 301–13 (see scenes 4 and 5, pp. 306–07). For an analysis of the dance music created to charac-

would have had little taste, at least at this stage in his life, for mundane tunes aspiring to the spirituality of devotional compositions, preferring to hold court and devotional music entirely separate. But given that Cavalieri was a particularly well-informed participant of the artistically contentious wedding ceremonies of 1600, the words he reports on *Euridice*—if their meaning is not taken strictly in negative terms—also suggest that Peri's and Rinuccini's work, in its attempt to portray love, poetry, music, and dance as meaningful, noble, and even divine pleasures, was immediately understood at the time as a courtly (and even mundane) response to Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione*. This would explain Cavalieri's urge to debunk the entire project of producing a court *divertimento* with higher spiritual aspirations as well as his attempt describe the entire experiment as a failure, which it clearly was not (though only a handful of Florentine courtiers originally saw *Euridice* at court because of the relatively small size of the venue). Rather, Peri's music and Rinuccini's libretto rapidly became famous across Italy, where their *divertimento* subsequently inspired a number of operas centred on the figure of Orpheus, such as Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (Mantova, 1607).

3 The Spectacle of Art's Power, or How to Spin a Myth into the Figuration of One's Court Position

Euridice's effort to spiritualize the sensuous experience of drama set to music cannot, of course, be separated from the courtly context in which the opera was developed. In this sense alone, the ties binding this work to the political configuration in and for which it was originally produced are anything but anecdotal. Indeed, *Euridice* not only meditates on art's spiritual value; it also interrogates the power that artistic practices and productions can exercise in the material world, as well as on the political structures that rule over sublunary affairs. From this perspective, the opera also functions as an allegorical statement about the place of art in the social and political economy of the court. This statement originates from two court artists who are clearly aspiring to favour, but who do not seem inclined to servility: while the allegorical depiction of the relationship of art to political power proposed in *Euridice* does not shun patronage, it does claim a certain social and political autonomy for both art and artists, even in court settings. This autonomy is to be understood

terise Piacere, see Anne Piéjus, 'Un Théâtre de l'âme', in *Le Noyau et l'écorce: les arts de l'allégorie XV^e–XVII^e siècles*, ed. by Colette Nativel (Paris: Somogy/Académie de France à Rome, 2009), pp. 355–71 (p. 362).

as a consequence of art's composite nature and of its interaction with love in both its carnal manifestations and its spiritual potential. As a product of matter and emotion—as well as of the spirit and the intellect—art's cosmic force can overcome the power of men, laws, and institutions.

The complexities of the relationship between art, power, and love in *Euridice* are clarified in scene 4 of the opera, during which Orfeo, led and assisted by Venus, descends to Hades to beg Pluto to return Euridice to her husband. His plea is supported not only by a demonstration of the power of music, but also by an evocation of the supernatural force of love. Indeed, in order to convince Pluto to allow Euridice to return, literally and figuratively, to the land of the living, Orfeo reminds Pluto of how much he himself loves his wife Proserpina.[84] Orfeo's plea is seconded by Proserpina herself who—in a move that cannot be found in Ovid, yet figures in Poliziano's *Fabula di Orfeo*—solemnly calls upon her husband to grant Orfeo his request in the name of the love he, Pluto, bears for her.[85] Pluto is moved, but hesitant. He objects that he cannot possibly override the laws of his own kingdom, which require that no dead soul ever see the light of day again. These laws are of course the laws of nature, but Pluto describes them as the civil laws of Inferno, drafted by none other than himself. Orfeo begs again for mercy, insisting that pity is befitting to the noble heart, while Caronte (Charon) points out to his master that, as sovereign of Inferno, it is his prerogative to freely change the laws he himself has made however he wishes: 'O great King, make whatever laws you please' ('Fa' pur leggie, o gran Re, quanto a te piace').[86] Exercising absolute power over his realm while simultaneously giving in to the cosmic power of Orfeo's music, Pluto finally announces that 'pity' ('pietà') has conquered him and allows Euridice to leave the underworld. A chorus of the gods of Inferno subsequently celebrate the role of *mercede* (mercy) in this miraculous gesture, thus linking Pluto's act of compassion back to the charitable and loving figure of Venus.

Interestingly enough, in this scene Orfeo does not flatter Pluto. The petitioner does not even present the king with the kind of fawning discourse of courtship that a powerful ruler might expect. Orfeo does, however, plead with power, but in a way that does not compromise his own integrity. Rather, he attempts to kindle love in the king's heart—love in the sense of sympathy and empathy—and this he does solely with moving words and accompanying sorrowful tunes, as Pluto himself acknowledges when he gives in to Orfeo's desires: 'Let pity triumph today in the infernal fields, | And be the pride and glory of

84 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 4, pp. xxix–xxx.

85 See Poliziano, *Stance / Stanze et Fable d'Orphée / Fabula di Orfeo*, p. 70.

86 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 4, pp. xxx–xxxi.

your tears, of your beautiful song' ('Trionfi oggi pietà ne' campi inferni, | E sia la gloria, e'l vanto | Delle lagrime tue, del tuo bel canto').[87] As such, Orfeo's approach to power is parallel to the strategies Peri, Rinuccini, and Corsi appear to have employed on the occasion of Maria's marriage—that is, to gain the respect of the Grand Duke and to make acceptable at court their understanding of art, without ever entirely submitting to the expectations Florentine rulers were accustomed to bringing to bear upon court artists.[88]

Indeed, though *Euridice* was clearly created in a court setting, the opera cannot convincingly be read as an allegorical praise of the Medici, as its plot displays practically no direct ties to the family's history.[89] This particularity once again supports the notion that this *divertimento* was conceived as somewhat of an aside in the wedding ceremonies. The lack of overt Medici propaganda also suggests that, because this performance was financially independent—at least to some degree—and took place in a venue that was not the Medici's official court theatre in the Uffizi, its creators and patron believed that they possessed a fair amount of ideological leeway with respect to how they chose to handle the Medici's encomiastic needs. A recently found piece of archival evidence confirms this hypothesis: according to Richard Goldwaithe and Tim Carter, the 6 October 1600 performance of *Euridice* was actually not the first.[90] Instead, a courtly staging of the opera was performed on 28 May 1600 in the Palazzo Pitti at the request of Christina of Lorraine. The performance took place in the *salone* of the apartment occupied by Falvia Peretti Orsini, the noble wife of

87 Ibid., scene 4, p. xxxi.

88 On the encomiastic uses of art among the Medici, see in particular Janet Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

89 Though Euridice could well represent Maria, it is difficult to associate Orfeo with Henry, who did not even come as far as Florence to claim his bride, while Orfeo miraculously rescued his from Inferno. Any association of Orfeo with Ferdinando is also fragile, as it can only be substantiated with elements external to the work itself. See Kelley Harness, 'Le tre Euridici: Characterization and Allegory in the *Euridici* of Peri and Caccini', § 7.2 to 7.5, which brings in Agnolo Bronzino's famous portrait of Ferdinando's father, Cosimo I, as Orpheus, arguing that it provides a key to the meaning of Peri's work. The *Portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici as Orpheus* (1537–1539?) is currently held in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and shows Orfeo/Cosimo seated in the nude; it was probably a wedding gift intended for Eleonora of Toledo. The problem with this argument is that the portrait is of Cosimo, not Ferdinando, and is at least forty years older than *Euridice*.

90 Goldwaithe and Carter, *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, p. 113. The document is a brief note dated 9 June 1600 that contains very few details (ASF Guardaroba Medicea 1152, fol. 148).

Virginio Orsini (1572–1615), second Duke of Bracciano, an active patron of the arts in late sixteenth-century Florence.[91] This young duke was the son of one of Cosimo I's daughters, Isabella de' Medici, who was murdered by her husband for infidelity in 1576. Orsini also had strong ties to the Alterati, whose gatherings he sometimes attended.[92] The choice of his wife's apartment as the first venue in which to showcase *Euridice* echoes the choice of Don Antonio's lodgings for the October performance. All of these spaces were somewhat peripheral *loci*, which belonged (or had belonged) to Medici princes whose status at court was tangential, even though missions were occasionally awarded to them, and they disposed (though sometimes only for a time) of lodgings in the grand ducal residence.[93] The repeated use of such venues suggests that Peri, Rinuccini, and possibly even Corsi himself not only also occupied a somewhat marginal position in the economy of the Medici court, but also were intent on

91 See Valerio Morucci, 'Poets and Musicians in the Roman-Florentine Circle of Virginio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano (1572–1615)', *Early Music*, advance access published 21 January 2015, doi:10.1093/em/cau131.

92 Orsini, then twenty-five-years old, was the dedicatee of a collection of academic orations given by Giacomini before the Alterati and published shortly before Giacomini's death: see *Orationi e discorsi di Lorenzo Giacomini Tebalducci Malespini* (Florence: Sermartelli, 1597). A letter written by the Alterato Cosimo Minerbetti in January 1613 to Cosimo II and his first secretary, Andreo Cioli, also testifies to the fact that the Duke of Bracciano was usually present on major Alterati occasions. In response to a specific enquiry, Minerbetti indicated: 'Sono stato hoggi dal Signor Giovan Battista Strozzi, per informarmi del particulare, che si desiderava da loro S.S. et egli mi ha detto, ch'il Signore Don Giovanni Medici, et il Signore Don Virgilio [*sic*] Orsini furono presenti l'anno 1596 all'oratione che recitò publicamente il Signore Lorenzo Giacomini nell'Accademia degl'Alterati sopra le lodi di Torquato Tasso, alla quale si trovò ancora l'istesso Signore Giovambattista [Strozzi].' ASF Mediceo del Principato 1351, fol. 34r–v. The presence of Don Virginio Orsini and Don Giovanni de' Medici at this semi-public occasion is quite revealing, since both of these Medici princes, like Don Antonio himself, held a marginal position at court (either because they were illegitimate Medici offspring or because they descended from delegitimized family members). The Alterati were clearly systematically cultivating court figures that were not among the most powerful and central members of the dynasty.

93 The frailty of these men's curial positions is exemplified in the trajectory of Don Giovanni de' Medici, on which see Brendan Dooley, *A Mattress Maker's Daughter: The Renaissance Romance of Don Giovanni de' Medici and Livia Vernazza* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014). Dooley shows how Don Giovanni's romance with Livia Vernazza quickly alienated him from the Medici court, making it necessary for him to settle in Venice. After Don Giovanni's death in Murano in 1621, the Grand Duke fiercely went after the copious fortune this wealthy Medici bastard had left his wife and their surviving son, and managed to take most of it back from Livia.

remaining somewhat peripheral. In this respect, *Euridice* might also be read as a meta-theatrical production of yet another kind, namely as a performance allegorically reflecting on the outsider position its creators were defining for themselves and their art at court—precisely by means of their art itself. In this strictly contextual reading—which would have been no less familiar to early modern spectators than the broader philosophical readings considered above—*Euridice* becomes a theatrical figuration of the type of relationship to political power these poets, musicians, and patrons hoped both they and their crafts might maintain. But what kind of relationship, exactly, did these men imagine, and how was it different from the types of relationship between art and power that were the norm at the Medici court?

The answer to this question is primarily to be found in the final half of *Euridice*, in whose scenes the spiritual power of poetry and music, when supported by true and generous (or charitable) love, is represented as capable of swaying absolute power itself. Indeed, the fact that Orfeo's art manages to convince Pluto to change his own laws suggests that poetry and music, when practiced at the level of virtuosity, have greater insights into what is right—and greater power over not only men but also nature itself—than does political might. This is first and foremost because music and art are capable of recreating God's worldly creations. As such, they partake in divinity itself and even possess the power to harness the cosmic forces that rule the world—thus trumping, in certain circumstances, all forms of terrestrial power. Yet, although the opera stresses that artists possess, via their art, a might comparable only to God's own, *Euridice* does not suggest that poets and musicians should themselves become rulers. Rather, as does Orfeo with Pluto, they are to negotiate continuously with those in power so as to be free to impose not only their practices but also their views. Accordingly, Orfeo's status as a demigod and his quasi-immortality as a creator are emphasised during his triumph, through the superposition of his figure on that of Apollo:

> Ma qual poi del sacro umore
> Sparge il core
> Tra i mortal può dirsi un Dio
> Ei degl'anni il volto eterno
> Prende a scherno
> e la morte e il fosco oblio.
>
> But he who nourishes his heart
> With sacred humours
> Can call himself a God upon men:

He can spurn the eternal flight
Of the ages,
And death, and gloomy oblivion.[94]

For while the seven first stanzas of the finale appear to refer to Apollo (the 'biondo arcier' or 'blond Archer') and only the last mentions Orfeo, both figures actually overlap in Rinuccini's intricate verses, and this implicit superposition underscores Orfeo's triumph: though not himself deified, the bard is hyperbolically likened to the god who presides over music and art. Yet no political destiny is ever evoked as a possible future for Orfeo. This is particularly striking because the association of Orfeo with the figure of King David—who is often represented as ruling Israel through the chanting of his psalms—was quite common throughout the early modern period and might well have been expected by the Palazzo Pitti audience. Instead of invoking a political destiny for Orfeo, however, the opera's finale shows him conspicuously revelling in his own music and profoundly enjoying, on a spiritual level, the love he has just rescued from death: 'armed only with his lyre', he is above all depicted as a 'happy husband' ('lieto sposo') and is therefore interested only in carrying Euridice to the heavens. She is his 'palm' and his sole worldly 'trophy'; he displays no interest whatsoever in political might or in military victories.[95]

This last depiction of Orfeo insists on his independence, particularly *vis-à-vis* political power: once Pluto has been swayed into giving Orfeo the freedom to enjoy both his beloved and his music, the bard appears to prosper in his autonomy, through which the sensual and spiritual powers of his art can be cultivated outside of any social or political obligations, in association with the joys of love. From this perspective, Orfeo's situation with respect to political power at the end of *Euridice* mirrors that which Peri, Rinuccini, and Corsi were hoping to carve out for themselves when they imposed the staging of this work in a somewhat peripheral locus during Maria's wedding festivities. By way of *Euridice* itself, the artists indirectly proclaim that the ideal configuration is one in which political power bows to music, acknowledging its extraordinary capacities and bestowing upon it legitimacy, without insisting that it exist in encomiastic enslavement. In such a configuration, music, dance, and poetry serve the prince only as much as is needed for these activities to acquire the freedom they require to exist as independent skills and thereby procure the enjoyment that defines them as arts.

94 Jacopo Peri, *Euridice*, scene 5, p. xxxvii.

95 Ibid.: 'Ma che più? S'al negro lito | Scende ardito | Sol di cetra armato Orfeo, | E del regno tenebroso | Lieto sposo | Porta al ciel palma, e trofeo.'

In other words, while artists are represented as acknowledging the power of important political actors in *Euridice*, they are shown to do it only enough to obtain the recognition and freedom that will allow their art to develop according to its own rules and necessities. Two separate spheres or regimes are therefore defined allegorically over the course of *Euridice*: that of political practice and that of artistic activity. These two spheres are clearly depicted by the opera as connected: they are in fact shown to be the product of a reciprocal exchange.[96] But *Euridice* also stresses that these practices are fundamentally distinct in their goals and in their modes of functioning. This theoretical configuration was also echoed in practice by the behaviour of Peri, Rinuccini, and Corsi at court: while the creators of *Euridice* appeared to be courting the Medici with a sumptuous *divertimento*, they were simultaneously distancing themselves, as artists, from the rulers of Florence by circulating, within this very spectacle, conceptions of artistic practices that did not submit art exclusively to the needs of a patron.

Such understandings of art and of its relationship to political power were in all probability honed amid the Alterati. Indeed, members of the academy experimented at length, both collectively and individually, with the idea that art, though needing to respect the existing political framework, should not be subjected to short-term political goals. They also attempted to define a place for artistic practice that would provide artists the freedom to obey the rationality of their craft, rather than impose upon them the necessity to serve power. In particular, the Alterati stressed that creators should be granted the liberty to set, for their art, goals that they themselves felt were appropriate—goals that academy members generally understood to be the production of pleasure in the audience, along with the moral and cognitive benefits they believed were attached to the enjoyment of artistic productions. In many of these debates, the academicians also recognized that art must not infringe on moral and political rules, thus pointing, in matters of art and power, to a dual regime involving both independence and interaction.

A hitherto unpublished manuscript by Filippo Sassetti offers one of the best examples of these (occasionally laborious) efforts to sort out the respective places of politics, poetry, and poetics in the social and political context of the

96 For a description of a comparable exchange in early seventeenth-century France, see Christian Jouhaud, 'Power and Literature: The Terms of the Exchange (1624–1642)', in *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism, and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Richard Burt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 35–82.

Florentine *città*.[97] In this manuscript, which Sassetti probably drafted sometime between 1575 and 1577 but never finished, the academician attempts a linear commentary of Aristotle's *Poetics* in Italian. He seems to have aimed at sketching out a balanced model that would have allowed both for the implementation of good government and for a form of autonomy in artistic practice. In the first part of his commentary, Sassetti stresses that those who govern should always have ultimate authority over the activities of poets, lest artists produce something that could be detrimental to the commonwealth.[98] However, in the second half of the manuscript, Sassetti defines poetics as a discourse aimed principally at assisting poets in the production of works of art that will be sources of pleasure as well as of knowledge for those who contemplate them (fols 119^{v}–124^{r}). As such, he claims, poetics rather than politics must rule over poetry. Though this last claim may seem to contradict Sassetti's initial considerations, it was probably only meant to better underscore his aim of creating boundaries between art and politics. For saying that poetics (rather than politics) should rule over poetry, at the level of its production, is a way to secure an isolated and intervention-free place in which art can develop according to its own standards. In Sassetti's model, it is apparently up to magistrates or princes to decide which of the effects that poetry can produce might (or might not) be good for their subjects or citizens; up to preceptors of poetics like Aristotle to determine how those effects can be achieved to the correct

97 BR 1539, fols 81^{r}–126^{v}. The text bears no title but is clearly in Sassetti's hand, as is most of the rest of the codex.

98 See in particular BR 1539, fols 82^{v}–83^{r}: 'Senza dubbio alcuno, poi che mostrato habbiamo che la poesia ha gran forza indisporre in questa o in quella maniera l'animo de cittadini i governatori o regolatori delle città i Magistrati e Principi, o coloro che alla tranquillità delle cittadi [*sic*] hanno riguardo, saranno coloro che impongono a Poeti che l'opere loro facciano questo e non quell'altro ufficio; imperoche a costoro s'appartiene il pensare alla tranquillità degl'animi de popoli; et alla felicità degli stati e delle Republiche, e questo e quello chi da Aristotile fu detto nel primo [libro] dell' [E]tica; che uno Artificio sovrano si ritrovava ; il quale della felicità teneva cura e la procacciava il Politico addomandandolo; al quale egli tutte le arti sottoposi come le servi alla signora lequali di procacciarle studiano quelle cose che ella comanda per il bene di sua signoria sara adunque l'arte Politica come Regina che chiede a Poeti suoi servi le Poesie che facciano certo e determinato ufficio [*sic*]; [. . .] e si come nel dimonstrare a poeti a quale fine habbiano ad havere le poesie e sara principe e maggior sendo egli la cagione alla quale s'ordinano l'altre cose; cosi egli o d'altri nillo [*sic*] insegnare a' poeti il modo che tenere debbano, sara agli stessi poeti inferiore; avvenga che questi ammaestramenti siano a fine di quella poesia ritrovate; tale adunque sara l'ordine tra queste arti che la Politica sara la piu nobile e la principale come quella chi comanda; dopo a lei sara la Poesia, e nel terzo luogo si riporrà quelle faculta, chi dimostra a poeti in che maniera de[v]ono comporsi le Poesie.'

degree; and up to poets to create satisfactory plays and poems according to the requirements of their art. This understanding is not fully explained by Sassetti, however, since he left his commentary unfinished—possibly because he became convinced that it was neither safe nor timely to circulate a text that developed an understanding of the relationship of political power to the arts which, in the contemporary Florentine context, could be understood as non-conformist.

Nevertheless, it is striking to observe how many of Sassetti's ideas found their way into a work like *Euridice*. This fact testifies to the continued circulation of Sassetti's manuscripts among the Alterati well after his departure for India (where he died in 1588, at the age of 48) and to the powerful intellectual influence he exercised on the academy even after he was no longer a regular participant at its meetings.[99] But the fact that *Euridice*'s meta-discourse on the spiritual value of love, poetry, music, and dance so evidently echoes the aesthetic and ethical debates entered into by Sassetti before 1578 also suggests that, after Sassetti's departure for the Indies, other strategies were devised among the Alterati to work out the theoretical issues that interested them and to circulate their opinions on these politically sensitive topics among Florentine elites. As they moved from exclusion to inclusion at the Medici court, the Alterati also moved, in their literary and artistic production, from theory to fiction—and from largely uncirculated direct speech to the publication of indirect but

99 Many traces of this fascination with Sassetti can be found in the Florentine archives. BML Ashb. 558.2, fol. 82^{r}, for instance, indicates that, on 27 January 1589 (1590), the academy celebrated the memory of Sassetti (who had recently died in Goa) in the presence of both academicians and outside guests: 'Furono all'Accademia gli Academici che si trovarono a Firenze: e s'introdusse buona quantità di forestieri. E l'Rinovellato alla loro presenza recitò l'oratione delle lodi dell'Assettato [Sassetti]: Doppo cio il Tenero lesse una sua ode sopra il medesimo soggetto: E l'Ottavio Rinuccini ne disse ancora egli un'altra fatta da lui nella stessa materia.' BNCF Palat. 497, fols 101^{r}–116^{r} contains a manuscript transcription of many of the texts written or collected for the occasion ('Orazione in lode di Filippo Sassetti morto in Goa nel 1588 di Luigi Alammani', fols 101^{r}–113^{r}; 'Notizia del giorno e della sepoltura di Filippo Sassetti', fol. 113^{v}; 'L'epitafio latino [di. F. Sassetti] composto e mandato a Goa dal fratello Francesco Sassetti', fol. 113^{v}; 'Canzone di Ottavio Rinuccini in lode di Filippo Sassetti all Signor Michael Saladini' ('Tra questo chiaro horrore'), fols 114^{r}–115^{r}; 'Tetrastici di G.B. Strozzi nella morte di Filippo Sassetti' ('Oltre i famosi termini d'Alcide'), fols 115^{r}–116^{r}; 'Sonetto di G.B. Vechietti in morta di Filippo Sassetti' ('Lungi dal natio nido in strana terra'), fol. 116^{r}. By the time Sassetti died in India, Florentine elites more generally had a great interest in him and in his work—particularly his letters from India, of which numerous manuscript copies can still be found in Florence and beyond: see Filippo Sassetti, *Lettere da vari paesi, 1570–1588*, ed. by Vanni Bramanti (Milan: Longanesi & C., 1970).

widely diffused allegorical works. From this perspective, Peri and Rinuccini's melodrama could also be envisaged as a less didactic, rigid, and conspicuous manner through which to circulate, both within and beyond Florence, the understandings of art at which the Alterati had arrived, in theory, prior to 1595. By choosing a court allegory set to heavenly and genuinely innovative music as the vehicle for their theoretical conceptions, the academicians were not only insuring that their ideas would be exposed in a more flexible fashion; they were also endowing their convictions with distinction and grace. In other words, they were spinning their erudition into an object of courtly curiosity, desire, and pleasure, without giving up too many of the daring nuances they had come to explore and promote within their academic gatherings.

4 Conclusion

Understanding *Euridice* as one of the most successful products of the theoretical and artistic endeavours of the Accademia degli Alterati makes its formal innovations seem the least of its audacities. For the work's attempt to blend poetry, music, and dance into a spectacle that remained dramatic at its core—on the model of what classical drama was imagined to have been—may not have been, in fact, its chief novelty. Rather, *Euridice* offered the Florentine court a new type of dramatic experience wherein diction, harmony, and movement worked together to create a totalizing spectacle and generate the feelings of overwhelmedness, astonishment, and enthusiasm that the Alterati associated with *meraviglia*. While Tasso's *Aminta* and Guarini's *Pastor Fido* both advanced similar artistic goals, they did not involve music as did *Euridice*. Furthermore, the opera's experimentation with the theory and practice of court spectacle is far more innovative and provocative than in other contemporary spectacles. For Peri and Rinuccini's creation not only attempted to define the contours of a new courtly experience by integrating music; it also redefined the very place of such court *divertimenti* in the economy of the court—and it did so precisely by praising the power of music.

Court celebrations normally required that those in power (who were usually also the patrons of the festive works) be praised and glorified. But *Euridice* transformed the relatively rigid and codified genre of the court celebration into a collective activity that seems to have had much more to do—in the goals it defined for itself via allegory—with the public musical spectacles that would soon develop in Venetian playhouses than with the politically charged Florentine *intermedi* (or with the Elizabethan court masques). In this respect, it is perhaps not surprising that Peri went on to become a close collaborator

of Claudio Monteverdi, whose operatic works embody the circulation of opera from the courts of northern Italy to the early public theatres of the Venetian Republic.[100] The new kind of dramatic performance Peri and Rinuccini, via *Euridice*, contributed to defining aimed at producing individual enjoyment in a collective setting instead of generating allegiance to the power and worldview of those who ruled over (usually extremely selective) court audiences. This new purpose also brought with it an attempt to redefine the place of artists in the economy of power. *Euridice* made possible the voicing, at court, of a perspective that was not entirely that of the court, and allowed for the creation of what one might call an outsider-insider position. This position could offer, to artists who claimed it, not only a reasonable amount of freedom in court settings and but also a form of public recognition and visibility within these spaces—in the orbit of court culture, as it were, yet somewhat at a distance from it.

Finally, *Euridice* is also an important experiment—even a milestone—with respect to the staging and dissemination of specific theoretical understandings of Aristotle's *Poetics*. The court performances themselves, as well as the subsequent publication of *Euridice* in a set of luxurious book formats, brought into court culture many of the academic discussions to which the Alterati, as dutiful disciples of Vettori, had devoted so much of their time and energy. These publications allowed the work to circulate among a much wider audience, albeit in the guise of a fiction the allegorical meaning of which would have been difficult to reconstitute for anyone who was not already in the know. This type of circulation is very different from that of Giraldi's tragedy *Orbecche* or of Speroni's play *Canace*, which were also the products of intense speculations on the *Poetics*, but whose audiences mostly remained confined to the erudite (and often academic) readership among which the works were produced and subsequently debated. *Euridice*, on the other hand, explores a type of relationship between theory and fiction that is much closer to the one presupposed in the link between Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* and his discourses 'On the Art of Poetry' and 'On the Heroic Poem', or between Guarini's *Pastor Fido* and his *Compendio* on pastoral tragi-comedy. In both of these last instances, poetics were explicitly adapted to the value, needs, and desires of courtly audiences—which constituted the central readership of both Tasso and Guarini—and were circulated as a gloss to works of fiction previously published. In the case of *Euridice*, however, only the work of fiction was circulated. The theory, interestingly enough, was withheld from courtly audiences and is preserved today only in unpublished manuscripts. Yet, the work itself was in fact theory set as

100 See Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

fiction. As such, it attempted to offer its viewers (and readers) a supple and elegant allegorical spectacle that was meant not only to be enjoyed as a fable but also to be deciphered as a statement on art and on the social function of artists. This way of setting theory into fiction may well be *Euridice*'s most profound novelty, both as dramatic experiment and as complex aesthetic experience proposed to early modern audiences.

CHAPTER 4

Il favore degli dei (1690): Meta-Opera and *Metamorphoses* at the Farnese Court

Wendy Heller

In 1690, Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni (1663–1728) and Gian Vincenzo Gravina (1664–1718), along with several of their literary colleagues, established the Arcadian Academy in Rome. Railing against the excesses of the day, their aim was to restore good taste and classical restraint to poetry, art, and opera. That same year, a mere 460 kilometres away, the Farnese court in Parma offered an entertainment that seemed designed to flout the precepts of these well-intentioned reformers.[1] For the marriage of his son Prince Odoardo Farnese (1666–1693) to Dorothea Sofia of Neuberg (1670–1748), Duke Ranuccio II Farnese (1639–1694) spared no expense, capping off the elaborate festivities with what might well be one of the longest operas ever performed: *Il favore degli dei*, a 'drama fantastico musicale' with music by Bernardo Sabadini (d. 1718) and poetry by the prolific Venetian librettist Aurelio Aureli (d. 1718).[2]

Although Sabadini's music does not survive, we are left with a host of paratextual materials to tempt the historical imagination. Aureli's printed libretto, which includes thirteen engravings, provides a vivid sense of a production

1 The object of Crescimbeni's most virulent condemnation was Giacinto Andrea Cicognini's *Giasone* (1649), set by Francesco Cavalli, which Crescimbeni both praised as a most perfect drama and condemned for bringing about the downfall of the genre. Mario Giovanni Crescimbeni, *La bellezza della volgar poesia spiegata in otto dialoghi* (Rome: Buagni, 1700), Dialogo IV, pp. 140–42; Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 276–77. On the aesthetics of the Arcadian Academy, see Susan M. Dixon, *Between the Real and the Ideal: The Accademia degli Arcadi and its Garden in Eighteenth-Century Rome* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006); Stefanie Tcharos, *Opera's Orbit: Music Drama and the Influence of Opera in Arcadian Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

2 On Aureli, see Claudio Mutini, 'Aureli, Aureli', *Dizionario Biografico Italiani*, vol. IV (1962), <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/aurelio-aureli_(Dizionario-Biografico)>; Wendy Heller, 'The Beloved's Image: Handel's *Admeto* and the Statue of Alcestis', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 58 (2005), pp. 559–637; Wendy Heller, 'Poppea's Legacy: The Julio-Claudians on the Venetian Stage', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 36 (2005), pp. 279–302.

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whose opulence was excessive, even by Baroque standards.[3] The unusually large cast included twenty-four principal singers, some of whom were borrowed from neighbouring courts such as Mantua and Modena. In addition, the libretto lists seventeen choruses and seven ballets featuring goddesses, breezes, warriors, nymphs, virgin huntresses, cupids, demons, stars, tritons, graces, fauns, and nereids who populated the stage for this remarkable performance. The set designers, painters, and engineers were also kept busy producing seventeen different sets and no fewer than forty-three machines that bore characters to and fro 'in the air and the earth' ('in aria, e in terra').

To accomplish all of this, Ranuccio II enlisted the aid of some of the period's most renowned stage designers and machinists: Domenico Mauro (fl. 1669–*c*. 1707), who is credited with the invention and painting of the scenes, as well as his brothers Gasparo (fl. 1657–*c*. 1719) and Pietro (fl. 1669–*c*. 1697), who devised the machines. Considered among the principal designers in Venice during the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the Mauro brothers were much in demand at courts outside Venice, including Munich, Turin, Pesaro, and Milan.[4] The scenes for the opera's royal baths were designed and executed by a member of another family who would dominate stage design in the eighteenth century: Ferdinando Galli di Bibiena (1657–1743).[5]

Not surprisingly, all of this resulted in an unusually long performance—as many as eight hours, according to the court publicist Giuseppe Notari:

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3 Aurelio Aureli, *Il favore degli dei, Drama Fantastico musical Fatto Rappresentare dal Serenissima Sig. Duca di Parma* (Parma: Stampa Ducale, 1690). On the Parma entertainments, see Lina Balestrieri, *Feste e spettacoli alla corte dei Farnesi: contributo all storia del meodramma* (Parma: Palatina Editrice, 1981), pp. 48–49; Giuseppe Cirillo and Giovanni Godi, *Il trionfo del barocco a Parma nelle feste farnesiane del 1690* (Parma: Banca Emiliana, 1989); Irène Mamczarz, *Le Théâtre Farnese de Parme et le drame musical italien (1618–1734): étude d'un lieu théâtral, des rapresentations, des formes, drame pastoral, intermèdes, opéra-tournoi, drame musicale* (Florence: Olschki, 1988); Cesare Molinari, *Le nozze degli dèi: Un saggio sul grande spettacolo italiano nel Seicento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1968).

4 Mercedes Viale Ferraro, 'The Evolution of Stage Design', in *Opera on Stage: The History of Italian Opera*, part II, vol. V, ed. by Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, trans. by Kate Singleton (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002), p. 53; Evan Baker, *From the Score to the Stage: An Illustrated History of Continental Opera Production and Staging* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

5 Anna Coccioli Matroviti, 'Galli Bibiena, Ferdinando', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. LI (1968), <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ferdinando-galli-bibiena_(Dizionario-Biografico)>.

> In questo fu rappresentata la grand' opera intitolata *Il Favore degli Dei*; fatica della famosa penna del Sig. Aurelio Aurelii, ben notato al mondo de' letterati, per tante opere date alle stampe, e animata dalla musica del. S. Bernardo Sabadini Mastro [*sic*] di Capella di S.A. Otto ore durò, ne minor tempo richiedeva il grande apparato di macchine, voli, scene, e balli. Qui si vidde il cielo, con tutti i finti suoi numi; la terra, con i suoi boschi, fieri, fiumi, giardini, caverne, monti, e pianure. Il mare, con le sue deità nereidi, tritoni, e mostri; l'inferno, con la reggia di Pluto, mostri, demonii, e serpenti.[6]
>
> In this [Teatro Farnese] the grand opera entitled *Il favore degli Dei* was presented, the famous pen of Signor Aurelio Aureli, well-known in the world of literary figures for having published so many works and having animated the music of Signor Bernardo Sabadini, master of music in the chapel of His Highness. It lasted eight hours, however it seemed but brief time on account of the great apparatus of machines, flights, scene changes, and dances. Here one saw the heavens, with all their feigned gods; the earth, with its forests, beasts, rivers, gardens, caverns, mountains, and plants; the sea, with its nereids, gods, tritons, and monsters; Hell, with the kingdom of Pluto, monsters, demons, and serpents.

Notari goes on to report that the *comparse* (extras) were so numerous that they seemed like armies. But if there were crowds on the stage, that did not compare to the audience, for indeed this was an entertainment presented by crowds of performers for an even larger audience. Notari claimed—'without hyperbole'—that 'there was a city on the stage, and a province in the theatre', estimating that there were 14,000 spectators.[7] This was entertainment for the masses in its most luxurious form.

The prolific French writer and traveler Casimir Freschot, who estimated that the opera lasted seven to eight hours was particularly impressed by the marvels evoked by the rapidity of the scene changes:

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6 Giuseppe Notari, *Descritione delle feste Fatte eseguire con Reale magnificenza nella città di Parma, il Mese di Maggio 1690. dal Serenissimo signor Duca Ranuccio II. per le nozze del serenissimo principe Odoardo Farnese suo primogenito con la serenissima principessa Dorotea Sofia Palatina di Neoburgo* (Parma: Rosati, 1690), p. 50. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine. Orthography and punctuation of the Italian passages are lightly edited according to modern usage.

7 Notari, *Descritione*, p. 50: 'senza iperbole raccontar si poteva, che sopra la scena v'era un epilogata una Città, e nel vasto Teatro un provincial, calcondosi il numero de' Spettatori a 14. Mila.'

> L'Opera qu'il fit répresenter dans le grand Théâtre dura sept à huit heures, et on vit paroître sur la scène toutes les plus riches décorations, et les plus admirables machines que l'Art sçut inventer. On a vû cet Opéra tous les deux fois qu'il fut representé: le premier en faveur des étrangers; et le second en faveur des sujets, et on avoüe qu'il paroissoit qu'on fut un païs enchanté, ou tou changeoit à tout moment, et les merveilles se succédoient l'une à l'autre, sans laisser le temps de réfléchir, laquelle étoit la plus admirable.
>
> The opera that was presented in the grand theatre lasted seven to eight hours, and one saw appear on the stage all the richest decorations and the most admirable machines that art could invent. We saw the opera both times it was presented; the first for the benefit of the foreigners, and the second for the subjects, and we confess that it appeared that we were in an enchanted palace, where everything changed all the time, and the marvels followed themselves one upon the other without leaving time for reflection, in a manner that was most admirable.[8]

Il favore degli dei, with its use of music, poetry, and visual spectacle to represent the mythological gods and the entire cosmos, shares many features with numerous spectacular musical entertainments produced for dynastic events throughout Europe in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of which the six *intermedi* for Girolamo Bargagli's *La Pellegrina*, presented in Florence in May 1589 as part of the festivities for the marriage of Grand Duke Ferdinando I to Christina of Lorraine, are the paradigmatic example.[9] And while opera historians have always been somewhat suspicious of spectacle for spectacle's sake, the Florentine *intermedi*, as humanistically inspired proto-opera, have somehow been exempt from such criticism, lauded for their moral and cosmological dimensions even as they sought to glorify Medici power. Thus, as Gary Tomlinson notes, the six *intermedi* can be understood as representing the 'graded mythological cosmos' as depicted by early modern mythographers: an orderly realm in which Apollo and his lyre signify therapeutic harmony and ethics of moderation, qualities that can be gleaned as well from the ending

8 Casimir Freschot, *Etat ancien et moderne des duchés de Florence Modène, Mantoue et Parme* (Utrecht: Guilaume Broedelet-Giuliaume von Poolsum, 1711), pp. 512–13.

9 Alois M. Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539–1637* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); James Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589: Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, which is occasionally disparaged, as he notes, for its 'stagey apotheosis'.[10]

But are these same aesthetic principles operating one hundred years later in *Il favore degli dei*? Should we regard this late seventeenth-century operatic extravaganza as a relic of the past, espousing the neoplatonic goals so often attributed to the Florentine *intermedi*, while also trifling with the same mythological *topoi* that were so prominent in the first operas? Or perhaps it is merely an example of unrestrained and tasteless musico-theatrical excess—and of the rejection of classical procedures at the end of the Seicento that so justified the complaints of Crescimbeni and his colleagues in the Arcadian Academy. It may well be, however, that neither formulation is adequate to explain this work, for *Il favore degli dei* is in fact quite faithful to the ancients, but not in a manner that accords with notions associated with Arcadian reforms. Rather, this extravagant performance can be best understood as the product of a different brand of humanism—an offshoot of the Venetian operatic tradition that embraces what might be described as 'Ovidian dramaturgy'—wherein the straightforward adaptions of Ovidian myths undertaken in the first operas were discarded in favour of a playful, irreverent, complex, and often sensual exploration of the Arcadian realm that was intended to overwhelm the spectator.[11] The first opera librettists may have borrowed some of their plots from Ovid and the creators of the *intermedi* may have captivated audiences with the combination of music and stage spectacle. Yet, it is likely only a seventeenth-century librettist, skilled at crafting librettos for the public theatres, who could so deftly adopt Ovid's procedures—the variation and melding of mythic fragments and the embrace of an unstable, chaotic, and changeable universe—and in so doing create a model for court opera that could be readily stretched nearly to the breaking point into an eight-hour extravaganza that would all but empty the Farnese coffers, while providing a tantalizing and seductive entertainment for what—if Notari is to believed—may have been among the largest audiences in the history of the genre.

1 Aurelio Aureli and the Venetian Operatic Libretto

Aurelio Aureli penned his first opera libretto *L'Erginda* in 1657, just twenty years after the establishment of public opera in Venice. By then, Venetian pub-

10 Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 30–33.

11 Wendy Heller, 'Opera Between the Ancients and Moderns', in *Oxford Handbook of Opera*, ed. by Helen Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 275–98.

lic opera had become one of the most celebrated forms of entertainment in Europe. Travelers who flocked to the Most Serene Republic for its famous carnival wrote of their pleasurable experiences at the opera; the Venetian noble families and impresarios who controlled opera developed an extensive network in order to hire the best singers, and libretto dedications bear witness to the many foreign nobles who were captivated by the genre.[12] While there were any number of court theatres that produced music dramas both before and after 1637—the Teatro Farnese in Parma, where *Il favore degli dei* was performed, opened in 1628—by the second half of the seventeenth century Venetian-style opera was the model to be emulated. Those who wished to present operas in public theatres or at court for dynastic celebrations might choose either to adapt an existing Venetian opera for their own production or—if circumstances allowed—to import Venetian artists to design new works. This was the case in Munich, for instance, when Elector Ferdinand Maria (1636–1679) hired librettist Pietro Paolo Bissari (1585–1663) and engineer/designer Francesco Santurini (1627–1682), both of whom had extensive experience on the Venetian stage, to create the lavish festivities in celebration of the birth of his son Maximillian II (1662–1726), although the music was all composed by the court composer Johann Kaspar Kerll (1627–1693).[13] Ranuccio II would take the same approach when he brought Aureli and the Mauro brothers to Parma in the late 1680s, leaving the composing to his court composer, Bernardo Sabadini. Although all of Sabadini's operas were written for the Farnese court after his appointment as court composer in 1686, he had been born in Venice and spent part of his career there at the Ospedale della Pietà (where Vivaldi would later be *maestro di capella*).[14] Therefore, despite the fact that Sabadini had never composed for the Venetian stage, he would certainly have been familiar with the conventions and may even have known Aureli prior to the poet's arrival in Parma.

It is telling that neither Elector Ferdinand Maria of Munich nor Duke Ranuccio II of Parma chose to import a musician with experience composing operas for the Venetian stage, for it suggests that the libretto—more than the musical style—was at the heart of what made Venetian opera distinctive. The librettist was not only responsible for writing the poetry that was to be sung,

12 Beth Lise Glixon and Jonathan Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and his World in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

13 Wendy Heller, 'Loving Theseus: The Spectacle of Feminine Passions on the Munich Stage (1662)', *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis*, 33 (2009), pp. 197–212.

14 Lorenzo Bianconi and Jennifer Williams Brown, 'Sabadini, Bernardo', *Grove Music Online*; *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press): <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/24223>.

but also was arguably the central creative authority in the construction of a seventeenth-century opera.[15] In some instances he may have consulted with patrons or impresarios about the subject of an opera (less commonly the composer), but he was ultimately responsible for the treatment of the subject and for the shape of the plot or plots, which might be newly invented, but which usually involved varying or expanding material derived from one or another classical source. Librettists would add subplots and secondary characters as well as insert comic servants and happy endings into stories that were ostensibly serious or tragic. The librettist also supplied the all-important cues for the composer, machinists, designers, and choreographers. The versification, furthermore, largely determined the musico-dramatic design of an opera—that is, the librettist not only decided what words would be sung at any given moment, but how they would be sung: poetry in *versi sciolti* was typically set as recitative, while poetry intended to be set as arias was typically arranged in a more regular metric pattern, and only the most inventive composers—such as Claudio Monteverdi—often contradicted the dictates of the librettists. The librettist also had considerable control over the visual spectacle since he determined where a given action might take place—in a throne room, gallery, royal garden, forest, or ocean—and might also make many of the critical decisions regarding the *balli* (dances), such as their subject (usually related to the main plot in some way) and characters, as well as the kind of action that the choreographer should represent. Moreover, it is the librettists whose voices we can hear most distinctly today through the *argomenti*, dedications, and prefaces in the printed librettos which—given the scarcity of reviews and critical reports—constitute our most significant body of aesthetic commentary on seventeenth-century opera.

We can gain insights into Aureli's approach by considering his predecessors in the world of Venetian opera, figures such as the citizen-class lawyer and poet Giovanni Francesco Busenello (1598–1659) and the nobleman Giacomo Badoaro (1602–1654), both having collaborated with Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643). Indeed, some of the idiosyncrasies of the Venetian-style libretto were a result of the special circumstances in which the first generation of Venetian librettists worked. Both Busenello and Badoaro, for instance, penned librettos merely as an avocation—as part of the literary activities they pursued in conjunction with the Accademia degli Incogniti, Venice's foremost literary

15 Wendy Heller, *Music in the Baroque* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), pp. 99–101.

academy, to which Aureli also likely belonged.[16] Whether or not Aureli subscribed to the somewhat heterodox teachings of the Incogniti—their skepticism towards conventional morality and their willingness, even eagerness, to circulate and publish works on the *Index of Forbidden Books*—he certainly seems to have absorbed their playful approach to humanism and to the inherited classical tradition, in particular their delight in weaving together multiple tales and in embracing anachronisms that might have horrified Aristotle but would likely have pleased Ovid.

In crafting *Il favore degli dei*, for instance, Aureli may well have looked to Busenello's *Gli amori di Apollo e di Dafne* (Venice, 1640), set by Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676), another mythological opera involving multiple Ovidian tales. In the preface to the libretto, Busenello lays out his aesthetic goals, going so far as to mock 'stingy narrow minds' who 'corrupt the world' for, 'while they endeavor to wear ancient clothing, they render their garments absurd with modern usage.'[17] For Busenello, the path to modernity involved performing his own Ovidian-style metamorphoses on the myths. Who would not have appreciated the joke at the end of *Gli amori* when Busenello, recognizing the parallels in the Daphne and Syrinx myths, contrives for Pan to make an unexpected entrance in the final scene and to offer comfort to the sun god, since he, too, had suffered when his beloved had turned from nymph into vegetation.[18] We find similar games with multiple myths in Giovanni Faustini's (1615–1651) libretto for Cavalli's *La Calisto* (1650), a libretto whose influence, as we shall see, is more than apparent in *Il favore degli dei*.[19]

16 On Venetian opera and the Incogniti, see Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, pp. 37–40, 88–109; Wendy Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 48–81. On Incogniti publications, see Monica Miato, *L'accademia degli Incogniti di Giovanni Francesco Loredano: Venezia, 1631–1661* (Florence: Olschki, 1998); Tiziana Menegatti, *Ex ignoto notus: Bibliografia delle opere a stampa del principle degli Incogniti: Giovanni Francesco Loredano* (Padua: 11 Poligrafo, 2000).

17 Giovanni Busenello, *Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne* (Venice: Giuliani, 1656), 7: "Gl'ingegni Stitici hanno corrotto il mondo, perché mentre sti studia di portar l'abito antico, si rendono le vesti riducole all' usanza moderna." See also Wendy Heller, 'Daphne's Dilemma: Desire as Metamorphosis in Early Modern Opera', in *Structures of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century Expressive Culture*, ed. by Susan McClary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 175–208.

18 Heller, 'Daphne's Desire', pp. 192–93.

19 Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence*, pp. 181–94.

2 Aureli and the Farnese

By the time the second generation of Venetian librettists—which included not only Aureli but also such figures as the nobleman Nicolò Minato (1627–1698)—came on the scene, the business of opera was sufficiently well established that they were able transform libretto writing from a hobby into a reasonably lucrative profession.[20] Over a career that spanned some five decades, Aureli would pen over fifty original librettos and adapt a number of others. When Ranuccio II invited him to Parma in the late 1680s, Aureli had been producing operas in Venice for over thirty years, collaborating with virtually all of the major composers of the period (and more than a few minor ones) and working closely with designers and machinists (such as the Mauro brothers), choreographers, and costumers. Although he was certainly adept at writing poetry that composers found congenial for musical setting, Aureli's true genius lay, arguably, in his ability to expand inventively a vast range of mythological and historical material while perfectly conforming to (and further establishing) the evolving conventions of the genre. The range of sources that he plumbed is impressive indeed, and includes Tacitus (*Claudio Cesare*, 1672), Eurpides (*Antigona delusa da Alceste*, 1660), Ariosto (*Olimpia vendicata*, 1683), and Ovid (*Perseo*, 1665), to name but a few. His works consistently display both a playful erudition and a practical knowledge of how to craft an opera that would succeed on the Venetian stage, as well as good instincts about how a libretto must be altered to suit the demands of more conservative patrons and audiences outside of Venice. Thus, for the opening of the newly renovated Teatro Farnese in 1688, when Aureli apparently did not have time to write a new libretto, he revised his *Olimpia vendicata* (Venice, 1682) to the somewhat more benign *Olimpia placata*, adding at least one new character and a different conclusion. This was the first of a half-dozen operas he would revise in Parma in collaboration with Sabadini.

The two central pieces he wrote for the Parma wedding, *Gloria d'amore* and *Il favore degli dei* were entirely original, however. Even taking into account the typically effusive language of dedications, Aureli seems to have been particularly enthusiastic about this opportunity, for indeed this would have been a rare chance for the librettist to practice his craft without the kinds of financial constraints that were necessarily part of the business of opera in Venice. Nevertheless, it is apparent from his detailed comments in the preface to *Il favore degli dei* that the assignment presented something of a challenge, even for a librettist as experienced as Aureli. He writes as follows:

20 Glixon and Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera*, pp. 109–39.

> Così in esso rappresentandosi qualche drama non mai scompagnato da moltiplicità di musici, da varietà di scene, e da quantità di machine, fù, e sarà sempre chi ha scritto, e scriverà per il medesimo in simile ocorrenze costretto a passar la misura dell'ore limitate all'altre dramatiche composizioni.
>
> In order to present a drama that is not disorganized because of the many musicians, variety of scene changes, and a large number of machines, it was (and always will be for anyone who has written or intends to write under similar circumstances) necessary to go beyond the normal number of hours allotted for other dramatic compositions.

The inordinate length of the opera, Aureli explains, was necessary in order to create a unified work that would accommodate so many singers, machines, and set changes, a problem that could not be solved in any other way by any other poet, past, present, or future.[21] For our purposes, what is particularly interesting is the way in which Aureli calls upon the principles of classical rhetoric—*invenzione* and *disposizione*—to describe his strategies.

> Due cose in questo drama hò studiate [*sic*]. Invenzione parte necessaria ad ogni poeta, e Disposizione delle cose inventate. Nella prima hò procurato con la varietà dell'apparenze di recar diletto, non tedio all grandezza, e nobilità de' spettatori nel corso di sett'ore, che può forse durare la recitata dell'opera, in cui mi dichiar d'essermi scapricciato a mia voglia mercé alla generosità senza pari di S.A.S. mio clementissimo Patrone, che mi ha concesso ampio campo di poter farlo. Nell'altro ho impiegato ogni studio per trovare quella facilità più propria al drameggiare.[22]
>
> I have studied two things in this drama: invention, a necessity for every poet and the disposition of the invented things. For the first [invention] I tried with variety of appearances to inspire delight rather than tedium in the great and noble spectators over the course of the seven hours that the performance of the opera might last, in which I declared myself to be free to indulge my fantasies, thanks to the incomparable generosity of his Excellency, my most forgiving patron, who had conceded to me ample free space in which to do so. For the second

21 Aureli, *Il favore degli dei*, p. v.

22 Ibid.

> [disposition], I devoted all of my studies to find that method most appropriate to dramatise [drameggiare].

Aureli's discussion of invention is by no means unusual, for indeed he is one of any number of Venetian librettists who prided themselves on their originality, even as they blamed audience taste for their most extravagant flights of fancy. More intriguing, however, is his discussion of the disposition (*disposizione*) of the work. Since, as he argued, the work had to be very long in order to be both unified and accommodate the large cast and special effects, it was the organization over the course of so long a drama that provided the greatest challenge—one that inspired him to invent a new term to describe his procedure: he uses the word *drameggiare* rather than the standard Italian *dramatizzare*. The use of the suffix '-eggiare', with its suggestion of a continuous process or repeated action, implies that he sought a special and, arguably, more dynamic approach to the disposition of the drama in order to create a work that would satisfy the demands of spectacle over such a long evening yet still be reasonably coherent.

3 Ovid and Meta-Opera

Aureli found the answer to this dilemma by returning to a source that he had used several times in the past and that had been of huge importance to opera librettists since the genre's inception: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Over his long and distinguished career, Aureli had written a number of operas inspired by myths best known from this remarkable poem. These include *L'Orfeo* (Venice, 1671), *Medea in Atene* (Venice, 1676), *Gli amori di Apollo e Leucotoe* (Venice, 1663), and *Perseo* (Venice, 1665), the latter of which includes an unusually detailed discussion of Ovid's treatment of the myth of Perseus as part of its *argomento.* The *Perseo argomento* provides an excellent example of the approach to classical sources adopted by most mid-seventeenth-century Venetian librettists. As was often the practice, Aureli divides his *argomento* into two parts. First, he cites the principal plot of the opera derived from the source—in this case Perseus's encounter with Medusa and his rescue of Andromeda from *Met.* IV. 604–803 and V. 1–249—summarizing Ovid's narrative under the rubric 'concerning that which one has from Ovid' ('di quello si ha da Ovidio'). He then begins the second half of the *argomento* with the phrase 'concerning that which one invents' ('di quello si finge'), therein describing his particular additions and variations to the plot. These usually involve expanding the time frame of the myth and inventing new characters, most often with the goal of creating another pair of

lovers and of heightening the dramatic tension created by erotic triangles. All of this allows for the insertion of plot devices that were particularly popular in seventeenth-century Venice. Thus we find in *Perseo* a new character (Merope, daughter of King Atlante of Mauritania) who, having been abandoned by a certain Sisifo (who was also in love with Andromeda), dresses up as an African page in order to pursue her unfaithful lover.

Nonetheless, as Aureli's comments in the preface to *Il favore degli dei* make apparent, an opera based on one or even two plots—even with these typical expansions—would not be adequate to satisfy the Farnese requirements for this special occasion. Instead of borrowing just one plot from Ovid and adding the usual ornamentation, therefore, Aureli borrows several; in so doing, he emulates the Latin author's method of varying and weaving together myths in an inventive fashion.

Il favore degli dei can be broken down into four distinctive plot strands. The master plot, which provides a justification for the other myths, features a character who is discussed only in passing in the *Metamorphoses*: the mother goddess Berecynthia. Also known as Cybele, Berecynthia had made an appearance with other goddesses in the sixth *intermedio* for *La Pellegrina*, mentioned earlier. Although it plays no role in his opera, Aureli would certainly have been familiar with Berecynthia's mythic association with a metamorphosis described in *Met*. X. 104–05 concerning the boy Attis, who was much beloved by the goddess. Attis broke his vow of chastity and was banished from her service, at which point he castrated himself and was transformed into a tree.[23] Indeed, given the importance of castrati to seventeenth-century opera, it may have been of no small interest to Aureli that self-castration was a requirement of the priests who served Berecynthia and who reportedly produced ecstatic and orgiastic music in her honor. As already noted, this somewhat lurid aspect of the myth does not enter into the opera, however. Instead, here Berecynthia takes on an exclusively motherly role: at the bidding of Hymen, it is her task to bring the badly behaved gods together to applaud the marriage of Odoardo and Dorothea Sofia.

The other three plots focus on the licentious loves of the gods that would have been well known to readers of Ovid (and of various translations of and

23 *Cybelle, Attis, and the Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermasern*, ed. by Eugene N. Lane (Leiden: Brill, 1996). Vincenzo Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei degli antichi*, ed. by Ginetta Auzzas, Federica Martignago, Manilo Pastore Stocchi, and Paolo Rigo (Vicenza: Neri Pozza 1996), pp. 184–85. Cartari's guide to mythology, first published in 1571, circulated widely in the seventeenth century and was an important reference source for both artists and librettists.

commentaries on his works) as well as to viewers of the numerous paintings, statues, and frescoes that his writings inspired.[24] By 1690, moreover, these myths had become part of opera's collective memory. Ovid was renowned for his ability to transform familiar myths and to weave them together in new ways; as suggested earlier, this is in fact precisely what Aureli does with the operatic tradition that he both inherited and contributed to, thus creating a kind of meta-operatic experience for the guests at the Farnese wedding, many of whom would have seen the originals in Venice. It is thus not surprising that Aureli would use the tale of Apollo's love for Daphne and her transformation into a laurel tree from *Met.* I. 451–566, which furnished the subject of the first opera libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini and was also, as noted earlier, adopted by Busenello for *Gli amori*—a work that Aureli had imitated in his own *Gli amori di Apollo e Leucotoe*, based on *Met.* IV. 196–255. The second plot involves the love triangle between Venus, Adonis, and Mars, borrowed both from Ovid (*Met.* X. 503–59) and from Giambattista Marino's controversial poem *Adone* (1621). Elements of the story had been seen several times on the Venetian stage in such works as Paolo Vendramino's *Adone* (1639), with music by Francesco Manelli, and Giovanni Matteo Giannini's *Adone in Cipro* (1675–1676), with music by Giovanni Legrenzi. In *Il favore degli dei*, Venus pretends to be in love with Mars, but is in fact pursuing her desire for Adone, championed by her son Cupid, who—in his battles with Mars—invariably proves that love is stronger than war.

Aureli is perhaps most inventive in his treatment of the tale of Callisto from *Met.* II. 409–507, a myth, as mentioned earlier, that was seen on the Venetian stage in 1650. In Giovanni Faustini's playful variation of Ovid, Jove's rape of Callisto in the guise of Diana is presented as a flirtatious love scene between two women in which Callisto participates quite eagerly.[25] Citing the need to present 'a more proper version of love' in *Il favore*, Aureli opts to have his Jove seduce Callisto in the guise of a shepherd, thus avoiding both the sexual violence of the original and the sexual titillation of the Venetian version.[26] He seems, however, to have had Faustini's libretto at hand when he crafted the

24 Paul Barolsky, *Ovid and the Metamorphoses of Modern Art from Botticelli to Picasso* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

25 Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence*, pp. 191–92.

26 *Il favore degli dei*, p. viii: 'Averti che se fu favola de' Poeti lo scricvere, che Giove, transformato in Diana ingannasse Calisto Vergine seguace di quella Dea per indurla a compiacere all'amorose sue brame; Et io per rappresentarti con maggior onestà questo amore pretender aver potuto inventar, che quel Nume in forma di Pastore amoreggi tra le Selve la Bella, porgendo ciò maggior materia d'intreccio al mio Drama.'

passage in which Jove tries to seduce Callisto: in Faustini's opera, Callisto is thirsty because the forest has been destroyed as a result of Phaeton's fire;[27] Jove tries to lure her to him by restoring the fountains and by providing her with much needed water, suggestively urging the nymph to wrap her coral lips around the crystal stream. Aureli not only uses the same plot device, but also borrows much of Faustini's language:

Faustini, *La Calisto*, I. 2. 42–46	Aureli, *Il favore*, I. 15. 50–53
Vedi de la sorgente	
In coppia scaturir fredd'i christalli.	In quei cristalli
De la tua dolce bocca amorosetta,	Immergi o cara immergi
Vaga mia languidetta,	De tue labra amorose i bei coralli.
Ne londa usicta immergi i bei coralli.	
See how from the spring	
The icy crystals burst forth.	In these crystals
My lovely languid one,	Immerse, oh dear one, immerse
Into the jetting waves,	The beautiful corals of your loving lips.
Immerse the beautiful coral lips of your loving mouth.	

But Aureli's Ovidian variations go further: in this version of the tale, Juno does not turn Callisto into a bear—this too might have seemed overly violent for the court audience in Parma. Instead, he stirs in a fifth myth, never mentioned in the prefatory material: the tale of Callisto in *Met.* II is conflated with the story of Andromeda and Perseus in *Met.* IV. Juno contrives for the breezes to carry the unfortunate nymph away, where she is tied to a rock, only to be rescued by Perseus carrying aloft the shield with Medusa's image. This, of course, was no error—Aureli did not forget his Ovid: his primary reference point for this unusual move was not only Ovid, but also his own *Perseo* (discussed above) that had been produced in Venice some twenty-five years previously.

4 *Invenzione* and *Disposizione*

Having used his poetic imagination to choose the myths for his opera, Aureli was then confronted with the problem of how to arrange them in a manner that was not too *scompagnata* (disconnected), while creating the dramatic

27 Giovanni Faustini, *La Calisto* (Venice: Giuliani, 1651).

impetus for the scenery and stage machinery in order to satisfy his patrons' desire for elaborate spectacle. Or, to put it in his words, the problem was how to find the best method to create drama—*drameggiare*.

We can learn something about Aureli's process by considering the dramatic design of act I (see Table 1). After setting up the master plot concerning Berecynthia and Hymen, Aureli introduces the major characters and the various dramatic conflicts. To make things still more complicated, act I contains six different settings: the Kingdom of Juno (1–2); the countryside with Berecynthia's temple in the background (3–8); the Kingdom of Mars (9–11); the royal baths of Arcadia (12–20); the lush valley irrigated by the River Peneus (21–25); and Venus's House of Pleasure (26–27). Notably, Aureli does not necessarily coordinate the shifts from one plot to another with scene changes, nor

TABLE 1 *Distribution of plot elements, scenes, and set changes, Act I,* Il favore degli dei

Scenes	Berecynthia-Hymen	Juno-Callisto-Jove	Venus-Mars-Adonis	Apollo-Daphne-Peneus
Act I. 1		**1. Kingdom of Juno** Juno, Fame		
Act I. 2	Hymen flying on a swan			
Act I. 3–5	**2. Country, with Berecynthia's Temple** Berecynthia, Hymen, then Mercury			
Act I. 6–8		Juno with the breezes, then Momo		

Scenes	Berecynthia-Hymen	Juno-Callisto-Jove	Venus-Mars-Adonis	Apollo-Daphne-Peneus
Act I. 9–11			**3. Kingdom of Mars** Mars, Jealousy, then Venus	
Act I. 12–13		Callisto, chorus of virgin hunters with Adonis	**4. Royal Baths of Arcadia** Adonis with Callisto	
Act I. 13 (cont.)–20		Callisto, Jove disguised as a shepherd, Mercury, Momo, later Juno, Diana		
Act I. 21–25				**5. Lush Valley of the Temples** Daphne, Delfa, Peneus, Apollo
Act I. 26–27			**6. Houses of Pleasures** Venus, Mars	

Thick horizontal lines indicate set changes. Dotted vertical lines indicate merging of plot lines.
Sets:
1. Kingdom of Juno, all aglow with the power of shining lights in the middle of the region of the air.
2. Delightful Country with Temple of Berecynthia, in distance.
3. Kingdom of Mars.
4. Royal Baths of Arcadia, in which all the fountains are dried up after the fire caused by Phaeton.
5. Lush Valley of the Temples, irrigated by the River Peneus.
6. Houses of Pleasures.

does he present each plot in an uninterrupted block. Rather, as is apparent from the diagram, there exists an intricate interweaving of the various strands. Thus, for instance, the Juno-Callisto-Jove plot, first introduced in I. 6 and interrupted by the Mars-Venus plot, is continued in I. 13; the next phase of the Mars-Venus plot is introduced only after we've met Apollo and Daphne. Aureli nonetheless achieves a certain degree of stability in the middle of act I by placing scenes 12–20 in a single set—the Arcadian baths—and it is here that the plots featuring Adonis and Callisto are allowed, albeit briefly, to intersect.

The second act, in which there are only five scene changes (see Table 2), is somewhat more orderly. There is only one doubling back of the plot, again involving Juno-Callisto-Jove, which—given the conflation of the Perseus

TABLE 2 *Distribution of plot elements, scenes, and set changes, Act II*, Il favore degli dei

Scenes	Berecynthia-Hymen	Juno-Callisto-Jove	Venus-Mars-Adonis	Apollo-Daphne-Peneus
Act II. 1–3	**1. Mine with Veins of Gold** Hymen, Berecynthia, Pluto			
Act II. 4–5	2. **Underworld with Mine in Background** Mercury, Berecynthia			
Act II. 6–10		**3. Forests of Arcadia** Callisto, Juno, Momo, choruses of breezes, Diana, Jove disguised as a shepherd, Mercury		
Act II. 11–14			Adonis, Venus, Mars, Bear	

Scenes	Berecynthia-Hymen	Juno-Callisto-Jove	Venus-Mars-Adonis	Apollo-Daphne-Peneus
Act II. 15–19				**4. Cloisters of the Temple of Diana** Daphne, Delfa, Apollo, chorus of virgins, Night on her chariot
Act II. 20–25		**5. Deserted Island on the Ocean** Juno, Callisto tied to the rock, Neptune, Momo, Perseus, Mercury		

Thick horizontal lines indicate set changes. Dotted vertical lines indicate merging of plot lines.
Sets:
1. Mine with Veins of Gold, illuminated by various lanterns.
2. Underworld with Mine in Background.
3. Forests of Arcadia.
4. Cloisters of the Temple of Diana.
5. Deserted Island on the Ocean, next to a small rock.

myth—is arguably the most complex of the various plots. Though narratively simpler, act II is enhanced with even greater scenic and architectural variety: the exoticism of an underworld mine with veins of gold and lanterns (1–3) is followed by Pluto's underworld kingdom, a much beloved operatic scene (4–5); the Arcadian forest (6–14), the cloisters for Diana's Temple (15–19), and the final spectacular conclusion take place in the ocean, as Callisto, in her guise as Andromeda tied to a rock, is rescued by Perseus (20–25). As during the first act, the Arcadian forests provide an apt setting for both the Callisto and Adonis tales, and it is here that we find one of Aureli's most clever touches. Although Callisto herself is not turned into a bear, as Ovid had prescribed, it seems that Aureli was unable to eliminate the creature from the story entirely: it appears

unexpectedly in act II on the heels of Juno's banishment of Callisto, seemingly caught wandering into the wrong plot only to be killed by Adonis (11).

As might be expected, Aureli begins to resolve the various plots during the first half of act III (see Table 3). The cavernous mountains by the river Peneus provide the backdrop for the transformation of Daphne into a tree. There is no set change for the next few scenes, as Juno expresses her fury to Berecynthia and Momo, the god of mockery, over the fact that Callisto is still alive (Berecynthia tells Juno to dry her tears as she is not alone in having an unfaithful husband); Mars swears vengeance on Adonis; and Jove promises Callisto that she will ascend to the heavens. The first celebratory scene (III. 13), set in the gallery of Berecynthia's kingdom, is enlivened by the descent of Harmony on a machine to the sounds of a sweet concerto that, due to the loss of the music, can only be imagined. Mars and Juno renounce their jealousy after drinking the waters of forgetfulness, and all ascend to the heavens while the drunken Momo and Daphne's companion Delfa sing a humourous duet. One curious point concerns the seemingly superfluous scenes in Venus's chamber, which is pictured in one of the libretto's engravings. About to attend to one of her cults, Venus allows Adonis to paint her picture so that he might have a memory of his absent beloved. Aureli included the portrait convention in many of his librettos—most notably *L'Antigona*, which would later be revised as Handel's *Admeto*.[28] But in *Il favore* it is, oddly, introduced as part of the *dénouement*—providing a way for Adonis to bid farewell to Venus and to forever worship her beauty, even in her absence. This seemingly conventional plot device reminds us of the relationship between nature and artifice that is central to Ovidian poetics—exemplified, for instance, in the tales of Arachne's web and Pygmalion's statue.[29] The final scene, in Jove's kingdom, provides an opportunity for all the gods (except Venus) to praise the newlyweds.

This description of the dramatic structure and intertwining of *Il favore*'s plots, however, fails to capture a central element of the opera: the instability created by the sudden arrival and departure of the various characters by machines, which must have created the sense of a constantly shifting universe in the eyes of spectators. The second act alone, for example, features no fewer than twenty-seven interventions by machines: not only did the principal gods and goddesses arrive on clouds, fly chariots, or shoot up from the ground, but there were choruses of flying demons, singing stars, dancing sea monsters and

28 Heller, 'The Beloved's Image'.

29 Andrew Feldherr, *Playing Gods: Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Politics of Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 272–80; Maurizio Bettini, *The Portrait of the Lover*, trans. by Laura Gibbs (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

TABLE 3 *Distribution of plot elements, scenes, and set changes, Act III*, Il favore degli dei

Scenes	Berecynthia-Hymen	Juno-Callisto-Jove	Venus-Mars-Adonis	Apollo-Daphne-Peneus
Act III. 1–5				**1. Cavernous Mountains** Daphne, Delfa, Apollo, Peneus
Act III. 6–8	Berecynthia, chorus of nymphs	Juno, Momo		
Act III. 9–10			Mercury, Mars	
Act III. 11–12		Callisto, Jove		
Act III. 13–15	**2. Gallery in Berecynthia's Kingdom** Berecynthia, Harmony	Juno, Jove, Momo	Mars, Mercury	Apollo
Act III. 16–19			**3. Venus's Chamber** Venus, Adonis, Cupid	
Act III. 20	**4. Kingdom of Jove** Hymen, Fame	Jove, Juno, Diana	Mars, Mercury, Cupid	Apollo

Thick horizontal lines indicate set changes. Dotted vertical lines indicate merging of plot lines.
Sets:
1. Cavernous Mountains, at the source of the River Peneus.
2. Delightful Gallery in Berecynthia's Kingdom.
3. Venus's Chamber.
4. Kingdom of Jove.

more—recalling Casimir Freschot's praise for the enchanted palace 'where everything changed all the time and the marvels followed themselves one after another'. The sense of movement was undoubtedly further enhanced by the eight *balli*—four in act I and four in act II—far more than in a typical Venetian opera, where they are usually found at the conclusion of the first and second acts. At the end of act II, for instance, after the rescue of Callisto, the *ballo* included twenty-four tritons, some of whom played trumpets and others of whom danced, darting on the waves.

We are thus left with some idea of how Aureli invoked the magical and shifting universe of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* alongside Venetian opera conventions in his *drama fantastico*. But what might we imagine about Sabadini's music? Indeed, the trumpets in the dance mentioned above suggest that it might have been as impressive musically as it was visually—that it to say, Sabadini likely used a larger and more varied orchestra than the strings typically heard in Venice, invoking Ovid's rich sonic world as well as his visual one. But there may have been another way in which the music quite specifically alluded to Ovid. To illustrate this point, I quote again from the writings of Casmir Freschot and, in particular, from his discussion of the opera's opening sinfonia:

> L'Opera commença par une Simphonie, qui paroissoit être un cry confus de tous les Elements, qui s'efforcoient à se débarasser au premier chaos, où l'on feint qu'ils étoient à la creation du monde. Le rideau tiré, il parût un véritable chaos sur la scène, où tous étoit sans forme, et sans figure, jusqu'à ce que le fracas de la première Musique s'adoucissant peu à peu, on vit sortir du fond du Théâtre formé en abisme des Créatures de toute sorte, qui, rangées dans leurs places, formérent la plus belle scène du monde.
>
> The opera began with a symphony that appeared to be a confused cry of all the elements that tried to rid themselves of the initial chaos, in which one sensed oneself to be present at the creation of the world. The curtain drawn, there appeared a veritable chaos on the stage, where everything was without form and without figure, until the agitation of the first music sweetened little by little, and from an abyss formed at the back of the theatre, we saw spilling out creatures of all sorts who, standing in line in their places, formed the most beautiful scene in the world.[30]

30 Freschot, p. 513.

Perhaps it is not surprising that Sabadini, composing the opening sinfonia for this Ovidian romp—in which the gods and goddesses pursued their lustful desires throughout the earth, seas, underworld, and heavens—would have created an aural equivalent of the act of creation, albeit with pagan overtones. But what is most remarkable is the extent to which Freschot's description of the sinfonia, and his aural sense of a world without 'form or figure', is reminiscent of the opening of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—a work he would surely have known—which begins with a description of creation:

> Before the earth and the sea and the all-encompassing heaven
> came into being, the whole of nature displayed but a single
> face, which men have called Chaos; a crude, unstructured mass,
> nothing but weight without motion, a general conglomeration
> of matter composed of disparate, incompatible elements. (*Met.* I. 5–9)[31]

This is followed a few lines later by a description of the gradual imposition of order:

> When the god, whichever one of the gods, had divided the substance
> of Chaos and ordered it thus in its different constituent members
> first, in order that the earth should hang suspended in perfect
> symmetrical balance, he moulded it into the shape of a great sphere.
> (*Met.* I. 31–34)

This transition from chaos to order reminds us of the dramaturgical design of the opera's three acts and of Aureli's efforts to find that 'facilità più propria al drameggiare'. In mining ancient sources for the Farnese wedding, Aureli and his colleagues embraced a vibrant, playful aspect of the Venetian tradition, pumping it full of extravagance and excess in a manner that invoked not so much the order of the cosmos as its infinite variety. In so doing, they transformed one kind of ritual—Venetian public opera—into another—dynastic court celebration—and, in so doing, acknowledged the power of the genre to enact its own brilliant metamorphoses and to transform the hearts and minds of the spectators.

31 Ovid, *Metamorphoses: A New Verse Translation*, trans. David Raeburn (London: Penguin Books, 2004).

CHAPTER 5

Entertainment for Melancholics: The Public and the Public Stage in Carlo Gozzi's *L'Amore delle tre melarance**

Tatiana Korneeva

L'Amore delle tre melarance (*The Love of the Three Oranges*, 1761), the first in a series of ten meta-theatrical fairy-tale plays by Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806), was initially defined by its author as a 'childish fable' ('favola fanciullesca') completely without serious parts ('ignuda affatto di parti serie')[1] and as 'a tale that grandmothers tell to their grandchildren, adapted to theatrical performance' ('il racconto delle nonne a' loro nipotini, ridotta a scenica rappresentazione').[2] These authorial statements imply that the comedy was merely the dramatisation of an old folk tale, but the description of its avid and passionate public reception ('resoundingly happy transformation, and such an immense diversion for the Public'; 'allegra rivoluzione strepitosa, e una diversione così grande nel Pubblico')[3] suggests that the play's admirers were not the victims of a collective hallucination caused by the *favola*'s overwhelming visual effects of marvels and magical transformations. Even its undisguised satire of contemporary theatrical polemics—specifically the on- and offstage controversies between Carlo Goldoni (1707–1793) and Pietro Chiari (1712–1785) on the reform of Italian comic theatre—can hardly explain *L'Amore*'s immense success with its audiences—both erudite and uncultured—which indicates that there was something more at stake in this fairy-tale comedy. Indeed, in his *Ragionamento*

* This essay grew out of a talk delivered in various forms in Berlin, Oxford, Zürich, and Venice. It is most appropriate that this research on dialogic cultural encounters should have developed in the course of dialogue and that a study about audience responses to Gozzi's drama should itself owe a great deal to the constructive responses of the diverse audiences I encountered in these scholarly venues. For helpful comments, criticisms, and suggestions, I wish to thank Kirill Ospovat and Piermario Vescovo, in particular.

1 All quotations from the play are from Carlo Gozzi, *L'Amore delle tre melarance*, in *Fiabe teatrali*, ed. by Alberto Beniscelli (Milan: Garzanti, 2004), p. 6. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

2 Carlo Gozzi, *Memorie inutili*, ed. by Paolo Bosisio and Valentina Garavaglia. 2 vols (Milan: LED, 2006), I. 34, p. 402.

3 Ibid.

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ingenuo, e storia sincera delle mie dieci fiabe teatrali (*Ingenuous Disquisition, and Sincere History of My Ten Tales for the Theatre*, 1772), and in blatant contradiction to his previous statements, Gozzi admitted that 'the choice of titles, and of childish topics, was nothing more than an insidious art' ('la scelta de' titoli, e degli argomenti fanciulleschi non fu, che un'arte insidiosa'), thus implying that the play was layered with double meaning.[4] Similarly, in his retrospective account of the play's genesis in *Le Memorie inutili* (*The Useless Memoirs*, 1797), the playwright confessed that the comedy's novelty could not be reduced to its satirical subject matter.[5] *L'Amore* was thus allegorical in the specifically eighteenth-century sense of allegory: the play was intended to have a second, non-literal significance.

Also symptomatic in this respect is the review by Gasparo Gozzi (1713–1793) of *L'Amore*'s première, in which the critic observed that the playwright 'had the intention of covering, under an allegorical veil, certain double sentiments and meanings that have a different explanation from what is explicitly declared therein [...]. These novelties and frivolous matters contain no small amount of doctrine' ('ha avuta l'intenzione di coprire sotto il velo allegorico certi doppi sentimenti, e significati, che hanno una spiegazione diversa dalle cose, che vi sono espresse [...] Quelle novelluzze e bagatelle racchiudono non piccola dottrina').[6] With his customary perspicacity Gasparo here raises a fundamental question: is this fairy-tale drama simply a cocktail of narrative structures characteristic of folk tales and *commedia dell'arte* stock characters mixed with topical allusions to Venetian theatrical warfare? It is significant that Gasparo, while emphasising the novelty of his brother Carlo's work and seeing in it the rise of a new dramatic genre, shows no interest in the polemical aspect of the play. In any case, neither Gasparo's questioning of the comedy's presumed

4 Carlo Gozzi, *'Ragionamento ingenuo', e storia sincera dell'origine delle mie dieci fiabe teatrali*, in *Ragionamento ingenuo. Dai 'preamboli' all''Appendice': Scritti di teoria teatrale*, ed. by Anna Scannapieco (Venice: Marsilio, 2013), p. 408. Subsequent quotations from the *Ragionamento ingenuo*, as well as from the *Appendice al 'Ragionamento ingenuo'* and the *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, reference page numbers in this edition.

5 Cf. Gozzi, *Memorie inutili*, I. 34, p. 403: 'la novità d'una tal Fola, ridotta ad azione teatrale, che non lasciava d'essere una parodia arditissima sull'opere del Goldoni, e del Chiari, né vuota di senso allegorico.'

6 Gasparo Gozzi, *Gazzetta Veneta*, 103 (27 January 1761), unpaginated. On Gasparo Gozzi's activity as a theatre reporter, see Alberto Beniscelli, 'I due Gozzi tra critica e pratica teatrale', in *Gasparo Gozzi: Il lavoro di un intellettuale nel Settecento veneziano. Atti del convegno* (*Venezia-Pordenone 4–6 dicembre 1986*), ed. by Ilaria Crotti and Ricciarda Ricorda (Padua: Antenore, 1989), pp. 263–79; Nicola Mangini, 'Gasparo Gozzi, cronista teatrale', in *Gasparo Gozzi*, ed. by Crotti and Ricorda, pp. 315–29.

simplicity nor Carlo's claims (which occlude as much as they bring to light) seem to have attracted the critical attention of either eighteenth-century or more recent interpreters.[7] Drawn instead to the manifestly polemical form of the play,[8] the majority of its critics continue to insist, reductively, that *L'Amore* is little more than a satirical allegory of contemporary Venetian debates on the reform of comic theatre and an undistorted mirror of Gozzi's antagonistic and militant self-posturing.[9]

The polemic against Goldoni's and Chiari's psychologically realistic character comedies and their abandonment of *commedia dell'arte* undeniably occupies a central place in *L'Amore delle tre melarance.* In fact, it was with this very play that Gozzi brought what had already been a vicious assault against his opponents to a new level of intensity and visibility by shifting his attack from pamphlet writings circulating mostly in manuscript form to the highly

7 See *Antologia della critica goldoniana e gozziana*, ed. by Michele Bordin and Anna Scannapieco (Venice: Marsilio, 2009), pp. 249 passim. Two exceptions are Alberto Beniscelli's lucid study of the play's structure in his *La finzione del fiabesco: Studi sul teatro di Carlo Gozzi* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1986), pp. 61–73, and Piermario Vescovo's fine 'Lo specchio e la lente: Il ruolo dello spettatore (1760–62)', in *Gasparo Gozzi: Il lavoro di un intellettuale*, ed. by Crotti and Ricorda, pp. 383–412.

8 It is useful to recall that *L'Amore delle tre melarance* is the only one of Gozzi's plays that was published (both in the Colombani editio princeps of 1772–1774 and in the subsequent Zanardi edition of 1801–1804) not as a fully scripted dramatic text, as was the case for his other nine fairy-tale dramas, but in the unusual form of a 'reflexive analysis' (a term taken from the complete title of the play, *Analisi riflessiva della fiaba 'L'Amore delle tre melarance', Rappresentazione divisa in tre atti*): a dramatic outline with extensive authorial commentary on the comedy's content.

9 The recent discovery of a family archive that sheds new light on Gozzi's compositional process for theatrical and theoretical writings (and the subsequent acquisition of this archive by the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in 2003) has led to a revival of scholarly interest in Gozzi and to the appearance of a number of valuable studies that have highlighted various aspects of the playwright's production. To mention only two of the most recent publications: Javier Gutiérrez Carou, *Metamorfosi drammaturgiche settecentesche: il teatro 'spagnolesco' di Carlo Gozzi* (Venice: lineadacqua, 2011) explores Gozzi's adaptations of Spanish drama from the *Siglo de oro*; Giulietta Bazoli's *L'orditura e la truppa: Le* Fiabe *di Carlo Gozzi tra scrittoio e palcoscenico* (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2012) investigates the playwright's relationship with his comic troupe. While my research is indebted to these and to other recent studies, their tendency is still to see in *L'Amore* an allegory of the theatrical polemic on theatre reform on the one hand and, on the other hand, an allegory of Gozzi's revival of the *commedia* tradition that was intended to counteract his rival Goldoni's abolishment of *commedia* archetypes.

public stage of the playhouse.[10] In this essay, however, I intend to suggest that Gozzi's intentions went far beyond straightforwardly supporting a *commedia dell'arte* comeback at the expense of his antagonists, and that the comedy can in fact be viewed as his artistic manifesto. As such, I would assert that *L'Amore* aptly expresses not only Gozzi's ideas about theatre and spectatorship, but also his socio-political and aesthetic concerns. Although it has been acknowledged by recent scholarship that the play's main sources lie in the fairy-tale and *commedia* traditions,[11] I will argue that Gozzi's claim of having undertaken

10 By the time *L'Amore* premiered on the stage of the San Samuele theatre on 25 January 1761, the battle between Gozzi, Goldoni, and Chiari, which had begun in the late 1750s, was already at its height. Gozzi's pamphlet writings—such as *Il Teatro comico all'osteria del Pellegrino*, *La tartana degl'influssi per l'anno bisestile 1756* (1757), and *La scrittura contestativa al taglio della Tartana* (1758)—however, could not give the playwright his desired level of public visibility in this polemic affair. In particular, the publication of *Il Teatro comico* was unauthorised by the censors; it therefore remained unpublished until 1805. On these issues, see Fabio Soldini's introduction to Carlo Gozzi, *Commedie in commedia. Le gare teatrali. Le convusioni. La cena mal apparecchiata*, ed. by Fabio Soldini and Piermario Vescovo (Venice: Marsilio, 2011), pp. 9–107 (esp. pp. 44–51); Anna Scannapieco, 'Noterelle gozziane ("in margine" al teatro di Antonio Sacco e di Carlo Gozzi): Aggiuntavi qualche schermaglia', *Studi goldoniani*, 11.3, n.s. (2014), pp. 101–23.

11 On folk tales as a principal source of Gozzi's inspiration, see Angelo Fabrizi, 'Carlo Gozzi e la tradizione popolare (a proposito de *L'Amore delle tre melarance*)', *Italianistica*, 7.2 (May–August 1978), pp. 336–45. Fabrizi's analysis of the six Italian versions of *The Love of the Three Oranges* underscores the divergence of Gozzi's play from the literary tradition of fairy tales stemming from Giambattista Basile's collection *Lo Cunto de li cunti* (1634–1636), highlighting instead *L'Amore*'s affinity to Northern Italian folk tales. Vescovo, 'Lo specchio e la lente', and Scannapieco, 'Noterelle gozziane', esp. pp. 112–16, emphasise, on the other hand, Gozzi's heavy reliance on the *commedia* tradition. Both Vescovo and Scannapieco quote from the letters of Abbot Gennaro Patriarchi, a member of the Granelleschi Academy who—in an update to his friend on the novelties of the Venetian stage (and hence on the performance of Gozzi's fairy-tale drama)—wrote on 31 January 1761: 'L'Amore delle tre melarancie è l'antica fiaba, ma tutta allusione come rileverete dalla Gazzetta n° 103. I Comici di S. Samuelo ne sono autori, ma vi so dire che alquanti accidenti o episodj le furono appiccati dal C. Carlo Gozzi per orticheggiare il Goldoni ed il Chiari.' With Patriarchi's account in mind, Vescovo claims that, although the actors were authors of an improvised dialogue ('a soggetto') in the play, the real creator and director of the performance was the playwright. In contrast, according to Scannapieco (who, interestingly, does not mention Vescovo's 1989 analysis of Patriarchi's letter in her article), Gozzi's tacit renouncement of authorship (the play was indeed staged anonymously) reveals that the actors' contribution to the creative process was more decisive than we have yet acknowledged. None of these three scholars' reconstructions of the play's sources contradict each

much 'effort and study [...] on these ten most unproductive subjects, such that works not unworthy of an Audience resulted' ('la fatica, e lo studio [...] in que' dieci sterilissimi argomenti, perché riuscissero opere non indegne d'un Pubblico')[12] hints at his relentless reflection on and appropriation of other philosophical, political, and aesthetic writings. In my opinion, what calls into question the presumed simplicity of the play and explains its dense cross-references to texts not belonging to improvised comedy *canovacci* or to the fairy-tale tradition, is the fact that Gozzi casts the sharp debates over Italian comic theatre reform in distinctively political terms. A reconstruction of references in *L'Amore delle tre melarance* can thus shed new light on the genesis of Gozzi's theatrical tales and strengthen our grasp of his conception of entertainment. In a larger sense, an analysis of the sources upon which the Venetian playwright drew can also highlight how traditions and ideas come into circulation and become accessible. In other words, such an analysis can reveal how the transmission of different forms of knowledge occurs. In addition, given the play's allegorical association of theatregoers in *la Serenissima*—the Venetian Republic—with Gozzi's protagonist prince, who embodies the political antithesis of a republican citizenry, this essay investigates the role of audiences and their responses in both eighteenth-century theatre practice and critical theory.

1 'A Melancholy of My Own'

In order to understand what is fundamentally at stake in Gozzi's project, it will be productive to delve more deeply into the motif of the melancholic sovereign that catalyses the entire action of the comedy. Prince Tartaglia, the protagonist of the play and an allegory of the Venetian public that audience members themselves would have recognised during performances of *L'Amore*,[13] suffers from hypochondriac melancholy. This disease affects the mind and digestive organs of the King of Hearts' only son and heir; the illness was brought upon him,

other, nor do scholars dispute the density of the play's cross-references to other writings, as I will argue in the ensuing pages.

12 Gozzi, *Ragionamento ingenuo*, p. 409.

13 See note 8 on *L'Amore* as an unusual 'reflexive analysis': a sketch of the comedy's content with extensive authorial commentary. Also striking is a fact not yet sufficiently addressed by Gozzi scholarship: though the play was published ten years after its first performance, it gives the impression of having been written down immediately after its première because it describes the public's reaction so vividly.

the audience is told, by two 'melancholic poets' ('poeti [...] malinconic[i]'),[14] whom the author intended (and his audience understood) to be Carlo Goldoni and Pietro Chiari. At war with each other and disguised, respectively, as the magician Celio and the evil fairy Morgana, these two allegorical characters practice magics with political aims. Morgana promotes the cause of Tartaglia's antagonists (Princess Clarice and First Minister Leandro), who want to kill the prince and take his kingdom for themselves. Celio intends to defeat the plotters' plans by sending Truffaldino (who represents *commedia dell'arte*) to the court in order to heal the prince's malady by making him laugh. During feasts and spectacles set up to amuse Tartaglia, fountains of oil and wine are erected in front of the palace with the idea that seeing passers-by slipping and bumping into each other would cheer up the prince, and this indeed occurs: Tartaglia cannot control his laughter when he sees Morgana slip on the oil. Celio and Truffaldino's plan is thus successful, but their victory is short-lived. Infuriated by Truffaldino's insults and by Tartaglia's laughter, Morgana casts a spell that makes the prince fall in love with three magic oranges, allegorically representing the three theatrical genres of comedy, tragedy, and improvised comedy. The quest for these oranges and their eventual acquisition fill the second and the third acts of the comedy. Predictably enough, the play ends with the cured prince's marriage to a maiden hidden inside one of the enchanted oranges—a figure who represents *commedia dell'arte*. In the overtly allegorical and self-reflexive dimension of the play, therefore, the melancholy prince represents the Venetian audience, which is increasingly bored with the reformed plays of Goldoni and Chiari—plays that consciously suppressed improvised comedy. I will argue that the prince's quest for the enchanted oranges allegorises both Gozzi's resuscitation of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition in order to revitalise Italian comic theatre and Tartaglia's evolution as a spectator from passive observer to critically productive audience member.

Every time Gozzi refers to the sources of his fairy-tale drama, he claims to be faithful to the folk tradition, and Angelo Fabrizi has compellingly demonstrated that *L'Amore* corresponds directly to northern Italian folk tales in several places (including the archetype of the prince who no longer laughs).[15] At the same time, melancholy has its own distinct cultural history. Considered by ancient medical doctrine to be a disorder arising from an imbalance in the body's four humours, melancholy came to denote a psychological state and even to acquire a certain intellectual prestige, eventually becoming a subject of fascination that inspired numerous artistic works. As Jean Starobinski puts

14 Gozzi, *L'Amore delle tre melarance*, p. 14.

15 Fabrizi, pp. 339–42.

it, melancholy had a long career, and by the time it arrived on the early modern stage and printed page it was at once understood as a symptom of sickness, a form of madness, a feeling of sadness, a marker of acute intelligence, a way of perceiving the world, a mode of self-fashioning, and a type of personality.[16] Jennifer Radden claims that melancholy was a central cultural idea that served to focus, explain, and organise the way people saw the world and one another;[17] indeed there has always been a strong cultural link between melancholy and theatre, and in particular between melancholy and the genre of comedy as a means of curing humoral disease by provoking positive emotions. Nevertheless, although Gozzi's universe is undeniably comic, the initial situation in *L'Amore* is potentially tragic: Tartaglia's condition is contagious and murderous; it is seen as analogous to the diseased society to which it is, simultaneously, a response.[18] Indeed, Truffaldino is summoned to court in order 'to preserve the king, his son, and all those people from the contagious disease of the aforementioned Martellian verses' ('preservare il re, il figliolo, e tutti que' popoli dal morbo degli accennati brevi [in versi martelliani]').[19] Thus, as Socrates hints in Plato's *Symposium* (223c–d), a comic catastrophe that makes us laugh may at any moment take a turn for the worse and have a real, felt impact on individuals and society. What further elicits audience sympathy for Tartaglia and inspires respect for his (almost) heroic stance is that melancholy in *L'Amore* is both political ploy and weapon aimed at ruining the kingdom and killing the prince. We might thus legitimately inquire whence positive connotations of the prince's melancholy come, and why Gozzi incorporates political terminology in his description of physical disease. Indeed, why set a play about public theatre in republican Venice at an imaginary absolutist court characterised by conspiracy and treacherous intrigues?

By the eighteenth century, melancholy was not only identified as a physical and mental disorder; it also had a long-standing positive association with genius, which can be traced back to the (pseudo-)Aristotelian discussion

16 Jean Starobinski, *Histoire du traitement de la mélancolie des origines à 1900* (Bâle: Geigy, 1960).

17 Jennifer Radden, *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. vii.

18 As Adam Kitzes argues, the introduction of melancholy into early modern discourse in the late 1500s took place in the context of renewed interest in the classical theory of the 'body-politic' which 'had posited an analogy between the individual human body and the collective "body" that political organisations consisted of'. Cf. Adam H. Kitzes, *The Politics of Melancholy from Spencer to Milton* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 5.

19 Gozzi, *L'Amore delle tre melarance*, p. 14.

of melancholy in the *Problemata physica*.[20] Seeing melancholy as a sign of extraordinary brilliance, Aristotle thus reinterpreted the entire problem of the melancholic disposition in terms of a condition of greatness. His examples of outstanding men afflicted by melancholy—Lysander, Ajax, Bellerophontes, Plato, Socrates, and Empedocles—indeed established the archetype of the melancholy man, who was likely to be a philosopher, poet, artist, or politician.

The authority of the (pseudo-)Aristotelian account that established a positive correlation between melancholy and artistic genius proved irresistible over the centuries, and can thus explain Gozzi's fascination with this elite malady. Indeed, the playwright frequently fashioned himself as melancholy man both in his memoirs[21] and in his private correspondence (under the pen name *il Solitario*, 'the Solitary') as a member of the Granelleschi Academy. As Fabio Soldini has pointed out, Gozzi's letters abounded with self-representations of a withdrawn intellectual prone to hypochondria—to the point where he actually titled the correspondence the 'Gazzette ipocondriache'.[22]

Although the (pseudo-)Aristotelian emphasis on melancholy's intellectual prestige clearly offered an attractive model for Gozzi's self-fashioning (as well as for the portrayal of some melancholic characters in his works),[23] it is not my intent to suggest that this model be regarded as the direct source for the melancholy prince in *L'Amore*. Indeed, Tartaglia's condition is not 'natural' (since

20 Aristotle, *Problems*, trans. by W.S. Hett, 2 vols (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1953–57), II, chapter 30.1, p. 155. Recent scholarship has attributed the discussion of melancholy in this chapter to Theophrastus. For a thorough discussion of Aristotle's account, see Philip van der Eijk, *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially chapter 5, 'Aristotle on Melancholy,' pp. 139–68; Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (New York: Basic Books), 1964.

21 Cf. Gozzi, *Memorie inutili*, I. 31, p. 356.

22 Cf. Gozzi's letter to his friend Innocenzo Massimo from 18 April 1785, in Gozzi, *Lettere*, ed. by Fabio Soldini (Venice: Marsilio, 2004), p. 153. See also the 12 February 1785 letter to the same correspondent, in which the playwright wrote: 'Sarà vero che il mio male non sia che un'affezione ipocondriaca' (ibid., p. 147). Soldini argues that 'raramente il Gozzi trattiene stati d'animo o giudizi e in prevalenza—s'è visto—è l'ipocondria il sentimento dominante'. Cf. 'Introduzione', in: ibid., p. 8. Gozzi's melancholy, as it emerges in his epistolary exchange with Innocenzo Massimo, is also elegantly analysed by Giuseppe Ortolani, 'Carlo Gozzi ipocondriaco', in *La riforma del teatro nel Settecento e altri scritti*, ed. by Gino Damerini (Venice: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1962), pp. 313–31.

23 Examples are many; it is sufficient here to recall the consumptive king ('re tisico') from *I due fratelli nimici*, in Gozzi, *Opere del Conte Carlo Gozzi*, 8 vols (Venice: Colombani, 1773), V, pp. 281–388.

it is caused by external circumstances), nor can the (pseudo-)Aristotelian account (according to which melancholy is a distinctive sign of the select few) explain why the prince is an allegory for the entire Venetian public. Rather, I would argue that, in his staging of Tartaglia's malady, the playwright interwove seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century references to melancholy—and, more specifically, that he drew upon Blaise Pascal's and Jean-Baptiste Dubos's reflections on *ennui* and *divertissement*. The next section will explore these references and their implications.

2 'Un roi sans divertissement'

Aristotle's account continued to intrigue and trouble the Baroque, which was replete with literary, dramatic, and pictorial representations of the melancholic condition. In fact, in the *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (*The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 1928), Walter Benjamin detects in melancholy a characteristic feature of the Baroque *zeitgeist* and of the German mourning play in particular.[24] Benjamin invokes Pascal as a central witness who 'gives voice to [this] feeling of his age',[25] making reference to the *Pensées*'s fragment on 'un roi sans divertissement'.[26] It is worth quoting this passage at length since, as I will argue in what follows, the connection that Pascal establishes between melancholy and sovereignty constitutes an important precedent for Gozzi's portrayal of his melancholic prince.

> La dignité royale n'est-elle pas assez grande d'elle-même, pour celui qui la possède, pour le rendre heureux par la seule vue de ce qu'il est? Faudra-t-il le divertir de cette pensée come les gens du commun? Je vois bien que c'est rendre un homme heureux de le divertir de la vue de ses misères domestiques pour remplir toute sa pensée du soin de bien danser, mais

24 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), p. 142.

25 Christopher Braider claims that despite the apparent 'absence' of the Baroque during the 'classical' century in France, between the founding of the Académie Française (1635) and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), 'Pascal's vaunted "classical" austerity incorporates a deeply baroque perspectivism'. Cf. Christopher Braider, *Baroque Self-Invention and Historical Truth: Hercules at the Crossroads* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), p. 145.

26 For an excellent discussion of the function of this reference to Pascal in Benjamin's argument, see Hall Bjørnstad, '"Giving voice to the feeling of his age": Benjamin, Pascal, and the Trauerspiel of the King without Diversion', *Yale French Studies*, 124 (2013), pp. 23–35.

en sera-t-il de même d'un roi, et sera-t-il plus heureux en s'attachant à ses vains amusements qu'à la vue de sa grandeur, et quel objet plus satisfaisant pourrait-on donner à son esprit? Ne serait-ce donc pas faire tort à sa joie d'occuper son âme à penser à ajuster ses pas à la cadence d'un air ou à place adroitement une barre, au lieu de le laisser jouir en repos de la contemplation de la gloire majestueuse qui l'environne? Qu'on en fasse l'épreuve. Qu'on laisse un roi tout seul sans aucune satisfaction des sens, sans aucun soin dans l'esprit, sans compagnies, penser à lui tout à loisir, et l'on verra qu'un roi sans divertissement est un homme plein de misère. Aussi on évite ce la soigneusement et il ne manque jamais d'y avoir auprès des personnes des rois un grand nombre de gens qui veillent à faire succéder le divertissement à leur affaires, et qui observent tout le temps de leur loisir pour leur fournir des plaisirs et des jeux, en sorte qu'il n'y ait point de vide. C'est-à-dire qu'ils sont environnés de personnes qui ont un soin merveilleux de prendre garde que le roi ne soit seul et en état de penser à soi, sachant bien qu'il sera misérable, tout roi qu'il est, s'il y pense. (Laf. 136)[27]

Is not the royal dignity sufficiently great in itself to make its possessor happy by the mere sight of what he is? Must he be diverted from this thought like ordinary people? I quite see that it makes a man happy to be diverted from thinking about his domestic woes by filling his thoughts with the concern to dance well. But will it be the same with a king, and will he be happier in the pursuit of these idle amusements than in considering his greatness? And what more satisfactory object could be presented to his mind? Would it not spoil his delight to occupy his soul with the thought of how to adjust his steps to the rhythm of a tune, or how to place a bar skilfully, instead of leaving him to enjoy quietly the contemplation of the majestic glory surrounding him? Let us test this. Let us leave a king all alone to reflect on himself at his leisure, without anything to satisfy his senses, without any care in his mind, without company, and we will see that a king without diversion is a man full of miseries. So this is carefully avoided; there never fail to be a great number of people near the retinues of kings, people who see to it who see to it that diversion follows the kings' affairs of state, watching over their leisure to supply them with pleasures and games, so that they have no empty moments. In

27 Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* [1670], in *Œuvres complètes* (*L'Intégrale*), ed. by Louis Lafuma (Paris: Seuil, 1963). The numbering of fragments from the *Pensées* follows this edition and is given in the text with the abbreviation 'Laf.'

> other words, they are surrounded by people who take wonderful care to insure that the king is not alone and able to think about himself knowing well that he will be miserable, though he is king if he does think about it.[28]

Pascal argues that the peaceful contemplation of royal glory cannot be a satisfying way for a prince to fill his time, nor it is enough to make him happy. Without his affairs of state and diversions, the prince will be miserable, since he will inevitably end up 'penser à soi'. As Pascal goes on to explain, during this self-contemplation the prince realises that his mortal human nature prevails over his immortal body politic, and that he is thus no different from his subjects. It is as if his supreme position among men, instead of making him less human, makes him even more fragile and miserable, 'un homme plein de misère'. The prince's recognition that his greatness only underscores his 'condition faible et mortelle' presents itself through what Benjamin calls melancholy and Pascal terms *ennui*. Thus, by implicitly providing yet another answer to the Aristotelian question as to why rulers are melancholic, Pascal—as Benjamin puts it—makes the sovereign 'the paradigm of the melancholy man'.[29]

What, however, differentiates the Pascalian discussion of melancholy from the (pseudo-)Aristotelian account—and what makes it relevant for our understanding of Gozzi's association of the prince with the theatre-going public—is that, for Pascal, melancholy is not a rare and distinguishing feature of the chosen few, but a common human condition. Indeed, his example of 'un roi sans divertissement' highlights that man is born into the condition of *ennui*, and that no one can escape from it—not even a prince.[30] In the *Pensées*, Pascal in fact maintains that human existence is defined by the impossibility of complete rest: 'man's unhappiness arises from one thing alone: that he cannot remain quietly in his room' (Ari. 38; 'tout le malheur des hommes vient d'une seule chose, qui est de ne savoir pas demeurer en repos dans une chambre', Laf. 136). For Pascal, *ennui* thus represents the external manifestation of an inner restlessness in human nature as well as man's lack of self-sufficiency.

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28 Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. by Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005), p. 42. Unless otherwise noted, English quotations of Pascal are from this edition. Since Ariew's translation follows Philippe Sellier's ordering of the fragments, I give page references to this edition, which hereafter appears in the text with the abbreviation 'Ari.'

29 Benjamin, p. 142.

30 Nicholas Hammond, in 'The Theme of Ennui in Pascal's *Pensées*', *Nottingham French Studies*, 26.2 (1987), pp. 1–16 (p. 1), has pointed out that Pascal most likely derived his definition of man's *ennui* from Michel de Montaigne's 'humeur mélancolique [. . .] produit par le chagrin et la solitude'. Cf. *Essais* II. 8, in *Œuvres complètes*, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), II, p. 370.

Ennui, moreover, is what renders the human condition intolerable, and is the very root of man's *misère*:

> Rien n'est si insupportable à l'homme que d'être dans un plein repos, sans passions, sans affaires, sans divertissement, sans application. Il sent alors son néant, son abandon, son insuffisance, sa dépendance, son impuissance, son vide. Incontinent il sortira du fond de son âme l'ennui, la noirceur, la tristesse, le chagrin, le dépit, le désespoir. (Laf. 622)

> Nothing is so intolerable for man as to be in complete tranquillity, without passions, without dealings, without diversion, without effort. He then feels his nothingness, isolation, insufficiency, dependence, weakness, emptiness. Immediately there arises from the depth of his soul boredom, gloom, sadness, chagrin, resentment, despair. (Ari. 163)

Man therefore tries to escape the source of his unhappiness and disquiet through *divertissement*, which gives him momentary relief:

> La seule chose qui nous console de nos misère est le divertissement, et cependant c'est la plus grande des nos misères. Car c'est qui nous empêche principalement de songer à nous, et qui nous fait perdre insensiblement. Sans cela, nous serions dans l'ennui, et cet ennui nous pousserait à chercher un moyen plus solide d'en sortir. Mais le divertissement nous amuse, et nous fait arriver insensiblement à la mort. (Laf. 414)

> The only thing that consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet this is the greatest of our miseries. For it is mainly what prevents us from thinking about ourselves, leading us imperceptibly to our ruin. Without it we would be bored, and this boredom would drive us to seek a more solid means of escape. But diversion amuses us and guides us imperceptibly to death. (Ari. 6)

Pascalian *divertissement* is thus a mechanism by which man seeks to avoid both awareness of his unhappiness and meditation on his mortality. Entertainments—such as gambling, billiards, or sporting events—do not bring him happiness in themselves, but they can at least becloud the uneasiness of existence and alleviate its inherent *ennui*.

Two opposing attitudes towards *divertissement* are discernible throughout the fragments of the *Pensées*. On the one hand, its meaning is almost always negative ('la plus grande des nos misères'), for in the logic of Pascal's unfinished apology all human pleasures are essentially corrupt. Since diversions

and pleasures are inseparable from man's fallen state, they only intensify his disquietude in his state of wretchedness without God: 'If man were happy, the less diverted the happier he would be, like the Saints and the God' (Ari. 38; 'Si l'homme était heureux, il le serait d'autant plus qu'il serait moins diverti, comme les saints et Dieu', Laf. 132). At times, however, Pascal invests *divertissement* with positive meaning, since it is what allows men to forget their all-encompassing sense of *ennui* ('sans cela, nous serions dans l'ennui', Laf. 414). The Pascalian notion of diversion thus includes the more literal notion of turning away from one's concerns and of keeping one's mind off worrying topics: 'If our condition were truly happy, we would not need to divert ourselves from thinking about it' (Ari. 22; 'Si notre condition était véritablement heureuse, il ne faudrait pas nous divertir d'y penser', Laf. 70). As Nicholas Hammond has argued, Pascal 'returns to the etymological sense of the *divertir*, that of "action de détourner, de se détourner", a meaning which was hardly apparent in seventeenth-century usage of the term'.[31]

What is also worth noting, before we return to Gozzi's play, is Pascal's choice of theatrical imagery to describe the human condition as well as the distinctively theatrical connotations of *divertissement*.[32] The end of human life is perceived by Pascal as the '[tragic] final act, however happy all the rest of the play is' ('le dernier acte est sanglant, quelque belle que soit la comédie en tout le reste', Laf. 165).[33] The theatricality of life off stage is also evident in another Pascalian *pensée*:

> L'unique bien des hommes consiste donc à être divertis de penser à leur condition ou par une occupation qui les en détourne ou par quelque passion agréable et nouvelle qui les occupe, ou par le jeu, la chasse, quelque spectacle attachant, et enfin par ce qu'on appelle divertissement. (Laf. 136)[34]

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31 Nicholas Hammond, *Playing with Truth: Language and the Human Condition in Pascal's 'Pensées'* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 109.

32 On theatrical undertones in the Pascalian description of the human condition, see Nicholas Hammond, 'Levez le rideaux': Images of the Theatre in Pascal's *Pensées*', *French Studies*, 47.3 (July 1993), pp. 276–87 (p. 280); Henry Philips, *The Theatre and its Critics in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 152.

33 I follow W.F. Trotter's translation here—*Thoughts* (New York: F. Collier & Son, 1910), p. 79)—whereas Ariew translates the famous fragment quite literally as 'the final act is bloody' (Ari. 52).

34 For an insightful discussion of the medieval theological roots of the metaphor of life as performance in relation to Walter Raleigh, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and his Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), esp. pp. 31–56.

> The unique good of men thus consists in being diverted from thinking about their condition either by an activity that diverts them or by some pleasant and new passion that occupies them, or by a game, the hunt, some appealing spectacle, and finally by what we call entertainment.

It is striking to find a reflection on melancholy and entertainment that runs along similar lines in Gozzi's writings that reconstruct the genealogy of his dramatic works. A passage from *Le Memorie inutile* is particularly significant. In it, the playwright recalls his public reading of *L'Amore* for the Accademia di Granelleschi before submitting the 'script' to Antonio Sacchi's comic troupe. Describing his discussion with the Granelleschi members (who advised him against staging the play, predicting its instant failure and challenging the playwright's daring theatrical innovation), *il Solitario* recounts how he rejected their criticism by arguing that

> conveniva *assalire l'intero Pubblico sul Teatro per cagionare una scossa di diversione*. Ch'io donava, e non vendeva il mio tentativo di nobile vendetta all'Accademica vilipesa a torto, e che le loro Signorie intelligentissime di coltura, d'esattezza, e di buoni libri, *conoscevano molto male il genere umano, e i nostri simili.*[35]

> It was worth assaulting the entire Audience in the Theatre in order to cause a jolt of diversion. Because I gave, and did not wrongly sell my attempt at noble revenge against the despised Academics, and because their Signorias, most intelligent with regard to culture, precision, and good books, very poorly comprehended humankind, and ours as well.

Two aspects are important to emphasise here. First, Gozzi's defence of his comedy is grounded neither on the efficacy of the allegorical fairy-tale formula for the purposes of anti-Goldoni and anti-Chiari revolt nor on the necessity of theatre reform. Rather, the playwright refers to his knowledge of humankind, closely mirroring Pascalian reflections on the 'condition de l'homme'. Second, Gozzi invests the diversionary effect ('scossa di diversione', or 'jolt of diversion') that he intends to trigger among the play's spectators with the Pascalian etymological force of a *divertissement* capable of turning the audience's attention away from its unpleasant concerns. This conception of theatrical entertainment as an activity designed to provide relief from the tediousness of life is intensified in the *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, in which Gozzi claims that

35 Gozzi, *Memorie inutili*, I. 34, p. 403; italics are mine.

> L'umanità per lo più oppressa dalle amare circostanze, e dagli acerbi pensieri, concorre alla Commedia per trarne qualche sollievo. Nella Tragedia ella lo riceve insensibilmente dal vedere i Principi soggetti alle passioni, alle debolezze, alle afflizioni, ed a tutte quelle miserie che eguagliano la umanità.[36]
>
> Humankind, burdened with sad circumstances and bitter thoughts, comes to the Comedy to get some relief. In Tragedy it gets [relief] from watching the princes be subjected to passions, weakness, afflictions, and all these miseries that are the same for all humankind.

What puts the theatregoers 'on the trail of diversions' ('in traccia di divertimenti') and makes them 'eager for new productions' ('bramos[i] di produzioni novelle'),[37] therefore, is less their hedonistic impulses or insatiable longing for novelty (which is understandable, considering the flooded Venetian theatre market) than the audience's need to be distracted from the many anxieties of daily life: 'amare circostanze, e acerbi pensieri' and 'tutte quelle miserie che eguagliano la umanità'.

Gozzi's tragic vision of the human condition, which lurks behind his ruminations on theatre, thus directly evokes Pascalian *divertissement* as a means by which man can distract himself from 'a thousand mishaps, which cause inevitable distress' ('mille accidents, qui font les afflictions inévitables', Laf. 132). The playwright's assertion appears even more striking since it is, as Scannapieco has pointed out, anomalous in the context of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century dramatic criticism, 'which tended to evoke the deterrent value of theatre as compared to other (dissolute) diversions, or its ethico-cognitive function'.[38] The anomalous nature of Gozzi's arguments supports the notion that his position shared a deep affinity with Pascalian theories of *ennui* and *divertissement*. If, as Gasparo Gozzi observed, the play stemmed from the idea of a game ('That King of Cups, those Magicians, those confusing muddles, those melancholic and exhilarating moments express the moves of the game and the enchantment of fortune that is at times good, at times the contrary, in [the game]'; 'Que' Re di Coppe, que' Maghi, quegli scompigli, quelle malinconie, quelle allegrezze dinotano le vicende del giuoco, e l'incantesimo or buono, ora con-

36 Gozzi, *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, p. 182.

37 Ibid., p. 178.

38 Cf. Scannapieco's commentary on the passage in question from *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, in Gozzi, *Ragionamento ingenuo*, p. 228.

trario delle fortuna in esso'[39]), it can be argued that the playwright's portrayal of the entire world in terms of mere card-playing represents a dramatisation of the Pascalian concept of *divertissement*. Indeed, far from simply mirroring the Venetian obsession with gambling (as has been proposed by DiGaetani, among other scholars[40]), this idea is clearly traceable back to Pascal, who saw *divertissement* as encapsulating 'not only the pursuit of particular pleasures such as gambling and hunting, but a whole way of life'.[41]

Gozzi's affinities with Pascal are so suggestive that it does not seem unreasonable to argue that, although the playwright was employing the fairy tale as his mode of storytelling, in his reflections on the function of theatrical entertainment he was actually looking to Pascal for insight. Of course, parallels and points of resemblance between two authors, however significant, do not constitute proof of influence. Considering that Gozzi never explicitly referred to the French philosopher in any of his writings nor kept any volume of Pascal's works in his library,[42] the question remains as to whether Gozzi actually read the *Pensées*.[43] Nonetheless, it has recently been demonstrated that the

39 Gasparo Gozzi, *Gazzetta Veneta*, 103 (27 January 1761), unpaginated.

40 John Louis DiGaetani, *Carlo Gozzi: A Life in the 18th Century Venetian Theatre, an Afterlife in Opera* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2000), p. 110.

41 D.C. Pott, 'Pascal's Contemporaries and "Le Divertissement"', *Modern Language Review*, 57.1 (January 1962), pp. 31–40 (p. 31).

42 Cf. the inventory of Gozzi's library, which is conserved in the State Archive of Venice (ASVE), Notarile, Atti, busta 13191, notaio Raffaele Todeschini (25 aprile 1792–30 aprile 1806), carte 1925^{v}–1934^{r}. I wish to thank Giulietta Bazoli for making available to me a digital reproduction of this document, which was found by Marta Vanore. The absence of Pascal's works in Gozzi's library does not constitute a decisive proof that Pascal had no influence on the Venetian playwright: Gozzi did not possess any of Goldoni's plays and yet quoted extensively from them, often indicating the page of reference. The inventory is from the last years of the dramatist's life, and it would be worth investigating the possibility that his complete library had been dispersed or moved to his country house or to the libraries of his parents at an earlier date.

43 Another issue that must be raised is what edition of Pascal was known to eighteenth-century readers. As Marta Vamos argues, confusion reigned in the first Port-Royal edition of the *Pensées*, and Pascal's original work wasn't restored by modern scholarship until well into the nineteenth century: cf. 'The Forgotten Book of Pascal's *Pensées*', *Romanic Review*, 62.4 (1971), pp. 262–69. If Gozzi was as familiar with the *Pensées* as he appears to have been, he must have read it in the Port-Royal version, as this was the only edition available to readers in Europe. (It was reprinted about thirty times before the 1844 Faugère edition.) As Vamos notes, the Port-Royal *Pensées* was an incomplete and distorted version of what we read under the same name today since it suppressed many fragments, altered the author's style and the ordering of the material, and even violated Pascal's thought (p. 265).

playwright was familiar with (and, in many respects, influenced by) the 1719 *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* by Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670–1742).[44] This treatise, authored by a learned diplomat, historian, and member of the Académie Française, was one of the most widely circulated works of the eighteenth century;[45] it marked a turning point in both theatre and art criticism by inaugurating proto-reception theory and modern aesthetics. What is crucial to emphasise here is that the underlying principle of Dubos's entire aesthetic theory in the *Réflexions critiques* is, again, that of Pascalian *ennui* and the need to escape it.[46] Dubos, however, secularises the Pascalian concept, moving the debate from knowledge of God to the role of literature and the visual arts in providing man with an escape from tedium.[47] In fact, Dubos

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The group of *pensées* dealing with *divertissement* and *ennui* discussed above, however, were present and unaltered in the Port-Royal edition.

44 Jean-Baptiste Dubos (sometimes spelled Du Bos), *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, 2 vols (Paris: Jean Mariette, 1719). For a discussion of the relationships between Dubos's aesthetic arguments and Gozzi's theoretical writings on theatre, see Anna Scannapieco, 'Il pubblico teatrale nella riflessione teorica e nella prassi drammaturgica di Carlo Gozzi', in *Autori, lettori e mercato nella modernità letteraria*, ed. by Alberto Zava, Illaria Crotti, Enza Del Tedesco, Ricciarda Ricorda (Pisa: ETS, 2011), pp. 100–11, and her introduction to Gozzi, *Ragionamento ingenuo*, pp. 9–92 (esp. p. 44).

45 Cf. D.G. Charton, 'Jean-Baptiste Du Bos and Eighteenth-Century Sensibility', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 266 (1989), pp. 151–62 (p. 152): 'The publication of seven editions in French in its first half-century down to 1770, plus three reprinted editions, and translations into Dutch, English and German, serve to illustrate Lombard's claim that the author was "un initiateur de la pensée modern" who exercised significant influence on numerous readers, both French and foreign.'

46 On the sources of the *Réflexions critiques* and the relationship between Dubos's and Pascal's concept of *ennui*, see Alfred Lombard, *L'Abbé Du Bos, un initiateur de la pensée moderne (1670–1742)* (Paris: Hachette, 1913); Salvatore Tedesco, 'Du Bos fra retorica e antropologia: Huarte de San Juan e François Lamy', in *Jean-Baptiste Du Bos e l'estetica dello spettatore*, ed. by Luigi Russo (Palermo: Centro internazionale studi di estetica, 2005), pp. 45–54 (esp. pp. 45–46).

47 On Dubos's secularisation of the epistemological and critical tradition that preceded him, see Ann T. Delehanty, 'Dubos and the Faculty of Sentiment', in *Literary Knowing in Neoclassical France: From Poetics to Aesthetics* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), pp. 145–68. Cf. also Rémy G. Saisselin, *The Rule of Reason and the Ruses of the Heart: A Philosophical Dictionary of Classical French Criticism, Critics and Aesthetic Ideas* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970), pp. 20–21: 'Du Bos's theory of art resolves the problem posed by Pascal [...]. The hedonistic theory of art turns into a therapeutic of the distressed soul of man in his fallen state, and Du Bos and others formulate, in effect, the classical solution to man's condition. An ideal solution to the problem of the human condition is reached when the passions and the imagination, that

begins his treatise by claiming that *ennui*, also envisaged here as a languid state of indolence or mental inactivity, is one of the most unpleasant aspects of the human condition:

> L'ame a ses besoins comme le corps; & l'un des plus grands besoins de l'homme, est celui d'avoir l'esprit occupé. L'ennui qui suit bientôt l'inaction de l'ame, est un mal si douloureux pour l'homme, qu'il entreprend souvent les travaux les plus pénibles, afin de s'épargner la peine d'en être tourmenté.[48]

> The soul hath its wants no less than the body; and one of the greatest wants of man is to have his mind incessantly occupied. The heaviness which quickly attends the inactivity of the mind, is a situation so very disagreeable to man, that he frequently chooses to expose himself to the most painful exercises, rather than be troubled with it.[49]

Dubos maintains that arousal of the passions is one of the most effective means of dispelling boredom. Arguing that any engaging spectacle—from gladiatorial combat and public executions to less frightful and bloody diversions, such as gambling or watching tragedies on stage—might prove pleasant to spectators to the extent that it diverts them from *ennui*, Dubos goes on to connect the importance of the arts with their capacity to provide pleasant relief from the tedium of everyday life: 'those imaginary passions which poetry and painting raise artificially within us, by means of their imitations, satisfy that natural want we have of being employed' (I. 5, p. 22; 'ces phantômes de passions que la Poësie & la Peinture sçavent exciter, en nous émouvant par les imitations qu'elles nous présentent, satisfont au besoin où nous sommes d'être occupés', I. 3, p. 27). According to the French aesthetician, the passions to which works of art give rise are able to keep men occupied and do so without causing suffering since they are only superficial 'phantômes de passions'

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source of error, are kept occupied without harm. [...] The Abbé Du Bos' solution may not be the Christian solution to the problem of man's estate, but it may be significant that the greater degree of secularisation of his time also corresponded to a greater interest in the arts.'

48 Dubos, *Réflexions critiques*, I. 1, p. 6. All references to Dubos's text are by volume, chapter, and page number in the seventh edition (Paris, 1770; repr. Geneva: Slatkine, 1967). Dubos's orthography and punctuation have been retained.

49 Dubos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music*, trans. by T. Nugent, 2 vols (London: John Nourse, 1748), I, p. 5.

with meagre strength and of short duration.[50] Dubos consequently defines the excellence of an artwork in relation to its capacity to impact the beholder and to the resulting effect, namely art's capacity to please and excite the passions, exposing viewers to virtuous models that might help them know themselves better and encourage them to emulate good behaviours.

When Gozzi represented the Venetian audience's disappointment with the dramatic works of Goldoni and Chiari through the allegory of Tartaglia's melancholy, he was articulating the inspiration he drew from Dubos's further elaboration of the Pascalian themes of *ennui* and *divertissement*.[51] As did Dubos, Gozzi thus advocated for a form of theatre that enhances the spectator's sensory pleasure and satisfies a very human need to be diverted from melancholy. Indeed, he claimed that,

> Collo sguardo sull'Italia, e spezialmente sopra a Venezia, di cui mi vanto buon Cittadino; ho ordite, e composte forse venti rappresentazioni teatrali di nuovo e bizzarro aspetto, ed ho avuto l'ardire di farle esporre sulle nostre scene *coll'unico desiderio di giovare, e di divertire*.
>
> Il vedere i grandi che reggono, i Cittadini colti, e il minuto popolo d'un Pubblico ch'io amo, *occupati, ed attenti in vari apparecchi d'innesti*, ch'io mi sono ingegnato a proccurare che sieno cangianti, e proporzionati a tutti quegl'intelletti differenti che compongono un Uditorio, fu il compenso non meritato de' miei spettacoli teatrali, quali si sieno.[52]

> With my eye upon Italy, and especially upon Venice (of which I pride myself on being a good Citizen), I formulated and composed about twenty plays of a new and bizarre kind, and I had the courage to have them performed on our stages *with the sole desire to please and to entertain.*
>
> To see the great who rule, the cultured Citizens, and the small [lower-class] people of a Public that I love, *absorbed in, and attentive to various interpretive devices* that I designed to provoke in order that they be changeable and proportional to all those different minds of which an Audience is composed, was the undeserved compensation of my theatrical spectacles, such as they are.

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50 Dubos, *Réflexions critiques*, I. 3, p. 28: 'Cette impression superficielle faite par une imitation, disparoît sans avoir des suites durables, comme en auroit une impression faite par l'objet même que le Peintre ou le Poëte a imité'.

51 If Gozzi did not in fact read Dubos directly, he was at the very least reusing ideas in circulation in Venice that originated with Dubos and his followers.

52 Gozzi, *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, pp. 186–87. Italics are mine.

The fact that Gozzi echoes Dubos's ruminations on the role of artwork-as-*divertissement* allows us to see more clearly the value that the playwright ascribes to theatrical entertainment. If theatre, according to Gozzi's own definition, is an 'enclosure of diversion' ('recinto di divertimento'),[53] it is not because watching a play is a vain and mindless leisure activity. Instead, it is because the theatre allows its audience to be temporary relieved of the tedium of humanity's earth-bound existence.

3 'Una artifiziosa difficile illusione'[54]

Gozzi's critical engagement with Pascal's and Dubos's ideas elucidates why, for the playwright, the most important aspect of theatre was the entertainment of the audience. Why, then, did Venetian cultural life—so vibrant and intense that it rendered the entire society 'sick of pleasures' ('nauseata de' piaceri')[55]—and the various forms of theatre available—ranging from character comedies to translations of French *dramme bourgeois* and *comédies larmoyantes*—remain incapable of diverting spectators from their *ennui*? Why, specifically, did Goldoni and Chiari's realistic plays fail to create a dramatic illusion that would emotionally engage spectators—fail, indeed, to the extent that they became the target of Gozzi's parody in *L'Amore*? These two queries raise yet another set of questions: How and why did Gozzi come to conceive his 'new, enchanting, and strongly passionate genres' ('nuovi generi di mirabile, e di forte passione')[56] precisely when Italian dramatists were searching for a model that would revitalise Italian theatre in French dramatic practice, unable as this practice was to do justice to the onstage manifestation of magic and the marvellous? (Indeed, magic and the *merveilleux* were deemed inappropriate for onstage representation by French Enlightenment dramatists and critics in particular, who dismissed fantastic spectacles as disruptive of the illusion created by

53 For Gozzi's definition of theatre as a 'recinto di divertimento' or 'recinto di passatempo', see especially the *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, p. 184: 'Lunge dal credere i Teatri una catedra, io non ho mai potuto giudicarli più che recinti, ne' quali delle adunanze vanno in traccia di spassarsi per il corso di tre ore circa; e senza paragonare le colte colle incolte opere di Teatro, anzi separandone il genere; ho creduto a proposito quelle che hanno intrattenuto un Pubblico senza pregiudicarlo nel buon costume, recando dell'utilità a' Comici.'

54 Carlo Gozzi, *Processo a difesa, ad offesa della Commedia*, in *Amore assottiglia il cervello, Opere edite ed inedite*, 14 vols (Venice: Zanardi, 1801–1804), XIII, p. 154.

55 Ibid.

56 Gozzi, *Appendice al 'Ragionamento ingenuo'*, p. 531.

theatre.[57]) In other words, what—in enlightened eighteenth-century Venice, which was dominated by mistrust of the irrational and by abandonment of the world of illusions—made Gozzi convinced that 'the passion of the wondrous [...] will always be the queen of all human passions' ('la passione del mirabile [...] sarà sempre la regina di tutte le umane passioni')?[58]

If Tartaglia's melancholy represents Gozzi's and the audience's discontent with Goldoni's and Chiari's plays, it could be useful to revisit the fundamental points of disagreement between Gozzi and his adversaries. Since Gozzi considered Chiari to be merely the Plagiarist (*il Saccheggio*), a blind and talentless imitator of Goldoni, in what follows I will primarily examine the aesthetic grounds of the quarrel between Gozzi and Goldoni. These more general considerations of Gozzi's poetics will bring us closer to answering the question I raised at the outset: why is the (republican) audience's emotional response to art translated, in *L'Amore*, into the sovereignty of a prince?

Goldoni notoriously claimed—in the preface to the Bettinelli edition of his works (1750), the most well-known exposition of his poetics of drama—that 'what is represented in Theatre should not be other than a copy of what happens in the world' ('quanto si rappresenta sul Teatro non deve essere se non la copia di quanto accade nel Mondo').[59] He also made it plain that 'over the

57 Friedrich Melchior Grimm, for instance, claimed that 'le poët dramatique et le peintre ne doivent me représenter que des objects dont le modèle existe dans la nature', and required that enchantment be employed only to depict sentiment. See his *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique* (*1753–1793*) (Paris: Garnier, 1877; Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1968), II, 15 avril 1754, p. 345). Voltaire, too, considered Corneille's use of magic in his *Médée* inappropriate because it interfered both with the play's verisimilitude and with its dramatic tension. Magic, in Voltaire's view, belonged exclusively to the genre of opera. In Diderot's opinion, 'the world of magic can amuse infants', but 'reason is pleased only by the real world': *Diderot's Writings on the Theatre*, ed. by F.C. Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), p. 51. Illusion, as theorised by eighteenth-century critics, required that the spectator perceive artistic representation as reality. For this generation of critics, as Marian Hobson observes, 'theatrical reality must not obtrude. [...] Nothing must refer away from the subject, from what is seen: there must be no awareness that what is seen is appearance, no flickering between the reality of the theatre and the subject which is represented.' Cf. *The Object of Art: the Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 144.

58 Gozzi, *Prefazione* a *Zeim, Re de' genj*, in *Opere del Conte Carlo Gozzi*, 8 vols (Venice: Colombani, 1772), III, p. 131.

59 Carlo Goldoni, 'Autore a chi legge', in *Polemiche editoriali. Prefazioni e polemiche*, ed. by Roberta Turchi (Venice: Marsilio, 2009), I, p. 100. Goldoni's famous description of his poetics paraphrases René Rapin's *Réflexions sur la Poétique d'Aristote et sur les ouvrages des Poètes anciens et modernes*. See Maria Grazia Accorsi, 'La prefazione di Goldoni all'edizione

marvellous, the simple and natural wins in the heart of man' ('sopra il meraviglioso, la vince nel cuor dell'uomo il semplice e naturale').[60] From Goldoni's standpoint, theatre is continuous with life, and its heroes have the capacity to reflect their times. In his *Teatro comico* (*The Comic Theatre*, 1750)—a comedy that he defined as 'poetics in action' ('poétique mise en action') and designed as a model for Italian theatre reform—Goldoni claimed that comedy should have a 'familiar, natural, and easy style, in order not to depart from the verisimilar' ('stile familiare, naturale e facile, per non distaccarsi dal verisimile').[61] He therefore staged such an accurate representation of domestic life that the audience was convinced it was watching real events affecting real people during the performance. The aesthetic illusion the playwright sought to produce required an error of perception: he hoped his spectators were deceived, if only for a moment, into mistaking art for reality.

It is this conception of the role of dramatic illusion that constitutes the fundamental point of disagreement between Gozzi and Goldoni. According to the former, the latter was oriented wrongly from the beginning because his plays constituted a facsimile of life on stage:

> Espose sul Teatro tutte quelle verità che gli si pararono dinanzi, ricopiate materialmente, e trivialmente e non imitate dalla natura, né coll'eleganza necessaria ad uno Scrittore.
>
> Non seppe, o non volle separare le verità che si devono, da quelle che non si devono porre in vista sopra un Teatro; ma si è regolato con quel solo principio che la verità piace sempre.[62]

Bettinelli e il razionalismo arcadico: Rapin, D'Aubignac, Muratori', in *Scena e lettura: Problemi di scrittura e recitazione dei testi teatrali* (Modena: Mucchi, 2002), pp. 141–200, on how Rapin's and D'Aubignac's treatises served as the principal points of reference for Goldoni's formulation of dramatic principles. According to Accorsi, Goldoni continues to refer to the terms of neoclassical poetics (*bienséance*, *vraisemblance*, order, nature) in all his later statements about the poetics of theatre, clearly positioning himself in the context of French rationalist aesthetic thought.

60 Goldoni, 'Autore a chi legge', p. 95.

61 Carlo Goldoni, *Teatro comico* (II. 2), in *Tutte le opere*, ed. by Giuseppe Ortolani, 14 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1935–1956), II (1936), p. 1068.

62 Gozzi, *Ragionamento ingenuo*, p. 398. Gozzi also criticised Goldoni on ideological grounds, claiming that his plays constituted a moral threat to Venetian society and undermined traditional values.

> [Goldoni] presented on stage all the truths that he saw in front of him, copied out in a rough and trivial manner and imitated neither from nature, nor with the elegance necessary for a Writer.
>
> He did not know, or did not want, to separate the truths that one must bring onto the stage from those that one must not; but he ruled himself with the sole principle that the truth always pleases.

If Goldoni was convinced that only a dramatic work that holds a mirror up to life and nature can please its spectators, Gozzi—drawing on Pascalian *divertissement*—believed instead that theatre should provide a type of illusion that allows theatregoers to avoid seeing reality as it is. This is why, for Gozzi, it is important that the playwright represent his characters and their adventures on stage as overtly fictitious, and that the action take place in a world of pure fantasy. If the human condition is indeed miserable, a universe visibly distinct from the one actually inhabited by the play's spectators will seem to them more interesting, more believable, and more intoxicating than their own reality. From this perspective, the setting of an imaginary realm ('regno immaginario') populated by princes and kings is not an expression of Gozzi's reactionary and aristocratic ideology. Rather, it is indicative of his perceived need to create an unambiguous dissimilarity between the action on stage and the world from which that action draws its inspiration.

Gozzi was not unconditionally opposed to Goldoni's imitation of the real world, however. Instead, he reacted against the trivial, graceless, and thoughtless copying of nature ('ricopiate materialmente, e trivialmente e non imitate dalla natura'):

> Moltissime delle sue Commedie non sono, che un ammasso di scene, le quali contengono delle verità, ma delle verità tanto vili, goffe, e fangose, che, quantunque abbiano divertito anche me medesimo animate dagli attori, non seppi giammai accomodare nella mia mente, che uno Scrittore dovesse umiliarsi a ricopiarle nelle più basse pozzanghere del volgo, né come potesse aver l'ardire d'innalzarle alla decorazione d'un Teatro, e sopratutto come potesse aver fronte di porle alle stampe per esemplari delle vere pidoccherie.[63]
>
> Many of [Goldoni's] comedies are no more than an agglomeration of scenes that contain truths, but truths so base, clumsy, and sloppy, that, however much they might have entertained even me [when] brought to

63 Ibid., p. 399.

> life by actors, I don't remotely know how to make space in my mind for the notion that a Writer must humiliate himself by copying truths from the lowest, most vulgar mud puddles, nor how he could dare raise them up to ornament a Theatre, and above all how he could have the courage to place them with publishers as specimens of real garbage.

Gozzi thus advocates a theatre that can provide its audience with more than just a perfect facsimile of the mundane world. As follows from his synthetic description of what his theatrical tales present—namely 'a strong passion, a serious facetiousness, a clear allegory, a reasoned critique, morality' ('una forte passione, un seriofaceto, una chiara allegoria, una critica ragionata, la morale')[64]—he argues for a dramatic form that offers the true and the marvellous in a combination that both pleases spectators (through its dramatic marvels) and shows them something true to nature (through its realism).

According to Gozzi, Goldoni's approach was also wrong because verisimilar drama could not emotionally engage the audience: '[theatrical subject matter], reduced to truth and to nature, was pleasing, but it was pleasing [precisely] from the birth of that boredom that is natural in men, especially in matters of delight' ('[la materia teatrale] ridotta questa al vero, e alla natura piacque, ma piacque sino al nascere di quella noia ch'è naturale negli uomini, spezialmente nelle cose di voluttà').[65] And, furthermore, 'boredom among the people was a consequence of these restrictive rules, and many Playwrights, [who] persisted in [following] these rules, filled their works with great absurdities that [writers for theatre] would not have filled [their works] with, if it had not been permitted' ('la noia ne' popoli fu una conseguenza di queste ristrette regole, e molti Scrittori teatrali, ostinatisi in queste, empierono le opere di maggiori assurdi che non le avrieno empiute, se ne fossero dispensati').[66]

In Gozzi's quarrel with Goldoni's adherence to verisimilitude, the imprint of Dubos's aesthetic arguments (as presented in the *Réflexions critiques*) is discernible. In fact, in addition to its concern with the centrality of the emotional appeal of the arts, the treatise also marked a turning point in debates on the problem of *vraisemblance*. Reacting against neoclassical doctrine, Dubos was

64 Gozzi, *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, p. 189.

65 Gozzi, *Appendice al 'Ragionamento ingenuo'*, p. 531.

66 Gozzi, *Ragionamento ingenuo*, pp. 391–92. In the passage immediately preceding, Gozzi claimed: 'Le regole lasciateci da' rigidi maestri antichi sull'opere di Teatro, particolarmente nell'unità della scena, e nel giro di ventiquattr'ore di tempo, non furono che per vincolare i talenti a comporre un'opera, che la probabilità, e l'unione delle parti facesse comparire un idoletto di perfetta armonia, proporzione, e interezza' (p. 391).

the first to disconnect the pleasure produced by dramatic illusion from the imitation of reality, remaining convinced that the theatre's engendering of pleasure in the spectator was not triggered by the illusion of reality:

> Des personnes d'esprit ont cru que l'illusion était la première cause du plaisir que nous donnent les spectacles & les tableaux. Suivant leur sentiment, la représentation du *Cid* ne nous donne tant de plaisir que par l'illusion qu'elle nous fait. Les vers du grand Corneille, l'appareil de la Scène et la déclamation des Acteurs nous en imposent assez pour nous faire croire, qu'au lieu d'assister à la représentation de l'événement, nous assistons à l'événement même, & que nous voyons réellement l'action, et non pas une imitation. Cette opinion me paraît insoutenable. (I. 43, p. 451).[67]

> 'Tis the opinion of several men of sense, that the pleasure we receive from spectacles and pictures is merely the effect of illusion. Pursuant to their way of thinking, the representation of the Cid affords us so much pleasure merely thro' the illusion that deceives us. The verses of the great Corneille, the apparatus of the scenes, and the declamation of the actors, impose upon us so as to make us believe that instead of assisting at the representation of the event, we are present at the event itself, and that we really see the action, and not the imitation. But this opinion seems to me to be quite unwarrantable. (I. 43, p. 349)

67 Dubos argues that complete illusion in the mind of the spectator cannot take place because he or she, unlike Pridamant in Corneille's *L'Illusion comique*, does not arrive at the theatre predisposed to believe that what s/he sees is real. Anticipating the central concern of Ernst H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* (1960) about the role of convention in our response to art, Dubos goes on to explain that the spectator knows that s/he is going to see a play because the poster says so: 'L'affiche ne nous a promis qu'une imitation ou des copies de Chimène & de Phèdre. Nous arrrivons au théâtre, préparés a voir ce que nous y voyons; & nous y avons perpétuellement cent choses sous les yeux, lesquelles d'instant en instant nous font souvenir du lieu où nous sommes, & de ce que nous sommes' (I. 43, p. 452). This brings Dubos to question whether illusion and its intensity are the source of the spectator's pleasure. Arguing that the better one knows a work the more one enjoys it, Dubos demonstrates that pleasure and illusion do not occur in proportion to each other: 'Le plaisir que les tableaux & les poëmes dramatiques excellents nous peuvent faire, est même plus grand, lorsque nous les voyons pour la seconde fois, & quand il n'y a plus lieu à l'illusion' (ibid., p. 456). On Dubos's differentiation between the beholder's reaction to art on the one hand and to external reality on the other, see Charlotte Hogsett, 'Jean-Baptiste Dubos on Art as Illusion,' *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 73 (1970), 147–64.

Dubos thus substituted the values of *vraisemblance* with those of sentiment and emotion, espousing a radically new approach to understanding our relationship to art. Rather than looking for beauty in a work's objective qualities or in its conformity with established aesthetic rules, he argued that the real measure of art's perfection lies instead in the reaction it elicits from its observer:

> Non seulement le public juge d'un ouvrage sans intérêt, mais il ne juge encore ainsi qu'il en faut décider en général, c'est-à-dire, par la voie du sentiment, & suivant l'impression que le poëme ou le tableau font sur lui. Puisque le premier but de la Poësie & de la Peinture est de nous toucher, les poëmes & les tableaux ne son de bons ouvrages qu'à proportion qu'ils nous émeuvent & qu'ils nous attachent. Un ouvrage qui touche beaucoup, doit être excellent à tout prendre. Par la même raison l'ouvrage qui ne touche point & qui n'attache pas, ne vaut rien; & si la critique n'y trouve point à reprendre des fautes contre les règles c'est qu'un ouvrage peut être mauvais, sans qu'il y ait des fautes contre les règles, comme un ouvrage plein de fautes contre les règles, peut être un ouvrage excellent. (II. 22, pp. 339–40)

> The public gives not only a disinterested judgment of a work, but judges likewise what opinion we are to entertain of it in general, by means of the sense, and according to the impression made thereon by the poem or picture. Since the chief end of poetry and painting is to move us, the productions of these arts can be valuable only in proportion as they touch and engage us. A work that is exquisitely moving, must be an excellent piece, take it all together. For the same reason, a work which does not move and engage us, is good for nothing; and if it be not obnoxious to criticism for trespassing against rules, 'tis because it may be bad, without any violation of rules; as on the contrary one full of faults against rules, may be an excellent performance. (II. 22, p. 237)

Dubos believed, moreover, that the audience forms its judgement by relying not on reason or on a code of fixed rules, but on sentiment and taste; he was the first to point out that drama is effective only if it evokes strong emotions. Dubos thus initiated a new trend in critical thinking: before him, critical reviews had formulated their judgement of a given dramatic work in terms of its aesthetic merit, but from the mid-eighteenth century on, works of art started to be evaluated based instead on their effect upon spectators. Public response thus began to rival specialist judgement as the predominant arbiter of the quality of theatrical performances.

These ideas appear to have had a most profound effect on Gozzi, who maintained that 'only what pleases us is beautiful' ('è bello sol tra noi quello che piace') and that 'the Public has the supreme right to be fascinated by what fascinates it and not to be willing to be affected by hypochondria' ('il Pubblico ha somma ragione di allettarsi di ciò che lo alletta, e di non voler cadere negli effetti ipocondriaci').[68] He was thus convinced that the audience relies upon the emotional appeal of theatre in making its judgements, and—much like Dubos, who argued that the opinions of the *doctes*, which were based upon rational reasoning, led to false conclusions—empowered the public with an ability to decide for itself: 'without any distinction, the whole Public has bought the full right to expect entertainment and amusement' ('senza distinzioni di teste, il Pubblico intero ha una ragione comperata, di trovar cosa che lo intrattenga, e lo diverta').[69]

I suggest that Gozzi's placement of public opinion at the forefront of the theatrical enterprise opened up new perspectives into his dramaturgical research. His theatrical fables might appear to be nothing more than an antidote to (and an attack on) Goldoni's shallow, predictable, and impoverished constructions of reality, but this is only a superficial reading. Gozzi's plays also provided him with an excellent means to compete for the favour of the Venetian audience (which thrived on scandal and novelty), but even this was not his only purpose. As Gasparo Gozzi observed, with a reference to the Aristotelian theory of catharsis in another review of his brother's plays, 'the transformations and the marvellous serve to manage passion' ('le trasformazioni e la maraviglia servono a maneggiare la passione'),[70] which is so important in the diversion of spectators from their boredom and melancholy. On careful reflection, therefore, the 'new genres of the wondrous and of strong passion' ('nuovi generi di mirabile, e di forte passione') are, for Gozzi, genres that first and foremost allow for the creation of a new relationship between dramatic performance and the subjectivity of the spectator—a relationship in which audience responsiveness to art becomes of primary importance.

68 Gozzi, *Prefazione al 'Fajel'*, p. 190. Cf. also: 'Il pubblico genio non va soggetto alle leggi delle Poetiche nella pubblica materia teatrale, e queste leggi non devono avere nè la facoltà, ne la sopraffazione di scemare d'un atomo il Pubblico ne' sui teatrali piaceri, se questi piaceri sono innocenti, e non feriscono le leggi de' Principati' (Gozzi, *Processo a difesa*, p. 157).

69 Carlo Gozzi, *Più lunga lettera che sia stata scritta*, in *Opere edite ed inedite*, 14 vols (Venice: Zanardi, 1801–1804), XIV, p. 10.

70 Gasparo Gozzi, *Osservatore Veneto*, XCVIII (9 January 1761), quoted in Vescovo, 'Lo specchio e la lente', p. 411.

4 The Public and the Public Stage

The rise of an aesthetic attentive to the emotional response of the public—which had, as we have seen, emerged from Dubos's insights, and which began to dominate art and theatre criticism from 1750 onward—provides one explanation for Gozzi's allegorical equation of audience and prince in *L'Amore*. Suggesting that the spectator can match the sovereign in greatness is, however, highly charged—even more so considering that theatre performance is a powerful form of symbolic action and a potent social force. Once again, then, we return to our initial question: why, in a play so intimately related to the Venetian context, is the republican citizenry of *La Serenissima* allegorised by its exact opposite: a prince, the figure for and source of absolutist political authority? Why, in other words, does the audience's response in *L'Amore* come to exercise an aesthetic and cultural authority previously reserved only for a monarch?

The theory of public opinion articulated by Jürgen Habermas will be useful in finding an answer to these questions. In his widely influential work *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 1962), Habermas argued that the explosion of the periodical press, the proliferation of public spaces, and the changing practices of reading and writing in the eighteenth century brought about the emergence of a 'bourgeois', or 'authentic' public sphere (*bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit*), in which public opinion became the authoritative judgement of a collective consciousness.[71] If the court ceremonies of the Ancien Régime served less to please their participants than to 're-present' the monarch's power and prestige to passive observers (where, to echo Louis Marin, 'the prefix re- [is] no longer a substitution of value, but rather an intensity or frequency'[72]), by 1750 the public was becoming a sovereign tribunal to which even governing institutions were subjected. Building on this Habermasian account, recent scholarship on public opinion has underscored that theatre, along with print culture, was one of the principle media involved in shaping and constructing an increasingly influential and politically engaged

71 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (repr. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

72 Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, trans. by Martha M. Houle, foreword by Tom Conley, Theory and History of Literature, 57 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 5.

public.[73] Going far beyond the government's less ambitious (and more self-protective) intention to keep the public pleased and entertained by spectacle, *a* public (which, of course, self-constitutes as an audience upon arrival at the theatre) translated itself into *the* public—a new and powerful social and critical entity.[74] In this respect, Johann Wolfgang Goethe's description of the city of Venice, which notably gave birth to the first public playhouses, is revealing. What made *La Serenissima* remarkable in the eyes of Goethe is indeed that she was 'a grand venerable work of combined human energies, a noble monument, not of a ruler, but of a people' ('ein groses, respecktables Werck versammelter Menschenkraft, ein herrliches Monument, nicht Eines Befehlenden sondern eines Volckes').[75] That Goethe's portrayal of 1786 Venice in his *Italienische Reise* is more than the routine praise of a foreign traveller, and that the city really was an living exemplar of conscious citizenship and of the public's critical power, is attested to by recent historical assessments. Indeed, though Habermas argued his case on examples of the emergence of the public sphere in England and France, insisting on the geographical specificity of his analysis, literary scholars and historians of cultural and political communication have dated this hypothetical 'public sphere' to early modernity and have expanded the relevance of the Habermasian framework to encompass the Italian context.[76]

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73 On the role played by the press and print culture in the evolution of public opinion, see *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775–1800*, ed. by Robert Darnton and Paul Roche (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* (Durham 1991); Mona Ozouf, '"Public Opinion" at the End of the Old Regime', *Journal of Modern History*, 60 suppl. (Sept. 1988), pp. 1–21. On the importance of theatre in crafting the public sphere, cf. recent studies by Logan J. Connors, *Dramatic Battles in Eighteenth-Century France: Philosophes, Anti-Philosophes, and Polemical Theatre* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2012) and Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theatre and French Political Culture, 1680–1791* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). To my knowledge, there are no critical studies on the role played by Italian theatre in shaping the emergent intellectual and social figure of the public.

74 These insights were pioneered by Johann Gottefried Herder in his '57. Brief (Haben wir noch heute das Publikum und Vaterland der Alten?)', in *Fünfte Sammlung: Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, ed. by Hans Dietrich Irmscher (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker, 1991), pp. 301–38 (cf. especially pp. 308–12).

75 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Tagebuch der italienischen Reise für Frau von Stein*, in *Sämtliche Werke, Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, ed. by Hendrick Birus et al., 40 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutscher Klassiker, 1985–1999), vol. 15.1 (1993), ed. by Christoph Michel and Hans-Georg Dewitz, pp. 599–745 (p. 682). The English translation is from Goethe, *Letters from in Italy*, in *The Auto-Biography of Goethe: Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life*, trans. by John Oxenford, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), II, p. 294.

76 On the extension of the Habermasian model to Italy and its relevance to seventeenth-century Venice in particular, see the excellent volume by Filippo De Vivo, *Information*

With this theoretical model in mind, we can affirm that Gozzi's transfer of agency from the aristocratic arena of government to republican public authority, allegorised in his equation of audience and prince, demonstrates the extent to which his first fairy-tale drama both reflected and helped conjure into being a new and critically productive spectatorship. According to Habermas, the emergence of the public sphere mirrored an ongoing shift away from princely authority towards an authority rooted in the enlightened and rational processes of the *Publikum* itself. It is therefore significant that it is Gozzi, long considered a reactionary promoter of the aristocracy's elitism and the values of Venice's conservative oligarchy, who was witness to and instigator of the transfer of power from state to citizen. Furthermore, Gozzi's vision of the public, which comprises 'a learned and unlearned Audience' ('un Uditorio dotto, ed indotto'),[77] is even broader than that of Dubos. Indeed, while conferring significant decision-making power upon the public, Dubos still narrowed his public to a restricted circle of learned 'men of taste'.[78] The expansive and thus revolutionary nature of Gozzi's bestowal of critical power upon public opinion is also apparent in comparison with Pietro Chiari's scornful representation of

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and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). See also Massimo Rospocher, 'Beyond the Public Sphere: A Historical Transition', in *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Massimo Rospocher (Bologna: Il Mulino; Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2012), pp. 9–28.

77 Gozzi, *Ragionamento ingenuo*, p. 409. See also the revealing observation of Paolo Farina, who points out that '[t]rent'anni più tardi, nella sua conclusiva riflessione critica sul teatro e sulla propria attività teatrale, svolta nella *Più lunga lettera*, rivendicando la coerenza di una vita, Carlo mette a fuoco ancora una volta la sua idea di teatro "per tutti" con parole non dissimili da quelle usate un tempo: "Io guardai sempre, e guardo tutt'ora la moltitudine de' nostri Teatri aperti all'universale con occhio poetico è vero, ma altresì con occhio morale, non meno che con occhio politico"'. Cf. Paolo Farina, 'Carlo Gozzi "conservatore rivoluzionario"? Declinazioni dell'anti-illuminismo', *Studi goldoniani*, 11.3, n.s. (2014), pp. 67–88, esp. p. 75.

78 Dubos, *Réflexions critiques*, II. 22, p. 316: 'je ne comprends pas le bas peuple dans le public capable de prononcer sur les poëmes ou sur les tableaux, comme de decider à quel degré ils sont excellents. Le mot de Public ne renferme icy que personnes qui ont acquis des lumieres, soit par la lecture soit par le commerce du monde. Elles sont les seules qui puissent marquer le rang des poëmes & des tableaux, quoiqu'il se rencontre dans les ouvrages excellents des beautés capables de se faire sentir au peuple du plus bas étage & de l'obliger à se recrier. [...] Le public dont il s'agit icy est donc borné aux personnes qui lisent, qui connoissent les spectacles, qui voient & qui entendent parler de tableaux, ou qui acquis de quelque maniere qui ce soit, ce discernement qu'on apelle *goût de comparaison*, & dont je parlerai tantôt plus au long.' Cf. also 'Jean Baptiste Du Bos', in *Il Gusto. Storia di una idea estetica*, ed. by Luigi Russo (Palermo: Aesthetica, 2000), p. 239, n. 15.

theatregoers. Comparing the reading public to theatre audiences, Chiari—in many respects a progressive intellectual likewise influenced by the tenets of the French Enlightenment, albeit a less talented dramatist than either Goldoni or Gozzi—suggested that the latter were too ill-informed, capricious, and uneducated to form an accurate opinion on aesthetic and artistic matters: 'This Public, that must itself decide, is not as mixed with plebeian and ignorant dregs as is, the majority of the time, the Theatre audience' ('Questo Pubblico, che deve di essi decidere non è così mescolato di feccia plebea, ed ignorante, come lo è il più delle volte la platea d'un Teatro').[79]

As Michael Warner puts it, however,

> No single text can create a public. Nor can a single voice, a single genre, or even a single medium. All are insufficient to create the kind of reflexivity that we call a public, since a public is understood to be an on-going space of encounter for discourse. It is not texts themselves that create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time.[80]

The sources for Gozzi's fairy-tale drama and its reference to the philosophical, political, and aesthetic postulations that I have individuated in Pascal's *Pensées* and Dubos's *Réflexions critiques* highlight that it is ultimately complex cultural encounters (both in terms of participants involved and information transmitted) as well as the circulation of knowledge across national borders, that bring about the creation of publics and, in particular, Gozzi's innovations in dramaturgical practice. As Voltaire eloquently wrote:

> Ainsi presque tout est imitation. L'idée des *Lettres persanes* est prise de celle de *l'Espion turc*. Le Boiardo a imité le Pulci, l'Arioste a imité le Boiardo. Les esprits les plus originaux empruntent les uns des autres. [...] Il en est des livres comme du feu dans nos foyers; on va prendre ce feu chez son voisin, on l'allume chez soi, on le communique à d'autres et il appartient à tous.

79 Cf. 'Autore a' Leggitori', preface to *Commedie rappresentate ne' Teatri Grimani di Venezia cominciando dall'anno 1749*, 4 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1752), I, p. x. For a valuable discussion of Chiari's distinction between readership and spectatorship, see Ann Hallamore Ceasar, 'Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel: Venice 1753–84', *Italian Studies*, 67.1 (March 2012), pp. 37–55 (pp. 40–41).

80 Michael Warner, 'Publics and Counter-Publics', *Public Culture*, 14.1 (2002), pp. 49–90 (p. 62).

> Thus nearly everything is imitation. The idea of *The Persian Letters* was taken from the idea of *The Turkish Spy*. Boiardo imitated Pulci, Ariosto imitated Boiardo. The most original writers borrowed from each other. [...] There are books that are like a fire in our hearths; we go to take fire from our neighbour, we light our own, we give it to others, and it belongs to everyone.[81]

In conclusion, I would argue that the reconstruction of Gozzi's intellectual sources undertaken herein challenges—if not overturns—the longstanding critical attitude according to which this last protagonist of the eighteenth-century Venetian stage is considered a conservative-minded and uncultivated playwright.[82] Gozzi's engagement with Dubos's treatise (a work that exercised significant influence on numerous men of letters and philosophers of the Enlightenment[83]) reveals Gozzi as a progressive intellectual and a most original theorist of theatre. His placement of the public at the forefront of the theatrical enterprise and his concern with its emotional response further illuminates how the centrality of spectators in the socio-political sphere and their impact as art critics informs his dramatic writing and influences his relationship with his audiences. What I hope to have elucidated, then, is that Gozzi's *L'Amore delle tre melarance* encodes meanings other than those that were played out in the form of dramatic performance, and that this work can in fact be considered this playwright's artistic manifesto—one which most befittingly expresses his ideas on both theatre and spectatorship.

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81 Voltaire, 'Lettre XXII: sur M. Pope et quelques autres poètes fameux', *Lettres philosophiques*, in *Mélanges*, ed. by Jacques van den Heuvel (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 1342.

82 My interpretation also adds weight to Scannapieco's recent evaluation of Gozzi's writings on theatre: 'la riflessione sul teatro del conte Gozzi non solo non si reduce a un'idea di corriva evasione edonistica, sfaccendata e regressiva [...], ma si nutre anzi di una prospettiva critica che riconduce costantemente l'analisi del fenomeno teatrale alle sue implicazioni sociopolitiche'. Cf. her introduction to Gozzi, *Ragionamento ingenuo*, pp. 45–46.

83 On Dubos's wide-ranging impact on European Enlightenment thinking about artistic matters and on the importance of his *Réflexions critiques* for the history of aesthetics, see Charton, 151–62; Ermanno Migliorini, 'Note alle *Réflexions critiques* di Jean-Baptiste Du Bos', in *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia toscana di scienze e lettere*, 27 (1962–1963), pp. 287–88; James F. Jones, 'Du Bos and Rousseau: A Question of Influence', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 127 (1974), pp. 231–41; Thomas M. Kavanaugh, *Enlightened Pleasures: Eighteenth-Century France and the New Epicureanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

CHAPTER 6

Pierre Nicole, Jean-Baptiste Dubos, and the Psychological Experience of Theatrical Performance in Early Modern France

Logan J. Connors

1 Introduction: A History of Psychology, a History of Theatrical Performance?

A seemingly off-topic question with which to begin an essay about early modern theories of theatrical performance: What did psychology—often defined as the scientific study of the human mind and its functions—look like before the nineteenth century? By employing words like 'scientific', 'mind', and 'function', this line of inquiry leads to plenty of confusion today, let alone when we examine earlier periods. As an interpreter of texts about literature, theatre, and other arts from the early modern period, I am often reminded of the difficulty we encounter in distinguishing so-called 'scientific study' from 'theological study' or from 'cultural studies'; sources and motives overlap and intertwine, making anything that might be called early modern psychology both tough to locate and confusingly ubiquitous.

Despite these difficulties, research into psychology *avant la lettre* has garnered more and more attention from a variety of disciplines, including psychology (though this is rare) and, more often, anthropology, philosophy, literary studies, religious studies, the history of science and medicine and, more recently, the history of emotions. Studies in these diverse fields[1] can help

1 The bibliography is indeed vast; of special note for this essay are Fernando Vidal, *Les Sciences de l'âme, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006); William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); *Les Émotions publiques et leurs langages à l'âge classique*, ed. by Hélène Merlin-Kajman, Littératures classiques 68 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009); Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Anne Coudreuse, *Le refus du pathos au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001). For a

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inform those of us who study early modern theatre, a field and experience that, like psychology, was and is a contested site of disparate discourses that compete to define and describe precisely its scope, disciplinary tools, and intellectual underpinnings.

The variety of ways to access the emotions during the early modern period is reflected in the different domains that are at present attempting to describe early psychology. For example, in *Les sciences de l'âme*, Fernando Vidal provides some of the most robust theorising on pre-psychology. He traces the advent of psychology from attacks on Aristotle during the Italian Renaissance to the formalisation of psychology as a discipline in Germany during the late eighteenth century. Vidal dedicates most of his study to this later period, arguing that 'eighteenth-century psychology absorbs the subjects of logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy, and emerges at the heart of anthropology, or the general science of man, an unprecedented domain' ('la psychologie du XVIII^{e} siècle absorbe des matières de la logique, de la métaphysique et de la morale, et se place au cœur d'un autre champ inédit, l'anthropologie ou science générale de l'homme').[2] Vidal, of course, is not alone in his quest to unearth theories of cognition, emotion, motivation, and other psychological notions that permeated a range of traditions during the early modern period and that would become objects of formal scientific analysis by the late nineteenth century.

In her work on sensibility, Jessica Riskin insists that by the time Jean-Baptiste Lamarck published his *Philosophie zoologique* in 1809, France already possessed a rich theoretical corpus on psychology, or what might have been called the 'sentimental empiricism' that Denis Diderot, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, the Baron d'Holbach, and others had developed and transformed throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.[3] In his work on the physician-anatomist Pierre Jean George Cabanis, Sergio Moravia argues that Cabanis's 1796 claim that mental disorders were functions of brain abnormalities rather than symptoms of 'moral problems' was actually part of an effort to explain universal humankind, and that this claim constituted the result of over thirty years of materialist physiological research during the later 1700s.[4]

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concise introduction to the history of emotions, see Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

2 Vidal, p. 14. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

3 Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 4.

4 Sergio Moravia, 'The Enlightenment and the Sciences of Man', *History of Science*, 18 (1980), p. 254.

Cabanis's desire to attach psychological causality to internal, biological processes was the natural conclusion of a researcher whose avowed interest was the *science de l'homme*—a wide- and far-reaching set of theories about the complex processes of human nature that sought to connect metaphysical, moral, or spiritual aspects of human life to the body, thereby wresting these issues from the hands of moralists and church leaders. In contrast to studies from the rationalist-scientific approach, Thomas Dixon, in *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*, has located many of the 'modern' emotions of the nineteenth century (many Jamesian constructs, for example) in religious writing (mostly in England) from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[5]

What binds these disparate studies together is the notion that a field as interdisciplinary as psychology cannot trace its roots back to one domain or line of inquiry. The rich interdisciplinarity that undergirds both the sources at the time and the current analysis of the history of psychology (I just named a psychologist, a historian, a philosopher, and a scholar of religion, respectively) could serve as an analogy for the study of the history and conceptual development of how writers described theatrical performance—that 'kaleidoscopic adventure' which involves a complex network of people, places, things, and non-things.[6]

In what follows, I will move from the theoretical underpinnings of psychology—texts from the domains of metaphysics, theology, and anatomy—to the dissemination, the application, or even what might be called the vulgarisation of psychology through an examination of several discourses about the theatre performance and its psychological effects on spectators. The connections between these two histories and their vulgarisations—the history of the dissemination of psychological precepts and theories, and that of theatrical discourses and theories—are in fact surprising. I argue that early modern theatre served as a dynamic site to test and contest emerging psychological and psychosocial theories. Yet this was not a one-way street from philosophy to theatre or from anatomical reflection to dramatic criticism; the anti-theatrical and pro-theatrical writers in my corpus actually informed the history of philosophy—from their reinterpretations of Cartesian mechanics in regards to acting styles to their addition of nuance and complexity to an emerging sensationalist branch of epistemology.

It is important first to note, however, that the vulgarisation question is always tricky: scholars are quick to point out how ideas permeated society

5 For Dixon's thesis, see his *From Passions to Emotions*, pp. 2–24.

6 Edwin Wilson, *The Theater Experience*, 4th edn (New York: McGraw Hill, 1988), p. 2.

(as, for example, does Robert Darnton in his works about the illegal book trade in France)[7] but hesitant to think about why complex scientific and religious doctrines found new avenues at specific moments into more public discursive arenas, such as theatre, painting, politics, and general polemics. As we shall see, some of France's most robust writing on consciousness and sensibility did not result from a murky 'dissemination of *lumières*' process—a spread of ideas for the sake of ideas. Instead, particular discourses about the human psyche and about theatre appeared alongside specific political reasons and goals, such as justification for the survival and proliferation of state-sponsored theatres or for the annihilation of theatre and 'theatrical life' in the French kingdom.

The analysis of theatrical theories that follows is thus grounded in particular notions of the political and social missions of theatre in early modern France. While one of my overall objectives is indeed to show how 'theatre theory is [...] a reflection as much on fundamental issues of human nature and psychology as on dramatic practice',[8] I also hope to prove that these 'fundamental issues' were constantly subject to revision and retooling. In sum, the histories of psychology and theatre overlap in that they both are subject to precise political anchoring. For example, the *Fronde* crisis (1648–1653) between nobles and the crown or the Regency (1715–1723) were specific contexts with particular cultural programs in the history of French politics—moments that influenced and undergirded any seemingly universal call to explain either theatre or the human psyche.

This essay is part of a larger project that attempts to show the conceptual birth—or, at the least, the theoretical strengthening—of what is often called the bourgeois spectator experience: an experience of individualised, mindful, and emotional attachment to staged fiction that dominated the explicit goals of dramatic literature and theatrical life throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, and that would only come to be criticised much later, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by writers such

7 See Darnton's landmark work, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), as well as *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996); *The Corpus of Clandestine Literature in France, 1769–1789* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995); *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010); and, most recently, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014).

8 Joseph Harris, *Inventing the Spectator: Subjectivity and the Theatrical Experience in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 7.

as Georg Fuchs, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and, of course, Berthold Brecht and Antonin Artaud.[9]

In this essay, written from a less teleological perspective in which there is no real need to critique this experience as being inherently dull, bad, or politically weak, I will attempt to show that the 'securing' or 'rescuing' of theatre was appropriated by proponents of the emotional (and therefore artistic) values of performance and taken from the hands of both wary ecclesiastics and utilitarian pedagogues. This process of redefinition, which occurred during the first few decades of the eighteenth century in France, ushered in a new conception—a new definition—of early modern theatre comparable to more recent conceptions of the dramatic arts that define theatre as a holistic, multisensorial, and lived experience rather than as a particularly prestigious example of poetry. This is one example of how I believe that 'theatre history can be understood and described as cultural history'.[10] Unearthing this cultural history—the history of anthropological, experience-focused theories of theatrical performance in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France—requires the analysis of a specific culture and how it negotiated a unique triangle of meaning that is inherent to the stage: that of perception, body, and language.

2 Local Specificities: Theatre and Anti-Theatre in Seventeenth-Century France

The rise of theatre as a social event in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France catalysed a rich period of theorising and production leading to what Voltaire and others called an epoch of theatromania. The popularity of dramatic literature and theatre attendance encouraged a variety of different personalities—from philosophers to government officials to ecclesiastics—to weigh in on the merits or drawbacks of theatre as an institution, an experience, and an art. Because it involves actual human bodies and the audio-visual transmission of sensory material, moreover, the theatre was a natural venue for discussing essential questions in early modern psychology, such as: Is pleasure anatomical or metaphysical? How is cognition affected by visual elements of the stage? Are actors really emotional, or do they just appear emotional? Do emotions help or hinder learning?

9 See Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997).

10 Fischer-Lichte, p. 9.

One place to start this line of inquiry is in the second half of the seventeenth century, which is often deemed the golden era of French dramatic output (Pierre Corneille (1606–1684), Jean Racine (1639–1699), Jean Rotrou (1609–1650), and Molière (1622–1673)) and theorisation (François Hédelin, abbé d'Aubignac (1604–1676), Charles de Saint-Évremond (1613–1703), Hippolyte-Jules Pilet de La Mesnardière (1610–1663), and, again, Corneille and Racine)). Contrary to powerful critics of the Académie française, like Georges de Scudéry (1601–1667) or Jean Chapelain (1595–1674), Corneille believed—to different degrees at different moments in his life—in formal invention, in mixing registers, and even in the emotional pleasure that spectators and readers enjoy during and after their experiences with drama. In his *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique* (1660), for example, Corneille asserts that pleasure—and, in particular, the affective creation of pleasure in the soul of the spectator—is the chief goal of tragic dramatists. At the beginning of his 'Premier discours', however, Corneille makes an important qualification regarding the type of pleasure one should feel with tragedy. Commenting on Aristotle, he writes:

> Bien que selon Aristote le seul but de la Poésie Dramatique soit de plaire aux Spectateurs, et que la plupart de ces Poèmes leur aient plu, je veux bien avouer toutefois que beaucoup d'entre eux n'ont pas atteint le but de l'Art. *Il ne faut pas prétendre*, dit ce Philosophe, *que ce genre de Poésie nous donne toute sorte de plaisir, mais seulement celui qui lui est propre*; et pour trouver ce plaisir qui lui est propre, et le donner aux Spectateurs, il faut suivre les Préceptes de l'Art, et leur plaire selon ses Règles.[11]
>
> Even though the only goal of Dramatic Poetry is to please Spectators and that the majority of Plays pleased them, I would like however to argue that many of them never attained the goal of the Art. *One must not try to argue*, said this Philosopher, *that this type of Art gives us any sort of pleasure, but only its own type*; and in order to find this type, and to give it to Spectators, one must follow the Principles of Art, and give pleasure to them according to its Rules.

Corneille's two-headed praise of both pleasure and universal rules is a famous cornerstone of French classical doctrine—a doctrine that has emerged, thanks to the recent works of Georges Forestier and John Lyons, as a fertile network

11 Pierre de Corneille, 'Premier discours', *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique* (1660) (Paris: Flammarion, 1999), p. 63.

of competing tensions instead of a set of intransigent, universal rules.[12] But by establishing terror and pity as the only emotions worthy of representation and by prescribing a universal path for emotions that runs from overwhelming feeling to mystical purgation, French classical theorists like Corneille limited emotional diversity and intensity by excluding a full gamut of emotions and valences that dramatists (including Corneille himself) actually employed—emotions like romantic love, friendship, maternal or paternal sentiment, and patriotism.

Many classical theorists attached the moral effects of drama to its emotional effects in an effort to follow Aristotle *à la letter*. This attachment may also have been a way to justify the proliferation of theatre as an institution during the seventeenth century, or even an attempt to explain the manifestation of a certain nonchalance vis-à-vis the importance of performance within a critical equation of aesthetic judgment. The narrow range of emotions emphasised by these theorists, when compared to the wide variety of emotional situations in plays at the time, left dramatic literature and theatrical performance open to a series of attacks on both emotional and moral grounds. The most prolific and complex of these attacks came from the French ecclesiastics, Pierre Nicole (1625–1695) and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704).

Nicole, the famous Jansenist master of the Port-Royal abbey, was cognisant of the fact that plays did not merely stage serious emotions like terror and pity, so he mounted a logical and structured assault against the theatre in his *Traité de la Comédie* (1667). Nicole's attack was comprehensive: he sought to unearth how theatre negatively affected individuals, interpersonal relationships, and even society as a whole. Just as comprehensive as the intellectual scope of his project were the formal and conceptual aspects of theatre targeted by Nicole in his treatise. For example, Nicole writes of acting that

12 Georges Forestier, *Passions tragiques et règles classiques* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2003); John D. Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder: The Theory of Tragedy in Classical France* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999). It is important to note that dramatic 'rule-making', a quintessential part of classical theory, was part and parcel of a nascent psychological discourse in seventeenth-century France. As Harris points out in *Inventing the Spectator*, 'all these accounts suggest that dramatic theory can offer privileged insight into the supposedly universal nature of human psychology. In all these examples [of classical rulemaking], the rules are not the opposite of subjectivity; on the contrary, they underpin it. The rules are so deeply buried in our nature that we can become aware of their general precepts only through our individual responses' (9).

> C'est un métier qui a pour but le divertissement des autres; où des hommes et des femmes paroissent sur un théâtre pour y représenter des passions de haine, de colère, d'ambition, de vengeance, et principalement d'amour. Il faut qu'ils les expriment le plus naturellement et le plus vivement qu'il leur est possible et ils ne le sçauroient faire, s'ils ne les excitent en quelque sorte en eux-mêmes, et si leur âme ne prend tous les plis que l'on voit sur leur visage. Il faut donc que ceux qui représentent une passion d'amour en soient en quelque sorte touchez pendant qu'ils la représentent, et il ne faut pas s'imaginer que l'on puisse effacer de son esprit cette impression qu'on y a excitée volontairement, et qu'elle ne laisse pas en nous une grande disposition à cette même passion qu'on a bien voulu ressentir.[13]
>
> The goal of this career is to amuse others; where men and women appear on a stage to perform the passions of hate, anger, ambition, revenge, and mostly love. They must express these passions the most naturally and the most vividly as they can, and they can only do this if they excite themselves in some way and if their souls accept all of the folds that one sees on their faces. Those who perform a passion of love must be somehow touched by it while they are performing, and we can never hope to erase this impression from our minds that was already voluntarily excited, and [we can never hope] that it [the impression] won't leave in us a powerful disposition to this same passion that we so very much wanted to feel.

In Nicole's detailed description of how actors prepare for and execute their roles on stage, a wide array of emotions are fully embodied by the actor and then transferred immediately to the spectator. The actor commits a sin, such as lust or envy, and then enchants spectators into committing sins themselves. The sin is then impossible to 'erase', becoming a repeatable, emotionally learned act even after the end of the performance. The behaviour or 'disposition' of spectators and actors is thus forever changed, for 'we can never hope' to rid ourselves of the nefarious, corporeal lesson gleaned from the audio-visual event. For Nicole, theatrical affect overpowers the mindful processes of the spectator or the actor; no remedy exists to counteract the emotions of performance.

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13 Pierre Nicole, 'Traité de la Comédie', in *Traité de la Comédie et autres pièces d'un procès du théâtre*, ed. by Laurent Thirouin (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), p. 37 (chapter II).

Later in the *Traité*, Nicole builds upon his theories of immediate impressionability and enduring consequences by employing food and poison metaphors to describe the effect of performance on spectators.[14] In doing so, he removes or at least displaces Corneille's argument that emotions are first felt but then dissipate or are purged at the end of the show. According to Nicole, Corneille's take on the value of emotion is false because of how the dramatist conceptualises its source and path. Emotions in the theatre are, for Nicole, once again grounded in the body. For Corneille, emotional response is more ambiguous; at times controlled, at times transcendental, emotions are often rationally employed and deployed by a tactful dramatic author. In Nicole's *Traité*, however, lust, for example, is a transferrable somatic response, and the negative consequences of emotions felt during a theatrical performance overpower any authorial intent to control the calibration, duration, or trajectory of the emotion. Dramatic literature, as proponents of theatre suggest, may indeed have values as well as important emotions that are attached to—or that are catalysts of—those values. But, and this is a sticking point, dramatic literature is not theatre to religious opponents of the stage. The locus of theatre for them, just like for later proponents of a 'transformative power of theatre' centuries later, is predicated on the audio-visual event of spectator attention to embodied fictional and non-fictional events on stage.

According to religious antagonists of theatre, spectators feel and then learn from performances through an efficient yet hazardous theatrical pedagogy. Learning in the theatre is passed into the soul from the body as spectators take pleasure in the constant visual stimuli. This means that theatre lacks any moral value because the information never passes into the mind, traveling instead directly to the soul from the body—an entity with, of course, a low moral status in religious writings across denominations. Writing about this process, Nicole contends that

> Ainsi la Comédie par sa nature même, est une école et un exercice de vice, puisque c'est un art où il faut nécessairement exciter en soi-même des passions vicieuses [...]. Ce qui rend le danger de la Comédie plus grand, est qu'elle éloigne tous les remèdes qui peuvent empescher la mauvaise impression qu'elle fait. Le cœur y est amolli par le plaisir. L'esprit y est tout occupé des objets extérieurs, et entièrement enyvré des folies qu'il y voit représenter, et par conséquent hors de l'estat de la vigilance chrestienne nécessaire pour éviter les tentations.[15]

14 See, for example, Nicole, p. 85 (chapter XXX).

15 Nicole, p. 43 (chapter VI).

> In this way the theatre, by its own nature, is a school and an exercise in vice, since it's an art in which one must necessarily excite vicious passions in oneself [...]. What makes the theatre even more dangerous is that it distances us from all of the possible remedies that could prevent the bad impressions that it makes. The heart is thus softened by pleasure. The mind is thus occupied by exterior objects and entirely intoxicated with the madness that it sees performed and, by consequence, outside the state of Christian vigilance [*vigilance chrétienne*] necessary to avoid temptations.

Nicole's argument against authorial power is radically different from Corneille's description of how dramatic authors ought to write good tragedies. For Corneille, emotions are planned by the author and then correctly executed (or not) by the actors on stage. These serious and noble emotions are then purged at the end of the theatrical experience during a moment of pleasure, lodged somewhere between intellectual clearing and emotional relief.

Conversely, Nicole reiterates a natural disconnect between authorial intent and the actual lived emotional experience of spectators during a performance: the author may intend, for example, to represent terror; the spectators, according to Nicole, might instead feel lust for the scantily clad characters on stage (a real or non-fictional response to dramatic fiction) or perhaps admiration for the evil character whose crime goes unpunished (an unintended or 'morally wrong' response to fiction). Theatrephobes like Nicole deny the existence of any purgative process—the cleansing process reserved for the Catholic church's own emotional moments like transubstantiation, benediction, or post-confessional grace, for instance (it being essential not to forget that theatre was in competition with the church for a place in the emotional lives of potential worshippers).

Informed by Cartesian mechanics and close readings of contemporary dramatic theories, Nicole's attack against the theatre on moral and emotional grounds was ultimately different than the host of other anti-theatrical diatribes dating back to antiquity. Given that the Jansenist ecclesiastic attacked state theatre at the height of its support by the crown, Nicole's *Traité* provoked several direct responses by prominent playwrights and theorists during the years immediately following the publication of certain chapters in 1664, a full edition in 1667, and a second edition in 1675. Racine (young Racine—not the serious and pious Racine who turned against the theatre later in life), for example, wrote a response to Nicole (who was his former classics and rhetoric teacher) in the *Lettres provinciales* that compares plays to church writings, arguing that even a pious theologian like Blaise Pascal 'introduces on the

stage at times Dominicans, at times doctors, and always Jesuits' ('introduit sur la scène tantôt des jacobins, tantôt des docteurs, et toujours des jésuites').[16] Racine's defence of the theatre was bold from a poetical and polemical point of view: he gestures at the similarities between the writings of a moralist and the texts of dramatic authors. Racine goes on to say that he 'could say just as much about novels' ('pourr[ait] dire autant des romans'),[17] once again brazenly connecting both traditions, but ultimately sidestepping Nicole's arguments about theatrical performance (and, mainly, his argument that the emotions of performance are not grounded in cognition and are thus not moral). Racine, like many seventeenth-century *doctes*, relegates (at least *de facto*) 'theatre' to dramatic scripts and universal *poétiques*.

Nicole's attack was as much against the experience of spectatorship as against the character compositions, situations, and plot twists of dramatic writing. Racine, for whatever reason (fear of retribution; inability to conceptualise the performance as part of an aesthetic system; desire to polemicise the event), did not want to respond to the 'experience' part of Nicole's argument. Two decades later, the Theatine priest Francesco Caffaro (1650?–1720) also favoured this 'poetic' and institutional approach by attempting to defend theatre by authoritative historical argument (e.g., church fathers such as St. Thomas and St. Cyprian were not totally against visual spectacles) and in sociological perspective (e.g., Caffaro writes that he knows plenty of upstanding people who attend theatre performances).[18] Rather than persuading French *fidèles* of theatre's merits, however, Caffaro's *Dissertation* provoked the indignation of a host of religious writers. In the most famous response, the renowned bishop and orator Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet systematically dismantled every one of Caffaro's historical arguments and essentially condemned his theatre-going pals to hell in his masterful *Maximes et réflexions sur la Comédie* (1694).[19] Bossuet picks up where Nicole left off, once again relegating the emotions felt during a performance to the unconscious and recategorising the various

16 Jean Racine, 'Seconde lettre en réplique aux deux précédentes [10 mai 1666]', in *Lettres de Racine à l'Auteur des Hérésies imaginaires et des Deux visionnaires* (1667), in *Œuvres complètes de Jean Racine*, vol. IV (Paris: Pinard, 1829), p. 67.

17 Racine, p. 68.

18 Francesco Caffaro, *Lettre d'un théologien illustre par sa qualité et par son mérite, consulté par l'auteur pour savoir si la Comédie peut être permise, ou doit être absolument défendue* (Paris: Jean Guignard, 1694), in *L'Église et le théâtre*, ed. by Ch. Urbain and E. Levesque (Paris: Grasset, 1930), pp. 67–119.

19 *Maximes et réflexions sur la Comédie* (1694), in *Œuvres complètes de Bossuet* (Paris: Louis Vivès, 1862); also reprinted in *L'Église et le theatre*, ed. by Urbain and Levesque, pp. 120–240.

positive emotions deployed in drama into strict categories of concupiscence and greed.[20]

By the end of the century, the church was a main source of theorisation about the types of emotions felt during a theatre performance and the long-term repercussions of those emotional moments. Proponents of the stage were, for the most part, silent[21]—or, if not, either continued to focus on the *utility* of theatre or employed the 'it's only harmless pleasure' argument.[22] Religious supporters of theatre, like Caffaro, grounded their arguments in the historical justification of spectacle, running up against the matter-of-fact response from theatrephobes that the Stations of the Cross, for example, have little to do with *Tartuffe*. It is only this group—religious anti-theatrical writers—who seem to go to any lengths to describe the somatic and psychic mechanisms involved in the theatrical experience.

3 Rescuing the Emotions of Theatrical Performance

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the theatrical experience was in theoretical crisis. While theatregoers continued to attend performances in droves, any positive effects of performance were absent, de-emphasised, or incorporated into utilitarian models in theoretical discourses of the time. In order for proponents of the theatrical experience to be able to 'rescue' performance from the hands of anti-theatrical zealots, they would need a new set of arguments—arguments that bolstered the positive role of the emotions in learning (as opposed to the claim that emotions overwhelm more mindful processes like learning), as well as arguments that increasingly focused the theatrical experience on spectator attention to a fictional event (rather than on a real

20 On the psychology of spectatorship Bossuet writes that 'pendant qu'on est enchanté par la douceur de la mélodie ou étourdi par le merveilleux du spectacle, ces sentiments s'insinuent sans qu'on y pense et plaisent sans être aperçus' ('while we are enchanted by the softness of the melody or overwhelmed by the magic of the spectacle, these feelings insinuate themselves without our knowledge and give us pleasure without being noticed'): *Œuvres complètes de Bossuet*, XVII, p. 21.

21 Many initial supporters of (or at least those who did not immediately condemn) Caffaro's defence of the theatre were reluctant to speak out after he was threatened with excommunication in 1694. For further details, see Henry Phillips, *The Theatre and its Critics in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

22 Examples are numerous: see, for instance, the overall gist of Molière's *La Critique de l'École des femmes* (1663) or the more explicit pleasure arguments in Racine's preface to *Bérénice* (1670).

danger). This 'refocusing effort', an example of which I will show here, ushered in a positive, anthropological discourse related to theatrical performance—a pro-dramatic theory of the stage that would come to dominate theatrical theories for decades and even centuries.[23]

The first quarter of the eighteenth century was witness to a fundamental change in the theory of theatrical emotions. In 1719, for example, Jean-Baptiste (the abbé) Dubos published the *Réfléxions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, in which he conceptualises the emotions of theatrical performance. About the type of emotion experienced by a spectator, Dubos writes:

> Les Peintres & les Poëtes excitent en nous ces passions artificielles, en présentant les imitations des objets capables d'exciter en nous des passions véritables. Comme l'impression que ces imitations font sur nous est du même genre que l'impression que l'objet imité par le Peintre ou par le Poëte ferait sur nous; comme l'impression que l'imitation fait n'est différente de l'impression que l'objet imité feroit, qu'en ce qu'elle est moins forte, elle doit exciter dans notre âme une passion qui ressemble à celle que l'objet imité y auroit pû exciter. La copie de l'objet doit, pour ainsi dire, exciter en nous une copie de la passion que l'objet y auroit excitée.[24]

> Painters and poets excite these artificial passions by presenting imitations of objects capable of exciting true passions in us. Because the impression that these imitations make on us is of the same nature as the object's impression, imitated by the painter or the poet, would be on us; because the impression made by the imitation is only different than the imitated object's impression in that it is weaker, it must therefore excite in our mind a passion that resembles that which the imitated object could have excited. The copy of the object must thus excite in us a copy of the passion that the object would have excited.

23 While the scope of this article is introductory, examples of this positive, anthropological theory of the stage which I analyse in my larger project include the tragic works of Houdar de La Mothe, Marivaux's theoretical writings on theatre, Voltaire's 'emotional' tragedy of the 1730s, the *comédie larmoyante*, and Diderot's *drame*. The conclusion of this essay briefly sketches this project. For more information, see Logan J. Connors, 'Interpretations', in *The Cultural History of Theatre: The Enlightenment*, ed. by Mechele Leon (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

24 Jean Baptiste Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* I., 3 (1719) (Paris: Pissot, 1770), p. 27.

Dubos adds layers and phases to what he conceptualises as a cognitive act of spectating; the immediate, physical, and even overwhelming aspects of emotion intimated by Corneille and other classical theorists, and then explained quite explicitly by church officials are subdued and sequenced by Dubos into a mindful event that includes both sensory perception and information processing. It is important to note that Dubos is not trying to 'rationalise' or downplay the emotions felt by spectators during a performance; these emotions are not the same emotions that characterise the everyday lives of spectators, but he is quick to point out that they certainly feel like 'real' emotions. Yet spectators have made the concerted effort to attend the play and their expectations are framed in a specific way. The emotions felt in response to theatre are thus categorically different from those experienced in everyday life, and it is therefore safe to take pleasure in the performance—even if this pleasure feels the same as pleasure induced by another, non-theatrical source. To use Nicole's lexicon, because these emotions do not affect spectators 'in the soul' ('réellement'), their 'vigilance chrétienne' remains unscathed, coexisting with any 'theatrical self' during the performance.

Continuing to describe this emotional process, Dubos writes:

> Nous jouissons de notre émotion, sans être alarmés par la crainte qu'elle dure trop long-tems. C'est, sans nous attrister réellement, que la pièce de Racine [Phèdre] fait couler des larmes de nos yeux: l'affliction n'est, pour ainsi dire, que sur la superficie de notre cœur, & nous sentons bien que nos pleurs finiront avec la représentation de la fiction ingénieuse qui les fait couler.[25]
>
> We enjoy our emotion without being alarmed by the terror that it might last too long. It's without really saddening us that Racine's play [*Phèdre*] puts tears in our eyes: the affliction, one might say, is only on the surface of our heart and we feel without difficulty that our tears will end with the performance of the ingenious fiction that caused them to flow.

It is possible that Dubos's theory of the emotions is a careful reflection on the emotions of theatrical performance—an attempt to parse and map the emotions on the 'surface' of the heart, or what we might conceptualise now as a junction between mindful reflection and corporeal affect. Or perhaps Dubos's theory was rhetorical sleight of hand to remove discussions of theatre and pleasure from the church's purview and to justify the survival and proliferation

25 Dubos, pp. 30–31.

of the dramatic arts during the turmoil of the Regency—a specific political and cultural 'post-absolutist regime' of relative openness in the wake of Louis XIV's death.[26] Authorial intent does not matter as much as the effects of the *Réflexions*—a text that was published many times throughout the eighteenth century and was later quoted by a host of dramatic authors and critics, including Rousseau, Diderot, Batteux, and Voltaire.

With his *Réflexions critiques*, Dubos refocused dramatic theory onto the theatrical performance—and, particularly, onto the emotional experiences of spectators—by conceptualising emotion as a critical criterion for judging the value of drama. This feeling, located on the 'surface of our heart', differed from anti-theatrical notions of 'real' affect as well as from 'cathartic' or 'purgative' narratives of how the emotions operate in theatre. Most importantly, Dubos adds what we might call an 'emotional safety net' to the activity of spectating. Critics could now evaluate a play using relational criteria enjoyed during the spectator-critic's experience with the event because this experience was mindful and emotional. Pleasure is thus a knowledge building process, rather than a confusing state of ecstasy or an overpowering feeling of excitement. Although it would go beyond the scope of this short essay, it is important to note in passing that important correlations exist between Dubos's emotional 'rescuing act' and the same type of 'reduction' or 'softening' of the passions into 'useful interests' in the works of Adam Smith, Bernard de Mandeville, Montesquieu, David Hume, and other philosophers at the time.[27]

In the dramatic field, shortly after the publication of *Les Réflexions*, several prominent writers employed an aesthetic that they termed *le pathétique* or *l'effet* or *l'intérêt sentimental*. This new aesthetic emerged as a more holistic, more diverse, and even more accurate means by which to treat the emotions. Where there was once an attempt to depict a universally constructed (or what was thought to be a universally constructed) emotion like terror, there was now a new emphasis on real spectator affect, grounding theatre in dramatic subjects that were thought to resonate more with spectators. Authors of *comédies*

26 Jay Caplan describes the period of 'post-absolutist culture' after Louis XIV's death as marked by 'the passing of absolutism as a cultural order, and to the emergence of new forms—of value, subjectivity, and legitimacy—that would survive the political death of absolutism'. See *In the King's Wake: Post-Absolutist Culture in France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 2.

27 For a masterful essay on the differences between passions and 'interests' during the first half of the eighteenth century, see Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (1977) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

larmoyantes, drames, and other 'new genres' demonstrated heightened concern for the audio-visual event of performance. Many productions conceptualised the emotions as relational, based on a more complex ideal subject rather than on a unified *docte* from antiquity or on a religious teleology of sin avoidance. Dubos's inclusive and safe take on the emotions gave dramatic authors the theoretical undergirding to justify veritable psychological experiments with their plays—experiments in which new types of characters negotiated new emotional situations like nostalgia, patriotism, and friendship.[28]

One example of the desire to bind emotionality with complex thought processes in the wake of Dubos's text is in Houdar de La Motte's (1672–1731) *Inès de Castro* of 1723. La Motte's tragedy was the first to place a child on stage at the Comédie-Française, drawing in the emotional attention of both the characters and the audience. At the conclusion of the play, the King decides to end his unjust course of action preventing marriage between his son, the Prince, and the lowborn Inès, after seeing their children for the first time—an ethical decision triggered by a 'non-linguistic' emotional event.[29] Although the present essay cannot give justice to this dramaturgical-emotional regime change, other examples include Marivaux's experiments on the immediacy and function of love in society (e.g., *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* and *La Surprise de l'Amour*) as well as works by Voltaire and Nivelle de La Chaussée—tragedies and comedies that represent the complexities of specific emotional valences and intensities through, among other strategies, increasingly identificatory and emotional plots deployed with visual considerations that draw attention to the stage.

My essay is part of a larger investigation that will trace the history of the 'theatrical event' in France from the religious critiques of the seventeenth century to the anthropological, pro-dramatic criticism of the Enlightenment. In this short study of Nicole and Dubos as well as in the larger project, my goal is to address, at least in part, what the historian William Reddy sees as a difficulty when literary scholars analyse the representation of emotions from before the advent of modern psychology. Reddy writes that 'they [literary historians] tend to regard ideas about emotions from the past as interesting, even fascinating, configurations to be understood as part of their own time. They have not asked themselves what relation such past ideas have to the "reality" of emotions'.[30]

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28 One instance of the desire to experiment with theatre in terms of the emotional and pedagogical values of performance is elucidated in Marivaux's *Réflexions sur l'esprit humain à l'occasion de Corneille et de Racine* (1744), in *Journaux et œvres diverses*, ed. by F. Deloffre and M. Gilot (Paris: Garnier, 1969), pp. 465–77.

29 Antoine Houdar de La Motte, *Inès de Castro, tragédie* (Paris: Chez Dupuis, 1723).

30 Reddy, p. ix.

The 'reality' of emotions is certainly a tricky construction—a likely reason why Reddy puts the term in scare quotes. Nevertheless, is it not possible that theatre, with its concern for things and 'non-things', is an experience to which we can turn to find moments when specific 'cultures', like that of early modern France, began to conceptualise their limits without recourse to religion and to discuss processes in which something like nature or reality play a role? Early modern writers, including Nicole and Dubos, reflected on the innateness of visual processes as well as on the fact that this apparent innateness might be part of a culturalisation (better for Dubos; worse for Nicole) involved in attending the theatre. These enemies and friends of the stage—like psychologists, anthropologists, and philosophers today who try to tease out the 'commerce' (to use Locke's term) between nature and nurture—began to recognise the complexity of our psyche and to observe that it includes, like a theatre performance, both ephemeral and deliberate (staged) processes. Eighteenth-century theatrical theories, like recent research into emotion and learning,[31] gesture to the power of emotions despite their deeply ambiguous character and our very best efforts to control, subdue, or divert them through reason, 'Christian vigilance', and universal poetic systems.

31 See, for example, Shari Stenberg, 'Teaching and (Re)Learning the Rhetoric of Emotion', in *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, vol. XI. 2 (2011), pp. 349–69; Raymond A. Mar and Keith Oatley, 'The Function of Fiction is the Abstraction and Simulation of Social Experience', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3 (2008), pp. 173–92; K. Oatley and S. Nundy, 'Rethinking the Role of Emotions in Education', in *The Handbook of Education and Human Development: New Models of Learning, Teaching and Schooling* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 257–74.

CHAPTER 7

The Catharsis of Prosecution: Royal Violence, Poetic Justice, and Public Emotion in the Russian *Hamlet* (1748)*

Kirill Ospovat

1 Introduction: The Politics of Catharsis in Early Modern Europe and Russia

Early modern tragedy, and particularly French *tragédie classique* and its imitations across Europe, famously represents a cultural site that brought together the elaborate learned tradition of Aristotelian poetics with visions of absolute sovereignty and their re-enactments in the institutional spaces of royal courts and theatres. Summarising what is for him a distortion of Aristotle in seventeenth-century dramatic theory and practice, Walter Benjamin famously emphasises their political nature. He concludes that the original 'cultic character of the Greek theatre' as a background for tragedy is replaced, in the 1600s, by royal politics: 'it is the single fact of the royal hero which prompted the critics to relate the new *Trauerspiel* to the ancient tragedy of the Greeks.'[1] Aristotle himself (to quote André Dacier's authoritative French version of 1692 and its English adaptation) required that tragedy should represent the actions of those 'who are of Eminent Quality, and of Great Reputation' ('qui sont dans une fortune éclatante, & dans une grande réputation'), and Dacier insisted on this requirement in his *Remarques*.[2] Decades earlier, Abbé d'Aubignac, in his professedly Aristotelian treatise *La pratique du théâtre* (*The Practice of Theatre*,

* This essay includes a part of my larger study, *Terror and Pity: Aleksandr Sumarokov and the Theater of Power in Elizabethan Russia*, which encompasses a much more detailed discussion of the issues addressed here in their political and literary contexts. This study was conceived and completed within the DramaNet project and is forthcoming with Academic Studies Press (Boston).

1 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (New York: Verso, 1985), p. 61.

2 *La Poétique d'Aristote, traduite en françois avec des remarques critiques* [...] *par André Dacier* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1692; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1976), pp. 173, 179; *Aristotle's Art of Poetry, Translated from the Original Greek* [...] *Together with Mr. D'Acier's Notes from the French* (London: D. Browne and W. Turner, 1705), pp. 186–87.

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1657), which was conceived under the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu, had written that:

> La *Tragédie* représentait la vie des Princes, plein d'inquiétudes, de soupçons, de troubles, de rébellions, de guerres, de meurtres, de passions violentes et de grandes aventures [...] ce terme ne veut rien dire sinon *Une chose magnifique, sérieuse, grave et convenable aux agitations & aux grands revers de la fortune des Princes.*
>
> Tragedy represented the Life of Princes and great People full of disquiets, suspicions, troubles, rebellions, wars, murders, and all sorts of violent passions, and mighty adventures [...] that word, in its true signification, meaning nothing else but a Magnificent, serious, grave poem, conformable to the Agitations and sudden turns of fortune of great people.[3]

This definition of tragedy as an appropriate medium for the representation of political crises builds upon Aristotle's notion of *peripeteia*, the drastic reversal of a character's fortune that is primarily responsible for the complex emotional effects of tragedy. In his own draft adaptation of the *Poetics* Jean Racine, one of the most prominent tragedians of the seventeenth century, maps *peripeteia* onto political hierarchies of rank and privilege in an almost imperceptible shift of the original logic: a tragic character is now someone 'who through his own fault brings about his misfortune and falls from great felicity and highest rank into great misery' ('qui, par sa faute, devienne malheureux et tombe d'une grande félicité et d'un rang très-considérable dans une grande misère').[4] The fall from power thus becomes, in early modern Europe, the definition of a tragic plot.[5]

As Benjamin and Stephen Greenblatt agree, in the emotional economy of early modern tragedy 'fear and pity are not seen as participation in the

3 François-Hédelin d'Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre*, ed. by Hélène Baby (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), pp. 210–11; [François-Hédelin d'Aubignac], *The Whole Art of the Stage* (London, 1684; repr. New York: Blom, 1968), p. 140.

4 Jean Racine, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1962), p. 588. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

5 Hans-Jürgen Schings, 'Consolatio Tragoediae: Zur Theorie des barocken Trauerspiels', in *Deutsche Dramentheorien: Beiträge zu einer historischen Poetik des Dramas in Deutschland*, ed. by Reinhold Grimm, (Frankfurt a.M.: Atheneum, 1971), pp. 30–31; Ronald L. Martinez, 'Tragic Machiavelli', in *The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*, ed. by Vickie B. Sullivan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 111–12; Margreta de Grazia, *'Hamlet' without Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 52.

integral whole of the action, but as participation in the fate of the most outstanding characters'; it is 'a dread bound up with the fate of particular situated individuals', immediately inscribed into the collective social and political experience.[6] Further developing this approach, Anselm Haverkamp revives Benjamin's claim that the ultimate tragic figure is the corpse: 'In the *Trauerspiel* of the seventeenth century the corpse becomes quite simply the pre-eminent emblematic property [...] and it is the function of the tyrant to provide the *Trauerspiel* with them.'[7] In a reading evocative of Foucault's discussion of public executions as spectacular stagings of authority, Haverkamp links the expressive powers of the corpse to a specific conception of sovereignty that is fundamental to early modern drama. According to Benjamin, drama 'makes a special point of endowing the ruler with the gesture of executive power'—'die Geste der Vollstreckung'—which is also the gesture of execution.[8] As Haverkamp would have it, 'the corpses become emblematic not only physically but as a result and proof of execution, meaningful only in the dismemberment whose gesture is the object of *Trauerspiel*.'[9] It is from this perspective that Haverkamp addresses the well-known passage from Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532) that recounts the story of Ramiro d'Orco, Cesare Borgia's deputy who was brutally disposed of by his master:

> E perché cognosceva le rigorosità passate avergli generato qualche odio, per purgare li animi di quelli popoli e guadagniarseli in tutto volse mostrare che, se crudeltà alcuna era seguita, non era causata da llui ma dalla acerba natura del ministro. E presa sopra a questo occasione, lo fece a Cesena una mattina mettere in dua pezi in sulla piazza, con un pezo di legne et uno coltello sanguinoso accanto; la ferocità del quale spettaculo fece quegli popoli in uno tempo rimanere satisfatti e stupidi.
>
> And because he [Cesare] knew that [Ramiro's] recent harshness had generated some hatred, in order to clear the minds of the people, and gain them over to his cause completely, he determined to make plain that whatever cruelty had occurred had come, not from him, but from

6 Benjamin, p. 61; Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 133.

7 Benjamin, pp. 218–19.

8 Ibid., p. 69.

9 Anselm Haverkamp, *Shakespearean Genealogies of Power: A Whispering of Nothing in 'Hamlet', 'Richard II', 'Julius Caesar', 'Macbeth', 'The Merchant of Venice', and 'The Winter's Tale'* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 79.

> the brutal character of the minister. Taking a proper occasion, therefore, he had him placed on the public square of Cesena one morning, in two pieces, with a piece of wood beside him and a bloody knife. The ferocity of the scene left the people at once stunned and satisfied.[10]

Many scholars have noted that Machiavelli discusses violence and submission in terms reminiscent of the Aristotelian concept of tragic catharsis, a purgation of fear and pity that should be engendered by the tragic plot.[11] In fact, this account represents a crucial juncture at which the language of tragic aesthetics was appropriated by the emerging culture of 'absolutist' authoritarian violence. The very notion of catharsis, as Déborah Blocker has argued, was originally singled out as the conceptual centrepiece of Aristotle's *Poetics* by Florentine humanists who constructed an emotional economy of civic appeasement for the Medici principate in the decades immediately following the publication of Machiavelli's *Prince*.[12] In his reading of the Ramiro d'Orco episode, Haverkamp speaks of an 'ironic catharsis' that replaces the moral effect suggested by the Aristotelian language with a public stupefaction as meaningless as the violence itself. In fact, however, this stupefaction does not fall outside the range of legitimate and culturally relevant aesthetic and political emotions. On the political side, Machiavelli himself recommended that authority should be based on public fear. Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651) developed both a political doctrine and an aesthetic of fear, amalgamating them in the famous engraving showing the state body to be constituted by a mass of subjects worshipping the sovereign head.[13] On the dramatic side, catharsis was regularly taken to imply 'shocking' ('percellere') the audience. To quote Gerhard Vossius's authoritative definition from 1647, 'the

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10 Niccolò Machiavelli, *De Principatibus*, in *Opere*, ed. by Rinaldo Rinaldi (Torino: UTET, 1999), pp. 182–83. English translation is from Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince: A Revised Translation, Backgrounds, Interpretations, Marginalia*, trans. and ed. by Robert M. Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), p. 21.

11 Steven Mullaney, 'Apprehending Subjects, or the Reformation in the Suburbs', in *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 88–91; Martinez, p. 113; Sandro Landi, '"Per purgare li animi di quelli populi": Metafore del vincolo politico e religioso in Machiavelli', in *Storia del pensiero politico*, 2 (2014), pp. 205–06.

12 Déborah Blocker, 'Dire l'"art" à Florence sous Cosme I de Médicis: une *Poétique* d'Aristote au service du Prince', *AISTHE*, 2 (2008), pp. 83–88. See also Blocker's essay in the current volume.

13 Horst Bredekamp, *Thomas Hobbes, der Leviathan: das Urbild des modernen Staates und seine Gegenbilder* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2003), pp. 11–16, 160. See also Blocker's essay in the current volume.

listener is shocked by the dreadfulness [*atrocitas*] of the deed itself, while the dignity of the characters increases the outrageousness of the situation.'[14]

Informed by both aesthetic and juridical concerns, the parallel between tragedy and public executions as rituals of power remained a central trope in the discussion of dramatic effect and penal practice at least until the late eighteenth century.[15] In 1611, another influential Aristotelian theorist, Daniel Heinsius, mentioned that ancient 'tyrants' used to include real and painful executions in the performances of tragedies 'for the oblectation and pleasure of theatres' ('in oblectationem, et ad voluptatem theatri').[16] Commenting on one of the primeval scenes of absolutist violence, the execution of Egmont and Horn in 1568, Montaigne described it as a 'tragedy' staged by the Spanish governor of the Netherlands, the Duke of Alba (*Essais* I. 7). Two centuries later, in the chapter 'Of the Effects of Tragedy' from his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Edmund Burke argued that even 'the most sublime and affecting tragedy' would not be able to exercise an emotional attraction comparable to that of the public execution of a 'state criminal of high rank'. Not incidentally, Burke's definition of the sublime included a Hobbesian vision of royal power associated with 'terror': 'Sovereigns are frequently addressed with the title of *dread majesty.*'[17] Tragedy, with its catharsis, provided an important paradigm for the mode of rule which, in Foucault's eloquent description, resorted to the 'atrocity' of public executions as 'a certain mechanism of power: of a power that not only did not hesitate to exert itself directly on bodies, but was exalted and strengthened by its visible manifestations [. . .] of a power which, in the absence of continual supervision, sought a renewal of its effect in the spectacle of its individual manifestations; of a power that was recharged in the ritual display of its reality as "super-power"'.[18]

As a 'scenario of power', tragedy negotiated between the two contrasting facets of absolutist rule: its aspiration to an all-embracing, 'civilised' emotional

14 Gerardus Joannes Vossius, *Poeticarum institutionum libri tres: Institutes of Poetics in Three Books*, ed., trans. and commentary by Jan Bloemendal with Edwin Rabbie (Leiden: Brill, 2010), I, pp. 510–11; Schings, p. 14.

15 Schings, p. 29; Carsten Zelle, 'Strafen und Schrecken: Einführende Bemerkungen zur Parallele zwischen dem Schauspiel der Tragödie und der Tragödie der Hinrichtung', in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 28 (1984), pp. 76–103.

16 Daniel Heinsius, *De constitutione tragoediae: La constitution de la tragédie: dite La poétique d'Heinsius*, ed. and trans. by Anne Duprat (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2001), pp. 35, 238.

17 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Bbeautiful*, ed. by J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge & Paul, 1958), pp. 47, 67.

18 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 57.

discipline and pacification of subjects, and its dependence on spectacular 'barbaric' atrocity as a crucial source of legitimacy.[19] As Stephen Greenblatt concludes, theatrical re-enactments of kingship existed to reveal 'paradoxes, ambiguities, and tensions of authority', since 'the enhancement of royal power is not only a matter of the deferral of doubt: the very doubts that Shakespeare raises serve not to rob the king of his charisma but to heighten it, precisely as they heighten the theatrical interest of the play'.[20] In Machiavelli's treatise, the notion of 'spectacle' ('spettaculo') evoked to describe the execution of Ramiro d'Orco reappears once again in the author's advice to the prince 'to entertain his people with festivals and spectacles' in order to keep them content.[21] This ambiguous political appropriation of spectacle also underlay Aubignac's *La pratique du theatre*, whose preface expressly grounds dramatic poetics in a political vision of royally sponsored public diversions:

> les Souverains ne peuvent rien faire de plus avantageux pour leur gloire, et pour le bien de leurs Sujets, que d'établir, et d'entretenir les Spectacles et les Jeux publics avec un bel ordre, et avec des magnificences dignes de leur Couronne. Il faut bien certes que les Spectacles soient très importants au gouvernement des États.
>
> Princes can never do any thing more advantageous for their own Glory, nor for their Peoples Happiness, than to found, settle, and maintain at

19 I borrow the term 'scenario of power' from Richard Wortman's seminal work on Russian imperial symbolism: Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Walter Benjamin has linked early modern tragic drama to a vision of sovereignty as originating in spectacular royal violence made possible by a 'state of exception' beyond any law, a vision which 'positively demands the completion of the image of the sovereign, as a tyrant' (Benjamin, p. 69). This conception, which relies on Carl Schmitt's reading of early modern political thought, was later developed by Louis Marin in 'Théâtralité et pouvoir: Magie, machination, machine: *Médée* de Corneille', in *Politiques de la représentation* (Paris: Kimé, 2005), pp. 263–85. In a recent essay, Bernhard Huss has opposed the sombre world of Racine's tragedies to the doctrine of catharsis as appropriated by the 'official' moralism of the court: Bernhard Huss, 'Die Katharsis, Jean Racine und das Problem einer tragischen Reinigung bei Hofe', in *PhiN—Philologie im Netz*, 49 (2009), pp. 35–55, http://web.fu-berlin.de/phin/phin49/p49t2.htm. In fact, however, Racine's well-documented success at Louis XIV's court seems to confirm Benjamin's view of *Trauerspiel* as a genre which both forges and builds upon the propensity of early modern elites to pessimistic ('tragic' or 'melancholic') self-reflection.

20 Greenblatt, p. 65.

21 Machiavelli, p. 63.

> their own Charges, publick Spectacles, Games, and other Diversions, in the greatest Order, and the noblest Magnificence that their Crown will afford. And without doubt they have always been thought very important to the very Political part of Government.[22]

Accordingly, the main reason for writing and performing tragedies is the disciplining effect they can have on the audience of subjects:

> II ne faut pas s'imaginer pourtant, que les Spectacles ne puissent rien donner qu'une splendeur vaine et inutile. C'est une secrète instruction des choses, les plus utiles au Peuple et les plus difficiles à lui persuader. [...] La principale règle du Poème Dramatique, est que les vertus y soient toujours récompensées, ou pour le moins toujours louées, malgré les outrages de la Fortune, et que les vices y soient toujours punis, ou pour le moins toujours en horreur, quand même ils y triomphent. Le Théâtre donc étant ainsi réglé, quels enseignements la Philosophie peut-elle avoir qui n'y deviennent sensibles? C'est-là que les plus grossiers [...] ne doutent point que le Ciel ne punisse les coupables par l'horreur de leur forfait, quand Oreste bourrelé de sa propre conscience, y fait ses plaintes, et paraît agité publiquement de sa fureur. C'est-là que l'Ambition passe devant eux, comme un grand mal, quand ils considèrent un Ambitieux plus travaillé par sa passion que par ses Ennemis, violer les lois du Ciel & de la Terre, et tomber en des malheurs inconcevables, pour avoir trop entrepris. [...] Enfin c'est-là qu'un Homme supposé les rend capables de pénétrer dans les plus profonds sentiments de l'humanité, touchant au doigt et à l'œil, s'il faut ainsi dire, dans ces peintures vivantes des vérités qu'ils ne pourraient concevoir autrement. Mais ce qui est de remarquable, c'est que jamais ils ne sortent du Théâtre, qu'ils ne remportent avec l'idée des personnes qu'on leur a représentées, la connaissance des vertus & des vices, dont ils ont vu les exemples.
>
> We are not nevertheless to imagine that these Publick Spectacles afford nothing but a vain Splendour, without any real Utility; for they are a secret

22 D'Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre*, p. 43; *The Whole Art of the Stage*, p. 7. For an analysis of d'Aubignac's argument and its political background, see Baby's introduction to the French edition (pp. 496–97) and, more generally, Blocker's insightful study of the political agendas behind the shaping of neoclassical theatrical practices in France under Richelieu in her *Instituer un 'art': Politiques du théâtre dans la France du premier XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009).

> instruction to the People of many things, which it would be hard to insinuate into them any other way. [...] One of the chiefest, and indeed the most indispensible Rule of Drammatick Poems, is, that in them Virtues always ought to be rewarded, or at least commended, in spight of all the Injuries of Fortune; and that likewise Vices will always be punished, or at least detested with Horrour, though they triumph upon the Stage for a time. The Stage being thus regulated, what can Philosophy teach that won't become much more sensibly touching by Representation; 'tis there that the meanest Capacities [...] are convinced that Heaven punishes the horrid Crimes of the Guilty with the remorse of them; when they see Orestes tormented by his own Conscience, and driven about by the Furies within his own Breast; 'tis there that Ambition seems to them a very dangerous Passion, when they see a man engaged in Crimes, to attain his ends, and after having violated the Laws of Heaven and Earth, fall into Misfortunes as great as those he had overwhelmed others in, and more tormented by himself than by his Enemies. [...] And lastly, 'tis here that a Man, by Representation, makes them penetrate into the most hidden secrets of Human Nature, while they seem to touch and feel in this living Picture, those Truths which else they would scarce be capable of: But that which is most remarkable, is, That they never go from the Theatre without carrying along with them the Idea of the Persons represented; the knowledge of those Virtues and Vices, of which they have seen the Examples.[23]

In his rearrangement of Aristotelian concepts, Aubignac links the dramatic effect of catharsis to catastrophes that claim the legitimacy of divine justice. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle indeed suggested that tragedies should profit from the impression that the events they represent are steered by divine design rather than mere chance, for example when 'the statue of Mitys at Argos [...] fell on his Murderer, and killed him on the spot'.[24] The legally trained master tragedian Pierre Corneille suggested in 1660 that Aristotle developed his conception of tragedy as a fictionalised and mystified substitute for a system of political justice that was missing in his age but had been since established: 'la punition des méchantes actions, et la récompense des bonnes, n'étaient pas de l'usage de son siècle, comme nous les avons rendues de celui du nôtre.'[25] For Aubignac

23 D'Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre*, pp. 39–42; *The Whole Art of the Stage*, pp. 3–6.

24 *Aristotle's Art of Poetry,* p. 140.

25 Pierre Corneille, *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique*, ed. by B. Louvat and M. Escola (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1999), p. 100.

even more than for Corneille, punishment of the guilty becomes a paradigmatic tragic action and a central source of the tragic effect: fear. This effect is, in turn, aligned with introspection—conscience—which maps the exigencies of obedience (the opposite of ambition, styled here as the ultimate political sin) onto 'the modern "soul"', which, according to Foucault, 'in historical reality [...], unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint.'[26]

This vision of theatre shaped the importation of classicising tragedy to mid-eighteenth-century Russia, which was almost single-handedly carried out by the court dramatist and theatre director Aleksandr Sumarokov (1717–1777).[27] His plays, which were written from 1747 and staged from 1750 onwards, were intended to inaugurate both the national (or, rather, imperial) 'classicist' canon of dramatic literature and a Russian-language theatre at a court that already entertained an Italian operatic company and a French dramatic company. Indeed, such a theatre was officially established under Sumarokov's supervision in 1756. This institutional development was anticipated by the prominent Parisian actor and theatrical writer Louis Riccoboni, who dedicated his 1743 treatise *De la réformation du theâtre* (*On the Reformation of Theatre*) to Russia's Empress Elizabeth. In this dedication, which was favourably received by the empress, Riccoboni suggested the establishment of a theatre in Russian that would function as an institution of public discipline, 'suited to fashion wise politicians, courageous soldiers, good citizens, magistrates upright and zealous in state service' ('propre à former de sages Politiques, d'intrépides Soldats, de bons Citoyens, des Magistrats integres & zélez pour L'Etat').[28] This was not the only instance when Aubignac's politicised interpretation of dramatic poetics was applied to Russian practices. In a lengthy 1750 critique of Sumarokov's oeuvre, his long-time adversary, the Paris-educated erudite Vasilii Trediakovskii, reiterated Aubignac's precepts for tragedies:

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26 Foucault, p. 29.

27 On Sumarokov, see Marcus Levitt, 'Sumarokov: Life and Works', in *Early Modern Russian Letters: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009), pp. 6–21, and other essays in this volume. On the early history of Russian court theatre, see V.N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, *Teatr v Rossii pri imperatritse Elizavete Petrovne* (Saint Petersburg: Giperion, 2003); *F.G. Volkov i russkii teatr ego vremeni. Sbornik dokumentov*, ed. by Iu A. Dmitriev (Moscow: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1953); *Teatral'naia zhizn' Rossii v epokhu* [...] *Elizavety Petrovny* [...] *Dokumental'naia khronika*, ed. by L.M. Starikova, vol. II. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 2003), vol. II. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), vol. III. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 2011).

28 Louis Riccoboni, *De la réformation du théatre* ([Paris], 1743), pp. vii–viii.

> Трагедия делается для того, по главнейшему и первейшему своему установлению, чтоб вложить в смотрителей любовь к добродетели и крайнюю ненависть к злости и омерзение ею не учительским, но некоторым приятным образом. Чего ради [...] надобно всегда отдавать преимущество добрым делам, а злодеянию, сколько б оно ни имело каких успехов, всегда б наконец быть в попрании, подражая сим самым действиям Божиим.
>
> According to its most important and primary statute, tragedy is produced in order to inculcate the audience with love for virtue and an extreme hatred for evil and a contempt for it in a pleasant rather than didactic fashion. Therefore [...] one must always give the upper hand to good deeds, and evildoing, however many successes it may have, must always end up defeated, in this way imitating the very actions of God.[29]

Although Trediakovskii's text was a first experimental attempt to develop learned (and, specifically, Aristotelian) literary criticism in Russian, his newly imported definition of tragedy was not devoid of resonances with the experiences of the Russian court. Twenty years earlier, in 1730, the Spanish ambassador to Saint Petersburg, Duke of Liria, had noted:

> Июля 6 <-го> кончили совершенную гибель дома Долгоруковых. Князь Алексей, отец обрученной невесты Петра II, был сослан со всем своим семейством на Березов остров, где прежде его содержался несчастный Меншиков [...] Таков был трагический конец этой ветви дома Долгоруковых, которую любил Петр II, и кажется, что падение оной было справедливым судом божиим, для наказания их дурных дел, безмерного высокомерия и тщеславия.
>
> June 6 sealed the final ruin of the house of Dolgorukii. Prince Aleksei, the father of the betrothed bride of Peter II, was exiled with all his family to the Berezov island which before that had harboured the unfortunate Menshikov [...] This was the tragic end of this branch of the house of Dolgorukii, favoured by Peter II, and it seems that its fall was effected by

29 V.K. Trediakovskii, 'Pis'mo, v kotorom soderzhitsia rassuzhdenie o stikhotvorenii, ponyne na svet izdannom [...] pisannoe ot priiatelia k priiateliu', in *Kritika XVIII veka*, ed. by A.M. Ranchin and V.L. Korovin (Moskva: Olimp, 2002), p. 92. I quote from the translation in Levitt, 'Sumarokov's Russianized *Hamlet*: Texts and Contexts', in *Early Modern Russian Letters*, pp. 86–87.

> divine justice, to punish them for their mischief and boundless haughtiness and vanity.[30]

As do Aubignac and Trediakovskii, Liria associates the concept of the 'tragic' with a spectacular fall from power that is interpreted as divine punishment for excessive ambition. In this case, such language is evoked to justify an ostentatiously arbitrary act of royal terror: Empress Anna's punishment of a noble clan that had all but ruled Russia under her predecessor Peter II. Liria's statement negotiates between the discourses of literature and politics just as it does between local Russian experience and pan-European cultural idioms: as a member of the British royal house of Stuart serving as a Spanish diplomat in Russia, Liria epitomised the cosmopolitanism of early modern ruling elites. His association of the fall of Dolgorukiis with tragedy was not unprecedented: his friend Jane Rondeau, wife of two consecutive British representatives in Russia, concurred that it would 'make a pretty story for a tragedy'.[31] There is little doubt that the parallel between royal violence and tragedy was still relevant for both Sumarokov and Trediakovskii. The ascension of Empress Elizabeth in the wake of a palace revolution in November 1741 was followed by two spectacular political trials of high-standing courtiers: Russia's most cunning diplomat, Count Heinrich Johann Friedrich Ostermann, and her most famous general, the charismatic and popular Field Marshal Count Burchard Christoph von Münnich. Sumarokov himself had been a client of and adjutant to another convict in that trial, the former Chancellor Mikhail Golovkin. In early 1742 they were sentenced to death and led to the scaffold, where they were granted a royal pardon that substituted permanent Siberian exile for capital punishment.

Accordingly, Aubignac's and Trediakovskii's tragic poetics as well as its kinship with the poetics of judicial terror informed Sumarokov's second tragedy, *Gamlet* (1748), a loose but obvious adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* Shakespeare's play, as Margreta de Grazia has reiterated in a compelling study, is a political drama of failed succession that threatens, and eventually destroys, the body politic ('Something is rotten in the state of Denmark').[32] Sumarokov, who had access to the 1685 Folio and to the freshly published French adaptation of the play in the second volume of Pierre-Antoine de Laplace's *Théâtre*

30 *Zapiski diuka Liriiskago i Bervikskago vo vremia prebyvaniia ego pri imperatorskom rossijskom dvore* [. . .] (Sanktpeterburg, 1845), p. 103.

31 Jane Vigor, *Letters from a Lady, Who Resided Some Years in Russia, to her Friend in England* (London: J. Dodsley, 1777), p. 64.

32 De Grazia, *'Hamlet' without Hamlet*; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* ed. by G.R. Hibbard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 184.

anglois (London, 1746), adapted *Hamlet*'s plot to fit both 'classicist' doctrine (he shared the commonplace criticisms of Shakespeare's 'irregularity') and a political agenda. In sum, he greatly simplified the narrative and, most importantly, provided it with a happy ending.

His Gamlet (Hamlet), informed by his confidant Armans of Klavdii's (Claudius's) crime, is urged by a dream vision of his father to avenge his murder. Gamlet confronts Gertruda (Gertrude), compelling her to confess and repent, but out of love for Ofeliia (Ophelia), he hesitates to punish Klavdii and Polonii (Polonius). Meanwhile, the two of them plan the murder of Gertruda, which would allow Klavdii to marry the virtuous Ofeliia. Dispatching assassins to kill Gamlet, the conspirators stay behind to execute Ofeliia for refusing to comply with their plan. The palace is stormed by the triumphant Gamlet, backed by the populace. He kills Klavdii off stage and, after a long hesitation, pardons Polonii at Ofeliia's request, but Polonii takes his own life.[33]

It has long been noted that, with this outcome, *Gamlet* could easily be recognised as a dramatic re-enactment of Empress Elizabeth's *coup d'état*.[34] Indeed, the plot of Sumarokov's play aligns well with other festive theatrical productions commemorating this event: the Novgorodian Baroque drama *Stefanotokos* (*The Crown-Bearer*, 1742); Voltaire's tragedy *Mérope* (1743), that was staged by the French company to celebrate the anniversary of Elizabeth's coronation in 1746; and the Italian opera *Bellerofonte*, that was produced for a similar occasion in 1750. As Louis Marin has argued, since the exceptional act of violence that lay at the foundation of royal authority—the *coup d'état*—was beyond the regulation of any theoretical discourse, an absolutist 'theory of politics' was in

33 For the first in-depth interpretation of the play that rightly emphasises its religious overtones but downplays its political resonances, see Levitt, 'Sumarokov's Russianized *Hamlet*'. On Sumarokov's direct acquaintance with Shakespeare's text, see Levitt, 'Sumarokov's Reading at the Academy of Sciences Library', in *Early Modern Russian Letters*, pp. 25–27, 33. On knowledge of Shakespeare in Russia see the monumental study edited by M.P. Alekseev, *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura* (Moskva: Nauka, 1965). I quote from the following edition of *Gamlet*: A.P. Sumarokov, *Polnoe sobranie vsekh sochinenii* (Moskva: Univ. tip. N. Novikova, 1787), vol. III; I also consult Maksim Amelin's re-publication of the play, which takes into account Sumarokov's list of corrections to the original edition: *Novaia Iunost*, 4 (2003), http://magazines.russ.ru/nov_yun/2003/4/amel.html. For English translations, I use where possible A.P. Sumarokov, *Selected Tragedies*, trans. by Richard and Raymond Fortune (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), providing page numbers in parentheses.

34 V.N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, *Politicheskie idei russkoi klassitsisticheskoi tragedii*, in *O teatre. Sbornik statei*, ed. by S.S. Danilov and S.S. Mokul'skii (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1940), pp. 110–12.

fact provided by the 'practice of theatre'.[35] In what follows, I will address the structure of *Gamlet*'s *dénouement*, Sumarokov's most crucial deviation from Shakespeare's plot, as a culminating moment that amalgamates dramatic poetics with a scenario of royal authority and reveals their common dependence on a carefully forged emotional effect on the audience of spectator subjects.

2 Punishment and Pardon

Gamlet's final triumph over his enemies takes a double form. Behind the scenes he kills Klavdii and overtakes the Danish throne, reappearing on stage for the last time only to deal with Ofeliia's insistent pleas that he pardon her captive father. Only after he does so (out of love for her) will she show an interest in Gamlet's exploits and allow the audience to hear the details of the revolt. Dramatic representation thus inverts both the chronological and the spatial pattern of events. Gamlet's coup, which is never shown to the audience, originates in the public spaces of the city and is made possible by the immediate involvement of the populace, whereas the prince's conversation with his mistress and the decision he makes in secluded royal chambers are exposed to the public eye. This inversion follows the French 'classicist' convention, which did not permit violence on stage. At the same time, the transposition reveals a fundamental logic of monarchic representation: the universally known but questionable origins of royal power in the 'state of exception' and in popular violence are overshadowed by a display of singular royal sovereignty over Polonii's life—and his death. The play's last spark of suspense is provided by Gamlet's verbose wavering between punishment and pardon, which fills an entire scene. Here, Sumarokov's tragedy re-enacts a tension that underlay manifestations of sovereignty in rituals of punishment, as described by Foucault:

> Sovereign power [...] never appeared with more spectacular effect than when it interrupted the executioner's gesture with a letter of pardon. The short time that usually elapsed between sentence and execution (often a few hours) meant that the pardon usually arrived at the very last moment. But the ceremony, by the very slowness of its progress, was no doubt arranged to leave room for this eventuality. [...] The sovereign was present at the execution not only as the power exacting the vengeance of the law, but as the power that could suspend both law and vengeance.[36]

35 Marin, pp. 264–66.

36 Foucault, p. 53.

Indeed, the proximity of dramatic poetics to procedures of spectacular punishment was made evident to the Russian public in the months after Elizabeth's ascension. Her newly acquired sovereignty was displayed in two parallel stagings of royal justice: the pardon and exile of Münnich and Ostermann on 18 January 1742 and, starting in May of the same year, repeated productions of the festive opera *La Clemenza di Tito* (*The Clemency of Titus*) which, according to Jacob Stählin, 'represented a live image of the glorious empress's benevolent spirit' ('worinnen die leutseligste Gemüths-Eigenschaften der huldreichsten Kaiserin nach dem Leben geschildert sind'). Stählin (who himself wrote the prologue articulating the analogy between Elizabeth and Titus) reported that a custom built theatre in Moscow intended for 5,000 spectators was overcrowded during the first three performances, and that the opera enjoyed the general approval of the empire's nobility.[37] In Pietro Metastasio's libretto, which was published in Russian translation soon afterwards, Emperor Titus investigates a failed conspiracy against him and, at the last moment, pardons the main suspect. Given its plot, *La Clemenza di Tito* (which was originally written for the Habsburg court and was loosely modeled on the French dramatic classic, Corneille's *Cinna* of 1642), became one of the most popular scripts for festive celebrations of monarchy across Europe. It was also recognised as a dramatic masterpiece: thus Voltaire, in his *Dissertation sur la tragédie ancienne et moderne*, praised Metastasio as a worthy rival of the Greek tragedians and singled out Titus's profession of clemency as 'an eternal lesson for kings, and the admiration of all mankind' ('l'éternelle leçon de tous les rois, et le charme de tous les hommes'): 'To take the life of a fellow creature is in the power of the vilest being upon the earth; to give it belongs only to the gods and to kings' ('Il torre altrui la vita | E facoltà comune | Al più vil della terra; il darla è solo | De' numi, e de' regnanti').[38] Merging dramatic poetics with the workings of royal charisma, clemency functioned as the ultimate 'scenario of power'—the constitutive act of sovereignty in its double status as earthly authority and an incarnation of divine will.

The demand for such a performance no doubt propelled the prosecution on false charges of Münnich and Ostermann, resulting in what an informed eyewitness, the Saxon diplomat Petzold, called a 'drama' ('Schauspiel'), a 'terrifying play' ('schauderhafte[s] Spiel'), and a 'tragic action' ('tragischer Aktus'). In

37 *Beylagen zum Neuveränderten Rußland* (Riga und Leipzig, 1770), II, pp. 94–95; V.N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, *Teatr v Rossii*, pp. 19–25.

38 Voltaire, *The Complete Works*, 30A (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2003), p. 146; Voltaire, *Dramatic Works*, trans. by Rev. Mr Francklin (London, 1763), v. 2, p. 11; Pietro Metastasio, *The Clemency of Titus, from the Italian by a Lady* (Liverpool, 1828), p. 51.

front of the crowd gathered for the promised execution, it was announced that lethal torture for all offenders would be substituted with 'perpetual banishment' (to quote a report by English diplomat Edward Finch) and the confiscation of their property. The intricate phrasing of the manifesto was reduced by Petzold to a laconic formula: 'God and the Empress grant you your life' ('Gott und die Kaiserin schenken Dir das Leben'). Even before he received a printed copy of the manifesto detailing the official interpretation of events, Petzold was easily able to summarise its contents: the empress has shown her magnanimity and clemency (*Clemenz*) and, in commemoration of her peaceful ascension, has taken mercy on those who have been found guilty.[39] In what is simultaneously an emotionally charged first-hand account and a circumspect political commentary, Petzold singles out the same qualities of the empress as did Stählin in his report on *La Clemenza di Tito.*

Important differences between these two performances of royal justice, however, produce a tension that complicates the very notion of clemency. In Corneille, Augustus pardons the guilty Cinna and restores him to his high rank. Similarly, in Metastasio, Titus repeals the painful—and public—death sentence he has ordered for the main suspect because he is at the last moment proven innocent. On the Petersburg scaffold, however, the concept of clemency comes to be identified with a penalty known in Russian judicial practice as 'political death'. In fact, the trial of Münnich and Ostermann was the starting point for Elizabeth's famous suspension of capital punishment and her reinstitution of political death instead as the harshest penalty imposed by the state. As Finch's overtly critical dispatches demonstrate, the outlines of Russian judicial order were at stake from the very beginning of the trial. In December 1741, he reported that the empress herself—just like Metastasio's Titus—was directing the interrogations involving torture and concluded that 'there is nothing in this country, at least on such occasions, which deserves the name of the court of justice', only of 'inquisition.'[40] After the scene on the scaffold, Finch pointed out the obvious cruelty of Elizabeth's 'clemency': 'If leading a wretched life in perpetual banishment and the remotest parts of Siberia may appear to any of these unhappy persons a more eligible fate, than a speedier end of their misery, it is entirely owing to her Majesty.'[41]

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39 For Petzold's dispatches see Ernst Herrmann, *Geschichte des russischen Staates* (Hamburg, 1853), v. 5, p. 5; *Sbornik imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva* (*SIRIO*), 6 (Saint Petersburg, 1871), pp. 407–08. For Finch's see *SIRIO* 91 (Saint Petersburg, 1894), p. 422.

40 *SIRIO* 91 (Saint Petersburg, 1894), p. 386.

41 Ibid., p. 422.

Elizabeth's handling of Münnich and Ostermann's case relied on the same deeply ambiguous view of clemency that had been explored in drama and theorised in political literature since Seneca's *De Clementia* (*On Clemency*, 55–56 CE), a treatise addressed to Nero and revived by early modern political thought. Praising clemency as the ultimate gesture of domination, Seneca's treatise amalgamated it with its opposite, oppression:

> to owe your life to someone is the same as to have lost your life. Anyone thrown down from the heights to his enemy's feet and made to wait for a verdict about his life and his kingdom from someone else increases the glory of the preserver by living on.[42]

As Hélène Merlin-Kajman demonstrates, in Corneille's *Cinna* (which, just like Metastasio's subsequent Titus libretto, closely followed Seneca), Augustus's clemency is similarly styled as an 'extraordinary form of punishment' and, as such, 'a revelation of sovereignty'.[43] The same perspective is discernible in the final scenes of *Gamlet*: Polonii is pardoned by the triumphant Gamlet but commits suicide rather than acknowledging Gamlet and Ofeliia as his 'sovereigns' ('vladeteli'). At this point his daughter, who earlier had felt obliged to plead for her criminal father's life, sums up the play's action with a formula that could be borrowed from Trediakovskii's or Liria's discussions of tragedy as a staging of divine retribution. She exclaims:

> Ты само небо днесь Полонья покарало!
> Ты, Боже мой! ему был долготерпелив!
> Я чту судьбы твои! твой гнев есть справедлив! (v. 6. 119)

> Heaven, you have yourself wrought justice on my father!
> Your patience has been tried, your judgment slow to come.
> I know your wrath is just, I know God's will is done! (134)

The play thus has a double ending: Gamlet's hesitant act of pardon is balanced in the very last lines by Polonii's terrifying and ambiguous death, which simultaneously represents a last doomed attempt at emancipation and an ultimate divine punishment. If Seneca and Metastasio associate the divinity of kingship

42 Seneca, *De clementia*, ed. and trans. by Susanna Braund (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 133.

43 Hélène Merlin, *Public et littérature en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994), p. 297.

with pardon, in *Gamlet* divine will is expressly assigned responsibility for the criminal's death. Indeed, according to Finch, similar arguments were employed by the Petersburg public to justify the evident injustice of Münnich's fate:

> Upon this occasion, those whose humanity and generosity lead them rather to insult than pity people in distress, affect to talk much of the providence of God and His divine judgments, which I believe it would better become them to adore, than to pretend to penetrate.[44]

Polonii's death represents the affinity between the 'political death' imposed after a pardon and the death penalty it ostensibly suspends, as well as commonly held notions of divine wrath as the ultimate reason behind royally sanctioned political prosecution. In his argument with Ofeliia, Gamlet evokes the divine vengeance embodied by his father's ghost as the primary justification for punishing Polonii, so that retribution rather than clemency is exalted as the sacred principle of royal justice. Later, Sumarokov would express similar views in his *Slovo na den' koronovaniia* [. . .] *Ekateriny II* (*Oration on the Coronation Day of Catherine II*, 1762), which was censored at the time of its original composition. Rearranging the commonplaces of official political theology, he develops a parallel argument against an overreliance on divine forgiveness and in favour of an understanding of royal clemency as leniency: 'clemency, too, imposes punishments' ('i milost' nakazaniia opredeliaet'). To illustrate his point, Sumarokov refers to none other than Titus, the paragon of clemency: 'Titus wept when he had to sign death warrants for the criminals; wept but signed them' ('Plakal Tit, kogda bezzakonnikam podpisyval kazni; plakal, no podpisyval').[45] Referring to an episode that figures in Metastasio's libretto, Sumarokov makes a point of circumventing the play's famous ending: while Titus could have pardoned the innocent, he still had to execute the guilty.

In *Gamlet*, however, Sumarokov associates the pattern of spectacular punishment unrestrained by clemency with the tyrannical ways of Klavdii and Polonii. As he prepares to execute Ofeliia for her refusal to marry Klavdii, Polonii says, to the guards present at the scene:

> Вы воины смотрите
> Позорище сие, и в нем пример возьмите,
> О правосудии народу возвестить,

44 *SIRIO* 91, p. 423.

45 A.P. Sumarokov, *Polnoe sobranie vsekh sochinenii*, v. 2, pp. 230–32.

Которо над собой я вам хочу явить.
Единородна дочь моя в преступок впала:
Она владетелю досаду показала,
Непослушанием устав пренебрегла. (V. 2. 108)

Soldiers, behold this spectacle, and learn from this a lesson.
To all the people tell of justice that was done
By one who had to make the judgment on himself.
My only daughter has into transgression fallen
By showing the king a heart filled up with anger,
By disobedience to the imperial will. (125)

While King Gamlet and Empress Elizabeth certainly share Polonii's belief in harsh punishment, they both feel compelled to resort to conspicuous if seemingly pointless gestures of clemency. Their logic, which is explored in Sumarokov's play, has less to do with the fate of particular offenders than with specific 'scenarios of power'—quasi-theatrical patterns of emotional engagement that were evoked by both the fictional and historical monarchies in order to fashion their relationship with the public constituted by their spectator subjects. Sumarokov's Titus has to weep as he punishes in order to make manifest the divine duality of the sovereign who combines heavenly justice with human empathy (as Gertruda reminds Klavdii in II. 2: 'Forgiving enemies is part of our religion', 102; 'Vragov svoikh proshchat' est' dolzhnost' nashei very', 77).

In Ofeliia's argument with Gamlet, the sentimental idiom of love tragedy is used to expose this empathy as an intrinsic attribute of royal politics that merges personal emotion and the strategies of power in the public performance of royal selfhood. In order to obtain Polonii's pardon, Ofeliia invokes Gamlet's love for her and reminds him that Polonii's execution would make their marriage impossible. When Gamlet holds to his notions of duty and vengeance, Ofeliia makes her last argument:

Сего ли для ты жизнь нещастныя продлил,
Чтоб ты свирепея мя с нею разлучил,
Чтоб я лютейшее терзание вкусила,
И очи, ах! в тоске несносной затворила?
Какое бедство я стране сей приключю!
Все радости в тебе народны помрачю.
Никто уже меня без злобы не вспомянет,
Коль из любви моей толь вредный гром здесь грянет.
Когда над сердцем я твоим имею власть;

Яви любезный Князь, яви мне ону страсть!
Иль на Полония железом изощренным,
Дай прежде смерть вкусить тобою чувствам пленным!
Отмщай! но прежде ты любовь мою забудь,
И проколи сперва Офелиину грудь! (v. 5. 115)

Today you saved my life, a life of the distressed.
Was this to kill me later with more savageness?
To make me know the taste of unimagined torment,
To make my eyes to close at last in bitter anguish?
How great will be the woe I cause to this poor land!
All of our country's joys will fade and die with you.
No one will think of me without a flush of hatred.
Out of my love for you will roar a fearful thunder.
If I still have the power left to sway your heart,
Show me, my dearest prince, the love that I once knew.
And if you will avenge, if your sword has been sharpened,
Then take your sweet revenge! But first do me this favour,
Forget my captive heart, forget the love it holds,
And pierce it with your sword before my father's death. (131)

Commonplace tropes of tragic sensibility are here interwoven with an interrogation of the newly established civic peace. While Ofeliia does not question Polonii's guilt ('like you I do disdain in him the villain', 128; 'Ia, Kniaz', zlodeia v nem, kak ty unichtozhaiu', v. 3. 111), she insists on the broader political resonances of his execution that would affect the innocent. In the pathetic evocation of her own near death, a metaphor of amorous longing amounts to a formula of royal terror capable of indiscriminate brutality—that is to say Gamlet's torture and murder of his own faithful bride:

Уже не чувствуешь любезной огорченья,
И становишься сам виной ея мученья.
Жалей меня, жалей, не дай мне умереть! (v. 5. 113)

No longer do you feel the grief of your beloved,
And you yourself become the cause of her affliction.
Take pity on me, Hamlet, do not let me die! (129)

As will Polonii later in the play, Ofeliia uses intimations of suicide as a trope for political resentment, and—in an otherwise obscure threat—styles her future

death as a hopeless yet imposing act of defiance. Invoking the fundamental patterns of clemency, punishment, and domination, she reveals the dependence of Gamlet's sovereignty on public emotion—'joy' or 'hatred'—which can, and must, be steered by extraordinary and spectacular actions. If imputed to Gamlet, as Ofeliia suggests, her death by her father's side would make her an innocent victim of royal terror, undermining the people's attachment to their king and thus producing a political calamity, 'fearful thunder'. Indeed, Ofeliia here draws on an argument commonly made in political philosophy. Frederick the Great, in his famous *Anti-Machiavel* (1740), for instance, advised against royal cruelty:

> Je conclus donc qu'un prince cruel s'expose plutôt à être trahi qu'un prince débonnaire, puisque la cruauté est insupportable, et qu'on est bientôt las de craindre, et, après tout, parce que la bonté est toujours aimable, et qu'on ne se lasse point de l'aimer. Il serait donc à souhaiter, pour le bonheur du monde, que les princes fussent bons sans être trop indulgents, afin que la bonté fût en eux toujours une vertu, et jamais une faiblesse.
>
> I conclude then, that a cruel Prince is much more exposed to treason and other dangers, than one that is tender and merciful: for cruelty is insupportable, and people soon grow tired of fear: but goodness is always amiable, and subjects are never weary of being affectionate. It is much to be wished, therefore, for the happiness of mankind, that all Princes were good, without being too indulgent: that so their lenity might always be regarded as a virtue, rather than despised as a weakness.[46]

It is not surprising, then, that Gamlet—after distancing himself from any suspicion of leniency or weakness—succumbs at this point to Ofeliia's arguments and gives free reign to pity and love ('O love, yours is the power [. . .]!', 131; 'Vladychestvui, liubov' [. . .]!', 115), which are—through his very choice of words—inscribed in, rather than opposed to, the logic of rule and kingship. This display of royal emotion does not save Polonii (heaven itself takes care of that), but it does reestablish Gamlet's affective relationship with the rest of the polity. Instead of terror, he now inspires public joy, as Ofeliia exclaims: 'Weeping, give way to joy and laughter!' (131) ('Preobrashchaisia, plach, ty v

46 *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale, 1848), VIII, p. 132; *The Works of Nicholas Machiavel* [. . .] *Newly Translated* [. . .] *by Ellis Farneworth* (London: Thomas Davies et al., 1762), v. 1., p. 630.

radosti i smekhi!', 115). In *Gamlet*, just as in *Cinna* and *La Clemenza di Tito*, the gesture of clemency functions as a theatrical device that grounds sovereignty in a strong emotional affect that is evoked among the publics both on and off stage.[47]

A quasi-theatrical view of royal justice—including both punishment and pardon—was not, however, peculiar to the dramatic tradition: it was also shared by legal and political discourses invoked in the official documentation of Elizabethan political trials. Among the works read in post-Petrine Russia was Justus Lipsius's *Monita et exempla politica* (1605), which was translated into Russian in 1721 as *Uveshchaniia i priklady politicheskiia.*[48] In this work Lipsius, an editor of and commentator on Seneca, engages in a lengthy discussion of royal justice and its effects on the populace. He first pleads for direct royal involvement in the administration of justice because it allows the king to claim the respect due all judges, so that 'his words, gestures, even his gaze gives rise to fear in the heart of men'. He then elaborates on the workings and effects of royal terror:

> неправда то яко грозная казнь раждает царю ненависть от народа, паче же противное видим в человецех правду любящих, иже радуются и благодарят, егда видят грозное и жестокое злым наказание. Самый точию взор жестокия казни умиляет нас и смущает. [...] Аще же царь иногда покажет ослабу согрешившему, не будет то во образ прочим согрешати понеже там велии страх и срам ослабу или прощение предварят. Простит кому царь, обаче страха прежде и безчестие исполнивши, простит кому царь, но царь [...] человеколюбия точию и милости ради, сие убо самое коликую любовь у всех исходатайствует, аще точию благовременне случится.
>
> It is not true that a terrifying punishment instils the people with hatred for the king; on the contrary we may see that people who value justice rejoice and express gratitude when they see the punishment of the wicked. The very spectacle of a severe punishment moves and agitates us. [...] Even if the king does show leniency towards a criminal, that will not be an example for others to sin because in that case pardon will be preceded by great fear and shame. The king can pardon, yet he will first

47 Merlin, p. 297.

48 On early Russian translations of Lipsius, see O.E. Novikova, 'Lipsii v Rossii pervoi poloviny XVIII veka', *Filosofskii vek* 10 (Saint Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii Tsentr istorii idei, 1999).

> inflict fear and infamy; the king can pardon but it will be the king [...] [acting] out of sheer humanity and mercy that will evoke general love, if the timing is right.[49]

Like Empress Elizabeth and Sumarokov, Lipsius does not see repression and clemency as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary elements of royal justice. His vision of authority builds upon the strategic manipulation of opposite emotions stirred by the 'spectacle of a severe punishment' (or pardon) which 'moves and agitates us' enough to mould 'fear and infamy' into their opposite, a manifold public affection (love, joy, and gratitude) for the ruler endowed with such 'humanity and mercy'.

3 Inwardness and Terror

Lipsius's definition of judicial authority develops along the same lines as Aristotelian definitions of the tragic effect that were canonised by classicist literary theory. This parallel both illuminates the logic of the trials and explains the functions claimed by the newly imported tragedy in the Elizabethan 'theatre of power'. According to Aristotle, tragedy had to evoke both pity and fear in order to 'purge' the emotions of the spectators. The influential French Aristotelian critic René Rapin wrote on the subject in his *Réflexions sur la poétique de ce temps* (1674–1675), which was well known in Russia:

> Car elle [tragédie] rend l'homme modeste, en luy représentant des Grands humiliez: et elle le rend sensible et pitoyable, en luy faisant voir sur le théâtre les étranges accidens de la vie, et les disgrâces imprévues, ausquelles sont sujettes les personnes les plus importantes. Mais parce que l'homme est naturellement timide, et compatissant, il peut' tomber dans une autre extrémité, d'estre ou trop craintif ou trop pitoyable: la trop grande crainte peut diminuer la fermeté de l'âme, et la trop grande compassion peut diminuer l'équité. La tragédie s'occupe à régler ces deux foiblesses: elle fait qu'on s'apprivoise aux disgraces: en les voyant si fréquentes dans les personnes les plus considérables: et qu'on cesse de craindre les accidens ordinaires, quand on en voit arriver de si extraordinaires aux Grands. Et comme la fin de la tragédie est d'apprendre aux hommes à ne pas craindre trop foiblement des disgrâces communes, et à ménager leur crainte: elle fait estat aussi de leur apprendre à ménager

49 OR RGB (Russian State Library, Manuscript Division), fol. 354, no. 233, ll. 277–79.

> leur compassion pour des sujets qui la méritent. Car il y a de l'injustice d'estre touché des malheurs de ceux, qui méritent d'estre miserables.
>
> For it [tragedy] makes Man modest, by representing the great Masters of the Earth humbled; and it makes him tender and merciful, by shewing him on the Theatre the strange Accidents of Life, and the unforeseen Disgraces to which the most important Persons are subject. But because Man is naturally timorous and compassionate, he may fall into another Extreme, to be either too fearful, or too full of Pity; the too much Fear may shake the Constancy of Mind, and the too great Compassion may enfeeble the Equity. 'Tis the Business of Tragedy to regulate these two Weaknesses; it prepares and arms him against Disgraces, by shewing them so frequent in the most considerable Persons; and he shall cease to fear ordinary Accidents, when he sees such extraordinary happen to the highest Part of Mankind. But as the End of Tragedy is to teach Men not to fear too weakly the common Misfortunes, and manage their Fear; it makes account also to teach them to spare their Compassion, for Objects that deserve it not. For there is Injustice in being mov'd at the Afflictions of those who deserve to be miserable.[50]

Expressly associating catharsis with the vicissitudes of the political life of the 'Masters of Earth', who are subject to 'disgraces', Rapin's vision of tragedy emphasises its mastery of what Stephen Greenblatt calls 'techniques of arousing and manipulating anxiety'. As Greenblatt argues, the deployment of such techniques in drama was related to the fact that early modern ruling elites, both clerical and secular, 'believed that a measure of insecurity and fear was a necessary, healthy element in the shaping of proper loyalties', and this view pervaded 'public maiming and executions' as well as the royal pardons that might ensue: 'Salutary anxiety, then, blocks the anger and resentment that would well up against what must, if contemplated in a secure state, seem an unjust order.'[51] Similarly, according to Rapin, catharsis provides a remedy against an all-too-strong public compassion for disgraced subjects. This was the emotional pattern that informed the punishment of Münnich and

50 René Rapin, *Les réflexions sur la poétique de ce temps, et sur les ouvrages des poètes anciens et modernes* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1970), pp. 97–98; René Rapin, 'Reflections upon Poetry', in *The Whole Critical Works* […] *Translated into English by Basil Kennet* (London: J. Walthoe et al., 1731), v. 2, pp. 204–05. Of the two slightly differing French redactions, I quote the one that matches the English translation.

51 Greenblatt, pp. 133, 138.

Ostermann and the public's reaction to it, which is construed in Petzold's reports in Aristotelian terms:

> Zeit seines Lebens ihm noch nichts so Trübseliges vorgekommen sei, als dieses Schauspiel; einen rasenden Pöbel ausgenommen, würden selbst von den vornehmen Russen wenige ungerührt und sonder Mitleiden den Platz verlassen haben.
>
> In all his life he did not experience anything more dismal than this spectacle; aside from the raging mob, even among Russian nobles there were few who left the square indifferent or without compassion.[52]

Apparently, differences in emotional reaction corresponded to—and reaffirmed—the distinct positions of various spectator groups in relation to the royal violence being perpetrated. While the populace assembled to witness a public execution was prepared to endorse royal punishment of the powerful, the nobility could not avoid a sense of compassion for the convicts, as nobles could not but feel immediately threatened. Indeed, since the ministers on trial had long occupied the highest positions in military and civil administration, many of the capital's serving nobles (like Sumarokov himself) were their former clients or subordinates.

Finch's sarcastic advice to those who justified the trial 'to reflect seriously on which of them the lot may fall to next' points to a reaction both natural for the subjects of an autocracy and appropriate for the spectators of a tragedy.[53] Dacier defines tragic pity as 'a Sense of Pain, which the sufferings of a Man who does not deserve it, produces in us; since that Evil is of such a Nature, that it may happen to us, and which we may reasonably fear' ('un sentiment de douleur que produit en nous le mal d'un homme qui souffre ce qu'il ne mérite pas; lorsque ce mal est d'une Nature à pouvoir aussi nous arrive').[54] In fact, Aristotle discusses and compares various possible emotional reactions to the public misfortunes of others, and advises against the display of the 'misfortunes of a very wicked Man' because, as Dacier explains,

> On peut avoir quelque plaisir à voir un tres méchant homme puny de ses crimes, mais son malheur n'excite point du tout la compassion, parce qu'il n'a que ce qu'il mérite; car jamais un honnête homme ne s'afflige

52 Herrmann, v. 5, p. 5.

53 *SIRIO* 91, p. 423.

54 *La Poétique d'Aristote*, p. 177; *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, pp. 189–90.

> de voir punir un meurtrier ou un parricide, parce que c'est une action juste, & dont, par consequent tous les gens de bien doivent être ravis. Si son malheur n'excite pas la pitié, il excite encore moins la crainte, et par conséquent il ne purge pas les passions; car les spectateurs qui se reconnoissent moins méchans que cet homme qu'ils voyent punir, ne s'avisent pas de craindre des malheurs qu'il ne s'est attirez que par ses crimes, et ne travaillent pas à se rendre meilleurs.
>
> One might have some Pleasure in seeing a very wicked Man punished for his crimes; but his Misery will never stir us up to Compassion, because he has only what he deserved [...] and consequently all good Men ought to be pleased at it. If his Misery does not excite Pity, it will much less excite Fear, and so cannot refine the Passions, for the Spectators knowing themselves not to be wicked as that Man, will never fear those evils, which he has drawn on him by his Crimes, nor endeavour to make themselves better.[55]

If so, not only pure 'pleasure' at the ruin of the 'wicked', but also compassion and fear of fellow subjects who felt threatened by disproportionate royal violence were proper reactions to public punishments staged with Lipsius, if not Aristotle, in mind. Just like Aristotelian theory, the idiom of judicial terror amalgamated fear and pleasure. When another group of courtiers around Natalia Lopukhina was prosecuted in 1743 for expressions of resentment after the Münnich trial, the royal manifesto read:

> мы [...] уповали, что показанное Наше к ним милосердие не токмо им самим и их фамилиям, но и друзьям их за наичуствительнейшее удовольствие быть имело, что и без сомнения целой свет засвидетельствовать может.
>
> We [...] had hoped that the clemency we have shown would be accepted with an utmost pleasure not only by the convicted but also by their families and friends, which the whole world can confirm.[56]

In *Gamlet*, Sumarokov both ignores Aristotle's advice in order to comply with Trediakovskii's criticism and to elicit moral pleasure originating from the

55 *La Poétique d'Aristote*, p. 179; *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, p. 192.

56 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii s 1649 g.*, *Sobranie* 1. 11 (1740–1743) ([Saint Petersburg], 1830), p. 881, no. 8775.

ruin of the wicked, and stages the political effects of pleasure originating in the act of false pardon. His Ofeliia seems to be modelled on Lopukhina and her accomplice Countess Bestuzheva, who gave a female voice to the resentment of the convicts' 'families and friends', who belonged to influential noble clans. In this case, Ofeliia's death threat alludes to Lopukhina's publicly known and all but blatantly suicidal defiance of Elizabeth, simultaneously pointing to the dangers for civic peace inherent in the false logic of escalating repression. Ofeliia's reconciliation with Gamlet precisely reproduces the pattern of appeasement outlined in the 1743 manifesto: a suspension of the death penalty is represented as a symbolic gesture strong enough, by itself, to produce 'pleasure' among the political class affected by the trials, just as it was designed to please the audience of *Gamlet*'s fifth act.

Sumarokov's tragic poetics relies on the same patterns of public sensibility that were affirmed and explored by judicial terror. Characteristically, in his 1756 madrigal celebrating a court production of his opera, the notion of pleasure (*udovol'stvie*) makes one of its first appearances in Russian as an aesthetic concept describing the fine effects of musical and dramatic performance on the court public and on the author himself.[57] Neither in the idiom of terror nor in Aristotelian poetics, however, is pleasure considered to be the primary or the best possible effect of the spectacle upon the audience. Aristotle suggested that the sight of another's undeserved ruin is beneficial as it evokes catharsis, a 'purgation of the passions'—which, in Dacier's words, inspires spectators 'to make themselves better'. Dacier inscribes Aristotle's poetics into a Christianised discussion of moral discipline: since it is impossible, he writes, 'to oblige Men to follow the Precepts of the Gospel' ('obliger tous les hommes à suivre les maximes de l'Evangile'), tragedy has been introduced in order to provide spectators with 'Diversions, where there is Order, and Shows, where Truth is to be found' ('divertissemens, où il y a de l'ordre, et les spectacles où l'on trouve de la vérité'). In this way, tragedy is a remedy against moral corruption, and consequently:

> La Tragédie ne représente pas seulement la punition que les crimes volontaires attirent toûjours fur leurs Auteurs [...] mais elle étale les malheurs que des fautes même involontaires, et commises par imprudence attirent sur nos semblables. Et c'est la Tragedie parfaite. Elle nous apprend à nous tenir fur nos gardes, et à purger et modérer les passions qui ont été la seule cause de la perte de ces malheureux. Ainsi l'ambitieux y apprend

57 A.P. Sumarokov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, ed. by P.N. Berkov (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1957), p. 181.

> à donner des bornes à son ambition; l'impie à craindre Dieu; le vindicatif à renoncer à la vangeance; l'emporté à retenir ses emportemens, le tyran à renoncer à ses violences et à son injustice.
>
> Tragedy does not only represent the Punishments, which voluntary Crimes always draw on their Authors [. . .] But it sets forth the misfortunes which even involuntary crimes, and those committed by Imprudence, draw on such as we are, and this is perfect Tragedy. It instructs us to stand on our guard, to refine and moderate our Passions, which alone occasion'd the loss of those unfortunate ones. Thus the aspiring may learn to give bounds to his Ambition; the Prophane to fear God; the Malicious to forget his Wrongs; the Passionate to restrain his Anger; the Tyrant to forsake his Violence and Injustice.[58]

Marcus Levitt draws attention to Sumarokov's direct paraphrase of this doctrine in a 1755 epistle that 'specifically described the action of the tragic poet in terms of compulsion':

> В героях кроючи стихов своих творца,
> Пусть тот трагедией вселяется в сердца:
> Принудит чувствовать чужие нам напасти
> И к добродетели направит наши страсти.
>
> Speaking in verse through his heroes, the creator of a tragedy should enter [his audience's] hearts, compel us to feel alien misfortunes and direct our passions toward virtue.[59]

According to Levitt's reading of these lines, 'the tragedian, like the divine Creator, actively "sows" emotions into the hearts of his audience and compels them towards virtue "by means of tragedy", thus "imitating the very actions of God" [as Trediakovskii advised]'.[60] While Sumarokov's repeated use of the word 'creator' ('tvorets') for author hardly supports a theological reading, a parallel between the effects of faith and those of tragedy is certainly warranted and is particularly relevant for *Gamlet*. Here, it is Gertruda who vividly enacts

58 *La Poétique d'Aristote*, p. xii; *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, preface.

59 A.P. Sumarokov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 130. I borrow Levitt's translation with slight emendations.

60 Levitt, 'Sumarokov's Russianized *Hamlet*', p. 87.

the alignment of dramatic representation and effect with disciplinary introspection, both divine and judicial.

In a variation of Shakespeare's closet scene with its famous formula of self-knowledge ('Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul', III. 4), Sumarokov's Gertruda is, as early as the first act, confronted by Gamlet and Armans and must admit her crimes:

> Покров безстыдных дел Гертрудиных низпал,
> Проклятая душа открылась пред тобою. (I. 3. 68)
>
> The curtain that concealed my shameful deeds has dropped,
> And you have seen the scars that left my soul accursed. (94)

As for Gamlet, in this first encounter with the crime he is destined to purge, he prefigures his later act of clemency and pardons Gertruda. In an oddly sacerdotal gesture, he and Armans speak in the name of divine justice and lecture her on the political theology of repentance that closely associates divine will with earthly compliance:

> Признание вины к прощению успех,
> Кто плачет о грехе, тот чувствует свой грех. [. . .]
> Безсмертный милосерд, и гнев его смягчится,
> Коль грешник перед ним всем сердцем сокрушится.
> Покайся, и коль смерть супругу ты дала,
> Превысь блаженными злодейские дела. (I. 3. 68–70)
>
> Confession of one's guilt leads others to forgive,
> Who truly rues his sin has won the right to grace. [. . .]
> God's mercy knows no bounds, and his wrath shall be softened,
> When sinners truly feel with all their hearts contrition.
> Repent, and if you've killed your husband, still repent,
> Exceed your evil deeds with deeds of blessedness. (94–96)

In response to these admonitions, Gertruda, in Levitt's words, 'truly engages the issue of whether or not she is in a condition to pray' and 'is able finally to reconcile divine commandment and the voice of heaven with her inner voice of repentant conscience [,] to overcome her passionate self'.[61] While she may indeed embody the 'traditional Russian Orthodox values of kenotic humility',

61 Ibid., p. 91.

as Levitt claims, it is crucial that she only repents when her crime is exposed and she considers herself to be in immediate danger of violent punishment. When Gamlet confronts her, he is armed and raging against his enemies, so that the desperate Gertruda even suggests that he should kill her himself: 'Forget that you're my son and kill me now, at once' (95) ('Zabud', chto mat' tvoia, kazni svoei rukoi', 68). While he does not physically harm his mother (a barbaric gesture reminiscent of ancient Orestes and prohibited by Shakespeare's Ghost), he does exercise his nascent authority over her. Promising her a remission of sins in the afterlife, Gamlet (through Armans) sentences Gertruda to what sounds like perpetual exile ('Leave the world behind forever for some wilderness', 97; 'Ostavi svet drugim, i plach' v pustyniakh vvek', 71)—a punishment that would have reminded spectators of Elizabeth's treatment of her overthrown predecessor, Anna Leopoldovna, who was spared a public punishment but sent away from Petersburg and imprisoned.

Confronted with pardon and punishment, a dual gesture of Gamlet's sovereignty, Gertruda experiences a conversion that simultaneously inscribes itself within several disciplinary paradigms—religious, political, and aesthetic—and showcases their mutual alignment in the symbolic structure of autocracy. Confessing her sins to a legitimate successor to the throne, she re-enacts the crossover of religious discipline and political order found in practices of justice and penitence characteristic of early modern Europe—and, specifically, of eighteenth-century Russia, where obligatory confessions were introduced as a measure of state control over the nation.[62] At the same time, Gertruda's self-exposure before the retributive gaze of royal and divine authority leads her to experience what Aristotelian criticism understood to be catharsis—a purgation of passions. Excessive fear of a criminal in hiding ('Hell's portals open wide and draw me to my home', 95; 'Razversty propasti, i ad menia pozhret', 69), evoked by Gamlet's account of her crime, resolves itself in a moral transformation associated with the righteous fear of God:

> Но все, что ни страшит в смятении меня,
> Чего себе ни ждет душа моя стеня,
> Ни что в толикий страх злочастну не приводит,

62 Viktor Zhivov, 'Handling Sin in Eighteenth-Century Russia', in *Representing Private Lives of the Enlightenment*, ed. by Andrew Kahn (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010). On the link between the disciplinary effects of public punishment and early modern drama, as well as on the amalgamation of dramatic, religious, and judicial introspection, see Mullaney; Debora Kuller Shuger, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in 'Measure for Measure'* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

> Как то, когда сие на мысль мою приходит,
> Что, ах! не буду зреть Творца я своего. (71)
>
> But there's one thing I fear beyond all other fears,
> Whatever else my soul may suffer in distress,
> And nothing grieves me more in all my tribulations
> Than when I sometimes chance to think of what I'd suffer,
> If I should never see my Maker and my God. (97)

Conversely, this intimately felt fear of God is inscribed into a vision of moral discipline that embraces political existence along with religious experience. Gertruda's spectacular conversion represents a mode of subjectivity posed equally by judicial terror and Aristotelian theory. The vices that she urges her accomplices, Klavdii and Polonii, to repudiate with her are precisely those that Dacier (and, to some extent, Aubignac) listed in his didactic interpretation of catharsis: 'Thus the aspiring may learn to give bounds to his Ambition; the Prophane to fear God; the Malicious to forget his Wrongs; the Passionate to restrain his Anger; the Tyrant to forsake his Violence and Injustice.' The act of repentance and purgation that is fulfilled by Gertruda on stage is thus also implied in tragedy as its primary effect on its audience. In this respect, too, tragedy was aligned with the political trials that, as can be seen from the Münnich manifesto, aimed to have a similar effect:

> И чтоб все верныя Наши подданные, смотря на то признавали, что Бог клятвопреступникам не терпит, и что мудрым Его промыслом скрытыя в сердцах их умышления к времянному и вечному их осуждению всегда откровенны бывают, и дабы опасаясь того от всяких таких Богу противных поступок конечно остерегались, и во всем бы так поступали, как то верным подданным и прямым сыновьям отечества по присяжной их должности принадлежит, за что от Бога во всех своих предприятиях благословенны, также и Нашею Императорскою милостию всегда награждены будут.
>
> Let all our true subjects see this and acknowledge that God does not tolerate perjurers and that evil intentions hidden in their hearts are always revealed through his wise Providence to their temporal and eternal blame, and that they [the subjects] should abstain from actions of this kind which are repugnant to God, and should always act as true subjects and sons of their fatherland ought according to their sworn duty, and

> they will be blessed by God and will be always rewarded with our royal favour.[63]

Appealing to the subjects' inner selves in an attempt to impose upon them an orthodoxy of autocratic obedience amalgamated with divine justice, the spectacle of disproportionate repression drew on emotional scripts common to both drama and the 'theatre of power'. The spectacular nature of political trials proved to be an intrinsic element of autocratic domination that could not be dispensed with even when the pattern of constant repression was suspended. With all their exaggerated or outright false accusations and unjustified punishments, the political trials of 1742–1743 functioned as scenarios, or 'fictions', that were carefully crafted to elicit and regulate public anxiety for the benefit of the monarchic order. Emerging after the cessation of high-profile trials in the wake of the Lopukhina case, Russian tragedy, with its plea for mercy, both supplanted them as a performative genre and took over their function as a means of fashioning public sensibilities. The scaffold thus provided a blueprint for the genre of tragedy and furnished the point of departure for the institution of court theatre in Russia. If the protocols of pleasure established on the stage were free from physical violence and displaced suffering into the realm of fiction, theatrical space simultaneously enhanced the ruler's physical and emotional control over her public, which itself literally became—along with the actors on stage—subject to the interrogating royal gaze.

63 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*, 11, p. 575, no. 8506.

CHAPTER 8

The Politics of Tragedy in the Dutch Republic: Joachim Oudaen's Martyr Drama in Context

Nigel Smith

In this essay I make a case for the significance of the drama of Joachim Oudaen, Remonstrant, Collegiant and republican in the Dutch Republic, who is more well known for his hymns, his Socinianism, and his occasional controversial or patriotic pamphlets. I look at two plays in particular—*Haagsche Broeder-Moord, Of Dolle Blydschap* (*Fratricide at The Hague, or Mad Joy*, 1673), and *Servetus* (1655)—considering them as political and religious dramas both informed by and attempting to shape the understanding of key violent events in the history of the Dutch Republic and post-Reformation European religion. Oudaen appears in recent histories as a source of critical views regarding the princes of Orange and patriotic sentiment against the English during the Anglo-Dutch wars of 1664–1667 and 1672–1674. Some of his non-dramatic writing has drawn the attention of art historians, but his plays have received very little attention even in the world of Dutch literary scholarship, and in the English-speaking world this corpus is entirely unknown. Before we approach the author and his plays, here are some important considerations of context.

1 Literature and the Rise of the Dutch Republic

The distinctiveness of the early modern Dutch Republic, the *Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provinciën* (Republic of the Seven United Provinces) is well attested in historiography. It was a newly formed state, emergent from a religious and political revolt in the 1570s against Spain, with whom there would be a military conflict lasting eighty years. Partly in order to fund resistance to Spain the United Provinces developed a global commercial empire and a political economy unrivalled through the seventeenth century.[1] The conse-

1 Among the many studies dealing with the rise of the Dutch Republic, and reaching back to the seventeenth century, see in particular Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). For an integrated view of the relationship between political structure and cultural and artistic consequences, see Horst

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quence was a cultural life dedicated to understanding and promulgating the nature of the new political reality and society that had been created, coupled with a measure of lament for that which had been lost. The republic's chief sociological feature was an unusually open and collaborative civil society. Some of its many writers were members of a group that met at the Muiderslot—home of the poet P.C. Hooft (1581–1647)—outside Amsterdam, an association that was notably cross-class as well as open to female participation. The idea of a 'Muiden group' has been seen as nineteenth-century myth-making, but the exchange of correspondence in letters and through poems suggests a literary circle that lasted for a very long time and encompassed a remarkably broad social range, from neo-aristocratic state officials (Hooft; Constantijn Huygens, 1596–1687) and merchants (Roemer Visscher, 1547–1620) to painters (Gerbrand Adriaenszoon Bredero, 1585–1618), shopkeepers (Joost van den Vondel, 1587–1679), and glaziers (Jan Vos, *c.* 1610–1667).[2] Women writers—notably the daughters of Visscher, Anna Roemers Visscher (*c.* 1584–1651) and Maria Tesselschade Roemers Visscher (1594–1649)—played influential roles that were politically and religiously committed. The coalescence of craft and literary ability was crucial: Dutch writers were moonlighters. For example, Jan Vos, well born but a successful glazier (he furnished the New Town Hall with its glass), was also a playwright and a poet; he was also so popular as a dining companion that he was known as the 'family poet'—with dinner often came an occasional poem.[3]

Lademacher, *Phönix aus der Asche?: Politik und Kultur der niederländischen Republik im Europa des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Waxmann, 2007).

2 See Jacobus Scheltema, *Anna en Maria Tesselschade, de dochters van Roemer Visscher: In eene redevoering, waar achter aanmerkingen en bijvoegsels: opgedragen aan de Nederlandsche vrouwen* (Amsterdam: J.W. Yntema en comp, 1808); Adriaan Beeloo, *Maria Tesselschade Visscher, op het slot te Muiden: blijspel* (Amsterdam, [*c.* 1819]); J. van Vloten, *Tesselschade Roemers en hare vrienden in 1632–1649* (*onuitgegeven brieven en dichtjens van Tesselschade, Huygens, Van Baerle*) (Leiden: Brill, 1852); M.C.A. van der Heijden, *'t Hoge Huis te Muiden: Teksten uit de Muiderkring* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1972); *De gedichten van Tesselschade Roemers*, ed. by A. Agnes Sneller and Olga van Marion (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994). On the Muiderkring, see Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), p. 354; Leendert Strengholt, 'Over de Muiderkring', in *Cultuurgeschiedenis in de Nederlanden van de renaissance naar de romantiek: Liber amicorum J. Andriessen S.J., A. Keersmakers, P. Lenders S.J.* (Leuven: Acco, 1986), pp. 265–77, http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/stre006muid01_01/stre006muid01_01_0001.php.

3 See Nina Geerdink, *Dichters en verdiensten: De sociale verankering van het dichterschap van* Jan Vos (*1610–1667*) (Hilversum: Verloren, 2012).

2 Literature, Religion, and Politics: The Case of Joachim Oudaen

The full extent of the Dutch poetic sphere and its relationship to the republic's public sphere is made clear in the voluminous work of Joachim Oudaen (or Oudaan, 1628–1692), Mennonite, Collegiant, Leiden-educated tile maker from Rotterdam, sometime resident of Rijnsburg.[4] Collegiantism grew up after the 1619 Synod of Dordt outlawed the Remonstrants and exiled their leaders; Collegiant churches were open, clergy-free associations, mostly and at first of Arminians and Mennonites; at monthly meetings all present had the same liberty to interpret the Bible, that is to prophesy, and to pray:[5] 'Collegiantism was intended, paradoxically, to give concrete form to a "non-church," an "invisible church" of all "unpartisan" believers, one that brought believers together without binding them or passing judgment.'[6] Would we expect a Mennonite and Collegiant to produce a treatise on the observations about Roman power structures that might be derived from Roman coins?[7] Just the poetry of Oudaen that engages with painting is enough of an oeuvre to be seriously absorbing to scholars for a considerable time.[8] Once again we are reminded of the cultural richness of Dutch radical religion: it was not a world of *sola scriptura* (as was so often the case in England), although city dwellers like Oudaen were more inured to this richness than were rural but still literate Mennonites.[9]

Oudaen's second birthday poem for the cloth merchant, engraver, and playwright Willem van Heemskerk (1613–1692) begins as a dream vision in which the dreamer poet cannot initially see his subject. 'Poetry arrives as the solution to this lack of sight, and is likened to painting, conceived as feminine with a reference Arachne, the weaver turned by Minerva into a spider, as recorded in

4 See Johannes Melles, *Joachim Oudaan: Heraut der verdraagzaamheid: 1628–1692* (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1958).

5 See J.C. van Slee, *De Rijnsburger Collegianten: Geschiedkundig onderzoek: Met een inleiding van S.B.J. Zilverberg* (Haarlem: Bohn, 1895; repr. Utrecht: HES, 1980); and Andrew C. Fix, *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

6 Gerrit Voogt, '"Anyone Who Can Read May be a Preacher": Sixteenth-Century Roots of the Collegiants', *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 85 (2005), p. 409.

7 Joachim Oudaen, *Roomsche mogentheyt, of Naeuwkeurige beschryving, van de macht en heerschappy der oude roomsche keyseren*, 1st edn (Amsterdam, 1669).

8 See Amy Golahny, *Rembrandt's Reading: The Artist's Bookshelf of Ancient Poetry and History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003).

9 The case for urban-rural differentiation is made by Ben Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Book VI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, we might legitimately be surprised to find her in Oudaen's verse.[10] For Oudaen was strongly against the presence of classical elements in poetry: he felt they introduced confusion since they were not clearly understood—at best they were matters for interpretation and, far worse, the presence of pagan deities was a dishonour to God. Oudaen had no place for them in his utterly reformed verse, and he is most known today, as noted above, for his hymns. This led to his famous attack (despite his admiration for the poem) on the use of classical mythology in Johannes Antonides van der Goes's *Ystroom* of 1671, to which van der Goes (who was, like Oudaen, from a Mennonite family) replied.[11] Devoid of mythology and all ornament, Oudaen's verse was an assault on the very idea of poetry as it had previously existed. In accordance with the ideas of the Collegiants, he stated that natural reason instead was the best servant of gospel truth. Low on imagery, his poetry is recognisable only by its rhymes and rhythms; it is profoundly discursive and has not won admirers, although his rhymed psalms were widely adopted in Mennonite worship, at first in Rotterdam and then, up to the nineteenth century, more broadly in the Netherlands. The only way to be godly, Oudaen says, is to undertake the purge that leads to full reformation. Oudaen follows the literal biblical epic pattern established by the greatest Dutch poet and dramatist of the period—and, from 1641, the Roman Catholic—Joost van den Vondel, in *Johannes de Boetgezant* (1662), but this pattern is interrupted in Oudaen's poetry by 'comparisons, spiritual interpretations, admonitions, and exclamations' that might more readily be associated with the Anabaptists.[12] There is no doubt about Oudaen's confidence in the republic's civic achievement, as is exemplified by the poem he wrote to accompany one of his friend's—the painter Samuel van Hoogstraten's—self-portraits, where an outstanding rationality is seen to be evident in the painting itself.[13]

One target of Oudaen's ire with respect to the ancients in contemporary verse was Andries Pels (1631–1681), the classicising poet who was a driving force in the theatre reform group Nil Volentibus Arduum and the author of

10 Oudaen, 'Ter verjaringe van den heere Willem van Heemskirk' in Joachim Oudaen, Gedichten, ed. H.K. Poot (Delft: Reinier Boitet, 1724), 169–70. See Marijke Spies, *Rhetoric, Rhetoricians and Poets: Studies in Renaissance Poetry and Poetics* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), pp. 103–05.

11 'Boekenlof. Op den Y-strom van J. Antonides', in Joachim Oudaen, *Poëzy verdeeld in drie deelen*, ed. by David Van Hoogstraten, 3 vols (1712), II, p. 33.

12 See Spies, *Rhetoric, Rhetoricians and the Poets*, p. 105.

13 See Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel Van Hoogstraten* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 137.

the attack on the histrionic (and allegedly immoral) tradition in Dutch drama, *Gebruik én misbruik des tooneels* (*The Use and Abuse of Drama*, 1681).[14] Pels invited Oudaen to comment on his verse; the comments, dated 13 September 1681, were not published until 1713 and in them Oudaen accused Pels of being arbitrary in his prosodic stresses, and the result—Oudaen claimed—was an obscurity of style that rendered the verse incomprehensible: 'so that [he went] towards some trashy ruin, by such trite instruction, with his examples and regulations for the measure of the epic, desiring containment or channelling' ('zoodat het tot eenige voddery vervalt, alle dusdanig onderwys, mey zyne voorbeelden en regelen, in de maat van het Heldendicht te willen insluiten of bevarten').[15] Oudaen's main objection is that the art of poetry is presented by Pels as a universally unbending statute on rhyme that acts as an infallible guide for the poet and his artistic creation.[16] Oudaen maintains that servility must follow from this reliance on strict metrical form, questions whether such literary law-abiding actually occurred in antiquity (or at any point thereafter), and insists that freedom is the only way forward for the poet. So many impediments deliver artistic death; rules exist to be violated. Oudaen makes a clear equation, too, between metrical and political freedom, and against the argument for the imitation of ancient Latin verse: 'in deze Dichtkunst ingeworpen, en die voornamelyk onze Vaderlantsche taal, vryheit, gewoonte; en wel herkomen gebruík betreft' ('deeply rooted in this poetic art, and the principal [aspect] of our native language, freedom, custom; is well fitted to its use').[17] Oudaen and Van der Goes were united in their resistance to French literature and culture: they saw it as a threatening hegemonic imperialism. A generation later their writings would be seen as crucial in an attempt to stem what was seen as Dutch decline in every sphere in the face of French pre-eminence.[18]

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14 Modern edition in Andries Pels, *Gebruik én misbruik des tooneels*, ed. by M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen (Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink-Noorduijn, 1978).

15 Joachim Oudaen, *J. Oudaan's Aanmerkingen over Q. Horatius Flaccus dichtkunst, op onze tyden en zeden gepast, door A. Pels* (1713), p. 30. Modern edition in Andries Pels, *Q. Horatius Flaccus dichtkunst op onze tijden en zeden gepast*, ed. M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp. B.V., 1973), also on the DBNL site: http://dbnl.org/tekst/pels001qhor01_01/. Rembrandt himself had produced some engravings for the printed edition of Vos's play.

16 Oudaen, *J. Oudaan's Aanmerkinge*, p. 32.

17 Ibid.

18 See Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, 'Dutch Culture in the Age of William and Mary: Cosmopolitan or Provincial', in *The World of William and Mary: Anglo-Dutch Perspectives on the Revolution of 1688–89*, ed. by Dale Hoak and Mordechai Feingold (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 219–33.

Oudaen believed that Pels did not practice what he preached in his dramas, that his respect for strict rhyme schemes was too constraining, and that he was thus betraying the Dutch language. Oudaen and Pels were also caught up in a debate on the nature of drama. Pels's desire to purify the theatre was anathema to Oudaen, who believed that the histrionics and violence of the tragic tradition he followed had a valid function that could be traced back to Jan Vos's *Aran en Titus* of 1641 (a play that had its sources in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and in a German play of 1620, and that is notable for its use of speaking ghosts and talking severed heads), one of the earliest plays to be performed at the Amsterdam Schouwburg after it opened in 1638.[19] The cultural figures line up in an interesting and significant way in this debate: Pels accused Vos of writing like Rembrandt painted, following nature rather than precept and thus producing pictures of servant girls or burger's wives rather than ideal and inspiring mythological subjects:

> Slappe borsten,
> Verwrongen' handen, ja de neepen van de worsten
> Des ryglyfs in de buik, des kousebands om 't been,
> 't Moest al gevólgd zyn, óf natuur was niet te vréên;
> Ten minsten zyne, die geen régels, nóch geen réden
> Van évenmaatigheid gedoogde in 's ménschen léden. (ll. 1109–14)

> Weak breasts in need of bracing
> Gnarled hands, e'en stomach weals caused by tight bodice lacing
> And legs with pressure marks from garters, just released,
> It must be followed all, or nature is not pleased.
> That is: his nature isn't: rules are no more acknowledged
> And for all human limbs, proportion is abolished.[20]

19 The standard edition is Jan Vos, *Toneelwerken: Aran en Titus, Oene, Medea*, ed. by W.J.C. Buitendijk (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975). See also Helmer Helmers, 'The Politics of Mobility: Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Jan Vos's *Aran and Titus* and the Poetics of Empire', in *Politics and Aesthetics in European Baroque Tragedy*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 344–72.

20 Andries Pels, *Gebruik én misbruik des tooneels*, ed. by M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen; translation by August F. Harms in *Literary History of the Low Countries*, ed. by Theo Hermans (Rochester: Camden House, 2009), p. 225. Pels would have found support for his views in the introduction to Giovanni Pietro Bellori's *Vite de'Pittori, Scultori et Architetti Moderni* (Rome, 1672). For Rembrandt and the drama, see Eric Jan Sluijter, 'Rembrandt's Portrayal of the Passions and Vondel's "staetveranderinge"', *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art / Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 60 (2010), pp. 285–306.

Pels, in contrast, wanted to import the 'pacified' Parisian drama of Corneille and Racine, and encouraged the dissemination of Spinoza's philosophy.[21]

3 Tragedy in the *Rampjaar*

Oudaen's insistence on freedom should not be taken lightly. Pels thought that the stage was a subversive force, damaging to the polity: he agreed that the theatre should have been closed, as it was between 1672 and 1677. But Oudaen regarded the stage as part and parcel of Dutch 'vryheid' or freedom. *Haagsche broeder-moord, of dolle blydschap* (*Fratricide at The Hague, or Mad Joy*, 1673), Oudaen's play about the killing and dismembering of the de Witt brothers, was never performed and was probably not published until 1712, during the second stadholder-less period; on his deathbed in 1696, he asked that it be burned. Oudaen was not wholly against princely authority: he said that he would have been partial to monarchy had he lived in England, and he had attacked Oliver Cromwell as a usurping tyrant in *Konradyn* (1649).[22] Indeed, later on and in contrast, Oudaen saw Willem III continuing the line of Johan de Witt by upholding toleration in the terms of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. But back in 1673 this possibility was still in the future. In a poem entitled *De vryheid. Op den troon gevestigt* (*Freedom Established on its Throne*) and written shortly after the edict of 5 August 1667 that abolished the office of stadholder in perpetuity, Oudaen had compared the four stadholders Willem I (1533–1584), Maurits (1567–1625), Frederick-Hendrik (1584–1647), and Willem II (1626–1650) to, respectively, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula: an increasingly unpleasant, debased, and tyrannical trajectory.[23]

The fact that publication dates are missing from early title pages of the play should be of concern to any book historian. So should the place of publica-

21 The career of Nil Volentibus Arduum and Pels's reform is traced in Francesco Sbarra et al., *Tieranny van eigenbaat (1679): Toneel als wapen tegen Oranje*, ed. by Tanja Holzhey et al. (Zoeterwoude: Astraea, 2008); Andries Pels, *Didoos doot: Treurspel. Met eenige konstwercken, vertoont op d'Amsterdamse Schouburg* (Amsterdam, 1684); Roberto Bordoli, *Etica arte scienza tra Descartes e Spinoza: Lodewijk Meyer (1629–1681) e l'associazione Nil Volentibus Arduum* (Milan: F. Angeli, 2001). Meyer is a far more likely figure than Pels to have been disseminating Spinoza.

22 David van Hoogstraten, 'J. Oudaens leven', in Oudaen, *Poëzy*, p. 21; Joachim Oudaen, *Haagsche Broeder Moord, Of Dolle Blydschap: Treurspel, ingel. en voorz. van annotatie door een Werkgroep van Utrechtse neerlandici* (Utrecht: Tweede Druk, Instituut De Vooys, 1984), p. 39.

23 Joachim Oudaen, *De vrijheid op den troon gevestigt* (Rotterdam, 1668).

tion, Fredrikstad: a settlement established by Remonstrant exiles in Holstein. This suggests a false imprimatur. *Haagsche Broeder-Moord*'s assertion of an Orangist conspiracy is so strong it is hard to imagine that Oudaen would not have been arrested at the time had it been printed and distributed in the 1670s and 1680s. The degree to which the play might have circulated in manuscript is not known, although it is not thought to have been performed.

The events of 20 August 1672 that are recorded in the play were witnessed by Oudaen, who had travelled from Rotterdam to The Hague that day; he later recorded what he saw in a handwritten recollection.[24] It was the *rampjaar*, the terrible year in which the United Provinces was brought to its knees by English naval action during the Third Anglo-Dutch War.[25] The account of the play's contents that follows is largely descriptive; there is very little criticism of it in the secondary literature.[26] The drama begins with two House of Orange cousins, Odyk and Zuylestein, conspiring in the name of Willem, although Zuylestein fears that the De Witts will escape, a reflection of their skilful statecraft.[27] Two preachers, Simonides and Landman,[28] learn that rousing sermons could raise a crowd against Johan de Witt and give the conspiracy moral justification, while enhancing the reputation and resources of their church. There is a reference to personal experience here: Oudaen was well aware of the precariousness of his own position as well as that of the De Witt brothers and other republicans in 1672, in the face of persistent pamphlet campaigns and

24 Gemeentelijk Archief Rotterdam, Hs. Verz 1575, 1672: Joachim Oudaen, 'Dagverhaal van de meuijterije van Rotterdam des jars 1672 door J. Oudaan Janszoon'.

25 See Michel Reinders, *Gedrukte chaos: Populisme en moord in het Rampjaar 1672* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2010), translated as *Printed Pandemonium: Popular Print and Politics in the Netherlands, 1650–72* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). The lynching of the De Witt brothers continues to raise shocked interest, even internationally and in the popular press: see Dan Fawkes, 'PM Eaten by the Mob', *Daily Mail*, 14 July, 2011, p. 55.

26 The exceptions are the 1984 edition of *Haagsche Broeder Moord*, which is richly annotated but very difficult to obtain (see note 22); Lia van Gemert, 'De Haagsche Broeder-Moord: Oranje ontmaskerd', *Literatuur*, 1 (1984), pp. 268–76; Bettina Noak, *Politische Auffassungen im niederländischen Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Waxmann Münster, 2002), pp. 262–80. However, the text of the play and some other materials can be read on the Netherlands Library of Dutch Literature website: http://www.dbnl.org/titels/titel.php?id=ouda001haag01.

27 Willem Adriaan van Nassau, heer van Odijk (*c.* 1632–1705), the son of Louis van Nassau (1602–1665), himself the illegitimate son of Maurits, Prince of Orange; Frederick Nassau de Zuylestein (1608–1672), an illegitimate son of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, governor of the household of William III from 1659 until his dismissal in 1666.

28 Simon Simonides (1629–1675); Thaddeus Landman (1621–1681).

preaching from Calvinist divines.[29] Zuylestein and Odyk urge the preachers on, since the Orange brothers fear that the De Witt brothers will be protected by the cavalry and that the force of righteous (as they see it) popular violence would thus be compromised. The act ends with the citizens afraid that state conflict and the predicament in which affairs had been left by the De Witts would drag the entire republic down.

The second act begins with Johan hoping that his elder brother Cornelis would be acquitted and would leave the Gevangenpoort prison, where he had been held on a treason charge for conspiring to end the life of the Prince of Orange on the allegation of Willem Tichelaar. We meet Johan's sister and his daughter Anna (Anna de Witt, 1655–1725), and Johan places his life in the hands of God, knowing the desperate state of affairs. Still, he does not believe his or his brother's life is ultimately in danger. His father Jacob, fearing a conspiracy, advises Johan not to visit the prison to help Cornelis. This is one of several inferences of an Orangist conspiracy to murder the De Witts of which Oudaen appears, at least in writing, to be the origin.[30] The play draws a comparison between the tyrannical actions of the Spanish Duke of Alva (1507–1582), Maurits, and Willem III (1650–1702) against their pensionaries Van den Ende, Oldenbarnevelt, and De Witt. Alva is portrayed as acting within the bounds of law, Maurits goes beyond him in committing a judicial murder, while Willem III is the most bloodthirsty and does not regard himself as under the law. As matters stood in the state, Johan had actually resigned on 4 August and Willem had resumed his role in government. Yet, as the play reveals, this was not enough.

The third act begins with further discussion among the citizens about the risks presented by the De Witts and about which brother is more to blame. The crowd is further incited by Willem Tichelaar (in Oudaen's view, the perjured witness against Cornelis), who reports to them on the hearing. Cornelis is not condemned to death by the Court of Holland but banished, and this incenses the crowd, whose members believe the sentence to be too light. (Later we will learn that Tichelaar has held undue sway over the judges.) Cornelis and Johan meet briefly, but unfortunately the preachers continue to incite the crowd and the brothers' coach driver is sent away. A little comic relief is provided: the crowd asks the coachman if the 'De Witt dog' is in the coach, and he replies in the affirmative, meaning, however, that he is carrying the family dog—not

29 See Jill Stern, *Orangism in the Dutch Republic in Word and Image, 1650–75* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

30 Reinders, *Printed Pandemonium*, p. 162.

Johan de Witt. The chorus concludes by noting the comparable hypocrisy of Roman Catholics and Calvinists.

In the fourth act, a further standoff with the crowd makes Johan realise that they are lost. (In actuality, the civic militia was acting with the crowd, and cavalry that had been sent to keep the peace was redeployed to guard the city gates: the de Witt brothers at that point were completely defenceless, and were in fact eventually taken out of the prison by a group of citizens.) In a further confrontation with the burghers during which Johan tries to justify himself, the brothers are shot. The prologue to the fifth act expresses surprise and contempt that this has happened given that Cornelis had been so important to the Dutch navy and Johan had been such an impressive statesman.[31]

In the fifth act, grieving is left to Jacob, his daughter, and Anna de Witt; the story of the brutal dismemberment of the brothers is told by the chorus to Johan's family, and the remains of the de Witt brothers are brought to Johan's house. We are told that the sight of the corpses will lead to Jacob's insanity: at first he cannot recognise them, but then the awful truth dawns upon him. The chorus bewails the removal of the De Witt family from politics and compares the Prince of Orange to Charles IX of France after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the mass killing of French Protestants in Paris on 24 August, 1572, in which the king was complicit, and after which he exploited the disarray of the Protestants, or Huguenots. That, of course, was neither a happy memory nor prognostication.[32] We should note the engravings that accompanied printed editions of the play and the powerful painting by Jan de Baen of the dead brothers suspended upside down, flayed and disembowelled, like butchered animals.

31 See Herbert Harvey Rowen, *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625–1672* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Herbert Harvey Rowen, *John de Witt, Statesman of the 'True Freedom'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Luc Panhuysen, *De Ware Vrijheid: De Levens van Joan en Cornelis de Witt* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2005).

32 See Arlette Jouanna, *The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre: The Mysteries of a Crime of State (24 August 1572)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

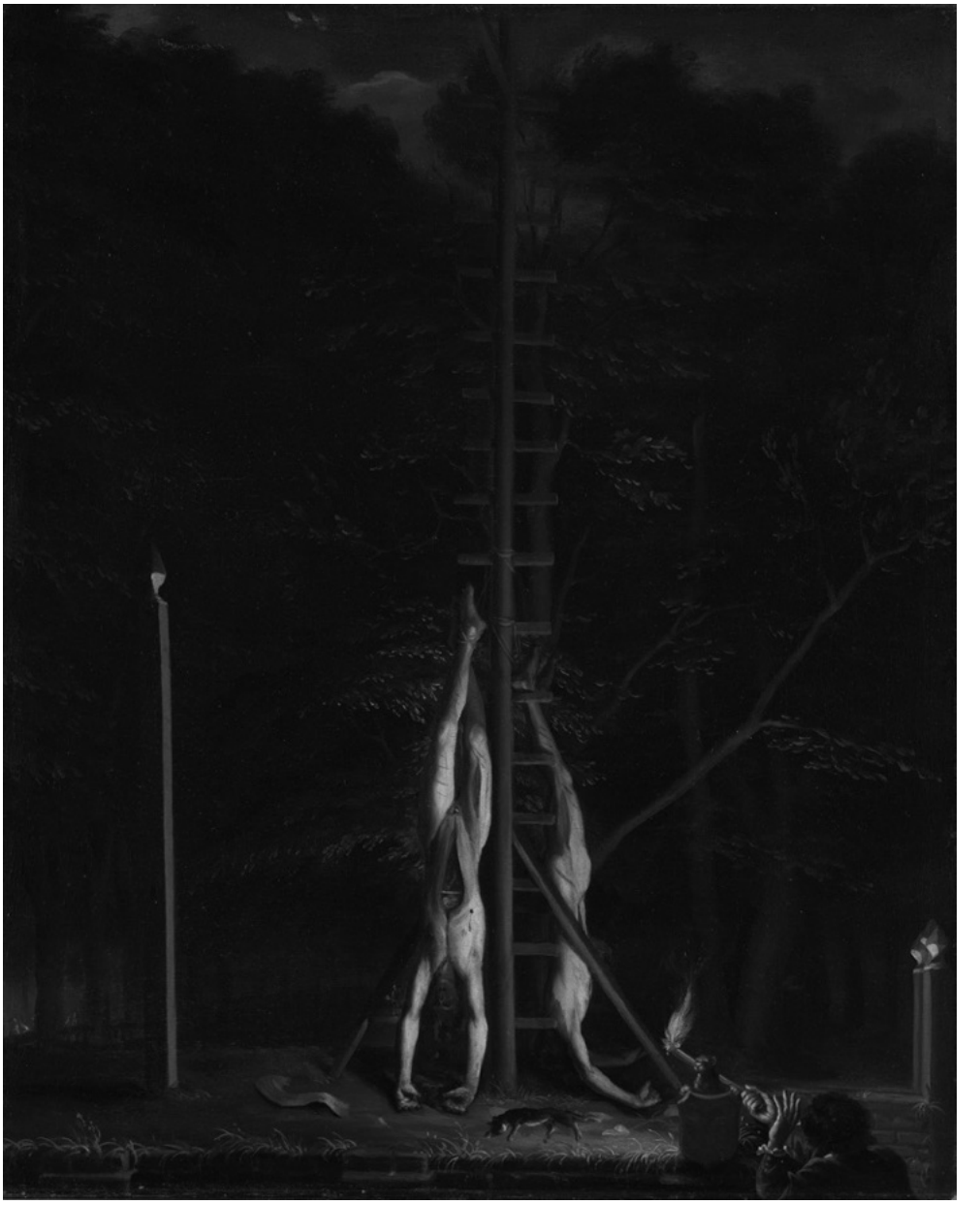

FIGURE 6 *'The Corpses of the de Witt Brothers, Jan and Cornelis, Hanging on the Groene Zoodje on the Vijverberg, The Hague, 1672', attr. Jan de Baen, 1672–c. 1675, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.*

At one point in the play, a contrast is made between this dismal scene and the heroic portraiture previously made of both Cornelis and Johan.[33] Yet it is also true, argues the chorus, that the republic will pay a heavy price—even to the extent of its own destruction—for it will now be lacking the various skills of the De Witt brothers from which it had so profited in the past; and now, too, Willem will have their miserable deaths on his conscience.

As a printed publication, not a performed drama, the play's appearance might initially make one think that it took its place among the many publications that played a role in the formation of public opinion during and after the *rampjaar*. Yet the majority of published pamphlets at this time in fact supported the case for the removal of the De Witts, and the argument has been made that the press had a real impact on motivating the ritual murder and dismemberment of the brothers. Traditionally, historiography has agreed with Oudaen's account in many respects, but more recent views offer different perspectives. It is now argued that Cornelis De Witt may indeed have been involved in plotting against Willem and that, despite his dubious reputation, Tichelaar may not have been an untrustworthy villain.[34] The instruments of state investigation and punishment employed tactics of a physical severity very similar to the violent end of the De Witts. By one account, Cornelis was tortured in the Gevangenpoort by having his shins broken and by having heavy weights suspended from his toes so that circulation of blood in his legs stopped. (In any case, he was suffering from extreme gout.) If this instance of torture was true, he would have found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to leave the prison by walking—even allowing for his recovery time. Johan himself was still recovering from a previous assassination attempt by Jacob van de Graaf. Whatever the truth of these historical circumstances, Oudaen's civic martyr drama was responding to a situation in which an identifiable group of prominent citizens (apparently led by Hendrik Verhoeff, 1645–1710, silversmith and militia captain) and not a mindless mob killed the brothers with their own hands and weapons, dismembered them, and cooked and ate their body parts (fingers, hands, ears, noses, feet, genitals, hearts, lungs) in a ritual purging of what they regarded as a tainted body politic. This is now understood by some historians to have been a rationally driven instance of early modern retributive symbolic justice, not the irrational actions of a crazed mob: as the perpetrators saw it, the further punishment of

33 See Oudaen, *Haagsche Broeder-Moord* (Utrecht: Tweede Druk, Instituut de Vooys, 1984), pp. 34–35, 145; Frans Grijzenhout, 'Between Memory and Amnesia: The Posthumous Portraits of Cornelis and Johan de Witt', *JHNA*, 7 (2015), p. 5.

34 On this latter point, see Reinders, *Printed Pandemonium*, p. 151.

dismemberment after execution was fitting to the crime. That retribution was, at the time, the source of very detailed pamphlet commentary. Surviving bits and pieces of the De Witts would change hands for handsome sums of money; even their supporters kept some of these relics and other personal effects as tokens of the republican tradition. We lessen the significance of the play and of Oudaen's intentions unless we take these factors into account. Indeed, the title page's unidentified quotation from Virgil, a chronogram making 1672, is quite appropriate: 'PraeCLaro gaVDent perpVsI sangVIne fratrVM' ('Joyfully they smear themselves with the blood of the illustrious brothers', *Georgics* II. 510). Thus Oudaen gave the lynching of the De Witts classical importance.

Oudaen was putting forward one particular viewpoint; other publications reveal a complicated set of different opinions. Johan de Witt's published writing was itself too learned and technical to connect with the reading public. The contrary was true for Orangist (or at least anti-De Witt) publications, in which the republicans were depicted as self-interested men who were prepared to place private gain over the public good and national security. A significant body of pamphlets enacted the death sentence in print weeks before it happened; some argued that execution and martyrdom were justified, even invoking comparisons with John the Baptist. Even those who did not approve of lynching because they objected to mob violence and to people taking justice into their own hands thought the killing was justified. Oudaen, therefore, was not just engaging in the defence of a political viewpoint, however much his careful attention to historical detail in the play might suggest this. He was also exploiting the aesthetic potential of the drama and using it to counteract the bloodthirstiness—however rationalised and justified—in political culture at this point in the *rampjaar* crisis. This extends to his attempt to capture, in dramatic form, the street-side discussions among citizens, such as the exchange of different viewpoints *pro et contra* the De Witts that occur at the beginning of act III. These passages certainly carry energy and are reminiscent of Ben Jonson's renderings of urban life. Indeed, in a severe critique of the play's quality, Lia van Gemert regards this section as the only performable part of the text.[35] Beernaart is a rude and ill-mannered character whose passions drive his opinions and who wishes to make short work of the De Witts. There is more than a hint of Seneca in the text:

> *Beernaart.*
> De moedwil acht geen stuk te stout,
> In 't geenze durft ter handen slaan:

35 Van Gemert, 'De Haagsche Broeder-Moord', p. 273. For a much later dramatic rendering of these events in German, see Ferdinand von Saar, *Die beiden de Witt: Trauerspiel in fünf Acten* (Heidelberg: G. Weiss, 1879).

Arent.
En d'onversaagtheid zal bestaan,
Uit nood, het geen waar door ze niet,
Of zeer bezwaarlyk, heene ziet:
Want een benarde kat in 't nauw
Waagt sprong, op sprong, en zet den klauw
In 't geen waar aan geen vatten was,
Of vliegt al dryvend door een glas.

Beernaart.
De Vogel, hier in 't tralinet
En yz're kevi vast gezet,
Is onversaagt, en stout, en schalk,
En afgerecht gelyk een Valk,
Of Arent, die met klauw, en bek,
Een' mind'ren vogel breekt den nek;
Of die geraakt aan ruime lucht,
Noit achterhaalt word in zyn vlucht.[36]

Beernaart.
Malevolence considers no venture too daring in what it dares to do.

Arent. [*Eagle*]
And intrepidity will dare—out of need—that of which it cannot, or hardly, see the
consequences, for a dire cat cornered takes the plunge again and again and puts its claws
into that which is slippery or runs very quickly through a glass.

Beernaart
The bird [i.e., Cornelis de Witt], here imprisoned behind iron bars and the iron cage,
is intrepid, and daring and cunning, and trained like a falcon or an eagle which with its
claw and beak breaks the neck of a smaller bird, or which if it is in the open air
is never caught in its flight.[37]

36 Oudaen, *Haagsche Broeder-Moord*, p. 39.

37 My thanks to Jan Bloemendal for his translation of these passages.

By contrast, Ernst and Frank speak for the De Witts and so represent rational detachment, objectivity, and honesty:

Ernst. Frank.
Ja zeker! gaat het zoo! en meent men, zonder spreken,
Ons dit voor gladde munt dus in de hand te steken:
Daar zeg ik neen toe; ‘k ben veel liever ver van daan,
Dan over, of omtrent, een werk dat zoo zal gaan.

Frank.
Zoo komje, zonder ‘t slot te hooren, weer na buiten?
Of zonder datje weet wat hier den Raad zal sluiten?
Dat ‘s wonder!

Ernst.
’t Lust me niet te morssen in een werk,
Daar ‘t schaamteloos bedrog gekent aan merk, op merk,
Met baar geweld die rol van boosheid zal volspelen;
‘k Zoek in den lof, of ‘t loon, niet garen diep te deelen;
En al die eerlyk is, of deugdzaam van gemoed,
Verwaarloost deugd en eer indien hy anders doet.
O Rechters! zelve Gy, die met het werk verlegen
Dit moog’lyk tegensprakt, als wien het onrecht tegen
De borst was, nu gy niet dorst spreken uit de borst,
Zoo rustig als ‘t betaamde, al mê met bloed bemorst,
Zult in der eeuwigheid dien naamsmet noch zien kleven
Op u, en uw’ geslacht, uw’ kind’ren, en uw’ neven;
Uw’ schaduw zal u zelf doen sidd’ren, waar gy zyt,
En ‘t knagend’ naberouw u nagaan met verwyt:
Maar om die waarheid niet met bitt’ren hoon te ontgelden,
Indien w’ hier onderling een woord in vryheid melden,
Zoe treed wat aan d’een zy; of wandel wat omher,
Zoo kan m’ op ons bedryf niet letten, als van ver.

Frank.
‘k Verlang hoe Tichelaar zyn zeggen heeft bewezen.

Ernst.
De valsheid van dien schelm is uyt zyn mond te lezen;
Want hoe hy ‘t stuk beglimt, en oppronkt ‘t geen hy zeit

Met een verhaal, het welk met groote omzichtigheid
Hem voorgeschreven schynt; zy kykt 'er dwers door henen:
En zoo men van ter zyd' zyn zeggen poogt t' ontzenen,
Waar door de valsheid best zouw komen aan den dag,
Men schreeuwt 'er tegen aan, zoo vinnig als men mag.[38]

Ernst. Frank.
Yes, sure, thus it goes, and people think, without saying it, to put this as slippery coins in our hands. I say no to this; I prefer to be far from a job, than to be engaged in it.

Frank.
Thus you come out again without hearing the end? Or without knowing what the Council will decide? That is strange!

Ernst.
I do not want to act dishonestly in a deed in which shameless deception that is recognised in several ways with pure violence will accomplish that evil task. I do not gladly share in praise or reward. And everyone who is honest or has a virtuous mind will disregard virtue and honour if he acts in a different way. O Judges! Even You who, having troubles with this matter, possibly refuted this, since you disapproved of this injustice and dare not to speak honestly as openly as you should have done, you also messed with blood, you will see this blemished name stick in eternity to you, your race, your children and grandchildren. Your very shadow will make you tremble wherever you are, and gnawing remorse will follow after you reproachfully. But to prevent the truth being expressed with bitter scorn if we speak together a word in freedom step aside, or stroll somewhat, so that people can't see what we are doing but from afar.

Frank.
I would like to know how Tichelaar has proved what he has said.

Ernst.
The falsity of that rascal can be read from his mouth; for however he perverts the venture and embellishes his words with a story, something which he seems to be required to do with great caution, [the truth] shines right through it, and if one wants to disprove his words from the side

38 Oudaen, *Haagsche Broeder-Moord*, pp. 47–48.

> lines, whereby the falsity would best come to light, one cries out against it as strongly as possible.

Oudaen attempts to maintain the classical unities and, to that extent, shares Vondel's debt to the classical tradition and to the work of the Dutch classical scholars, notably Heinsius and Vossius. There is an even distribution of action across the whole play and closure for each act. The combination of prolepsis and retrospection not only unifies the action in an arc from the beginning of the first act to the end of the fourth, but also gives the play a structure for reflection by the discerning imagined audience member or actual reader. Nonetheless, the extended argument from principle and Oudaen's sense that he should be faithful to the events he witnessed puts considerable pressure on the tragic form. The text is half as long again as the typical Dutch play text of this period (some three thousand rather than two thousand lines). As an example of this expansiveness, here the De Witt brothers discuss their situation at length while pondering the situation of the republic:

> *Kornelis de Witt. Johan de Witt.*
> *Kornelis.*
> O Broeder, Vryheids stut, en rechterhand der Vromen,
> Naast God 's Lands toeverlaat, waar is het toe gekomen!
> Hoe word uw' zorg, en trouw, en arbeid, dag en nacht,
> Uw' wysheid, en beleid, verwaarloost en veracht!
> Hoe word die dierb're schat van uw' vermoge gaven,
> Vertreden met den voet, en in het stof begraven!
> Onmensch'lyk Hof, in dienst van uwen dwingeland
> Verslaaft, was 't niet genoeg, dat gy me rekt, en spant,
> En pynigt? daar gy zelf gepynigt in 't geweten,
> Uw' eer, uw' eed, uw' God, en Godsdienst hebt vergeten?
> Moest gy myn Broeder noch bedraayen in dien ramp!
> Waar van 't bewimp'len zal verdwynen als een damp:
> Op dat het helsch geweld hem dinge naar zyn leven:
> Dat zal in eeuwigheid de Staat u niet vergeven;
> Nadien het Vaderland hier met een hart-quetsuur
> Geraakt word, die 't gevoelt zoo lang het leven duur?
> Tot dat het magteloos zieltoogende uit zal quynen;
> Vermits het met een zucht de Vryheid ziet verdwynen.
>
> *Johan.*
> Myn waardste, neem geduld: Staat, Vryheid, Vaderland,
> Is maar een yd'le klank van namen, zonder stand,

Of grondsteun; en verstrekt een speeltuig voor de winden
Van 't wispelturig volk; gelyk we nu bevinden:
Want zyt gy, dapp 're Man, gepynigt en gerekt,
Mishandelt van een' beul! dat toont ons, dat ontdekt
Hoe haast d' ondank baarheid de weldaat heeft vergeeten;
En dat geen Vaderland de vroomheid af kan meten,
Waar door het, met het loof van uwe lauwerkrans
Beschaduwt, zyn gezag tot onverwelkb'ren glans
Scheen op te beuren, en onwankelbaar te vesten:
En ach! bewyst men zulk een snoodheid aan de besten!
Aan eenen die noch niet ontslagen van 't Gezag
Van Opperoverste der Zeemacht, niet en mag
Van iemant ooit gehoont, veel min beledigt worden;
Ten zy met quetsing van's Lands Oppermacht, en orden,
Welks eere op hem berust; die, na gedaan bescheid,
Zyns machts, in handen van zyn' Meesters afgeleit,
Dan eerst ontslagen word; 't en zyze 't zelf belasten:
Nu dan het Hof in u 's Lands Hoogheid aan durft tasten,
En schenden, wien gelust dan Vaderland, of Staat,
Of voorstand van 't Gemeen, zyn vroomheid, of zyn raad
Op t"off'ren?[39]

Cornelis de Witt. Johan de Witt.
Cornelis.
O brother, Freedom's support and right hand of the righteous, with God the Country's mainstay, what has it come to! How your care and faith, your labour both day and night, your wisdom and policies are neglected and despised! How that precious treasure of your great gifts [is] trampled and buried in the dust! Inhuman Court [i.e., of William III], made a slave in service of your tyrant, wasn't it enough to stretch me, draw me, and torture me? Whereas you yourself, tortured in your conscience, have forgotten your honour, your oath, your God, and your Religion? Should you involve my brother in that disaster, the scrambling of which will disappear as a vapour, since the hellish violence will try to kill him: The State will never forgive you that, since the Country is struck a deathblow that it will feel as long as life will last, until it waste away, powerless and moribund, since it experiences Freedom disappearing with its last sigh.

39 Oudaen, *Haagsche Broeder-Moord*, pp. 75–76.

> *Johan.*
> My dear, have some patience: State, Freedom, Country, are merely idle sounds of names, without foundation or solidity, and give full play to the winds of the fickle people, as we experience now. For you, brave man, are tormented and stretched, tortured by a headsman! This shows us, this reveals how quickly ingratitude has forgotten benefaction, and that no country can value the bravery by which, shaded by the leaves of your wreath, it seemed to elevate its authority to an unfading lustre and give it an unshakable foundation. Alas! Such a wickedness is done to worthies! To someone who, not yet dismissed from the office of the Supreme Commander of the Navy, is not allowed ever to be scorned by anyone, and even less is allowed to be offended. But if it is done, then the States General and the laws are violated, whose honour rests on the man who, after having given account of his power, is carried away in the hands of his masters and then is relieved of his duties, unless they have serious criticism of it themselves. Now [that] the court dares to affect and infringe the majesty of the Republic in you, who will wish to sacrifice for his country or state, or his bravery or prudence for the promotion of the common interest?

There is copious reference in the dialogue to the involvement of England in Dutch affairs. Charles II persistently and in different ways backed the interests of his nephew Willem. Cornelis de Witt had been present at the Dutch navy's successful raid on the English navy in the River Medway in July 1667, and was widely celebrated for his countrymen's victory. This was the action that brought the Second Anglo-Dutch War to a successful conclusion on Dutch terms. In the previous decade, Johan de Witt had made peace with the Cromwellian Protectorate with the inclusion of the infamous secret clause stating that the stadholder be excluded from politics, and this is indeed what happened, culminating in the exclusionary edict of 5 August 1667. Oudaen depicted republican outrage at further English intervention in Dutch politics: with precise timing, as Willem visited Amsterdam, Charles II published a letter claiming that English naval pressure would be lifted and that peace would prevail if Willem's rightful claims as stadholder were recognised. The English context raises further questions with regard to how nations represent and understand each other in literary works as well as to mutual Anglo-Dutch literary exchange.

4 Vondel and Oudaen: The Spectre of *Palamedes*

Haagsche Broeder Moord was also, in a sense, about Vondel (by 1673 acknowledged as the preeminent Dutch poet-playwright) and about his place in Oudaen's writing and imagination: Vondel's own Remonstrant and then Roman Catholic sympathies, and his attacks on tyrants are well known. This is the case despite the confessional difference between the two men and their opposed views on the use of classical precepts.[40] Oudaen's play is indebted to Vondel's *Palamedes* (1st edn. 1626), an allegorical account of the demise of Pensionary Jan van Oldenbarnevelt, a performance of which we know de Witt attended in 1662.[41] Palamedes appeared as a character unjustly condemned to death in tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; it was known in the seventeenth century that the story of Palamedes had been used by Euripides in an allegorical play on the death of Socrates. There had already been a Palamedes on the Dutch stage in the allegorical play *Iphigenia* (1617) by Vondel's associate Samuel Coster; the character had also been present in the visual iconography that represented the embattled Pensionary De Witt.[42] Vondel presents Palamedes's death as a cannibalistic sacrificial meal, for he is literally torn apart by a furious mob and then has his blood drunk by Agamemnon (representing Maurits, the Prince of Orange), who begins the entire sequence of events 'greedily and so diabolically' ('En Agamemnon suypt verwoed | Sijn trouste raedsmans edel bloed').[43] Shockingly, Vondel portrays the rigors of

40 Melles, p. 123. For further evidence of both connections and tensions between Vondel and Oudaen, see Amy Golahny, 'Paired Poems on Pendant Paintings: Vondel and Oudaan Interpret Lastman', in *The Eye of the Poet: Studies in the Reciprocity of the Visual and Literary Arts from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. by Amy Golahny (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1996), pp. 154–78.

41 I am indebted to the readings of *Palamedes* offered by Bettina Noak, 'Vondel as a Dramatist: The Representation of Language and Body' and Nina Geerdink, 'Politics and Aesthetics—Decoding Allegory in *Palamedes* (1625)', both in *Joost van den Vondel: Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age (1587–1679)*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 115–38 and 225–48, respectively.

42 See M.B. Smits-Veldt, *Samuel Coster, ethicus-didacticus: Een onderzoek naar dramatische opzet en morele instructie van Ithys, Polyxena en Iphigenia* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff/Forsten, 1986), chapter 5; Freya Sierhuis, *The Literature of the Arminian Controversy: Religion, Politics and the Stage in the Dutch Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), chapter 3.

43 Vondel, *Palamedes* (Amsterdam: Jacob Aerstz. Calom, 1625), p. 96. Translation by Noak, 'Vondel as a Dramatist', p. 134.

Calvinist theology and its willingness to pursue its aims with arms against the Arminians as bloodthirsty primitivism.[44] Palamedes and his violent tale prefigure Oudaen's portrayal of the De Witt brothers' murder, in which ancient ritual barbarism seems reborn.

Palamedes was censored, and since Vondel's name was on the title page, charges were brought against him. He went into hiding for fear of the sanctions of the severe Court of Holland in The Hague (the court that, in 1672, would try Cornelis de Witt) but resurfaced after it became clear that the Amsterdam city government had refused to hand him over to The Hague. In fact, they had decided to prosecute him themselves. Since some of the Amsterdam city regents were kindly disposed to Vondel, he was treated leniently and was subjected to a fine of just three hundred guilders. The fact that *Palamedes* took the form of a play was used as an argument by some of the judges to regard it as open to manifold interpretations, rendering it not obviously intended as a political statement. For his part, Oudaen avoided censure simply by not appearing in court when summoned.

What could not be played in the Netherlands found reception elsewhere. Another play signed 'N.V.M.' and now attributed to J. Duym, *Tragoedie van den bloedigen Haeg, ofte Broedermoort van Jan en Cornelis de Witt* (*The Bloody Hague Tragedy, or the Fratricide of Jan and Cornelis de Witt*), was performed in Stockholm by a company from The Hague in 1674; in 1679 another performance at the Swedish court was prevented by the Dutch ambassador.[45] This play, together with some illustrative engravings, was printed at Amsterdam and Antwerp in 1672. The difference between it and Oudaen's play is clear: a romantic sub-plot involves an imaginary lover (Frederick) of De Witt's daughter in political intrigues; one sees the devising and development of the conspiracy and the dubious role of the prince therein. The anti-Orangist scope of the drama addressed contemporary Swedish politics as well, and among the Dutch then resident in Scandinavia there were many republicans who feared the excessive power of the stadholder. The tragic demise of the Grand Pensionary and his brother was, for them, new proof of Orangist arbitrariness.

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44 For recent readings, see Frans-Willem Korsten, *Vondel belicht: Voorstellingen van soevereiniteit* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006), pp. 129–37; in English as Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), pp. 119–25.

45 See Noak, *Politische Auffassungen*, pp. 235–36.

5 Martyred in a Fragment: *Servetus*

Oudaen's ultimate testimony to the tradition of religious toleration was his *truer-spel* (tragedy) of 1655, *Servetus*, which is concerned with the very same martyred Spanish anti-Trinitarian Miguel Servet (1509/11–1553) who figured so prominently in the great sixteenth-century Dutch tolerationist Dirck Volkerszoon Coornhert's *Synodus of tusshcen de ende nieuw. Vander conscientien vryheyt* (*Synod on the Freedom of the Conscience*).[46] Alas, only one act (the last one) survives, although I am beginning to think that this is all there ever was of what in part is also a morality play (*Zinnespel*), which also means 'concern with the distinction between good and evil or right and wrong'. The single act is mostly a dialogue between the suspiciously named 'Vatikanus' and 'Blandrata', the latter based on the real Giorgio Biandrata or Blandrata (1515–1588), Italian physician and polemicist, follower of Servetus, and perennial anti-Trinitarian, whose published works were compressed versions of Servetus's major work *Christianismi Restitutio* (1553). Blandrata played a major role in introducing anti-Trinitarianism to Transylvania and was especially good at making Calvinists anti-Trinitarian; his character in the play speaks about what he regards as the loathsome hypocrisy of Calvinism.[47]

Oudaen's character Blandrata is also keen to reveal the hypocrisy of Jean Calvin (1509–1564), whose public humility regarding the condemnation and burning of Servetus masked triumphal laughter—a damnable offence in Blandrata's view. Calvin's infamous letter to his fellow reformer Guillaume Farel (1485–1565), in which he wrote that if Servetus came to Geneva he (Calvin) would not let him leave alive, is dramatically represented.[48] The letter is cited in a footnote in the text: here Oudaen performs his function of openly revealing that which had been secret (in keeping with the genre of the 'secret history').[49] His footnote cites Grotius (Hugo Grotius or Hugo de Groot, 1583–1645), friend of the Remonstrants and exile to Paris in the 1620s), on whose testimony the existence of the letter in the Royal Library in Paris was confirmed.[50] There was a determined attempt to keep the letter secret; it was finally made

46 First published in print in Joachim Oudaen, *Tooneelpoëzy* (Amsterdam, 1712), pp. 261–81.

47 See Sergio Carletto and Graziano Lingua, *La Trinità e l'Anticristo: Giorgio Biandrata tra eresia e diplomazia* (Dronero: L'Arciere, 2001).

48 For Farel, see Jason Zuidema and Theodore van Raalte, *Early French Reform: The Theology and Spirituality of Guillaume Farel* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011).

49 See Annabel Patterson, 'Marvell and Secret History', in *Marvell and Liberty*, ed. by Warren Cherniak and Martin Dzelzainis (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, 1999), pp. 27–29.

50 Oudaen, *Tooneelpoëzy*, p. 272.

fully public in Antoine Varillas's 1686 history of religious revolutions (and here we should remember that *Servetus*, like *Haagsche Broeder-Moord*, did not circulate in print until 1712).[51] Farel becomes Calvin's tool in the reported action, demanding that Servetus speak to the Genevan people while the scene of execution is prepared and described in graphic detail: the 'murder pole', the chain that binds the victim to the pole, and the blue and purple striped robe that Servetus was required to wear.[52] The faggots are lit and Servetus screams as he feels the heat; then we hear a far coarser voice, choked with smoke, as he calls on his Redeemer. Shortly thereafter, Servetus is cooked black like coal. Only his gold chain remains, glowing in the charred ruins of his body.[53] As Servetus's soul makes its journey heavenward, the allegorical figures of Resentment and Envy feast on his remains.[54] It is in Vatikanus's interest to show that Geneva is far worse than Rome. He admonishes Blandrata not to call down holy vengeance from God; Blandrata's reply is that God will act in his own time when he is good and ready.[55]

It would be natural to see the play as part of the inter-confessional martyr-drama wars of early modern Europe that were so capaciously analysed by Alison Shell in her earlier work.[56] And indeed, here we do have anti-Trinitarian and Roman Catholic debaters, concentrating the confessional clash within a single play even as it is a vilification of magisterial Protestantism and Calvin in particular. That would be fine were it not for the fact that Oudaen is so strongly linked with the fierce drama of the earlier Schouwburg years. Moreover, how could *Servetus* not be seen as a development of and reaction against a slightly earlier martyr play like Vondel's *Maria Stuarta of Gemartelde majesteit* (*Mary Stuart or Martyred Majesty*, 1646), which had occasioned a direct response from Oudaen in *Johanna Grey of gemartelde onnozelheyd* (*Jane Grey or Martyred Innocence*, 1648)? In the 1640s, soon after Vondel converted to Catholicism in 1640–1641, his plays hit on the martyr theme, an account of tragic death that was both confessional and part of the high politics of post-Reformation Europe. *Mary Stuart or Martyred Majesty* (1646) presents Mary Queen of Scots as the

51 Antoine Varillas, *Histoire des Revolutions arrivées dans l'Europe en Matiere de Religion*, 6 vols (1686).

52 Oudaen, *Tooneelpoëzy*, pp. 266–67.

53 Ibid., pp. 267–68: 'daar vat de vlam na't hart | En glenstert levend op; hy zwijmt, hy zakt ter neder, | Zoo zwart gelijk een kool [...] De yz're keten gloeyt, en fchijnt de goude keten, | Die op den boezen hing.'

54 Ibid., pp. 270–71.

55 Ibid., p. 276.

56 Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

victim of a Machiavellian Elizabeth I and of international intrigue.[57] Parallels with the plight of Charles I at this time are obvious: there is an open castigation of Puritanism in the play and, by presenting Mary as a latter day Christ, Vondel was affirming his strong belief in divine right monarchy. James VI of Scotland, the future James I of England and Mary's son, is warned in the play to keep the Puritans in check; by 1646 it was known that Charles I, son of James VI and I, had consummately failed to do so (l. 1128). The First Anglo-Dutch War was five years in the future and Vondel was speaking against the official views of the Dutch Republic: he seemed to delight in these provocations. Perhaps we should not be surprised when we remember that religious controversy itself was no stranger to religious acting companies before the Dutch Revolt, so that some rhetorical societies in the Netherlands were populated by majorities of both Lutherans and Anabaptists.[58] Vondel is not, however, uncritical of Mary, and clearly sides with the rational analysis of her predicament and with the free will that we see her exercise—as opposed to the blind partisanship and bigoted intolerance of her chaplain.[59]

Servetus was notorious as an anti-Trinitarian (among several other heterodox views he held) and Oudaen's play offers a radical religious critique of the persecution of heresy by magisterial Protestantism.[60] To that end he calls upon a Netherlands tradition of martyrdom in the name of faith that was a quintessential part of Anabaptist and Mennonite identity. By virtue of his birth, Vondel would also have been deeply familiar with it.[61] Yet in their plays that refer to

57 For a translation, see Joost van den Vondel, *Mary Stuart or Tortured Majesty*, trans. with introd. and notes by Kristiann P. Aercke (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions Inc., 1996).

58 Gary K. Waite, *Reformers on Stage: Popular Drama and Religious Propaganda in the Low Countries of Charles V, 1515–1556* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 127–29. See also Wim Hüsken, '"Heresy" in the Plays of the Dutch Rhetoricians', in *Urban Theatre in the Low Countries, 1400–1625*, ed. by Elsa Stretman and Peter Happé (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 103–24.

59 For many of the European plays concerned with Mary Stuart's execution, the sympathy of the audience with the tragic queen was overwhelming; for another, more equivocal perspective, see Christophorus Kormart, *Maria Stuart Oder Gemarterte Majestät* (1673) and Joel B. Lande, 'German Trauerspiel and its International Nexus: On the Migration of Poetic Forms', in *Politics and Aesthetics in European Baroque Tragedy*, ed. by Bloemendal and Smith, pp. 319–43.

60 See also Bauke van Dam-Heringa, 'Oudaans socinianisme, met name in zijn Aandachtige Treurigheyd', *De Nieuwe Taalgids*, 77 (1984), pp. 484–92.

61 The definitions and interactions of early modern Roman Catholic, Protestant and Anabaptist versions of martyrdom, that is dying for and in the name of one's faith, usually as a result of religious persecution, literally embodying the word's original meaning as 'witness', is extensively analysed by Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian*

political strife in the Dutch Republic, even though the issue at stake is religious (the Arminian controversy and the longer history of religious toleration), and even though there is forceful religious persecution (the Dutch Calvinists as well as the Prince of Orange), we are witnessing in Vondel's *Palamedes* and certainly in Oudaen's *Haagsche Broeder-Moord* what must be described as political martyr drama, presented in a distinctly civic context.

6 Conclusion: Contexts for Oudaen's Drama

We have seen how English events are strongly present in *Haagsche Broeder Moord*, and there was much sympathy in the Netherlands for the plight of King Charles I, who was executed on 30 January 1649 and represented—by himself and his followers—as a martyr king: certainly a political martyr but also a simulacrum of Jesus, whose representative he was considered to be, as well as a kind of English Protestant saint. No one in the Netherlands (as opposed to a Dutchman in the employ of the English Republic in the Netherlands, such as the jurist Isaac Dorislaus, 1595–1649, who was eventually assassinated in The Hague by English Royalists) approved of the English regicide. It was universally condemned, even among the republicans; Paul Sellin and Helmer Helmers have accurately documented how widespread this disapproval was.[62] Oudaen's *Konradyn* is his resistance to Oliver Cromwell. *Karel Stuart* (1652) by Jan Dullaert (1630–*c.* 1681), which is profoundly resonant with English royalism, is no less indebted to Vondel's *Palamedes* than is Oudaen's *Haagsche Broeder-Moord.*[63] The Silesian playwright Andreas Gryphius also made dramatic capital from the English martyr kings with his 1657 *trauerspiel* entitled *Carolus Stuardus, oder Ermordetete Majestät*.

It could be argued that Vondel had by 1672 already outstripped Oudaen's martyr theatre in his attempt to present flawed heroes by employing classi-

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Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); see especially pp. 215–49.

62 See, for example, Jan Dullaart, *Karel Stuart, of Rampzalige Majesteit* [*Charles Stuart, or Catastrophic Majesty*] (1652); Paul R. Sellin (with Margriet Lacy-Bruijn), 'Royalist Propaganda and Dutch Poets on the Execution of Charles I: Notes Towards an Inquiry', *Dutch Crossing*, 24 (2000), pp. 241–64; Helmer Helmers, 'The Cry of the Royal Blood: Revenge Tragedy and the Stuart Cause in the Dutch Republic', in *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal, Arjan van Dixhoorn and Elsa Strietman (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 219–50.

63 See Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 179.

cal precepts. The question of will arises in Vondel's *Lucifer* (1654), a study in Edenic excellence and angelic inferiority:

> Hoe arm is eenigheit! Wy kennen geen gespan
> Van tweederhande kunne, een jongkvrouw, en een' man.
> Helaes! Wy zyn misdealt: wy weten van geen trouwen,
> Van gade of gading, in een' hemel, zonder vrouwen.
>
> We're poorly off, alone and celibate—
> Denied the joys of sex, the married state;
> Deprived of consort, starved of loving tryst:
> Some heaven, this—where women don't exist![64]

Lucifer is called the 'lieutenant' ('Stedehouder') in the *dramatis personae*; he describes mankind as mere 'commoners'. Vondel was probably alluding to Willem II's attack on Amsterdam in August 1650, which would have been a major step towards total Orange sovereignty in the Dutch Republic, had it been successful. Rafael's position that 'Authority's not owned; it's delegated!' ('Geleende heerschappy staet los, en is geen erf!') also foreshadows the contestation of Orangist claims that Willem III was entitled to the offices and powers of his forefathers by birth.[65]

After he had mastered Latin around 1640, Vondel followed the Dutch scholarly commentators on ancient tragedy (in particular G.J. Vossius, 1577–1649)[66] in order to fashion an even more narrowly focused printed tragedy (although Vondel treats the contents as performed action) that analyses the exquisite pain of its protagonists. These include Jeptha, the eponymous subject of a 1659 tragedy, the Israelite hero who condemned his daughter to death by vowing, in thanks to God for a victory over the Ephraimites, to sacrifice the first thing he sees upon his return to his city.[67] He sees his daughter, keeps his word (despite mitigating arguments from a priest), and proceeds to lose his daughter, his wits, his reputation, and finally his life. In his preface and throughout, Vondel

64 Joost van den Vondel, *Lucifer* (1654), p. 5; *Lucifer*, trans. by Noel Clark (London: Oberon Books, 1990), p. 17.

65 Vondel, *Lucifer*, p. 44; trans. Clark, p. 61.

66 See the magnificent edition of Vossius's *Poeticarum institutionum libri tres*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal, with English translation, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

67 Joost van den Vondel, *Jeptha of Offerbelofte* (1659), ed. by N.C.H. Wijngaards (Zutphen: W.J. Thieme & CIE, 1972, rev. edn 1977); see also *Koning David hersteld* and *Faëton, of roekeloze stoutheid*, ed. by J.W.H. Konst (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2004).

maintains that his play is 'appropriately proportioned' in order to maximise 'powerful emotional effect' ('Het spel heft zijne behoorlijcke hoegrootheid, en leden, met de maete van evenredenheit gemeeten'; 'maghtige beweeghenisse te baeren'). Jeptha must exist in a state between 'pious and impious, which is actually the quality required of the main character of a perfect tragedy' ('vroom en onvroom, eene hoedanigheit eigentlijck in een personaedje vann een volkomen truerspel vereischt').[68] Vondel is instead contributing to the formation and development of uniquely Dutch classical drama, following a tradition of scholarship that had settled strongly and distinctively in Holland, and his narrative may be said to assert an ideological plea for Catholic level-headed discipline (exemplified by the Israelite priest and arch-priest—the mitigating voices of traditional authority) over and against the claims of destructive Protestant personal conscience (as represented by Jeptha). Calvinism was the public, if not established, religion of the Dutch Republic. Vondel had found a way of commenting upon contemporary politics without staging literal history, thereby creating artistic freedom for himself and interpretative liberty for his audience or readers, and replacing martyrdom with a meditation on the theme of sacrifice and the nature of human will.

We have already seen that Oudaen was a Collegiant, and noted the relatively non-exclusive, non-binding nature of Collegiant association.[69] A Collegiant principle, from the beginning, had been to admit to their society all individuals who were willing to acknowledge their belief in the Bible as inspired scripture. No confession of faith was required, and the widest diversity of opinion was permitted. Baruch de Spinoza, member of the Jewish community, lens grinder, and challengingly original philosopher, joined the study groups of the Collegiants at Rijnsberg while living near Leiden from 1660 to 1663. By the end of the seventeenth century, his opinions had obtained a strong hold upon the Collegiants and caused a temporary division of their members into two parties, with separate places of meeting.

It is not difficult to see how Oudaen, active in the Rotterdam Collegiant community, would have prevailed in it in terms of his own beliefs. Not surprisingly, he denounced Hobbes's views and also refuted Spinoza.[70] In 1675, just two years after writing *Haagsche Broeder-Moord*, Oudaen published a Dutch

68 'Joost van den Vondel's *Jephtha*', trans. by Peter King, *Dutch Crossing*, 32 (2008), p. 185; 'Berecht' [literally 'trail'; as in 'discussion', standing for 'Preface'] in Vondel, *Jeptha*, ed. by Wijngaards, pp. 34–35.

69 See notes 5–6.

70 See Joachim Oudaen, 'Aan Adriaan Verwer of Zijn Werk. De atheisterij het mom-aanzicht af-gelicht; of Wedderlegging de Zedekunst van B. Spinoza', in Melles, pp. 191–93.

translation of Sir Edwin Sandys's comparative study of European versions of Christianity, which was one of the century's most influential motors of free thinking and deism; initially assembled in Venice with the help of Paolo Sarpi, it first appeared, without Sandys's permission, as *A Relation of the State of Religion: and with what Hopes and Pollicies it hath beene framed, and is maintained in the Severall States of these Westerne Parts of the World* (London, 1605).[71] I suspect Oudaen was most interested in the exposure of Roman Catholicism that was offered by Sandys; that he translated it from the French underlines his distance from English culture. Yet clearly the challenge represented by Spinoza's decoupling of the Bible from philosophy was in quite another league, enforced as it was by his gleanings from Descartes and Hobbes.

In this context we can see that Oudaen's career and works sit very close to but are not identical with associations in the Netherlands that seem to cut free from conventional belief, move into philosophy, and assert a critique of scripture in terms that, in England or France at this time, are only ever offered in theistic terms. For example, Franciscus Van den Enden (1602–1674) was a sometime Jesuit, neo-Latin poet, physician, art dealer, philosopher, and plotter who taught Spinoza in his Latin school on the Singel in Amsterdam in the late 1650s.[72] From this school, Van den Enden had his pupils perform several Latin dramas in the Schouwburg as well as his own Latin play, *Philedonius* (1657), an allegory of virtue deploying alchemical symbolism based on the Table of Cebes.[73] In a prefatory poem, Vondel strongly recommended *Philedonius*. Like the martyr hero in Oudaen's *Servetus*, Van den Enden was seen as an atheist by some and as a Roman Catholic by others. With Pieter Corneliszoon Plockhoy (*c.* 1625–*c.* 1664/70) another Mennonite Collegiant who sought permission

71 Edwin Sandys, *Verhaal van den staat der religie: Waar in te zien is met hoedanige voornemens, en listigheden, de zelve toegestelt, en beleid word, in verscheyde staaten van de westersche deelen des werelds*, trans. by Joachim Oudaen (Harlingen, 1675).

72 Readers should know that the origins of this paragraph and my first encounter with Van den Enden was in Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 169–84. See also Franciscus van den Enden, *Free Political Propositions and Considerations of State (1665): Text in Translation, the Relevant Biographical Documents and a Selection from Kort Verhael*, ed. by Wim Klever ('Vrijstad' [Capelle a/d Ijssel], 2007).

73 Franciscus van den Enden, *Philedonius*, ed. by Marc Bedjaï (Paris: Kimé, 1994); Franciscus van den Enden, *Philedonius, 1657: Spinoza, Van den Enden e i classici latini*, ed. by Omero Proietti (Macerata: EUM, 2010). See also Frans-Willem Korsten, 'Mundus Dramaticus: A School Drama and Dramatization—Franciscus van den Enden', in *Drama, Performance and Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal, Peter G.F. Eversmann, and Elsa Strietman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 311–33.

from Oliver Cromwell to establish utopias in England), Van den Enden worked on a project for a utopian settlement in New Netherland, on the present Delaware shore, and developed views of this ideal society in his *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederland* (*Brief Account of New-Netherland*, 1662). He was plainly against slavery. In 1665, Van den Enden's *Vrye Politijke Stellingen* (*Free Political Propositions*) defended democracy and gave the state social and educational tasks. In 1671, he moved to Paris where he opened another Latin school, was unfortunately implicated in a plot to establish an aristocratic republic in Normandy, and was ignominiously hanged in front of the Bastille after the decapitation of the noble conspirators. It is almost a surprise that the republican and tolerant, if still religious, Oudaen did not write a play about him.

The achievement of Dutch literature seems—while undoubtedly embodying and participating in the advanced form of mercantile life afforded by the rise of the United Provinces in a way that seems similar to the development of both consciousness and artistic achievement in the Italian city states of the later fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries—to be that high literary art is both expression and, again, embodiment of what was considered most valuable about life in the republic: liberty and toleration. Joachim Oudaen was at the centre of this achievement, and he was profoundly influenced by (although he ultimately departed from) Joost van den Vondel. While never entirely separating the figure of the martyr from religious concerns, in locating the martyr as a consequence of political violence, and while seeing very little of his drama performed on stage, Oudaen gave vital theatrical embodiment to the tensions at the heart of the republic's fractious political life.

I do not think that there is any comparable achievement in any other European vernacular literature at this time. English drama, before the theatre closure of July 1642, offered political views at the behest of powerful aristocratic patrons; this was exaggerated when the theatres reopened in 1661; Milton struggled to find the kind of context for his art that Vondel, Oudaen, and their fellow writers enjoyed; the English republicans could only imagine the kind of theatre afforded by the Schouwburg, however difficult it was to mount a contentious play in Amsterdam. In France, a powerful administration meant that many advanced kinds of literary innovation took place in the service of an absolutist monarchy enforced by the church: alterity and critique was censored and persecuted *c.* 1615–1630 and then became implicit if not completely under wraps. Oudaen's drama embodies in its very form the passage from a society in which the most violent persecution of religious belief was considered legitimate and normative to a tolerant society; from uniformity enforced by princely and clerical authority, even to the point of war, to a mercantile and artistic prosperity based upon peaceful trading and the open

exchange of views, values, and truth standards. Those who preferred neoclassical patterns to this violent drama might be seen to have been attempting to repress or forget difficult tensions that remained unresolved at the heart of the Dutch Republic's polity. These are tensions that resonate throughout early modern European and colonial history and come down to us today. For these reasons Dutch drama deserves to be far better known than it is, to be juxtaposed far more effectively with Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Corneille, Racine, Calderón, Lope de Vega, and all the rest, and to be performed again, in the name of a vigorously revived international civic theatre. The theatre and commitments of Dario Fo come to mind.

CHAPTER 9

Devils On and Off Stage: Shifting Effects of Fear and Laughter in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Urban Theatre

Hans Rudolf Velten

1 Introduction

Long before the print medium acquired its function of guiding and controlling communication as a means of enforcing a cohesive political system, print had the task of storing and preserving collective knowledge and practices. In the period of transition between a predominantly performative culture and a predominantly textual culture—the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—the public sphere was constituted by physical media and cultural performances. This 'socialisation among present beings' ('Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden') is one of Rudolf Schlögl's central assumptions in his reflections on the development of a public sphere in the early modern period.[1] Schlögl does not deny the formation and existence of public spheres in late medieval and early modern courts and cities, but he does argue that there was no self-observation in urban performances outside the political process. Urban spaces, he suggested, still lacked a specific discursive medium that was able to reflect upon itself (and that was to become written—print—communication).

The following is an attempt to reassess Schlögl's thesis by examining a single element of one specific form of early modern urban performance, namely German urban theatre.[2] The element in question is the figure of the devil in

1 Rudolf Schlögl, 'Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt und ihre politische Öffentlichkeit', in *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Gerd Schwerhoff (Köln: Böhlau, 2011), pp. 29–38. See also Rudolf Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2014). All translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

2 The term *theatre* embraces both religious and secular drama and performance. There is no doubt that early modern theatre, as an urban event, was subject to the urban public sphere—to its rules and to its discourses—and that theatre could, in turn, influence the rules and discourses of the public sphere. See the introduction to *Drama, Performance and Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal, Peter G.G. Eversmann, and Elsa Strietman (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 1–18.

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relation to its ritual and religious functions in German plays of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, focusing on laughter as a form of communication between characters and audiences. Laughter circulates not only between certain performative occurrences and audiences, but also between the play and public order (as part of the public sphere) in early modern cities. As I hope to show, not only performative occurrences of laughter (humour) but also laughter itself—as a 'performative statement'—can be transformed and used in other cultural contexts, thus becoming a means of self-reflective activity.

In late medieval and early modern plays, devils—and, with them, other negative and foil-like characters like quacks, tomb guards, and Jews—are omnipresent. Not only in plays about the Antichrist and the Last Judgment, but also in Easter and Passion plays, devils have had a significant role as symbolic enemies of God and as reminders of timeless evil in the world. In contrast to the other characters in religious plays, devils distinguished themselves by excessive performances: loud shouting, laughing, and moaning; uncontrolled and fast motoric and proxemic movements like jumping, running, and limping across the open stage; obscene speech and behaviour; grotesque gestures and verbal expressions; and elaborate costumes resulting in a high level of disguise. Devils dance gleefully at every opportunity; try to harm Jesus and his followers; and recruit as many sinful souls as they can. At the same time, their efforts are mostly fruitless: they fail to realise their common goals; they fight and mock each other; they do not listen to the commands of their leader Lucifer; and, thereby, they display the deficiencies of the hellish order.

The Ambivalences of Medieval Religious Drama: so reads the English title of Rainer Warning's 1974 book *Funktion und Struktur. Die Ambivalenzen des Geistlichen Spiels*. This title also suggests the ambivalence of the devil's role in religious late medieval plays—the ambivalence of fear and laughter, terror and relief, real danger and mere foolishness.[3] When German medievalists study the interpretation of late medieval plays, they must take Warning into consideration, as he was the first scholar to acknowledge a ritual layer in the religious play: he ascribed the strong opposition between God and the Devil in the dramatic structure of the medieval religious play to an archaic dualism that the kerygmatic liturgy had defined. He demonstrated, therefore, that the staging of Easter and Passion plays resulted in a monumental re-mythologisation of salvation history.

In Warning's theory, the Devil plays a much more significant role in drama than in liturgy or in liturgical plays. As an anthropological antagonist to God,

3 Rainer Warning, *The Ambivalences of Medieval Religious Drama*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 102 ff.

he is also the impersonation of terror, a fact that had a strong impact on audiences but could be overcome by ritual laughter at a finally defeated enemy: the figure of the risible devil not only exposes his groundless claim for power, but also addresses the pagan fear of demons, which had been excluded by Christian ideology but was still present in folkloristic belief. Warning supported this argument with the 'Harrowing of Hell', which almost every Easter and Passion play contains: the risen Jesus descends to Hell, breaks open its gates (*tollite portas*), chains Lucifer, and frees the Old Patriarchs. Lucifer and his devils restock Hell by collecting damned souls. The canonical gospels mention none of these episodes. The 'Harrowing of Hell' was taken from the Gospel of Nicodemus, one of several early Christian gospels that medieval clerics who knew Latin read for information about Christ's life, and that scholars later dropped from the canon as apocryphal. In the 'Harrowing of Hell', which he classifies as a 'staged ritual', Warning sees a gateway to other comical scenes in which devils participate, such as the collecting of souls.

The question remains: Why does the Devil become such a ridiculous figure, if he is meant to be the antagonist of God? Warning himself speaks of a discrepancy between the represented powerlessness and factual omnipotence of the Devil. The problem of coping with evil in relation to laughter has been resolved (or left unresolved) in a variety of ways. Warning himself judges laughter at the Devil as a ritual expression of an archaic Easter joy, that is provoked by the defeat of the old by the new. Laughter thus arises not so much from the Devil's powerlessness, but as a response to the overcoming of his power. The Devil's fruitless efforts to fill up hell by collecting souls can be seen (in Warning) as an answer to the *descensus*—laughter as an answer to a situation that is otherwise unmanageable. The Devil must be simultaneously powerful and ridiculous or he cannot be ritually defeated.

Friedrich Ohly has vehemently rejected Warning's thesis, pointing to the Christian roots of the Easter play.[4] The Devil was always present in medieval theology, Ohly reminds us, and it would be false to remove him from an archetypical ritual context. Ohly, however, says little about the ambivalence of fear and ridicule, so questions still remain: Why was staging the Devil in religious urban plays so attractive to directors and to urban theatre performance organisers? Does the Devil fail at his goals and become ludicrous for his exemplary

4 Friedrich Ohly, 'Rainer Warning: Funktion und Struktur', in *Romanische Forschungen*, 91 (1979), pp. 111–41. See also Walter Haug, 'Rainer Warning, Friedrich Ohly und die Wiederkehr des Bösen im geistlichen Schauspiel des Mittelalters', in *Ritual und Inszenierung: Geistliches und weltliches Drama des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Hans-Joachim Ziegeler (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004), pp. 361–74.

superbia, as Klaus Ridder states?[5] Can laughter alone lead to redemption, as Peter Berger holds, or can laughter, as an exorcising ritual process, make the Devil's defeat come true, as Bruno Quast suggests?[6]

In the following analysis, I focus less on the symbolic or structural analysis of devil characters in religious and secular plays, in favour of inquiring instead into their performance: their physical behaviour; their relation to the audience; their permeability, all of which I explore from different perspectives and in different theatrical contexts, including Shrovetide and Neidhart plays as well as carnival performances. What was the impact of devils on the audience? What functions and effects did their staging have in the eyes of late medieval playwrights and directors? What kind of laughter did devil performances generate? These are some of the questions to which I would like to briefly sketch answers, beginning with examples from two significant religious plays from the sixteenth century: the three-day Alsfeld Passion play (performed in 1501, 1511, and 1517) and the 1583 Lucern play of the Last Judgement.

2 Religious Plays

My first example is from the Alsfeld Passion play. With 8,095 lines, many incipits of German and Latin songs, and plenty of stage directions this was one of the longest and most complex plays in German religious theatre. Like every large-scale medieval drama it was performed on an open stage (*Simultanbühne*), which enabled the director to present actions simultaneously on the different parts of the stage and scaffolds. In Easter and Passion plays, simultaneous staging highlighted a powerful contrast between antagonistic forces and between the sacred and the profane. The mansion at the mouth of hell—the gaping jaws of a monster dragon belching smoke and emitting an infernal racket—is to be found, in virtually all religious plays, standing opposite the elevated mansion of heaven erected in the East. The Alsfeld Passion play of 1501 reveals some details that permit us to reconstruct the fairly simple set for hell, which had a door that could be locked firmly with bolts—bolts that Jesus breaks open when harrowing hell and fettering Luciper. The set must also have contained at least one window, since Luciper at one point looks outside.

5 Klaus Ridder, 'Erlösendes Lachen: Götterkomik, Teufelskomik, Endzeitkomik', in *Ritual und Inszenierung*, ed. by Ziegeler, pp. 195–206.

6 Bruno Quast, *Vom Kult zur Kunst. Öffnungen des rituellen Textes in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Francke, 2004), pp. 124–139.

From the beginning of the text, it is clear that the devils did not limit themselves to the space of their mansion, but that instead they took over the whole stage, right up to its margins, where they were used as a sort of theatre police. In his prologue, the Proclamator threatens any potential disturbers of the play as follows:

> ich wyl uch vorkundigen eyn gebott, das der her schultheys thut: wer da betredden wirt in dissem kreyß, er sij Heyncz adder Concz adder wie er heyß, der do nit gehoret in dit spiel, (vor war ich uch das sagen wel!) der muß syn bußе groiplich entphan: mit den tufeln muß er yn die helle gan! ungefug sal nymmant hie triben, wel hie anders yn der herren holde bliben!
>
> I wish to make known a proclamation from the mayor: whoever would enter into this circle be he Heinz or Kunz or whatever his name, who does not belong in this play, (I tell you this in truth!) will be severely punished: with the devils he will have to go to hell! No one can behave raucously here and remain in favour with the city council![7]

The threat that anyone setting foot on the stage would be seized by devils and dragged into hell puts sinner characters within the plot and transgressors of theatre rules during the performance on the same level: here the play and social order overlap, almost merging with each other. Hans-Jürgen Linke sees this admonition as a response to audience behaviour:[8] The organisers of the play wanted to ensure that the audience follows the plot, attending to it with the necessary religious seriousness rather than talking, shouting, or laughing. The danger of loud, disruptive expressions of fear, joy, and astonishment was real, especially when we imagine some six to eight thousand spectators packed into the Alsfeld marketplace. In fact, similar threats and admonitions appear very often in religious play texts. Audience members were not to laugh in cases where actors mispronounced or forgot their lines, or moved in the wrong way. Such incidents could easily leap over the thin border between performance

7 *The Alsfeld Passion Play* (1501), ed., trans., and introd. by Larry E. West (Lewiston: Mellen, 1997), l. 109–18.

8 Hans-Jürgen Linke, 'Sozialisation und Vergesellschaftung im mittelalterlichen Drama und Theater', in *Das Theater des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit als Ort und Medium sozialer und symbolischer Kommunikation*, ed. by Christel Meier, Heinz Meyer, and Claudia Spanily (Münster: Rhema, 2004), pp. 63–93 (p. 83).

and reality, and have actual social consequences, as stated by the Praecursor in the Tyrolian Ascension and Pentecost play of 1517:

> Vnnd treibt daraus nit eur gespett So ainer jn reymen misseredt [...]
> Das ainer sein reim nit wol khann so hennckt jm der ain klämfle an.
>
> And do not mock yourself if someone fails to say his rhyme
> And if someone does so, do not make a rumour out of it.[9]

Here the dramatic action of the play exceeds its limits and becomes social action, commentary potentially turning into gossip the next day. In this example, instead of the dramatic character the actor—a real person who has made a mistake—becomes visible to the audience. Even if medieval theatre was not a theatre of illusion, interruptions like this one could distort the salvific space that the play was intended to establish.[10]

The Freiburg city council protocols state more than once that, during the play, no one should be mocked or ridiculed: 'To do everything with diligence, so that nobody be mocked' ('alle ding mit vleiß bestelt und versehen, damit man khein spott einlege').[11] Audience laughter and derisive talk, in other words, was viewed as a danger to the play's success. We can thus immediately grasp a differentiation in laughter types: ritual laughter about devil figures that focused on the action and derisive laughter at actors' mistakes and unexpected onstage incidents aimed more at the performance than at the salvific narrative.

What information is provided by the records concerning the actors who impersonated devils and, specifically, their social status and profession? Only in some cases do we have evidence to answer this question. For Alsfeld, we are lucky to have an almost complete register of the actors from the performances of 1511 and 1517. Approximately 177 roles can be identified, and when Dorothea Freise studied the city records she found some interesting facts concerning

9 *Tiroler Himmelfahrt- und Pfingstspiel* (*Tyrolian Ascension and Pentecost-Play*) (1517), in *Die geistlichen Spiele des Sterzinger Spielarchivs*, according to the manuscripts ed. by Walter Lipphardt and Hans-Gert Roloff (Bern: Lang, 1990), IV, pp. 257–300, 366–75, vv. 83–88.

10 See Glenn Ehrstine, 'Präsenzverwaltung: Die Regulierung des Spielrahmens durch den Proklamator und andere expositores ludi', in *Transformationen des Religiösen: Performativität und Textualität im geistlichen Spiel*, ed. by Ingrid Kasten and Erika Fischer-Lichte (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 63–79.

11 Excerpt from the council protocols of the city of Freiburg, cit. from Johannes Janota, 'Repraesentatio peccatorum: Zu Absicht und Wirkung der spätmittelalterlichen Passionsspielaufführungen', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 137 (2008), pp. 439–70 (p. 449).

devil's roles.[12] Surprisingly, they were played by men of every age and of every social status. Four of the devil-playing actors were in fact among the most venerated citizens of Alsfeld: Jost Spede, Wigant Thuchscherer, Frebinus Erart, and Jost Snider. The only social group that did not take devil roles was the clergy. The organisers tried to prevent identifications between actor and role, when they attributed some of the central characters of the evil to laymen whose religious engagement was beyond any doubt.

Returning now to the beginning of the play, we may note that, in visual support of the Proclamator's warning not to be disruptive, the first figure appearing on stage was Luciper. He was directed to climb up onto his barrel and to call for his devils, who then flocked to him from all over the stage: 'And then all the devils stand in circle around the barrel, singing and chanting' ('Et tunc omnes dyaboli circeunt doleum corisando et cantando').[13]

This staged image of the omnipresence of evil as hidden yet everywhere, as well as the devils' noisy appearance, strengthens the Proclamator's initial warning—fear is thus instituted as the play's main emotion via dramaturgic audio-visuals: sight, sound, and movement. At the outset of the play, indeed, two kinds of fear come together: the fear of being thrown into the staged mouth of hell set (in the case of audience members trespassing onto the stage) and the parallel religious fear of being thrown into very real hell (by failing, in their real-world lives, to achieve salvation). Both kinds of fear would have been provoked by the audience's perception of the gruesome, loud, and fierce-looking devils who populated the stage.[14] But soon this fear was to vanish, replaced by relief: the next scene shows Sathanas (Satan) disguising himself as an old woman in order to approach Herodias in an attempt to convince her husband to have John the Baptist beheaded. This may well have set up a special tension between the two characters—possibly causing the audience to snicker—since Herodias was played by a male actor dressed as a woman.

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12 Dorothea Freise, *Geistliche Spiele in der Stadt des ausgehenden Mittelalters: Frankfurt—Friedberg—Alsfeld* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), pp. 322–27.

13 *The Alsfeld Passion Play*, ed. by Larry West, after v. 137.

14 Röcke points to the violence as a central issue of the hellish order: Werner Röcke, 'Höllengelächter und Verlachen des Teufels: Inversionen von Lach- und Gewaltgemeinschaften im geistlichen Spiel des Spätmittelalters', in *Gewaltgenuss, Zorn und Gelächter: Die emotionale Seite der Gewalt in Literatur und Historiographie des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Claudia Ansorge et al. (Göttingen: V&R, 2015), pp. 130–62.

> Luciper respondit: Synt du es dan, Sathan, wylt bestan, ßo nym und hencke den mantel an und winge das duch um dyn heubt: die frawe dir destu baß gleubet!
>
> Luciper answers: Satan, since you will take this upon yourself, take the cape and put it on, and wind the cloth around your head; in this way the woman will believe you better!
>
> Et porrigit sibi pallium cum pepulo, et Sathanas recipit et induit dicens:
>
> And he offers his cloak and robe, and Satan takes them and puts them on saying:
>
> Herre, her, ßo ziege ich an die wat: laß sehen, wie woln sie mer dan stad!
>
> My lord, I put on the garment thusly Let's see how it looks on me![15]

At this point in the action, the smaller devils put the dress on Satan and mock him for his feminine looks, saying 'he just looks like a wicked woman!',[16] and he begins to dance towards the court of Herod while the other devils run to the mouth of hell.

Satan may well have caused smiling and laughter in the audience for his worldly modes and 'secret' goals—which would have been made transparent to the spectators. The laughter here may have been ritual, but it is more likely to have come from specific comedic action: on the one hand, from the farcical disguise; on the other, from the staging of different knowledge between audience and character—a 'split situation' in which the audience already knows Satan's plans whereas the characters on stage do not.[17] A similar humorous motivation for laughter can be seen in the way the devils made themselves

15 *The Alsfeld Passion Play*, ed. by Larry West, vv. 686–91.

16 Ibid., vv. 694.

17 The term 'split situation' ('Situationsspaltung') was coined by Konrad Ehlich to illustrate the interference of two different communicative situations, one inside the text, and one outside. See Konrad Ehlich, 'Text und sprachliches Handeln: Die Entstehung von Texten aus dem Bedürfnis nach Überlieferung', in *Schrift und Gedächtnis: Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation*, ed. Aleida Assmann, Jan Assman, and Christof Hardmeier (Munich: Fink, 1983), pp. 24–43.

appear ridiculous when dealing with sinners of different social classes.[18] As we have seen, fear and laughter are not usually simultaneous emotions, but they appear syntagmatically separated and alternate with each other throughout the performance. Furthermore, not all occasions for laughter are located in a 'ritual' context of good and evil; instead, they respond to ancient theatrical, carnivalesque, and even literary means such as disguise, cross-dressing, and the 'split situation'.

If we turn for a moment from Alsfeld to another local theatre tradition, namely that of Lucerne in Switzerland, we can learn more about the physical appearance of devils on stage. Traditionally, devil characters displayed hybrid elements like horns, tails, and hoofs; were mostly black or wore black cloth; and had a devil's mask. In sixteenth-century Lucerne, Protestant directors like Renward Cysat and Zacharias Bletz stressed the more human traits of the devil, ignoring both the beast traits and the mask. For his extensive 1583 Passion play (over 12,000 lines and more than 300 roles in a performance lasting 24 hours), Cysat left us copious notes as to the kinds of features he was looking for in the actors he wished to engage. Lucifer was to be a proud and fierce-looking man, and his devils were to be physically strong men who were able to leap about in spectacular ways.[19] The Lucerne hell was in a small alley next to the wine market where the stage was located, in which devils hid, only to rush out into the market at a signal. According to the stage directions, Satan was fettered with a long chain and when, on the second day, he was freed by the Salvator, he jumped all around the stage like the others. In Lucerne, therefore, the performative aspect of the devil characters becomes evident: they led away and imprisoned souls amidst loud shouting and singing, leaping and jumping, and a series of demoniac goings-on: 'dann hywlent die tüffel, hand ein seltzams springen', the devils howled and jumped around in strange ways.[20]

The best record we have from an eyewitness is a report by Angelo Rizio, the Italian legate of Emperor Charles V, who was present at a performance of the Lucerne play of the Last Judgment (Easter 1549):

18 This also occurs in the lengthy play of catching souls (Seelenfangspiel) in *Das Redentiner Osterspiel: Mittelniederdeutsch / Neuhochdeutsch* (1464), ed. by Brigitta Schottmann (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), vv. 1044–2025.

19 M. Blakemore Evans, *Das Osterspiel von Luzern: Eine historisch-kritische Einleitung*, trans. by Paul Hagmann (Bern: Theaterkultur-Verlag, 1961), p. 92.

20 Renward Brandstetter, 'Die Technik der Luterners Heiligenspiele: II. Das Spiel von 1549', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 72 (1886), pp. 383–418 (pp. 404–05).

> Li dannati furno condutti all'Inferno da tutti li diavoli circundati con una grossa catena di ferro, et in quello atto fu fatto uno grande applauso per detti diavoli, et nell'Inferno uno strepito grandissimo con fochi diversi et tiri d'artiglieria che pareva volesse minare il mondo.
>
> The devils belted the damned with a thick iron chain and led [them] to hell. At seeing this, the surrounding audience cheered loudly at the devils. But in hell there was a terrific noise coming from fires and gun salutes so that it seemed the world would break into pieces.[21]

This may be a late example of ritual laughter if we assume that, together with applause for the devils' chaining and deporting of the damned into hell, there was also loud, joyful laughter from the audience. Still, there remains a doubt: what if such a response were mere Schadenfreude—the people's malicious enjoyment of even princes, bishops, and kings being forced to follow wild devils to eternal damnation?

The Lucerne records here confirm a tendency that we can observe over the course of the entire sixteenth century: a continuous process of both theatricalisation (in the sense of role-awareness) and entertainment of the devil character. The Devil himself still caused fear and apprehension, but as the century wore on and comic effects increased among the rioting groups of devils on stage, these came to lose their status as a ritualised threat and instead became more and more entertaining.[22] Moreover, the assignment of other tasks to devil characters—leading souls into hell in the play mirrored devils' real roles as police-like representatives of the urban authority that sought to secure and maintain orderly performances—transformed performative action into social action. Devil characters thus left the frame of salvation to carry the ambivalence of terror and laughter into urban social spaces. This process can also be

21 Angelo Rizio, account in Italian, in Leonhard Haas, 'Über geistliche Spiele in der Innerschweiz', *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte*, 47 (1953), pp. 113–22 (p. 120).

22 Ursula Schulze proposes that the ritual character of religious plays underwent a process of dissolution in the sixteenth century. She gives two reasons: first, a questioning of the salvation effect among audience members, and second, a resulting change in patterns of behaviour during performances—that is, a lack of the necessary receptive attitude: 'das Publikum die ihm zugewiesene Rolle nicht mitspielt, sodass die erforderliche verinnerlichende Rezeption ausbleibt.' Ursula Schulze, 'Formen der *Repraesentatio* im Geistlichen Spiel', in *Mittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit: Übergänge, Umbrüche und Neuansätze*, ed. Walter Haug (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), pp. 312–56 (p. 356).

traced in the secular tradition in, for instance, Neidhart and Shrovetide plays, which I will address next.

3 Devil Characters in Secular Plays

In this section, I will look briefly at the contemporary secular tradition, where we can observe a similar transformation and gradual dissolution of the traditional devil character. Many Shrovetide and some Neidhart plays use material from religious drama and deploy *contrafacta* of devil scenes in their performative structure. I will present three short examples.

In the *Großes Neidhartspiel* (Tyrolia, *c.* 1490), a play which depicts the antagonistic relationship between the knight Neidhart and his peasant enemies, devils have lost much of their power to arouse anxiety because they are equated to the latter. The devil scene is not here introduced by a 'Harrowing of Hell', but by a 'confession farce' in which one peasant confesses, on behalf of all the peasants, his hatred for Neidhart, who appears on stage as a priest in disguise. Neidhart-as-priest makes the peasants drunk, cuts their hair into tonsures, and makes them believe that they are monks. After three days—an allusion, of course, to Jesus's three days in the tomb—they rise from their drunken stupor and think they are in hell. Scholars have assumed that, in order to aid this (false) perception, a mouth of hell set was erected on stage, just like in the religious plays. But instead of being captured by the devils, the peasant-monks drag them into a conflict with the knights. The peasants and devils then start to dance with one another and their dances—which until then had had a syntagmatic framing function between the pranks—seem to have completely overtaken the stage. Indeed, the peasants, who have peg-legs (Neidhart had earlier chopped off their left legs as a punishment), become in this dance very like the devils, who have hooves. The scene has been interpreted as a diabolical dance that would have occurred during the arrival of the sin-laden peasants in front of the mouth of hell. Satan had collected the peasants' legs and is keeping them as collateral for the peasants' souls.[23] According to Cora Dietl, the peasants have sinned by being envious ('neidisch') of Neidhart and by arguing with an 'envy devil' ('Neidteufel') among them. Dietl holds that, because of its allusions to the motifs and patterns of religious plays, the Neidhart play enabled

23 Cora Dietl, 'Tanz und Teufel in der Neidharttradition: "Neidhart Fuchs" und "Großes Neidhartspiel"', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 125 (2006), pp. 390–414 (p. 407).

audiences to merge into a community of believers that saw the peasants on stage as part of the diabolical community (in an Augustinian sense).[24]

But Dietl overlooks the fact that analogies to the Easter plays are here inverted and transformed into parody: there is no salvation for the audience, as members of both groups—devils and peasants—have become completely grotesque figures, thrashing and cursing at each other. The devils have lost their power because they no longer act as representatives of a transcendent evil. Stage action that is almost nonsensical and completely in the service of the audience's amusement annihilates symbolic meaning. The Neidhart play, which has urban roots and follows an urban ideology, stages the fight between knights and peasants as outdated and depicts its senselessness, making it a matter deserving of laughter. I do not therefore agree that the devils' dance represents their diabolical nature. The performative aspect of the dance makes it ridiculous, and the devils work as instigators of the even more ridiculous peasants. The occasion for laughter here comes from bodies on the stage, not at all from the ritual of salvation. It is their motoric hyperagility which makes these characters ridiculous: rushing and running around had long been the way ludicrous figures like servants and devils moved on stage, and the peasants' and devils' one-legged dance makes it all hypertrophic—a performative example of Mikhail Bachtin's model of the grotesque body, which is a source of laughter and ridicule.[25]

The Nuremberg Fastnachtspiel 'Keller 56', a mid-fifteenth-century Shrovetide play, begins as follows: 'Here starts a play of three evil women who stole cattle from hell' ('Hier gebt sich ain spil an von dreien pösen weiben, die nehmen das vich vor der helle').[26] Three ugly old women get drunk at an inn where they learn that a herdsman and his cattle went to hell to try to convince the devils to buy the innkeeper's wine. The women, who have boasted about their reluctance to pay the conjugal debt to their husbands, sneak off without paying and decide to play a prank by stealing the herdsman's cattle. Lucifer,

24 Dietl generally asserts the theological function of dancing in religious plays: 'Dancing Devils and Singing Angels: The Disparate Qualities of Dances in Hessian Religious Plays', *European Medieval Drama*, 14 (2010), pp. 25–45.

25 See Hans Rudolf Velten, 'Grotesker und komischer Körper: Für ein performatives Körperkonzept', in *Der komische Körper. Szenen—Figuren—Formen*, ed. by Eva Erdmann (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2003), pp. 145–53 (p. 152).

26 *Fastnachtsspiele aus dem 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Adelbert von Keller, 4 vols (Stuttgart: Bibl.d.litt. Vereins, 1853–1858; repr. Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchg., 1965–1966), I, no. 56, pp. 483–96 (p. 483); subsequent references to this play in the text and notes are to 'K 56'. See also Ute von Bloh, 'Vor der Hölle: Fastnachtspiel (Keller 56)—Osterspiel—Emmausspiel', in *Ritual und Inszenierung*, ed. by Ziegeler, pp. 233–46.

who has befriended the herdsman, sends his devilish assistants to get the cattle back, but the women escape with the herd, and Lucifer's devils come back to hell empty-handed.

Here we have carnivalesque inversions of all sorts: the women break the rules of marriage and of the household hierarchy by turning their husbands into cuckolds; in fact, they behave like bad husbands themselves by drinking, swearing, and stealing, yet calling themselves 'three strong heroes' ('starker helden drei').[27] The devils in the play are not gruesome and terrible at all; instead, they are ridiculous in their kind-hearted friendliness. In the end, Harlire, one of the women, announces that even the Devil is inferior to 'the old evil women' ('alten pösen weiben').[28] What the devil could not manage they would bring about by 'working magic and cooing' ('zaubern und auch kosen') and by 'lying, deceiving, and swearing' ('liegen triegen und swern').[29] In a word, the women's abilities are more powerful and devastating than those of the empty-handed devils.

This text is organised in dialogue with elements from religious plays; it provides almost demonic *contrafacta* to the *visitatio* and *descensus* scenes of the Easter and Passion plays:[30] the three women represent the three holy Marys in the Mercator scene, which is a central catalyst for laughter in many Easter plays; the rape of the cattle refers to the liberation of the righteous from hell; and the devils' inability to bring back the cattle parodies and inverts their power to refill hell with sinful people. This Shrovetide play takes the devil plays as a matrix from which to create a parodistic assemblage that reduces devil characters to ridiculousness, as von Bloh has stated.[31] A salient example is the Innsbruck Easter play, in which Lucifer mourns an attack on his reign with furious cries: 'Fellows, dear fellows, we have lost all our souls' ('Gesellen, liben geselen alle, [...] wir haben dy selen vorlorn'), summoning them in order to collect new souls.[32] In K 56, similar lines read:

27 K 56, p. 490, l. 31.

28 K 56, p. 495, l. 35.

29 K 56, p. 494, ll. 6–8.

30 Henning Brinkmann, 'Die Eigenform des mittelalterlichen Dramas in Deutschland', in *Studien zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, IV (Düsseldorf, 1966), pp. 193–231 (p. 209).

31 Ute von Bloh, p. 342.

32 *Das Innsbrucker Osterspiel: Das Osterspiel von Muri*, ed. by Rudolf Meier (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980), vv. 362–70.

> Luciper rüeft die andern teuflen aus der helle und spricht: Wol her, wol her aus der helle, Allen mein lieben gesellen [. . .] Wir haben unsern vich gar verlorn Von dreien pösen weiben. Das sült ir all her wider treiben
>
> Come to me, come to me from hell, my dear fellows, we have lost all our cattle to three evil women, you must drive them back.[33]

In K 56, the theological program of the religious play is devalued by parody. The devils are no longer able to represent evil, being themselves too weak and sinful: they have become 'poor devils' and their powerlessness is total. Evil, here, has shifted onto the sly characters of the three old women—it has become human and subjective. Thus, Harlire can close the play by saying, in a disconcerting analogy to Jesus: 'O dear people, now look what great fun we old women have. The devil cannot resist against us' ('O lieben leut, nun secht an,/ Was großer lust wir alte weib han. / Der teufel mag uns nit wider streben').[34]

The carnival play does not promise salvation to its audience. Rather, it plays intertextually with this kind of promise, excelling it on a fictional level. The play requires its audience members to agree to a theatrical 'as if' contract that they can easily decode, rather than to participate in a ritual from which they cannot take any distance. Thus the carnival play suspends the symbolic power of the Easter plays, destroying their seriousness and reducing the terror the Devil is able to incite. The derisive laughter that this play arouses is not at all ritualised. On the contrary, it mocks ritual with the help of both profanation and familiarisation. The devils of the Neidhart and Shrovetide plays have nothing to do with the devils of the religious plays, which can be characterised by their 'real presence' ('Realpräsenz');[35] they are instead theatrical figures who have lost their ritual power. If this is so, it may be that devils in religious plays could also be perceived as such, a consideration that might shed light on the different kinds of laughter we saw above. Next to the fear-banning laughter for salvation there was laughter for comical causes (physical performances, 'split situation', carnival inversions) provoked by fictitious theatre figures who were played by locally known people. At the very least, carnival plays show that there was a consciousness of the fictional and of the theatrical in the staging of

33 K 56, p. 492, ll. 7–9.

34 K 56, p. 494, l. 34; p. 495, ll. 1–2.

35 The term 'Realpräsenz' is used to illustrate the belief in the real presence of biblical characters on stage in an eschatological sense. See Jan-Dirk Müller, 'Realpräsenz und Repräsentation: Reale Frömmigkeit und Geistliches Spiel', in *Ritual und Inszenierung*, ed. by Ziegeler, pp. 113–33.

characters that is responsible for these plays' increasing autonomy from ritual functions.[36] By loosening the tight relationship of fear with evil, devil characters in the carnival plays become variables that increasingly leave the performance spaces to penetrate the secular context of everyday life.

4 Devils, Devil Costumes, and Devil Masks in Urban Records of Carnival Rituals

Theatre performances communicate with their audiences not only during the play, but also before and after. Were there mediating practices that modulated the relationship between what happened on and off stage?[37] To conclude this essay, I will focus on devil costumes and masks that appeared off stage. Quite often, during carnival, there was an abuse of the devil's role and outfit, that resulted in mischief being made in public city spaces. Devil clothes, in particular, were much sought after goods—they were especially used during carnival mummeries, as mentioned in several council protocols, for instance in Freiburg (1566):

> Es ist erkhanndt, die personen, so in den kleidern, die man im passion geprauchte, inn mumeri und butzenweise diese vaßnacht geloffen seindt etc., gefengklich inzelegen und zustrafen. Und uffs kunfftig jar die mumerey, butzen- und narrenweise ze lauffen getzlich abzestellen und zu verpieten.
>
> It is known that the persons who, this Shrovetide, ran about in clothes that are normally used in the Passion play in order to mummer and disguise themselves, should be seized and jailed, and punished.[38]

More than a hundred years earlier, the city council of Basel had imposed a ban on running around in churches and in the city wearing devil masks and

36 The idea of 'literary' Shrovetide plays that take some distance from carnivalesque ritual dates back to Catholy: Eckehard Catholy, *Das Fastnachtspiel des Spätmittelalters: Gestalt und Funktion*, (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1961), pp. 354 ff.

37 This is the question asked in Christopher Balme, *The Theatrical Public Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 47.

38 Cit. from *Geistliches Schauspiel im Zeugnis der Zeit. Zur Aufführung mittelalterlicher religiöser Dramen im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, ed. by Bernd Neumann, I (München: Artemis, 1987), p. 346 (Freiburg im Breisgau; no. 1613).

disguises: between 1420 and 1447, they imposed this ban at least five times.[39] In Lucerne, from 1412 on there were several council bans on 'wild fool's activities' ('wildes gougkelwäsen').[40] Anyone appearing in the streets or in churches wearing a devil costume had to pay a severe penalty. As noted above, we know something about Lucerne devil disguises: they were made of fur, horns, cow tails, and animal teeth. The protocol of the general gathering that prepared the plays held in the wine market mentions the various uses for costumes. The Lutheran historian Cyriacus Spangenberg reports, in his Mansfeld chronicle (1590–1600), a disaster involving a 1488 Easter play produced in Hettstedt, another town in Thuringia, in the marketplace. Because the Hettstedt town council had punished an unnamed townswoman, she encouraged her sons to get even. Playing devils in the 1488 Easter play, Spangenberg reports, enabled them to run wildly through the streets and to set the whole town on fire.[41]

In 1566, in the Swiss town of Winterthur, devils set fire to their staged hell with gunpowder; the chronicler thanks God that nobody was seriously harmed. In 1527, in the town of Hof in Frankonia, the Catholic priest believed that, after the expulsion of the Protestant preacher, citizens were ready for a re-introduction of the sacred plays in order to re-establish the Catholic faith. When the play started with the 'Harrowing of Hell' on Easter Sunday morning in front of St. Michael, some younger spectators in devil disguises threw burning rags at the priest.[42]

In the town of Nördlingen in Thuringia, there were two incidents around the annual Corpus Christi procession. In 1502, a certain Leonhart Nesselhauf circulated in devil disguise, harassing 'women and virgins' ('frowen und iunckfrowen') with obscene words and gestures, for which he was jailed. In 1507, Daniel Frey 'went around in devil's clothes during the procession' ('hat in dem verganngen umbganng teufels klaider angehept und getragen'). Here the transgression seems to be the same: bothering and molesting women with inappropriate vocabulary.[43]

Why all these abuses of devil costumes and masks? What advantage did transgressors gain from wearing them? To think that it was just for fun or that it was simply a carnivalesque type of joking would not be sufficient and would

39 Neumann, p. 124 (Basel 1420; no. 43).

40 Heidy Greco-Kaufmann, *Zuo der Eere Gottes, vfferbuwung dess mentschen vnd der statt Lucern lob: Theater und szenische Vorgänge in der Stadt Luzern im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Zürich: Chronos, 2009), pp. 195–96.

41 Neumann, p. 405 (Hettstedt 1488, no. 1947).

42 Ibid., p. 407 (Hof 1527; no. 1951).

43 Ibid., p. 602 (Nordhausen 1502; no. 2331; Nordhausen 1507; no. 2332).

hardly have had provoked such severe reactions from city rulers. Motives must have been both general and specific: general causes could well have been founded in medieval charivari culture: young men (women are never mentioned) disguised as devils participated in ritual group actions including begging (*heischen*), punishment, and harassment within the framework of local carnivalesque justice.[44] Youths even went into houses to demand food and drinks, and would not depart before getting what they wanted. In this context there was occasion to abuse the rituals, particularly when they were used for private acts of revenge.

The devil's mask could thus lead its wearers from theatrical to real criminal action. The Lucerne council protocols report several cases of violent and harmful intrusions into private homes, and in 1412 a law was instituted that permitted the court to cite those people who were masked and mummered, insisting that they had to pay for what they destroyed. According to this law, devils in disguise were without rights.[45] In 1396, three men (Uli Lütishofen, Hans Kramer, and Peter Scherer) entered, 'in devil's disguise' ('tüfels wise'), the house of Werner Keller's wife. They beat on her boards and closets with clubs and said that she had hidden to her husband that he lain with her 'as a child' ('kints lege'). This was probably a charivari—a publicly staged act of punishment in which a group of men in carnival clothes turned against someone (in this case a woman) who was believed to have bent or broken certain ritually instituted rules of moral behaviour (in this case marrying a man much younger than her). The goal of the three men was the public mocking and shaming of the rule-breaker. In this case, we can assume that the men made 'hellish noise and chaos' with their clubs, that they destroyed household objects, and that they menaced the woman.[46] They likely wanted not only to scare the woman, but also to show that the Devil himself was called by these kinds of transgressions against normative public morality. The men thus made an example of this particular couple: by punishing a socially inappropriate marriage, they warned all women or widows against doing the same.

There is no record of whether these men were seized and punished or not. The whole event may have been tolerated by the authorities, given the mocking and farcical mode of the act, which could also have aroused aggressive laughter with bystanders or neighbours, as in mock rituals. Thus devil costumes allowed

44 The topic of carnivalesque ritual justice among youths is studied by Werner Röcke and Hans-Jürgen Bachorski, 'Verspielte Eh(r)e: Rügebräuche und "rites de passage" in Tanz- und Fastnachtsspielen des Mittelalters', *Paragrana*, 11.1 (2002), pp. 103–32.

45 Greco-Kaufmann, p. 198.

46 Ibid., p. 199.

individuals to play the role of the prankster outside the theatre.[47] Here we are very far from the representation of evil in religious drama, but close to the Alsfeld devils who keep the order, more or less playing the role of moral police, a behaviour that is mirrored by the stage devils who drag sinners to hell.

5 Conclusion

As I have shown, devils off stage took advantage of emotional patterns established within the theatrical medium from which they came: their well-known disguise and movements, their noise, and their visual appearance might almost literally 'scare the hell out of people' in places where there is no theatrical framework whatsoever. These devils' ambivalent staging of effects that shift between fear and laughter can thus be used in a variety of ritual enactments that both mock and punish, and that require an ambivalence between seriousness and humour.

What the devil figure has lost off stage is his symbolic value as the representative of evil, both in religious and in ritual perspective. Council records and carnival plays highlight the depowering of a devil's force: when, in secular plays, he is shown as akin to foolish peasants; when he appears as inferior to ugly old women, beaten both physically and intellectually; and when he becomes a laughing-stock who is no longer dangerous to anyone, there is no pagan fear of him left.

If we apply these results to the question of the function of devil characters in religious plays, neither Warning's ritual theory nor Ohly's thesis of the Devil as fierce antagonist of God completely convince, because neither take seriously into account the staging of the devils and because both consider laughter ontologically. In my view, we must distinguish several forms of laughter that correspond to different occasions for laughter: Warning's ritual laughter can be seen in cheering the Devil when he acts as a hellish janitor, while Ohly's and

47 Which, as we have already seen, could sometimes slip into criminal action, as the 1485 Bar-le-Duc case, reported by chronicler Philippe de Vigneulles, shows: 'There was performed in Bar-le-Duc a play in which there were several men playing the parts of devils. Amongst them, there was one who, in that get-up, wished to enjoy consortium with his wife. And she was putting him off and asking him what he was trying to do; and he responded: I wish, said he, to make the beast with two backs. And, hard as she tried to resist, she was forced to obey him.' Jody Enders, 'The Devil in the Flesh of Theater', in *Transformationen des Religiösen*, ed. by Kasten and Fischer-Lichte, pp. 127–38 (p. 128).

Berger's Christian redemptive laughter arises when paschal joy concludes the play and the Devil is overcome by Jesus in the 'Harrowing of Hell'.

But there are still other sorts of laughter that respond to the devils' performance, specifically their physical acting, their obscene speech, their intellectual and moral inferiority—in short, their farcical side, which will later be taken up by fool characters. This is a type of laughter that arises from a theatrical figure with a mirror function, created in theatre for a theatrical audience and based mostly on physical comedy. This type of laughter does not work off stage, as we have seen, but wanders to the carnival stage to which it lends its arsenal of scenes and pranks, transforming the fearsome devil into a poor devil. And there is yet another kind of laughter that is directed to the actors playing devil roles: like other actors, they commit mistakes of declamation and movement, but the danger of ridicule is high with devils. If this kind of laughter succeeds, the whole theological program is jeopardised. Most importantly, it reveals the audience's awareness of the theatrical staging, which is a kind of reception we usually do not ascribe to medieval plays. This point seems to me highly important in the context of studies that examine the constitution of the public sphere through dramatic strategies.

Urban performances of religious and secular plays in the medieval tradition became bigger and more spectacular events in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the two kinds of theatrical entertainment interacted with each other in manifold ways. But they also became central events of urban self-representation, exceeding the limits of sacred contemplation and the certainty of salvation by establishing autonomous frameworks of theatricality and special effects. When devil scenes in Easter and Passion plays lose their representational character, become more profane and spectacular, and permit the figure of the devil to penetrate into secular plays, laughter transgresses its redeeming and ritual functions, diversifying and shifting to become a looking-glass for group and individual conflicts in the urban community. Laughter at the devil can therefore be seen as a medium of moral reflection: it circulates among the theatrical space of the performance and different public spaces, be it in carnival mockery and begging practices or in criminal action that enforces private interests. In this circulation of laughter as a performative statement I see a first step towards the constitution of an urban sphere of communication. It is a negotiation of the construction of evil, which is still dominated by corporeality and presence, but which laughter impacts, allowing a reflection upon the dissolving borders of social spheres and a pluralisation of the meaning of symbolic figures.

CHAPTER 10

Imagining the Audience in Eighteenth-Century Folk Theatre in Tyrol

Toni Bernhart

One of the most active and vibrant folk theatre landscapes in Europe may be found in the historical County of Tyrol, which includes today's Bundesland of Tyrol in Austria as well as the two provinces of Südtirol/Bolzano and Trento in Italy. In Tyrol, folk theatre culture has been important and influential from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, in particular during the 1700s. There exists much research on the plays themselves, their themes, and their motifs; some useful editions have also been published.[1] There is, however, no research on folk theatre audiences, perhaps due to a decided lack of sources and the resulting need for a more complex reconstruction of the audiences' composition and expectations than can be undertaken for better documented types of theatre. This essay, therefore, employs sources that include both 'inscribed' and 'described' audience depictions in order to help us gain insight into the audience(s) of Tyrolean folk plays.[2] To more specifically define these terms: spectators are inscribed within dramatic texts themselves; audiences are described in reports and reviews on theatre performances as well as in books on the demography, economics, and culture of the region. Both kinds of sources will serve as the basis for my reconstruction of eighteenth-century folk theatre audiences in Tyrol.

1 August Hartmann and Hyacinth Abele, *Volksschauspiele: In Bayern und Österreich-Ungarn gesammelt von August Hartmann: Mit vielen Melodien, nach dem Volksmund aufgezeichnet von Hyacinth Abele* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1880; repr. 1972; Norbert Hölzl, *Theatergeschichte des östlichen Tirol vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, 2 vols (Wien: Böhlau, 1967); Ekkehard Schönwiese, *Das Volksschauspiel im nördlichen Tirol: Renaissance und Barock* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975); Ellen Hastaba, 'Das Volksschauspiel im Oberinntal' (doctoral thesis, University of Innsbruck, 1986); Johannes Ulrich von Federspiel, *Hirlanda: Durch falschheit zu feir verdamte unschuld: Edition des Legendenspiels nach der Laaser Handschrift von 1791*, ed. by Toni Bernhart (Wien: Folio, 1999).

2 See Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); *Rethinking the Media Audience: The New Agenda*, ed. by Pertti Alasuutari (London: Sage, 1999).

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Folk plays, in general, have been highly mystified, and research into the genre has been pressed into the service of various ideologies: the concept of the nation and of an autochthonous poetical genius (Johann Gottfried Herder); the idea of naïve poetry (Friedrich Schiller); the nationalistic, German-centric understanding of a 'pure' German literature that could act as a weapon against enemies and their cultural influences; the post-1950s notion of folk theatre as a means of empowering the peasant and working classes. All these are examples of how folk theatre has been used as a tool for the promotion of different ideological viewpoints.

The folk theatre audience, too, has been idealised from the beginning, a fact that is evident in two pictures from the first half of the nineteenth century. The earliest known depiction of a Tyrolean folk theatre audience appears in *Bauerntheater* (*Peasants' Theatre*, *c.* 1805) by Jakob Placidus Altmutter (1780–1819), who is famous for his folkloristic drawings and paintings of rural subjects.

FIGURE 7 *Jakob Placidus Altmutter*, Bauerntheater (Peasants' Theatre), *pen-and-wash drawing, 179 × 254 mm,* c. *1805, Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Grafische Sammlungen, TBar/1149.*

Altmutter's drawing clearly idealises—even romanticises—its subject, which includes both the scene on stage (presumably a Saint George play) and the audience. In a bright and cheerful setting, children, youths, adults, and elderly people—peasant and bourgeois, male and female—congregate to enjoy the play. The drawing provides interesting insights into details that seem typical of a folk theatre audience: the mixed classes, their orientation towards the magnetic action on stage, and the scene's impact on the audience.

FIGURE 8 *Adolph von Menzel,* Bauerntheater in Tirol (Peasants' Theatre in Tyrol), *oil on canvas, 375 × 550 mm, 1859, Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle, bpk, Elke Walford.*

A similarly romanticised, albeit darker toned depiction of a folk theatre audience is to be found in the painting *Bauerntheater in Tirol* (*Peasants' Theatre in Tyrol*, 1859) by the prominent German artist Adolph von Menzel (1815–1905). Here, instead, the image concentrates on the audience, explicitly excluding the theatrical scene the public has gathered to watch. This performance is located in a barn, while Altmutter places his out of doors.

What is a theatre audience? Who actually experienced eighteenth-century Tyrolean folk plays? Fundamental work on other historical audiences (by, for

instance, Alfred Harbage, Reinhard Urbach, Reiner Schmid, Jeremy Lopez, and Bettina Boecker)[3] agrees that knowledge about audiences must be regarded as a 'historical void' ('historische Leerstelle')[4] that can only be reconstructed through dramatic texts themselves and by considering specific socio-historical context. Audiences were inscribed and represented in the dramatic texts they witnessed in many ways: by direct appeals to the audience in the vernacular and with country-specific colouring;[5] in prologues often spoken by a character named Prologus;[6] and through *tableaux* that were meant to evoke the experience of holiness or fear.[7] These components are not specific to folk theatre audiences, but were common across many national dramatic traditions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Folk plays are a widespread but vaguely defined phenomenon that exist not only all over Europe but worldwide. Christopher Balme and Klaus Lazarowicz have noted that it seems hopeless to define folk theatre and the folk play, since both terms have different meanings in different linguistic and cultural contexts ('folk theatre', 'théâtre populaire', and 'Volksschauspiel', for instance, do not mean the same thing); the terms also tend to address different social classes in different periods (the peasant class in the countryside and the bourgeois in towns during the early modern period; the working classes during the twentieth century).[8] According to Herta-Elisabeth Renk, the 'folk play' genre

3 Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941); Reinhard Urbach, *Die Wiener Komödie und ihr Publikum. Stranitzky und die Folgen* (Wien: Jugend & Volk, 1973); Rainer H. Schmid, *Raum, Zeit und Publikum des geistlichen Spiels: Aussage und Absicht eines mittelalterlichen Massenmediums* (München: tuduv Verlagsgesellschaft, 1975); Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Bettina Boecker, *Shakespeares elisabethanisches Publikum: Formen und Funktionen einer Fiktion der Shakespearekritik und -forschung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2006).

4 Boecker, p. 4. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

5 Schmid, pp. 184–95.

6 See Stefan Tilg, *Die Hl. Katharina von Alexandria auf der Jesuitenbühne: Drei Innsbrucker Dramen aus den Jahren 1576, 1577 und 1606* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2005), p. 421.

7 See Albrecht Schöne, *Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock*, 2nd edn (München: Beck, 1968), p. 13.

8 Klaus Lazarowicz and Christopher Balme, *Texte zur Theorie des Theater* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2012), p. 571. See also Jean-Marie Valentin, 'Theatralische Paradigmen und Konventionen im österreichischen Volkstheater (Anfang des 18.—Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts): Eine provisorische Bilanz', in *Das österreichische Volkstheater im europäischen Zusammenhang 1830–1880: Akten des vom Centre de Recherches Germaniques* (*R.C.P. 666, Paris, des Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*) *veranstalteten Kolloquiums, Dezember 1984*, ed. by Jean-Marie Valentin (Berne: Peter Lang, 1988), pp. 5–12 (pp. 6–7).

also lacks any definable literary history.[9] Jürgen Hein, one of the leading scholars in German folk theatre research, points out that the folk play concept has only been applied to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century dramatic texts from the nineteenth century.[10]

Despite the looseness of the genre, it can be said that the concept of a 'folk' play originated in Germany. The idea of folk poetry, which was related to the idea of the nation from the very first, was introduced and promoted by Johann Gottfried Herder in his *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (*Of German Character and Art*, 1773).[11] Gottfried August Bürger was one of the first to promote Herder's ideas in his *Aus Daniel Wunderlichs Buch* (*From Daniel Wunderlich's Book*, 1776) and *Von der Popularität der Poesie* (*On the Popularity of Poetry*, 1784).[12]

Within the context of this essay, I define the 'folk play' as a dramatic text that has four main characteristics. It is:

1. Available exclusively in manuscript form;
2. Written in the vernacular—or, more precisely, in the local German dialect;
3. Performed by amateurs who were members of the same classes as the audience;
4. Performed predominantly during the eighteenth century.

The folk plays referred to here, therefore, were not printed as books during the eighteenth century. Since they circulated only in manuscript form, they represent a unique phenomenon within a culture that had had the printed book as a primary form of media for centuries. In this respect, folk plays

9 Herta-Elisabeth Renk, 'Volksstück', in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur. Begründet von Günther und Irmgard Schweikle*, ed. by Dieter Burdorf, Christoph Fasbender, and Burkhard Moennighoff, 3rd edn (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), pp. 815–16 (p. 815).

10 Hugo Aust, Peter Haida, and Jürgen Hein, *Volksstück: Vom Hanswurstspiel zum sozialen Drama der Gegenwart* (München: Beck, 1989).

11 Herder's treatise consists of three parts: part 1, *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (*Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*); part 2, *Shakespear*; and part 3, *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittleren englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst*. Part 3 has been translated into English as Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Shakespeare*, ed. and trans. by Gregory Moore (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

12 Gottfried August Bürger, 'Aus Daniel Wunderlichs Buch', in *Bürgers Werke in einem Band*, ed. by Lore Kaim-Kloock and Siegfried Streller, 4th edn (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1973), pp. 313–25; Gottfried August Bürger, 'Von der Popularität der Poesie', in *Bürgers Werke in einem Band*, ed. by Kaim-Kloock and Streller, pp. 335–41.

functioned as 'low culture' mass media that ran parallel to 'high culture' canonical literature. Folk play manuscripts, as well as other printed materials, were accessible to quite a small circle of people—only those who were able to read—and almost all residents of the rural area of Tyrol were illiterate. In the Habsburg Empire, school attendance was introduced into law in 1774,[13] but with little effect: most often, only priests, monks, and civil servants were able to read and write, which meant that drama could be experienced only when it was performed on stage. Folk play manuscripts were thus written for rehearsal rather than to preserve the text on paper. 'The main common characteristic of early modern drama is that it is written from the perspective of being performed on stage', as Joachim Küpper states, thus extends to eighteenth-century Tyrolean folk theatre.[14]

It seems rather difficult to imagine how actors memorised dramatic texts if they were illiterate—they must have been taught the lines by a director. Indeed, the fact that the dramatic texts circulated exclusively in manuscript form might also lead us to suppose that the actors did not rehearse on their own, but together and with the help of a director able to read. In the absence of sources on folk theatre rehearsals, this circuitous and perhaps inefficient process of collective rehearsing of the text is arguably the most plausible assumption.

Although folk plays are widely considered to be a kind of 'pure' and 'autochthonous' poetry that emerged from a collective creative process, precisely the opposite is shown by the manuscripts.[15] Their authors are often known by name, though they have never found their way onto the canonical list of authors. However, these named writers were not authors in that they were the creators or inventors of a play. Instead, they usually copied and adapted other texts. This becomes apparent with regard to the plays' themes and characters, whose origins include the Bible (Jesus Christ, King David, Absalom) and Christian or Catholic tradition (Perpetua, Hermengildus, Polyeuctus, Sebastian, Alexius, Eustachius), earlier writers (Boccaccio's Griselda; the seventeenth-century French Jesuit Renè de Ceriziers's Hirlanda and Genoveva),

13 Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918*, 2nd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 192–93.

14 Joachim Küpper, *The Cultural Net—Early Modern Drama as Paradigm* (forthcoming, 2017).

15 The most extensive collection of folk plays is in the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck. See the catalogue by Ellen Hastaba, 'Theater in Tirol: Spielbelege in der Bibliothek des Tiroler Landesmuseums Ferdinandeum', *Veröffentlichungen des Tiroler Landesmuseums Ferdinandeum*, 75–76 (1995–1996), pp. 233–343.

legend and fairy-tale tradition (the fictional saint Catherine of Alexandria and Hanswurst), and history (Mary Stuart).

1 The Inscribed Audience

An intriguing representation of a folk play audience can be found in *Das Laaser Spiel vom Eigenen Gericht* (*The Laas Play of Judgment Day*) by Johann Herbst.[16] This is a morality play in the tradition of both Everyman and Last Judgment plays that gives instruction on how to die properly and ascend directly into heaven. The original manuscript is no longer extant, though the text, without title, has been preserved as a transcript by Oswald von Zingerle.[17] Even though an exact performance year is unknown, the play very probably dates from the late eighteenth century. Two of its characters provide us with particular insight into the audience: 'Prollogus' and 'Das menschliche Geschlecht' ('The Human Species'). While Prollogus directly addresses the audience, Das menschliche Geschlecht is a representative of all viewers and functions as an allegory of the public.

Prollogus appears on stage four times; his first entry starts with the lines:

> Hochansöchliche sie erlauben,
> in kirze vorzuweisen,
> daß man durch wahren glauben
> kan alle nöz zerreisen
> dem teifl, der nur tracht,
> deß menschen sel zu föllen
> und sie mit ganzer macht
> zu stirzen in die höllen[.][18]

16 Johann Herbst, *Das Laaser Spiel vom Eigenen Gericht. Edition der Abschrift von Oswald von Zingerle und Kommentar*, ed. by Toni Bernhart (Wien: Folio, 2010). For a first attempt on the audience in *Das Laaser Spiel*, see Toni Bernhart, 'Das implizite Publikum im *Laaser Spiel vom Eigenen Gericht* (vor 1805)', in *'Das Theater glich einem Irrenhause': Das Publikum im Theater des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Hermann Korte and Hans-Joachim Jakob (Heidelberg: Univ.-Verl. Winter, 2012), pp. 179–91.

17 The transcript is in the Tiroler Landesarchiv, Innsbruck, shelfmark Nachlass Anton Dörrer, Karton 9, Pos. 16. The title *Das Laaser Spiel vom Eigenen Gericht* was provided by the archivist Anton Dörrer in his 'Das Laaser Spiel vom Eigenen Gericht: Ein Text der Vintschgauer Komödianten', *Der Schlern*, 18 (1937), pp. 164–70.

18 Herbst, p. 10.

Illustrious audience, allow
Me to show you briefly
That through true faith
Any net will be torn apart
With which the devil wants
To capture the human soul
And throw it into hell.

Throughout the play, this character announces the scenes and *tableaux*, acting as commentator and interpreter:

der erst glikselig stirbt
und ihm die himelßkron
nach seinen dod erwirbt
vor allerhögsten thron,
[...]
der zweite aber ist
verdamt in höllen grund,
weil er der teiflen list
piß in der lösten stund
hat niehmahlß widersagt
[...]
also pefleise sich
ein ieder, jung und alt,
daß man ganz riterlich
theilß sig und kron erhalt,
wan daß die löste stund
deß lebenß ruket an
und unß die höllen hund
zum fall noch dreiben an.[19]

The first dies happily
And earns heaven's crown
After his death
In front of the highest throne
[...]
The second, however,
Is damned to hell

19 Ibid., p. 67.

Because he never
Renounced the devils' falsehood
until his final hour
[...]
Take care, each and every one of you,
young and old,
to earn boldly victory and crown
when the last hour comes
and the hellhounds
hunt us till our fall.

At the very end of the play, Prollogus summarises its moral, amplifying its emotional effect and intensifying its pedagogical message. His role is also that of a preacher: he reminds the public of the play's religious intent. Das menschliche Geschlecht will pick up on Prollogus's admonition, providing the audience with an example of how they should act in everyday life. In the first act, Das menschliche Geschlecht appears 'with hands up and kneeling on the floor' ('eß kumt daß menschliche geschlecht, wellicheß mit aufgehobenen henden auf den poden knielet').[20] Four devils and Lucifer himself are pestering Das menschliche Geschlecht; in his misery, he prays to Jesus Christ and to Holy Mary:

gekreizigister Jesuß
ich falle dir zu fiesn
ich bite dich, erhöre unß,
laß deine gnad erspriesn,
[...]
o Märiä, die du pist
ein zuflucht aller sinder,
peschize auch vor teiflß list
unß arme Adamß kinder.[21]

Oh, crucified Jesus,
I am falling at your feet,
I pray you, listen to us,
Give us your grace.
[...]

20 Ibid., p. 16–17.

21 Ibid., p. 17.

Oh, Holy Mary, who art
A refuge for all sinners,
Guard us children of Adam
From the devils' fraud.

Mary then enters, just like Das menschliche Geschlecht, 'with hands up and kneeling on the floor' ('mit aufgehobenen henden auf den poden knielend'), and prays to her son Jesus:

ach aller liebster sohn,
mildreich erzeige dich
dem menschlichen geschlecht
[...]
ich pit, erröte sie
auch von dem ebigen dod,
[...]
o Jesu liebster sohn,
ach so erparme dich,
weil ich vor deinen thron
selbst wirf zu fiesen mich,
dan du auß liebe pist
selbst von den himel gstign.[22]

My dearly beloved son,
show yourself merciful
to the human species
[...]
I pray you, protect them
even from eternal death
[...]
Oh Jesus, my beloved son,
Have mercy upon humankind,
Before your throne
I throw myself down at your feet,
For your love of humankind
You came down from heaven.

Thereafter, Jesus asks his mother to stand up and appeals to God the Father, who answers his son's prayer:

22 Ibid., p. 17–18.

ich wird auf dein pegern
mein zohrn lasßen falln
nur daß sie sich pekern
die gnad verleichen alln.[23]

I will forsake upon your plea
My anger and my pain
And give humankind my grace
When they shall repent.

Immediately, Lucifer and the four devils wrathfully leave the scene. Jesus tells Das menschliche Geschlecht that his prayer has been answered by God the Father, and Das menschliche Geschlecht thanks Jesus for His grace and pledges eternal loyalty to Him.[24] This sequence of communications clearly reflects the hierarchical structure of the Catholic church, which by tradition requires individual petitioners to appeal to God not directly but through the intermediaries of Mary and Jesus. The public is here addressed as Catholic believers who are educated in their faith and religion. This educational aspect emphasises the ritual character of the play, which is aimed at the instruction and edification of the theatregoers—not just at their entertainment. At the same time, the sequence also reflects the hierarchical structure of the Habsburg Empire: the public is also addressed as subjects who are trained in appropriate political behaviour.

2 The Described Audience

A more diverse depiction of the audience can be found when we consider reports and reviews of folk plays. There exist a few written descriptions of folk theatre performances from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; because of the slow development of theatre and culture in the rural area of Tyrol, however, we might employ these sources in our analysis of the earlier eighteenth century as well. In what follows, I will concentrate on writings by an anonymous traveller (1790), by Joseph Rohrer (1796), by Johannes Schuler (1822), and by Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari (*c*. 1780, published in 1830).

One early source is Johann Georg Krünitz's enormous 242-volume encyclopaedia (1773–1858). Volume 141 (1825) contains the entry 'Drama', which includes a report by an anonymous traveller who attended a comedy in Amras

23 Ibid., p. 19.
24 Ibid., p. 20.

near Innsbruck in 1790.[25] Such a theatrical performance, the traveller claimed, 'one can hardly find in northern Germany' ('eine theatralische Vorstellung [...], wie man sie im nördlichen Deutschland nicht findet').[26] The play was entitled *Der junge Held und Martyrer St. Pangraz* (*The Young Hero and Martyr Saint Pancras*). It took place on Sunday 25 July 1790 from half past one to six in the afternoon. The traveller pointed out that, although it was the tenth performance of the run, a huge mass of people were on the road from Innsbruck to the theatre, which was a simple building in a meadow near a tavern. Seats in the shade cost six Kreutzer, approximately the price of a tavern meal.[27]

After a detailed summary of the martyr play—and the eighteenth (!) curtain—the anonymous spectator was eagerly awaiting the play's end.[28] This came quickly, along with a closing anachronism: Emperor Diocletian was killed by a furious Christian and the martyr Pancras was canonised by the pope. Our witness then draws our attention to the audience:

> Mehr als durch die Ausdehnung des Stücks, durch die, Trotz des theuer bezahlten Schattens, drückende Sonnenhitze, und durch die Unverständlichkeit des Tyroler Dialekts, wurde meine Aufmerksamkeit bei der Beobachtung des feierlichen Ernstes der Zuschauer zerstreuet, welche mit unverwandtem Blicke die lächerlichsten Phrasen und Geberden anstaunten. Ein geistlicher Herr, der neben mir saß, erlaubte sich nur ein einziges Mal, bei der Zerstörung des Heidnischen Opfermahls, ein bescheidenes Lächeln. Der Pabst kam, um nicht bloß Genuß zu geben, sondern auch selbst zu genießen, wenn er nichts zu thun hatte, in pontificalibus in das Parterre und wußte ohne Erinnerung sehr genau, wenn die Reihe wieder an ihn kam. Am wenigsten andächtig waren einige junge Tyroler, welche Straußfedern auf ihren runden grünen Hüten trugen. Dieses zeigt nach Landessitte eine Bereitwilligkeit zum Kampfe an.

25 Johann Georg Krünitz, *Ökonomisch-technologische Encyklopädie, oder allgemeines System der Staats-, Stadt-, Haus- und Landwirthschaft, und der Kunstgeschichte in alphabetischer Ordnung: Früher fortgesetzt von Friedrich Jakob und Heinrich Gustav Floerke, und jetzt von Johann Wilhelm David Korth: Hundert und ein und vierzigster Theil, welcher die Artikel Schauspiel bis Scheintod enthält. Nebst 12 Kupfertafel auf 3 Bogen und einem Portrait* (Berlin: Paulische Buchhandlung, 1825), pp. 114–19. Krünitz does not give any sources for this report.

26 Krünitz, p. 114.

27 Ibid., p. 115. The amount has been contextualised by the purchasing-power parity index of the Österreichische Nationalbank, http://www.oenb.at/Ueber-Uns/Bankhistorisches-Archiv/Archivbestaende/11-4-Wiener-W-hrung-WW-.html.

28 Krünitz, p. 117.

> Da ich dieses nicht wußte, so fragte ich einen ganz bescheiden um die Ursache dieser Auszeichnung, und erhielt hierauf die lakonische und bedeutende Antwort: daß er wünsche, es möchte ihm einer die Feder abnehmen. Sein Wunsch wurde auch, wenn gleich durch einen Andern, erfüllt, und das Publikum hatte eine, nicht bloß dem Scheine nach, blutige Vorstellung gratis anzusehen.[29]
>
> More than by the duration of the play, by the blazing heat despite the expensive seat in the shade, and by the incomprehensibility of the Tyrolean dialect, my attention was attracted by the solemn gravity of the spectators who were impressed by the silliest gestures and phrases. A cleric who was sitting next to me allowed himself to smile only once, when a pagan place of worship was destroyed. The Pope entered fully dressed, not only in order to entertain the audience when acting upon the stage, but also to enjoy himself. When he had no scene, he was sitting in the parterre, watching the play, and knew exactly when he was on again without being reminded. The least attentive were some young Tyrolean males, who wore ostrich feathers on their green round hats. This showed a readiness to fight, according to regional custom. Since I did not know that, I humbly asked someone for the reason for this decoration and got the laconic, but meaningful answer that the fellow wished somebody would snatch the feather. His wish was fulfilled (even if by somebody else)—the audience got a bloody spectacle for free, which was not only an illusion.

The great demand for these comedies, their high attraction and fascination for audiences, is characteristic of the folk play. In the countryside, theatre was one of very few occasions during which audiences might experience culture and entertainment—apart from sermons, images, music, and dance. It is interesting to note, therefore, that our anonymous reporter seems to have been more interested in the audience than in the play. He attentively observed and described audience members' general attitude as well as the behaviour of particular spectators such as the smiling cleric and the bachelors' quarrel. For him, it seems, the most thrilling dramatic experience was the experience of the audience. Indeed, he uses approximately the same number of pages to describe the audience as to summarise the play. We know nothing of this spectator, though we may assume that there was some social, cultural, and educational difference between him and the audience that he watched attending the

29 Ibid., pp. 117–18.

play. Because of this difference, he was able to point out some details that were worth narrating. It is quite probable that he was a philologist, since he took the opportunity to see (and, presumably, read) the play's manuscript, which was 'from the last century' (that is, the seventeenth century) and 'written in a fairly legible way' ('aus dem vorigen Jahrhunderte'; 'ziemlich leserlich geschrieben'), and held in the burgomaster's archive.[30]

A different view on Tyrolean drama and the theatre audience can be found in *Uiber die Tiroler* (*On Tyroleans*, 1796), a book by the economist and statistician Joseph Rohrer.[31] Born in Vienna in 1769, Rohrer completed his studies at the university at Innsbruck and became first a civil servant in Vorarlberg and then a professor of politics and statistics at the University of Lemberg (Lviv). He retired in 1827 and returned to Vienna, where he died in 1828. Rohrer wrote many articles and some books on the regional geography, economics, and culture of several Habsburg crown lands.[32]

Uiber die Tiroler is an analysis of the physical, mental, and intellectual qualities of the 700,000 Tyrolean people of the time.[33] Several chapters of the book deal with trade and agriculture, as well as with the widespread phenomenon of child labour—more specifically, renting out children as farmhands. Rohrer tells of Tyrolean salesmen travelling throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas; he praises the technical and inventive ingenuity of the Tyroleans as well as their creativity in painting and sculpture. In contrast, according to Rohrer, the Tyroleans' ability in poetry and chant was absolutely undeveloped due to the chronic deformity of their articulatory apparatus and their general neglect of the German language.[34] Rohrer subsequently claims that Tyroleans are funny and comic—wandering and sunburnt specimens who served as a remedy against both melancholy and hypochondria for Bohemian and Hungarian aristocrats: 'The not so rare naïveté of these sons of the Alps elicit a kind smile from prosperous gents, while the ladies feel charitable tenderness for these poor and exotic members of the human race' ('Die nicht seltene Naivetät dieser Alpensöhne erzeugt bey dem wohlhabenden Adel dieser Länder ein gutherziges Lächeln, das gewöhnlich bey den Damen mit einem wohlthätigen Gefühle der Zärtlichkeit gegen diese arme exotische Menschenrace verbunden

30 Ibid., p. 118.

31 Joseph Rohrer, *Uiber die Tiroler: Ein Beytrag zur Oesterreichischen Völkerkunde* (Wien: Dollische Buchhandlung, 1796).

32 Karl Hugelmann, 'Rohrer, Joseph', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (1889), pp. 64–68, http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd119527138.html?anchor=adb.

33 Rohrer, p. 3.

34 Ibid., p. 74.

ist').[35] These stereotypes resulted in the gentle disparagement of Rohrer's subjects, which provided him the opportunity to promulgate his anticlerical and enlightened credo: that the Tyrolean mind is usually rather limited because of its explosive mixture of bigotry, superstition, addiction to spectacle and theatre, drunkenness, looseness, and illiteracy.

To control these tendencies, Rohrer suggests, Emperor Joseph II decreed many 'beneficial reform acts and orders regarding politics, justice, and the church' ('wohlthätigen Neuerungen und erlassenen Verordnungen im politischen, Justiz- und Kirchensache [*sic*]') which, the author regrets, had no effect.[36] Pilgrimage and comedies, in particular, continued to waste the Tyroleans' time to an unjustifiable and excessive extent. Eighteen additional public holidays a year, Rohrer writes, make the workers in the Vorarlberg cotton factories lose 900,000 gulden in income and the Habsburg Empire 43,000 gulden in duties every year.[37] As a result, he argues, theatre and pilgrimage must be suppressed in order that pilgrims and audience members be turned towards activities that have an economic benefit.

Rohrer's position may be little more than the well-written reiteration of a stereotypical view, and yet his contrasting of the Tyroleans' (supposed) limitations of mind and their neglect of poetry and language, on the one hand, and their eagerness for theatre and pilgrimage, on the other hand, is striking. Intellectual and cultural limitations, obviously, do not hinder people from going to the theatre, which is a low-threshold form of early mass media that can and did flower even in an illiterate cultural environment.

About two decades later, in 1822, Johannes Infirmus (the pseudonym of Johannes Schuler) published an article entitled 'Über die Bauernspiele in Tyrol' ('On the Peasants' Plays in Tyrol') in a Viennese review.[38] Schuler (1800–1859) was born in Matrei, Tyrol and died at Innsbruck. He studied law in Vienna and was awarded a doctoral degree in Padua; after taking several positions in public administration, he was appointed professor of law at the University of Innsbruck, where he was also elected rector in 1853. In 1848/49, he was a liberal deputy to the Frankfurt Parliament. Over the course of his life, Schuler wrote short novels, articles, and one libretto.[39]

35 Ibid., p. 76.

36 Ibid., p. 79.

37 Ibid., p. 81.

38 Johannes Schuler [Ps. Johannes Infirmus], 'Über die Bauernspiele in Tyrol', *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*, 86 (18 July 1822), pp. 693–95.

39 H. Kuprian and H. Reitterer, 'Schuler, Johann(es)', in *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon*, vol. XI (Vienna, 1998), pp. 318–19.

In Schuler's eyes, folk plays and peasant comedies were not exotic phenomena, but were unique popular events, worthy of promotion and popularisation. Schuler states that this kind of theatre was common throughout Austria, Bavaria, and Schwaben, but was nowhere more important and prominent than in Tyrol.[40] His appreciation of the art form is rather a new voice that marks a starting point for the eventual scholarly discovery of folk plays.

Schuler points out that performances were quite extended in time, normally lasting

> daß ein solches Schauspiel ein Uhr Nachmittags bis sieben Uhr Abend dauert, während welcher Zeit die Zuhörer nicht in bedecktem Raume, und auf gepolsterten Stühlen oder in bequemen Logen sitzen, sondern auf harten Bänken fortdauernd der stärksten Sonnenhitze ausgesetzt bleiben. Und doch haben diese Bauern den Dichtern nie Gelegenheit gegeben, sich über das Beschneiden ihrer Werke zu beklagen, oder den Schauspielern, den Mangel an Aufmerksamkeit zu bedauern.[41]
>
> From 1 pm to 7 pm, during which time the audience is not sitting under a roof, nor on upholstered chairs, nor in comfortable seats, but rather on hard benches and exposed to the most blazing sunlight. The peasants, nonetheless, never gave the poets reason to complain that their works had been cut, nor did they give the actors reason to complain of a lack of attention.

Schuler continues with a striking description of the beginning of the performance:

> Das Glöckchen ertönt, der Vorhang rollt auf und der ganze tosende Schwarm ist wie versteinert, kaum daß Einer dem Andern zu athmen vergönnt. Die berühmtesten Schauspieler würden sich glücklich schätzen, ein so aufmerksames und empfängliches Publicum vor sich zu haben. Je mehr die ganze Bühneneinrichtung jede mögliche Illusion zerstören zu wollen scheint, mit desto größerer Liebe und Phantasie gibt sich der gemeine Mann den süßen Täuschungen der Kunst hin. Nur den polirten Leutchen der feinen Welt war es vorbehalten, zu lachen und zu plauderen, wenn König Lear rast oder Wilhelm Tell zielt. Sehr oft sah ich bey diesen kunstlosen Schilderungen des Martyrthums Thränen über

40 Schuler, p. 693.

41 Ibid., p. 694.

> die braunen männlichen Wangen fließen, und wenn je das Theater eine Schule der Erbauung war oder werden könnte, so ist es in diesen einfältigschlichten Darstellungen.[42]
>
> The bell is ringing, the curtain is raised, and all the roaring swarm seems to turn into stone. Hardly anyone suffers their neighbour to breathe. The most famous actors would be proud of such an attentive and impressionable audience. If the stage design and decor tend to destroy any possible illusion, it is with even more passion and love that the common man abandons himself to the sweetest illusions of the art. Only snobbish people will laugh or chat, when King Lear is raging or Wilhelm Tell is taking aim. I very often saw tears flow from tanned male cheeks during these artless representations of martyrdom. If theatre ever was or is going to become a school of edification and instruction, these naïve and simple performances are examples of it.

In this passage, Schuler discerns two social classes in the audience—an upper and a lower one—who differ in their behaviour and reactions. While our anonymous reporter seems to notice different social groups but not to favour any of them, Schuler clearly appears sympathetic to the peasants who watch the play attentively. As a consequence of this, he romanticises both play and peasants.

The playwrights, Schuler writes, were often the village schoolteacher or a shoemaker (a possible allusion to the most famous versifying German shoemaker, Hans Sachs, even though Schuler does not mention this name). Unfortunately, it seems that folk dramatists did not receive any money or recognition for their works as their names were usually concealed.[43]

Another insightful source is by Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari (1763–1842), an Italian composer and voice teacher who born in Rovereto near Trento and died in London. Ferrari composed four operas (all of which premiered in London), two ballets, two piano concertos, and about fifty sonatas.[44] Beginning around 1780, he was a scholar with the Benedictines at the Marienberg Abbey in Tyrol;

42 Ibid., p. 695.

43 Ibid., p. 695.

44 Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire, 'Ferrari, Giacomo Gotifredo', in *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, vol. 2*, ed. by Nicolas Slonimsky and Laura Kuhn (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), p. 1094.

at a village nearby, he attended a play that he described in his 1830 autobiography *Aneddoti piacevoli e interessanti* (*Pleasant and Interesting Anecdotes*).[45]

In the chapter 'Festa teatrale religiosa al padre abate ed ai monaci di Marienberg' ('A Religious Theatrical Celebration Dedicated to the Abbot and Monks of Marienberg'),[46] Ferrari recalls the performance of a Noah's Ark play ('L'Arca di Noè in un atto solo') that took place in the early 1780s and was written by the barber of Marienberg Abbey, who initiated the performance together with a judge, a captain, and an innkeeper from the surrounding area. Ferrari does not mention the writer's name. This corresponds to Schuler's note on the fact that authors of folk plays often remained anonymous, a surprising similarity since Ferrari was a professional composer and thus, presumably, aware of how important it was for authors to be recognised.

The Noah's Ark play took place in a barn provided by the innkeeper. Ferrari describes the stage and decor in detail, explaining where the ark, sea, heaven, paradise, and hell were situated on stage. Although he was not particularly attentive to the audience, he mentioned some useful details: the courtyard in front of the barn served as the seating area; it was surrounded by tables covered in curtains and decorated with green branches, deer's antlers, and bearskins (which, Ferrari tells us, were commonly used decor in Tyrolean taverns). On the right side, in the centre of this area, a chair was reserved for the abbot; on the left were another six chairs for the monks. A row of chairs for the village's wealthier residents were arranged behind, as was the area for 'the common people, who were allowed by the directors to attend the performance' ('la gente comune, alla quale i direttori avean favorito l'ingresso');[47] they entered one hour before. When the abbot and the monks entered, the audience stood up and applauded loudly, and before the performance began, the six actors paid homage to them. Ferrari clearly discerned different categories of audience members within the theatre space—clerics, wealthier residents, and common people—as, we might recall, can be seen in Altmutter's drawing, which depicts the different classes in distinct dress.

In his description, Ferrari observed that no actor or actress on stage appealed directly to the audience: the performers neither watched the audience nor addressed any words to it. In other words, there was no Prologus-like character

45 Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari, *Aneddoti piacevoli e interessanti occorsi nella vita di Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari da Roveredo: Operetta scritta da lui medesimo, e dedicata col dovuto permesso a sua Maestà Giorgio IV, Re della Gran Bretagna* (London: Presso l'autore, 27 Clipton-Street, Filzroy Square, 1830).

46 Ferrari, pp. 101–06.

47 Ibid., p. 100.

in this play. Interestingly, when the performers stopped acting, they abruptly discarded their roles, left the stage, and became part of the audience: like the other spectators they started 'eating, drinking, and talking to each other as if they stood in their dwellings' ('mangiavano, bevevano, parlavan fra di loro come se fossero stati nei loro tuguri').[48]

In eighteen-century folk theatre, therefore, actors could become spectators—and vice versa. Our anonymous observer in Krünitz and Ferrari both point out that actors watched the play like all the other audience members when they did not have to act on stage. The musicians in Altmutter's drawing might also be mentioned in this context. While playing their instruments, they were facing the stage. Even actors and musicians, it would seem, were eager to become spectators whenever possible. The scene from *Laaser Spiel* also illustrates the unity of audience and actors: Prollogus addresses the public and comments upon the play; the character Das menschliche Geschlecht represents and personifies the public—these characters both involve and mirror the public.

Tyrolean folk play actors, authors, and most audience members tended to be part of the same social, economic, and intellectual class: they were peasants or smallholders. Authors differed slightly from actors and audience members because they were able to write, to read, and, therefore, to access a more wide-reaching cultural net. This leads us to reconsider the theatrical triangle of authors, actors, and audience since in folk theatre these tend to be identical.

In contrast to the shared social status of authors, actors, and the majority of the audience, there were also, as we have seen, a small number of clerics and local aristocrats in the audience. In our sources, these attendees were distinguished from the common people, both spatially and with regard to their behaviour. They were in a position to spend money for a seat in the shade (Krünitz), were offered proper seats (the abbot and monks, Ferrari), and might react in a particularly emotional way when religious scenes were performed (the smiling cleric, Krünitz). Aristocrats in particular were considered an inattentive and unmannered audience by both Krünitz and Schuler, the latter of whom tends to intensify morally his reproach of them by idealising and romanticising the peasants in attendance as the more receptive and grateful audience in contrast with noble spectators who were unable to appropriately appreciate the play.

We must, of course, also consider the perspective from which our reports were written. Our sources were all composed by members of the regional or local elite—their authors were civil servants, academics, politicians, and

48 Ibid., p. 101.

artists. Their social positions imply a distance from everyday rural life that enabled them to diagnose folk drama as either exotic (Rohrer) or romantic (Schuler), depending on the observer's ideology.

Finally, we must also return to the fact that folk dramatic texts circulated exclusively in the form of handwritten manuscripts. As noted above, this is highly peculiar since letterpress printing had been invented centuries earlier. Because of its medium of distribution, folk theatre functioned as a cultural phenomenon parallel to European high culture, in which printed books had long been the most preferred medium for the circulation of texts. The folk play thus also draws attention to the fact that handwritten and printed books were circulated synchronically for centuries. Since folk play texts existed only in manuscript form, access to them was rather limited. However, this did not hinder low-threshold access to theatre for an illiterate public. Theatre performances were in fact easily accessible to them, while written texts would not at all have been accessible.

CHAPTER 11

Nô within Walls and Beyond: Theatre as Cultural Capital in Edo Japan (1603–1868)

Stanca Scholz-Cionca

On 31 October 1613, Captain Richard Cocks, head of the English factory in Japan and one of the country's early European visitors, attended a theatre performance in Hirado, which to his great astonishment was given 'by the Kings themselves, with the greatest Noblemen and Princes. [...] The matter was of the valiant deeds of their Ancestors, from the beginning of their Kingdome or Common-wealth, untill this present, with much mirth mixed among, to give the common people content'. And he concluded appreciatively: 'I never saw Play wherein I noted so much, for I see their policie is great in doing thereof, and quite contrary to our Comoedies in Christendome, ours being but dumbe shewes, and this the truth it selfe, acted by the Kings themselves, to keep in perpetuall remembrance their affaires.'[1]

A contemporary of Shakespeare and thus accustomed to royal performances,[2] Cocks discerned the meaning of such theatricalities of power, though he was unaware of the dramatic genre, which was *nô*—that is, lyric masked drama interspersed with song and dance, and accompanied by instrumental music and a chorus—alternating with *kyôgen*—comic sketches. To be more accurate, what the captain saw was amateur *nô* played by warriors. More than two centuries had passed since actor-authors like Kan'ami Kiyotsugu (1334–1384) and his son, Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1444?), brought *sarugaku nô* (later called *nô*) to a first bloom. Meanwhile, the genre had turned from a 'beggars' occupation' (as one fourteenth-century courtier described it) of troupes affiliated with Buddhist temples and Shintô shrines, into a refined stage art. Patronised by the military elite, *nô* not only absorbed the iconography and rhetoric of aristocratic literature, but also adopted courtly deportment on stage. During the

1 The account by Cocks is in John Saris's journal, *The Voyage of Captain John Saris to Japan, 1613*, ed. by Ernest Satow, pp. 169, 170.

2 The theatre metaphor pervades not only dramatic works but also royal discourse from the period, as in famed sayings by English monarchs both on stage and off: 'We royals are always on stage' (Queen Elizabeth I); or, 'A King is as one set on a stage' (King James I, *Basilicon Doron*).

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two centuries between the first famed actor-authors and Cocks, these elegiac dramas, fed by old myths and legends evoking the deeds of literary and historical heroes, had become so popular with mighty patrons that they themselves started practicing *nô* chant and dance. Thus, in Cocks's time, *nô* (and *kyôgen*), transmitted over generations in the families of professional actors, had become an elegant pastime of the military class. Dancing and chanting *nô* became a discipline included in the curriculum of young samurai as well as an indicator of prestige and cultivation. Soon, what had begun as patronage became a sort of monopoly, as professional *nô* was absorbed by court ceremony: regimented, controlled, and jealously confined to the warriors' world.[3] Nevertheless, the old theatre form continued to attract afficionados from all social strata, and was practiced and enjoyed in various contexts beyond the samurai circles.

This essay deals with the visibility, the value, and the uses of *nô* during Japan's early modern period—the Edo or Tokugawa Shogunate (1603–1868)—and argues that, in spite of its relative seclusion, the art asserted its role as a leading cultural medium and as a good that was traded across social divides. A contribution to work on *nô*'s shifting sociopolitical contexts, which have been highlighted by recent studies,[4] this paper traces the resonance of *nô* in the public sphere, which emerged in Japan in response to absolutist rule and rapid urbanisation.[5] During the early modern period, *nô*'s status and its uses varied considerably: it was a state ceremony but also a refined stage art; a body-mind discipline and lifestyle trend-setter; a repertoire of classical literary and visual *topoi*—all in all a multimedia repository of collective memory. My contention here is that, precisely because of its multiple functions, early modern *nô* shaped patterns of cultural identity that became conspicuous during Japan's nation-building phase and have resonances down to the present day.

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3 For the role of warriors as patrons and amateur practitioners, I am especially indebted to Fumio Amano and Akira Omote, *Nôgaku no rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1987); Akira Omote, *Kitaryû no seiritsu to tenkai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1994); further Fumio Amano, *Nô ni tsukareta kenryokusha: Hideyoshi nôgaku aikôki* (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1997).

4 The agency of *nô* actors is discussed in Eric Rath, *The Ethos of Noh: Actors and their Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); on the commoners' relation to *nô*, see Kano Shigeru, *Edo to nôgaku* (Tokyo: Wan'ya Shoten, 1989); Gerald Groemer, '*Nô* at the Crossroads: Commoner Performance During the Edo Period', *Asian Theatre Journal*, 15.1 (1998), pp. 117–41, also provides rich material.

5 For the concept of the theatrical public sphere as an abstract and encompassing space of multilevel interaction, extending beyond the categories of (actual) spectators and (potential) onlookers, I refer to Christopher Balme, *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 12–14.

1 A Fulminant Prelude: *Nô* and Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Dramaturgy of Power

The use of *nô* as political weapon reached its first peak with Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598; r. 1585–1598), the second unifier of Japan after long and devastating intestine wars. This hegemon was not only the most versatile performer of royal power in Japan's history, but also a fervent amateur actor and far-sighted patron of *nô*, who laid the foundations for an enduring recontextualisation of the art.[6] Hideyoshi's dramatic reign, which was roughly contemporary with the Elizabethan Age, illustrates what Christopher Pye called 'the irreducible relation between theatricality and absolutism', disclosing in multiple ways 'sovereignty's true, and profound theatrical sources'.[7] The need to defend his status, which had been acquired by prowess in arms and strategic genius, led the hegemon to a conspicuous self-fashioning via sedulous training in the elegant arts and disciplines, and to a sophisticated dramaturgy of pageants and other state acts—including destructive gestures such as irrational and lurid punishments as well as ordered suicides of close relatives, friends, and vassals—all staged as huge shows for the masses.[8] In these performances, Hideyoshi distingished himself not only by his love for ceremony but also by his impulsive, whimsical behaviour, which often disrupted normative protocol.

The hegemon's histrionic temperament found congenial expression in *nô*, an art that he practiced assiduously during the last six years of his life, when chanting and dancing became an obsessive occupation. Fully aware of its symbolic potential, Hideyoshi used *nô* on a grand scale as a rhetorical weapon.[9] He not only learned by heart and publicly performed sixteen classical dramas, but

6 Hideyoshi issued two theatre laws (in 1593 and in 1597), which raised *nô* to the position of a state art that was integrated into court ceremony and was financed by the Council of Lords (*sho-daimyô*), who had to provide annual rice stipends and salaries to designated actor families (which were, essentially, schools for *nô* actors).

7 Christopher Pye, *The Regal Phantasm: Shakespeare and the Politics of Spectacle* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1–2.

8 On Hideyoshi's training in courtly ceremony and the arts, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); *101 Letters of Hideyoshi: The Private Correspondence of Hideyoshi*, ed. by Adriana Boscaro (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1975); George Elison, 'Hideyoshi, the Bountiful Minister', in *Warlords, Artists, Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981), pp. 223–44.

9 Hideyoshi's understanding of the political uses of *nô* can be inferred from his comments on the tea ceremony, which he employed to similar ends: 'For Nobunaga [Hideyoshi's predecessor], tea was part of the Way of Politics. I shall never forget neither in this nor in my next

also compelled his vassals to emulate him on the stage; moreover, he ordered ten new *nô* to be composed in praise of his own military deeds.[10] Among the five extant texts, two deity plays distinguish themselves by complex dramaturgies meant to create a charismatic relationship between the hegemon and his subjects. Unlike the warrior dramas dedicated to him, the deity plays do not recall past events, but instead offer anticipatory scenarios of actual royal pageants, thus appearing both prescriptive and descriptive. Their performance *in situ* implied multiple acts of dislocation and substitution of the royal persona in a network of reflective discourses.

The first of these texts, *Yoshino môde* (*The Royal Procession to Yoshino*), prefigures Hideyoshi's famous pilgrimage to an important religious site on Mount Yoshino, the centre of a famous sect of mountain ascetics (*shugendô*), where a pageant took place in the spring of 1594. After minute preparations, the hegemon left Osaka with a huge retinue on the twenty-sixth day of the second month, spending one night at Taimadera and two more at Yoshino in a pavilion provided with a *nô* stage, Yoshimizu-in, close to the temple, where he held a poetry party on the twenty-ninth. The festivities culminated in the official cherry blossom viewing (*hanami*) in front of the great temple hall (Zaôdô) on the first day of the third month, followed by a *nô* program containing nine plays: three performed by Hideyoshi himself, two by his designated heir, Hidetsugi, three by high dignitaries, and one by a famous *nô* actor.[11]

The first *nô* on the program was *Yoshino môde*, which displayed a *mise-en-abîme* of the royal pageant itself. The drama opens with a high dignitary (*waki*, the deuteragonist) announcing the procession of the hegemon, who rules the land at his heart's will; conquered, allegedly, the three Korean lands and showed his benevolence to the Ming envoys; put an end to the wars; and built a splendid castle at Fushimi in Yamashiro.[12] A character called 'Hideyoshi', accompanied by his retinue (cast in side roles as *waki / wakizure*), then arrives at Yoshino, where he encounters a mysterious old couple (*shite*, the protagonist, and *tsure*, his companion) and engages in formal conversation about the holi-

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life that Nobunaga allowed me to do tea.' Cf. Herbert Plutschow, *Rediscovering Rikyu and the Beginnings of the Japanese Tea Ceremony* (Kent: Global Oriental, 2003), p. 83.

10 Only five of the plays (with libretti by Hideyoshi's historian and sycophant, Ômura Yûko, and musical arrangement by Konparu Yasuteru) have been preserved: three are warrior dramas; the other two are deity plays. One warrior play is translated in Steven T. Brown, *Theatricalities of Power: The Cultural Politics of Noh* (2001).

11 The program included *Yoshino môde*, *Genji kuyô*, and *Sekidera Komachi* (Hideyoshi); *Aoi no ue* and *Taema* (Hidetsugi); *Yûgao*, *Ominameshi*, and *Miwa* (vassals of Hideyoshi); and *Shiga* (Konparu Anshô). Cf. Amano, p. 162.

12 My paraphrase is of the libretto in *Yôkyoku sanbyakugojûbanshû*, ed. by Nonomura Kaizô (Tokyo: Kôbunsha, 1928), p. 685.

ness of the site. The old couple depart, only to reappear in the second scene in their real form as two local deities—the formidable Zaô Gongen, patron deity of the temple, and a Heavenly Maid, who performs ceremonial dances. Both extend their grace to the hegemon character and promise to protect his reign.

Following the common pattern of deity plays, Hideyoshi's pilgrimage is here cast as a *via sacra* crowned by divine epiphany. Indeed, the great hall of the temple complex (Zaôdô), completed two years earlier in 1592, contained a carved wooden trinity of Zaô Gongen, the fierce patron deity of *shugendô*, a formidable native god who is mentioned in texts as early as the ninth century. Iconographic similarities between Zaô Gongen and Hideyoshi's royal persona were not entirely incidental: the despot often appeared in front of his subjects wearing fierce looking makeup with false eyows, a false moustache, and blackened teeth, looking very much like that fierce deity.

In contrast to the warrior dramas written for Hideyoshi, the location of *Yoshino môde* is not connected to the hegemon's past deeds. Indeed, it is not a battlefield at all; rather, it is a place infused with a *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum* as well as a landscape of paradisiac harmony and peace, famous for its cherry blossoms—a *locus amoenus*. This double connotation offers an ideal mirror for Hideyoshi's state procession, as the landscape comes to resonate in the libretto with abundant and carefully chosen felicitous words (*shûgen*) that are reinforced by wordplay (weaving the hegemon's name into the text, for instance) and that point to the cosmic and religious dimensions of embodied royal power.

The performance relied on the sovereign's multiple roles: Hideyoshi was simultaneously the leader of the flower viewing party (*hanami*); an actor on the stage (impersonating not himself, but the local protective deity); dramaturge and spectator of the event; and, in addition, a character in his drama (the character Hideyoshi was played by a child, which was usual for royal characters in *nô*). Embedded within the multilayered state ceremony, the *nô* conflated a *via sacra* crowned by divine epiphany with the actual apotheosis of the sovereign-as-deity, thereby blurring, disturbingly, the realms of religion, poetry, theatre, and politics. On the *nô* stage, Hideyoshi (cast as Zaô Gongen) presented himself (the character Hideyoshi) with a symbolic gift—a blossoming cherry twig—and promised divine protection for his own reign. This intricate dramaturgy of sight and signs kept the spectators' attention fluctuating between mirrored images that not only implied but also enacted godly sponsorship, literally displacing the hegemon's royal person into a divine space.[13]

13 The present essay is indebted to recent research on the performance of power: Karl-Georg Soeffner, *Figurative Politik* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich 2002); Ron Eyerman, *Myth, Meaning and Performance: Towards a New Cultural Sociology of the Arts* (New Haven:

Intermedial resonance replicated the event in perdurable images: the procession *cum* performance was related in official annals and visualised in art, for instance on a gorgeous folding screen probably painted by Kanô Mitsunobu, which clearly echoes representations of Buddhist paradise. On one of the screen's panels, Hideyoshi appears dressed in white, like a bodhisattva among courtiers clad in bright colours, sitting in a pristine spring landscape and enjoying the view of blossoming cherry trees, a reflection of his own peaceful reign. In the lower left corner, inconspicuously, a *nô* stage is visible, annexed to his travel abode (Yoshimizu-in) and alluding to the performance that was actually held in front of Zaô Hall. The stage depicted on the screen was probably never used, yet it survives as an iconic sign—a symbolic tool of royal power.[14]

Such an overt conflation of royal with divine authority carried a seed of blasphemy that would have been perceivable even to subjects living in a 'charismatic social order' (Max Weber's term). When the hegemon turned to Mount Kôya immediately after his visit to Yoshino, to perform the second deity *nô, Kôya sankei* (*Royal Pilgrimage to Mount Kôya*)—in which Hideyoshi was to impersonate his own (deified) mother, voicing her gratitude to the character Hideyoshi (cast, again, as a child)—an earthquake and a violent storm prevented the show. According to an eyewitness, the despot's presumption had infuriated the gods and Kôbô Daishi himself, founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, showed his discontent. Frightened by this divine omen, the despot hurried back to his Osaka residence, leaving behind the *nô* manuscript, where it still remains. These incidents did not, however, hinder Hideyoshi's subsequent deification, which had been symbolically prefigured in the two deity plays.[15] In his dramaturgy, *nô* came to be embedded in grand acts of state that display in striking ways the interpenetration of poetry, religion, and politics symptomatic of charismatic royalty.

Paradigm Publishers, 2007); Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Performance and Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); and on self-fashioning: Pye; Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Horst Bredekamp, *Der schwimmende Souverän: Karl der Große und die Bildpolitik des Körpers* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2014).

14 *Yoshino hanamizu byôbu*, preserved in the Hosomi collection. http://bunka.nii.ac.jp/heritages/detail/43081.

15 Toyotomi Hideyoshi's deification as Shin-Hachiman, the New Deity of War, was short-lived: his temple-shrine, erected after the hegemon's death, was demolished in 1619.

2 Patronage as Symbiosis: *Nô* as Court Ceremony and Samurai Body-Mind Discipline

Toyotomi Hideyoshi's addiction to *nô* was not an isolated case. Before and after him, warlords dedicated much time to the practice of the art, some of them mastering impressive numbers of dramas: the despot's temporarily designated heir, Hidetsugi (who was later ordered to commit ritual suicide) mastered forty plays, to say nothing of the warrior and aesthete Hosokawa Yûsai, who boasted a repertoire of eighty-three. After Hideyoshi, all Tokugawa shoguns practiced *nô* in some form (either chanting and dancing or playing an instrument, preferably the drums), some of them even to excess. The fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi (nicknamed the 'dog shogun' due to his edicts on animal protection), for instance, danced *nô* on all official and private occasions, even at the bedside of his dying mother; and he was posthumously accused of having favoured actors such that he 'inflicted harm on his samurai vassals'.[16]

Following Hideyoshi's theatre legislation, the shogunate bestowed privileges on five *nô* schools that were designated to safekeep the art's memory and authority.[17] In the end, for these protected troupes, the distinction proved both an opportunity and a burden: it guaranteed their financial security and a certain social position (of quasi-samurai),[18] but it also placed them under strict control by powerful patrons, which affected the profession's most intimate aspects.[19] *Nô* stages were integrated into the architecture of noble residences, both in Edo and in the provinces, acquiring the standard form still employed today. Professional customs were classified, regulated, and reified: lists of libretti and other requisites (masks and costumes, theoretical treatises, and other treasured family objects) were presented at intervals to the shogunate (*kakiage*), whereas the actors' and musicians' schools adopted the hierarchical 'head-of-school system' ('iemoto'). Genealogies of professional groups of

16 Among other favours extended to actors, Tsunayoshi bestowed the status of samurai on nearly one hundred of them. Cf. Amano and Omote, pp. 114–15.

17 The four Yamato schools (Kanze, Konparu, Hôshô and Kongô), joined by a fifth (Kita) in the mid-seventeenth century, are still active today.

18 The position of official actors fluctuated during the Edo period at the whim of those in power: for some time, certain actors were allowed to carry two swords in public (a distinction otherwise reserved for samurai), though they remained under the jurisdiction of the city police (who were recruited from among outcasts) and could be even beaten in public by them, as occurred in the mid-seventeeth century.

19 In the mid-seventeenth century, for instance, shogun Iemitsu ordered the heads of the four established schools to take lessons from the head of the new Kita school.

actors and musicians were also compiled, their authors grasping at the chance to upgrade their ancestry and to confirm the authority of their school.

Official actors during the Edo period had access to courtly life, where they also served as teachers of chant and dance to lords and their offspring, some actors even advancing to high positions in the shogunal administration. All in all, *nô* became a compulsory part of courtly life, as well as an instrument of control and coercion that was exercised by shoguns over their vassals. Provincial lords (*daimyô*) were expected to spend lavish sums of money and considerable time on the art; to build *nô* stages as standard elements of their residences (important *daimyô* had two or even three stages in their villas, while lesser samurai would spread mats in their study rooms upon which to hold performances); to maintain their own *nô* troupe (which could comprise up to ten persons); or to organise elaborate *nô* programs for banquets as expensive status symbols. Practicing *nô* thus became an important aspect of samurai accomplishment and excellence therein could enhance one's chance for promotion; manner books warned that it was shameful to be unfamiliar either with *nô* or with the tea ceremony.

Throughout the Edo period, *nô* remained deeply entwined with the lives of the elites. It was integrated into the official festival calendar and was required on a variety of occasions, from the elaborate New Year's ceremony, called first chanting (*utaizome*), to the end-of-year banquets; from private rites of passage (coming-of-age, marriage, and childbirth) to official acts, such as a shogun's investiture and the emperor's enthronement, to say nothing of the art's diplomatic functions (*nô* adorned the reception ceremonies of all Korean delegations) and the numerous public and private banquets given throughout the year.

The omnipresence of *nô* in courtly life could be a heavy cost for the spectators, especially at events lasting for days during which a single day's program might include as many as thirteen plays. Consumed (and practiced) in such quantity, *nô* was prone to provoke resentment among warriors, or lead at times to maniacal behaviour. It was not unusual for samurai to take part in *nô* marathons that triggered a state of trance. One private diary mentions a samurai who, exhausted by the daylong program, was taking a nap during the performance: he was woken in the middle of the night to put on his *nô* costume and to dance one scene, after which he drew his pillow close and fell asleep again.[20] These prolonged *nô* performances could even produce states of intoxication—fully-fledged flow experiences.

20 Quoted in Kano, p. 44.

In its courtly surroundings, *nô* underwent deep changes: practiced together with the martial arts (especially swordmanship), the stage idiom (gestures and dances, recitation and music) becamse immersed in the solemn decorum of court ceremony and the tempo of the shows slowed by approximately a quarter. The repertoire was restricted to about 200 plays—the number varies according to the school—in comparison to the over 3,000 plays that were written during the early modern period—while body language and gestures were standardised: the Edo period witnessed the emergence of the basic posture (*kamae*), the typical walking style with sliding steps (*hakobi, suriashi*), the system of gesture units (*kata*), and the rigid staging patterns that allowed only a few variations (*kogaki*).

These changes were prefigured as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Konparu Zenpô, a grandson of Zenchiku (Zeami's son-in-law), stressed the proximity of his art to martial arts, advising his pupils to hold the dancing fan exactly as warriors grip the sword when preparing for a fight, and prescribing a basic body posture similar to that of a fighting warrior.[21] By the mid-eighteenth century, *nô* had completely absorbed the samurai demeanour, as a contemporary commentator suggests with bitter irony: 'the voice in *nô* is their [the samurai's] angry voice; the drummers' voices also sound angry: probably similar to the shouts of attacking the northern barbarians (as Confucius writes).'[22]

3 A Difficult Relationship: Commoners as Spectators of *Nô*

The transformation of *nô* into a court ceremony inevitably estranged the art from the broad masses of commoners who had formed the greater part of its audiences in preceding centuries. During the Edo period, spectators from the lower classes—deprived of regular opportunities to participate in what Fischer-Lichte terms the 'autopoietic loop' of a full aesthetic experience of the theatre form, to say nothing of practicing the art on a broader scale—gradually lost their competence as knowledgeable and responsive spectators. Though commoner access to *nô* performances was not formally prohibited, it did become subject to manifold restrictions.

21 On the standardisation of *nô* stage practice in relation to warrior discipline, see Stanca Scholz-Cionca, 'Halte den Fächer wie ein Schwert', in *Körper-Inszenierungen: Präsenz und kultureller Wandel,* ed. by E. Fischer-Lichte and Anne Fleig (Tübingen: attempto, 2000), pp. 131–47.

22 *Edo hanshôki*, quoted in Kano, p. 37.

The admission of commoners to courtly performances was limited to rare occasions; the so-called *machiiri nô*, or *nô* for the townspeople, were usually scheduled on the last (sometimes first) day of elaborate, multi-day theatre programs held in the shogun's Edo castle or in residences of his vassals in Edo or in the provinces. On such special days, the castle doors would open to let commoners throng in and sit uncomfortably on the white pebbles surrounding the stage, which opened onto an inner garden on three sides. From there the crowds would watch the performance under the critical eyes of palace guards, while the lord and his entourage sat on the open veranda of the residence's rooms that faced the stage. The admission of townspeople followed a strict order and timing: groups of commoners (each usually corresponding to a single city district) were admitted in turns to program slots that lasted about two hours; at the end of their allotted time they were moved out in order to make room for the next throng of spectators.

This practice contrasted with the normal theatre habits that involved daylong relaxed participation in the performances. Unable to enjoy a full *nô* program—which included several dramas in well-balanced succession, accelerating the tempo and dramatic tension towards the end of the day—common spectators, awed by the rigid rhetoric of power, were struck by the splendor of the set, costumes, and masks, and enjoyed the free meal and sake distributed by the lord. Paper umbrellas, distributed on rainy days, could scarcely compensate for the uncomfortable pebbles on which spectators sat exposed to rain and snow; they were more often the cause of disputes, preventing spectators in the rear from seeing the show. Even so, watching *nô* was a rare occasion for commoners: theatre historians approximate that just ten percent of the city population joined a *nô* audience in the three great urban centres of Kyoto, Edo, and Osaka.

Apart from formal shows in noble residences, opportunities to watch *nô* in public spaces varied according to location and were more frequent in the old imperial capital of Kyoto than in the more regimented political centre of Edo. Benefit performances (*kanjin nô*)—which were, before Hideyoshi's theatre laws, the way the art form was most frequently practiced and had provided actors with the bulk of their income—were drastically restricted and closely controlled by the authorities. From time to time, the head actors of the official schools were allowed to organise benefit performances in public city spaces or on temple precincts. Among the five schools, it was only the head of the Kanze who enjoyed the privilege of holding so-called 'once in a lifetime *kanjin nô*': an elaborate program that could last up to several weeks or even longer, depending on weather conditions, and that brought substantial income to the school head from ticket sales.

A 1657 text written by a leading *kyôgen* actor, Ôkura Toraakira, gives us direct insight into the logistical complexity of such actors' enterprises, which were planned far in advance and were submitted to the city magistrate for approval. Toraakira describes an all-*kyôgen* benefit program held on a gun training area on the seashore of Sakai (part of present day Osaka).[23] He covers all aspects of the enterprise: he provides architectural details, such as the size of the stage with its adjacent bridge to the green rooms; he prescribes the material, form, and size of the diases erected for upper class spectators; he describes the expensive boxes with their special latticed woodwork designed to hide the faces of spectators seated in them; he offers advice on catering, fire prevention, billing, the wooden entrance tickets, the rental of cushions to sit on and of umbrellas for the lower class spectators watching from the lawn, and so on and so forth.

Financially, these huge performances were always profitable. Notwithstanding the high prices for the boxes, which could amount to several gold or silver coins, the best seats were usually sold out for the entire duration of the event (which could last up to fifteen days), a fact that points to the high prestige *nô* enjoyed among townspeople, especially wealthy merchants. Extravagant spectators would even decorate their boxes with furniture and luxury objects, an implicitly subversive gesture of protest against the strict class discrimination and the luxury prohibition laws imposed by the shogunate.

In contrast to warriors' ceremony *nô*, which were staged in the subdued pitch of what we would call a chamber theatre, *kanjin nô* were noisy and entertaining shows, with bustling crowds of onlookers from all social strata; people eating, drinking, and smoking their long pipes; onlookers emitting encouraging shouts for the actors; women breastfeeding their babies; tired audience members taking a nap; or viewers watching the distant stage through their fashionable telescopes imported from Holland.

The popularity of *kanjin nô* should not, however, hide the fact that both rural and urban commoners had become increasingly unfamiliar with the themes, conventions, and acting style of the art, which had by this time been adapted to samurai decorum. Humorous lowbrow literature from the period suggests that comprehension of the dramas was often superficial.[24] Satirical verses, anecdotes, and other minor literary genres, which flowered during the Tokugawa

23 Ôkura Toraakira, *Meireki Sakai Shichidô kyôgen shibai*, in *Nihon shomin shiryô bunka shûsei*, vol. XII, pp. 281–92.

24 As an exception, one event from the late Edo period is better documented: the huge *kanjin* performance held by the Hôshô school in Edo in 1848, for which commoners' reactions were recorded. Quoted in Miyamoto Keizô, 'Edo jidai nôgaku hanjôki' ('Notes on

period, refer in oblique ways to the difficult relationship of commoners to *nô*: the hero of one anecdote, for instance, mistook a comical *kyôgen* sketch (*Suminuri*; *The Ink-Smeared Lady*) for a famous *nô* drama (*Sumidagawa*; *The River Sumida*), a misapprehension caused by phonetic proximity ('Sumidagawa' / 'sumi-ga-kao'; 'ink-smeared face'). Many stories, too, refer to the bustling atmosphere and poor viewing conditions. Another anecdotal hero dreams of meeting a deity, who would bestow upon him an eye on his middle finger (to have a better view of the stage over the heads of people sitting in front of him).[25]

Apart from the huge public performances discussed above, commoners could occasionally watch coarser styles of *nô* called *tsuji-nô* (crossroads theatre), *shikata-nô* (imitation *nô*), and *kadozuke-nô* / *kado-utai* (*nô* chanted in front of one's gate). These less formal *nô* performances usually comprised single plays or fragments of drama and were performed in the streets, on shrine and temple precincts, in market places, and, occasionally, on wooden stages erected for the purpose by entertainers, most of them unauthorised. The alternative label for this sort of entertainment, *kojiki nô* (beggars' *nô*), points to the performers' status as outcasts.[26] However, status barriers did occasionally crumble in the face of straitened financial circumstances, as when impoverished samurai offered their musical expertise to paying commoners. An illustration in a book on Edo lifestyles and customs shows a lordless samurai, his straw hat lowered to conceal his face, sitting on a mat in the street in front of a wall with his *nô* drum at hand. The picture bears the ironic caption: '*Nô* singing is a lofty pastime enjoyed by samurai of high standing; but some of them may also sink into misfortune and become *rônin* (lordless samurai) and come to sit in the dust on the roadside to beat the drum begging for alms.'[27]

Alongside these informal entertainments, some itinerant troupes offered elaborate shows that were closer to orthodox *nô*. These were performed on wooden stages furnished with a *hashigakari* bridge and decorated with the customary auspicious pine tree painted on the backdrop; the troupes also provided standard instrumental accompaniment (a *nô* flute and three drums). On

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the Flourishing of *Nô* during the Edo Period'), *Kanze* sequel 17 (May 2009): pp. 42–48 (pp. 42ff.).

25 These anecdotes appear in a collection from the first half of the seventeenth century: *Kinô ha kyô no monogatari: Kenkyû oyobi sakuin*, ed. by Kitahara Yasuo (Tokyo, Kasama sakuin sôkan, 1973).

26 A detailed account of 'crossroad performances' in Edo and in the Kansai region is provided by Groemer, pp. 122–29.

27 Cf. an illustrated book of customs and lifestyles, *Ehon Edo ôrai* (1854), quoted in Kano, p. 15.

these stages, gifted actors could acquire popularity and fame among the city populace, some of them boasting followers and successors or even grounding schools similar to the official ones.[28] Amateur *nô* could also be mixed with public entertainments of all sorts, sometimes in unexpected surroundings. A book print, for instance, shows a boat party (*funa-asobi*) with a *nô* stage built across two large boats docked at the pier, while crowds of people group together to watch the performance in smaller vessels floating around the temporary stage.

4 Emulating the Samurai: Commoners as Amateur Practitioners of *Nô*

As suggested by the variety of unofficial *nô* performances dicussed above, hampered access to orthodox *nô* did not stifle the commoners' desire to experience this exclusive art. In spite of class barriers, many townspeople did not only seek out opportunities to become audience members, but also found ways to participate in amateur training. While practicing with authorised *nô* teachers remained out of reach for most commoners, access to *nô* texts was facilitated by the quick dissemination of printed libretti, some as comprehensive anthologies and others containing just one play or arias selected for chanting lessons. Such booklets sold at moderate prices and their production and sales enjoyed an impressive boom during the whole period; their wide circulation in thousands of editions illustrates the huge popularity of *nô* among all social strata in cities, towns, and in the countryside.

The easiest means of accessing *nô* was *su-utai* (literally 'bare chanting', meaning chant without instrumental accompaniment or dance), a practice that had started among amateurs centuries before, but that acquired mass popularity during the Edo period. In fact, *nô* chanting became a rewarding leisure activity for commoners, as it could be practiced in a variety of contexts: individually or in small groups, at home or in the company of friends—but also within larger circles, thus encouraging communal participation. Regular chanting sessions held in private or public rooms rented for the purpose were fashionable among townspeople. Such gatherings, which might include tea parties, attracted people of all ages and occupations from all parts of the city

28 Such is the case with the Horii Sensuke troupe, a name used by several generations of *tsuji-nô* actors who were popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On their activities and their uncertain connections to the official Kanze school, see Omote Akira, "'Sensuke-za Ikken-dome' ni tsuite", in *Nôgakushi shinkô* (Tokyo: Wanya shoten, 1986), vol. 2: 595–606.

and its outskirts, casual performers coming together to sing lyrical 'arias' from famous dramas as a chorus. Comical haiku (*senryû*) mention *nô* afficionados from all sorts of occupations and ages (one verse makes fun of the mixture of 'long haired' teenagers and 'grey haired' heads in one chorus, while another verse mentions a cook addicted to chanting).[29]

Despite the varying levels of proficiency at these gatherings, chanting sessions contributed in significant ways to the formation of a public sphere, both in urban surroundings and in the countryside. Group chanting spurred on agonistic ambitions and encouraged the diligent study of complex texts; it trained sensitivity to and aesthetic taste in literary and musical matters, all the more so as commoners of all professions spent plenty of their leisure time on practice. Contemporary sources mention cases of extravagant behaviour and addiction among commoners: visitors would practice chanting throughout the night and would sing with their host until dawn; wealthy merchants would spend huge sums of money bringing professional actors to their homes. Thus bare chanting (*su-utai*) became a common accomplishment among ordinary citizens, and was even introduced into ordinary school curricula.[30]

In contrast to chanting, which was a common pastime, nô dancing and the performance of entire dramas became increasingly rare beyond samurai circles. While amateur performances by commoners were still frequent during the seventeenth century—especially those held in city pleasure quarters either by courtesans themselves or by their clients—in later times, practicing *nô* seems to have been a clandestine activity among commoners: it is mentioned in instances of conflict with the authorities, when townspeople practicing *nô* were punished for contravening the luxury bans. Performing *nô*—that is, building an expensive stage, engaging musicians, and providing costly costumes and masks—was a medium for bold self-fashioning and the display of wealth, and would have been affordable primarily for prosperous merchants, brothel owners, rice brokers, and loan sharks, some of whom became genuine *nô* afficionados.[31]

Nô masters responded to the high demand by aggressively marketing their expertise, as teaching *nô* to amateurs of all classes became an important source of income, which called for structured programs and refined methods of knowledge transfer. To counteract the amateurs' easy access to libretti and

29 Kano quotes *senryû* verse and prose stories referring to the *nô* chanting craze among townspeople in Edo and in urban centres in Kansai.

30 Cf. Rath, p. 196.

31 Prominent cases of commoners active as *nô* amateurs in the late Tokugawa period are described in Groemer, pp. 120–26.

to *nô* treatises that was provided by the printing industry, actors would stress the value of personal transmission, which they advertised as the ultimate key to their art. Heads of *nô* schools veiled their professional expertise in an aura of secrecy and exclusivity in order to control the access of amateurs to *nô* practice. At the same time, teaching *nô* to growing numbers of amateurs, as noted above, contributed to the standardisation of the repertoire and to the development of a structured curriculum, which stipulated long time spans for each level of proficiency. *Nô* masters thus controlled the access of amateurs to the arcana of their art, permitting the release of teaching licences only to a very limited number of students.[32]

The dissemination of *nô*, even reduced to its most basic form, initiated a significant transfer of knowledge and aesthetic standards from the elite to the commoners, encouraging the latter to become familiar with classical genres and poetic techniques that had previously been reserved for the ruling classes. Despite all the restrictions, *nô* came to inhabit the bodies and to spark the imagination of commoners, shaping their sensibility and expanding their cultural horizons. Thus, in the interstices and folds of a strictly controlled system, bits and pieces of the elite art spread among the lower strata of society, becoming part of the commoners' shared history of leisure and entertainment culture. Last but not least, practicing *su-utai* contributed to the shaping of communities by intensifying social cohesion, an important factor during the subsequent nation-building phase.

5 The Commodification of *Nô* in Everyday Urban Culture

Beyond chanting and occasionally watching shows, commoner contact with *nô* also extended to objects of everyday use that were connected with the art. The lofty theatre genre, jealously confined to and controlled by the shogunate, was regarded as a luxury good that belonged to the splendid samurai culture and that constituted a repository of aesthetic refinement and good taste, all of which was reflected in its material aspects. For the lower classes, costly masks and gorgeous costumes were unattainable but at least, as we have seen, printed libretti could be bought, collected, cherished, even fetishised. Collections of *nô* texts, released by the heads of actors' schools and reprinted by the mushrooming publishing houses during the whole Edo period became bestsellers in the long term, their popularity easily matched by that of *nô* treatises both old and

32 Cf. Rath, p. 196 ff.

new (some freshly compiled by heads of the official schools to reinforce their authority), which allowed glimpses into the secret traditions of the art.

Among these books, lavish editions—such as the illustrated one hundred drama series printed in the early seventeenth century by the famous artist Hon'ami Kôetsu[33]—were traded as art objects and treasured as status symbols, not only by mighty warriors, but also by rich commoners in big cities. Wealthy merchants, who held the lowest status in the stratified society, eagerly collected precious books printed on fine handmade rice paper delicately adorned with floral motifs, animals, birds, or landscapes decorated with glittering silver or gold powder. The commercial success of printed libretti also spurred the production and dissemination of new dramas, while broad interest in *nô* encouraged philological studies that resulted in annotated and commented *nô* editions explaining the rhetorical texture of the dramas. Via these many and diverse activities, *nô* was made available to a broad public and gradually came to be integrated into the canon of vernacular literature. Along with venerated prose works from the classical period and imperial poem anthologies, *nô* texts came to be viewed as a fund of classical *topoi* and poetic techniques, becoming part of a collective cultural memory that transgressed class distinctions, preparing the ground for the emergence of national literature during the Meiji period (1868–1912) and after.

Knowledge of *nô* also spread through related but distinct genres, especially the kabuki and puppet theatre, which integrated famous *nô* scenes into popular plots or produced remakes of whole *nô* dramas. Towards the end of the Edo period, *nô* dramas transposed onto the stage using the language of popular urban theatre formed a distinct kabuki subgenre, *matsubamemono*. As might be expected, *matsubamemono* favoured plots dealing with filial piety or feudal loyalty as well as universal stories of love and jealousy. Kabuki and puppet dramas like *Kanjinchô* (*The Conscription List*, after the *nô Ataka*), *Funa Benkei* (*Benkei in the Boat*), and *Musume Dôjôji* (after the famous jealousy *nô Dôjôji*), which transposed core plots from the *nô* repertoire to popular stage forms, remain theatre hits down to the present day. As Tokugawa rule came to an end, hybrid genres performed by *nô* professionals for common audiences also emerged: *teriha kyôgen*, a mixture of *nô* with kabuki that originated in Osaka, and *Azuma nô,* a hybrid genre popular in Edo (Azuma) that witnessed a short-lived popularity during the second half of the nineteenth century.[34]

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33 Hon'ami Kôetsu (1558–1637), a famous multimedia artist—painter, potter, lacquerer, calligrapher, swordpolisher—and the founder of an artisan community in the vicinity of Kyoto, issued, in collaboration with other artists, lavish editions of *nô* libretti.

34 A succint summary of these two hybrid genres is in Groemer, pp. 130–33.

Besides, *nô* iconography, reified and reproduced on material objects, permeated the cultural horizons of commoners, becoming part of their domestic surroundings: emblematic motifs were disseminated as surrogates or metonymic substitutes for full-fledged dramas. Visual *nô* quotes appear on color prints (*ukiyoe*), folding screens, fashionable kimonos, sword handle sheets (*tsuba*), and on the tiny carved weights (*netsuke*) that were hung from one's belt to hold in place tobacco-pouches or pillboxes.[35] *Nô* motifs also adorned decorative combs, teapots, lacquerware, and other objects of daily use. In larger cities, even a lowly servant would have been able to decipher the symbolism of such pictures. He might identify, for instance in the background of a courtesan's portrait, a scene from the *nô Kantan* (*The Pillow Dream*, a drama on the *topos* of life as a dream that has a European parallel in Calderon's *La vida es sueno*) as a *memento mori* pointing to the transience of worldly pleasures. Similarly, a *netsuke* carved in the form of *hannya*—the horned demonic mask famously worn by the serpent-woman in the *nô Dôjôji*—might caution him against the sin of jealousy.[36] Such playful visual quotations were ubiquitous in Edo culture across class divides and contributed to the integration of *nô* into the collective imaginary.

6 Conclusion

During Japan's early modern period, *nô* theatre was primarily located within samurai residences, functioning as a subsidised 'official art' integrated into court ceremony and jealously controlled by its patrons, who put it to many uses. Besides being a theatrical genre to be watched and enjoyed for its aesthetic and entertainment value, *nô* was a medium of power discourse meant to impress and awe the commoners; it was used as a political weapon by the shogunate to maintain control over provincial lords; and it was an instrument of self-fashioning for the elites. However, in that period of rigid distinctions, *nô* remained an object of desire for commoners, who reclaimed it for their own needs: as entertainment and participative practice, but also as a commodity to be traded across social divides in a period of emerging consumerism.

35 A selection of *nô* motifs represented on everyday objects is in the Suntory Museum of Art Tokyo catalogue *Nô no aikonorojî* (Tokyo, 1992).

36 The *hannya* mask famously reminded Brecht of 'how strenuous it is to be evil' ('wie anstrengend es ist, böse zu sein'). *Die Maske des Bösen* (*The Mask of Evil*), in *Werke* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993), vol. XV (Gedichte, 1941–1947).

Thus, on the one hand, *nô* thrived as a refined, lofty, and increasingly rigid ceremonial art, driven by financial security and tight control, which required actors to take on the role of strict preservers of authorised forms. On the other hand, commoners also claimed their right to watch and practice *nô* techniques (especially chanting); wealthy merchants used it (in more or less clandestine ways) as an instrument of self-fashioning and wealth display; and artisans integrated its iconography into the urban everyday. Even in abbreviated, fragmentary forms, the heritage of *nô* pervaded commoners' lives and shaped their sensibilities in manifold ways. Thus, during the early modern period, *nô* came to be—for all social classes—more than just a theatre genre. With the expansion of amateur practice, *nô* transported not only classical literature and the ethos of the ruling class into the cultural horizon of commoners, but also norms of bodily discipline, etiquette, and aesthetics that would become prerequisites of the national culture of modern Japan.

The tensions and pressures that surrounded this contested artistic genre during Japan's early modern period are engraved in its institutional structure, stage practice, and transmission techniques down to the present day. Contemporary *nô* has not only inherited—and even consolidated—the hierarchical 'head-of-school system' (*iemoto*), but also a strong dependence of the theatre genre on amateur practicioners, who form the most reliable and competent audience and also provide the main source of income for professional actors even now. *Nô* masters still maintain their authority by a quantified transmission of professional knowledge—a practice developed during the Edo period. In their teaching, they cultivate and transfer, to new generations of pupils, standards of value and mental habits inherited from early modern times. Even nowadays, shared physical experience of the art is a *sine qua non* prerequisite for spectatorial, critical, and even scholarly competence, just as chanting a song from the *nô Takasago* is still part of a Japanese wedding ceremony—both habits being the legacy of the long period which historians call Edo Japan.

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