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STAGING HISTORY:
Renaissance Dramatic Historiography

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Preface

Though it may not have been as monumental and unified as earlier generations of scholars imagined, a transformation in the conception of history occurred in the second half of the 16th century. Following the sixteenth-century debates about historical knowledge and the "art of history", mediaeval chronicles gave way to antiquarian historiography and new aesthetic forms of historical representation also began to flourish. No doubt, the various manifestations of this change had multiple individual causes. Yet they were fundamentally united by a sharpened focus on history as a complex realm of incongruous details, heterogeneous customs and traditions, conflicting motives, ideas and interests: by a conception of the historical world as a battlefield of opinions and beliefs ever subject to interpretation and manipulation.

Among the many new historiographical departures of the period the historical drama stands out. Due to its eminent ability to make history come alive before the eyes of the audience through an increasingly advanced set of technical and performative devices it was certainly the most far-reaching in terms of public appeal and, thus, the prime aesthetic vehicle of collective memory and cultural identity formation during this period of nascent nation states – an effectful means of "rekindling famous deeds and words in the memory of the people", as Lope de Vega put it in the dedication to his history play *La campana de Aragón*, 1623;[1] a "bewitching thing" with "the power to new mold the hearts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt", as Thomas Heywood said of history plays in *An Apology for Actors*, 1612.[2]

The present volume approaches Renaissance historical drama from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, examining its intriguing intertwinement of aesthetics and historiography. While taking different approaches and treating different materials, the articles collectively explore the problem-oriented and dialogical discourse of Renaissance historical drama and what can be termed its "relative autonomy": simultaneous critical interpretation *and* answering to the demands imposed by royal patronage and state sponsorship; or exercise of what Margaret Greer has called "loyal criticism" and Dirk Niefanger has conceptualized as "verdeckte Ambiguität".[3]

Thus, taken as a whole, the articles suggest an image of Renaissance dramatic historiography as an extremely complex discursive and representational space. Together they convey the idea of Renaissance historical drama as a problem-oriented reflection on the defining moments and charismatic protag-

[1] Quoted in Case 1975, 204.
[2] Quoted in Pollard 2004, 221.
[3] Greer 1991, 79; Niefanger 2005, 113–44.

onists of European history and as a creative-performative negotiation of heterogeneous perspectives that included not only a sensual revivification of the past, but also theologico-philosophical contemplation on the ephemeral nature of history, moral lessons on the usefulness of historical examples, and, not the least, the careful address of politically and religiously sensitive issues. Through analyses of selected examples, the articles illuminate how Renaissance historical stagings, by means of a highly formalized aesthetic, theatrical, and performative language, were able to present controversial historical issues in a dialectical manner; make ambiguous statements; and create irreducibly complex syntheses of apparently irreconcilable historiographical perspectives; and how they exactly therefore came to influence the contemporary historical horizon in a valuable, thought-provoking way.

The underlying theoretical-methodological take of the volume can be described as a transformative merger of narrative historiography and New Historicism. On one hand, following the narrative turn in the theory of history inaugurated with Hayden White's famous *Metahistory* (1973),[4] narrative historians have for some decades envisioned a cross-over between historiography and literature.[5] However, this vision never materialized in historiographical readings of texts traditionally considered aesthetic nor in aesthetic readings of historiographical texts, although the idea was briefly introduced by Alun Munslow.[6] On the other hand, New Historicists have of course long been reading literary texts as historical documents, but they have done so with the explicit goal of downplaying the privilege of "Literature" as compared to other discursive forms,[7] and their work therefore imply a neutralization of the power of aesthetics which the articles of the present volume implicitly and explicitly assert through the emphasis on Renaissance historical dramatists' use of aesthetics to produce complex, problem-oriented forms of historiography.

Grafting the insights of narrative historians about the aesthetic components of historiography onto New Historicist recognitions of the historical embeddedness of literary texts, the superordinate approach to Renaissance historical drama presented in this volume fills two gaps: it amends historians' lack of attention to the historiographical contributions of texts traditionally considered extra-historiographical and compensates for the lack of attention in literary studies to the historiographical contribution of Renaissance historical drama. As Paulina Kewes has correctly stated, "the drama's contribution to

[4] White 1973.
[5] Ankersmit 2001.
[6] Munslow 2007, 64–79.
[7] Gallagher & Greenblatt 2000, 1–19.

transformation in the ways history was written and used [in the Renaissance] has gone largely unrecognized".[8]

The driving intention behind the present collection of articles is thus to establish a new basis for studying Renaissance dramatic historiography and the volume will hopefully encourage more work along the proposed lines. First of all, it can hopefully work as a kind of prolegomenon to a more comprehensive comparative study of European Renaissance historical drama. For different reasons, most of the articles presented here concern materials from England and Spain, but the approach can – as the articles on Busenello and Racine demonstrate – be applied to other contexts, including less explored dramatic cultures such as the Dutch Renaissance theatre (Vondel) or the German *Trauerspiel*. It could also be extended to other literary genres and text types, including, obviously, historical poetry (epic and lyric), but also, perhaps, genres traditionally considered non-aesthetic such as historical literature, travelogues, and diplomatic literature.

In the opening article, Ulla KALLENBACH discusses the English Renaissance concept of imagination in relation to historical stagings, examining the various epistemological and moral aspects of the debates surrounding history plays and their basis in Renaissance theories of cognition. The period's ambivalent attitude toward the mirroring of history can be traced back to the contemporaneous idea of the imagination as a fragile faculty within a precarious mental hierarchy that was always on the verge of collapsing, she argues.

David Hasberg ZIRAK-SCHMIDT's article examines Shakespeare's *Richard III* and shows how questions of ideology and historiography are discussed in the play's characterizations of Richard and Richmond. Focusing on Shakespeare's sources and the play's metatheatrical rhetoric, the article argues that both characters are represented in accordance with Tudor orthodoxy, yet the play's engagement with theatricality and metatheatrical language allows for an undogmatic approach to historical representations.

Per SIVEFORS's article investigates the metaliterary discourses that characterises Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*. Looking at the tension between the foreign and the vernacular, the public and the private, and the poetic and the historical, Sivefors argues that Marlowe privileges the artful over the historical. In doing so, Sivefors argues, Marlowe's play questions and moves away from both nationalistic representations of history and domesticated Latinity.

Bent HOLM examines the historiographical perspective of Shakespeare's *Othello* in light of the Battle of Lepanto (1571), focusing on the historical and metaphorical aspects of the image of the Turk in the depiction of both Venice, the Turks and the 'moor of Venice'. Holm analyzes how the actual event of

[8] Kewes 2006, 4–5.

the battle transformed into an apocalyptic narrative, which he terms a "historiographical mythologization", which again transformed into performative ritualized stagings or re-enactments.

Sofie KLUGE's article examines Lope de Vega's problem-oriented historiography of one of the milestones of Renaissance history: the discovery of the fourth continent by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Focus lies on how *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* exploits aesthetic and performative devices such as secondary dramatization and the literary dream in order to make its audience reflect on whether Columbus was a visionary figure, carrying God's word to the heathen, or in fact a raving madman who, inspired by demonic voices and visions, brought calamity on Spain through his fatal initiation of imperialism.

Kristoffer SCHMIDT's article examines Jean Racine's use of historical and literary sources in *Bajazet* and the play's rather adverse seventeenth-century reception in the light of the contemporaneous discussions of verisimilitude from the viewpoint of the historian. Studying the two different "historiographical" prefaces penned by Racine for his Ottoman play, both of which claim the play to be based on a true but unpublished account, Schmidt concludes that although the dramatist held psychological verisimilitude to be of prime importance and although he probably relied, directly or indirectly, on literary sources as well, he still held historical authenticity in high esteem and understood his drama to be historiographical.

Magnus Tessing SCHNEIDER, in his article, uncovers how *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (*The Coronation of Poppaea*, 1643) by librettist Gian Francesco Busenello and composer Claudio Monteverdi reflects the historiographical challenge posed by the 1623 discovery of *Secret History* by sixth-century Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea; a book which had vilified Emperor Justinian I and his wife Theodora. Schneider analyzes the central theme of unreliability of historical narratives in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, one of the first opera librettos to feature historical characters, by way of the opera's use of allegory, disguise and role doubling, which challenges the audience to adopt a critical stance when engaging with theatre and with the world of politics.

Christian DAHL's article examines the temporal ambiguity of Shakespeare's roman play *Julius Caesar*, which is seen to derive from the two different calendars that were in use during the Reformation: the Julian and the Gregorian. Drawing on Reinhart Koselleck's notion of "recursivity", the article shows how the recursive structure of *Julius Caesar* simultaneously stresses the cyclical dimensions of historical time and exposes the political dimensions of the calendar's repetitive nature.

In the volume's sole article on the Renaissance staging of sacred history, Rebeca SANMARTÍN BASTIDA examines the sixteenth-century Spanish visio-

nary Juana de la Cruz's dramatization of one of the crucial events of this history: the fall of Lucifer. She argues that the Spanish visionary's treatment of this event in *Auto de la Asunción* should be approached within the framework of the author's recurrent preoccupation, in various generic registers, with *angelomachia* – the world-defining battle of angels and demons – of which it offers an alternative, corrective historiography as compared to the official version of the day.

Finally, Sacramento ROSELLÓ-MARTÍNEZ's article on Lope de Vega's *El último godo* examines the playwright's contribution to the popular contemporaneous understanding of the key period in Spanish history known as the *Reconquista*: the period between the Umayyad conquest of Hispania in 711 and the fall of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada in 1492, retrospectively construed in Christian historiography as the Catholic "reconquest" of the Peninsula. Problematizing the play's allegedly unambiguous messianism and pondering the political nature of spectatorship, the article discusses the nature of the cultural and collective memory created by Lope.

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Sofie Kluge, Ulla Kallenbach & David Hasberg Zirak-Schmidt, editors of *Renæssanceforum* 13

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Feigning History:

The early modern imagination and the theatre

By Ulla Kallenbach

This article will examine the conception of imagination in relation to the theatrical mirroring of history in an early modern English context. While imagination was conceived as an essential cognitive capacity, it was at the same time also the most fragile mental faculty – like a mirror of glass in which strange shadows appeared – within a precarious mental hierarchy that was always on the verge of collapsing. Theories of poetics accordingly sought to establish imagination either as being in league with the superior faculties of reason and memory or conversely strived to demonstrate how it undermined them.

In *Advancement of Learning* (1605) philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626) set up a strict division between the disciplines of history, poetry and philosophy stating that: "The parts of human learning have reference to the three parts of Man's Understanding, which is the seat of learning: History to his Memory, Poesy to his Imagination, and Philosophy to his Reason."[1] While far from all thinkers set up similarly rigid divisions of disciplines of learning and corresponding cognitive faculties, they did share the – more or less – same cognitive model of separate mental faculties. In particular, the faculty of imagination was considered problematic. Both in its being the cognitive intermediary between sensation and reason and in its being the medium for feigning the historical reality as theatre and poetry.[2] In this article, I will discuss how the early modern theories of the imagination as a cognitive faculty conceived the transition from empirical, historical fact to theatrical feigning. One concern was the practice of feigning historical reality, another the impact of the theatrical, feigned representation on the minds of the spectators.

Feigning history

In the efforts to counter the numerous attacks on the theatre and dramatic poetry that surfaced during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the theatre's potential for working as an instructive medium for portraying English history

[1] Bacon 1962a, 329.

[2] 'Feigning', like 'fiction', derives from Latin *fingĕre*, i.e. to form or mould. As the *Oxford English Dictionary* entry elucidates, the notion of feigning not only involves a material sense, i.e. "to fashion, form, shape" but "to fashion fictitiously or deceptively."

and historical, heroic figures were highlighted as virtues of the stage. For example, in *An Apology for Actors* (1612), actor and playwright Thomas Heywood (c. 1570–1641) argued that:

> plays have made the ignorant more apprehensive, taught the unlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, instructed such as cannot read in the discovery of all our English chronicles: and what man have you now of that weak capacity that cannot discourse of any notable thing recorded even from William the Conqueror, nay from the landing of Brute, until this day, being possessed of their true use? For, because plays are writ with this aim and carried with this method, to teach the subjects' obedience to their king; to show the people the untimely ends of such as have moved tumults, commotions, and insurrections; and to present them with flourishing estate of such as live in obedience, exhorting them to allegiance, dehorting them from all traitorous and felonious stratagems.[3]

However, historical dramas notoriously played quite freely with the past and drew liberally from their sources. It makes little sense to speak of historical accuracy since the scale of correctness ranged from a relatively close adherence to the source to the downright invented. Shakespeare, in *Henry V* (c. 1599), for example, omitted several key aspects from Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577/1587), especially those involving the French side of the Battle of Agincourt, to produce an essentially English narrative that spoke to his own time. And a historical tragedy such as *Macbeth* (c. 1606) is a hybrid of two unrelated historical events which together form a narrative that was devised as to indicate the newly appointed King James I's heritage as well as the current political events in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot of 1604.[4] Fictionalising history thus involved a fusing of past as well as current events. This was, perhaps, a necessary move, since state censorship prohibited representations of, for instance, portrayals of living monarchs, catholic propaganda, and politically subversive plays – but not of political drama as such.[5]

Similarly, the only surviving sketch of a contemporary Shakespearean performance, the so-called Longleat manuscript or Peacham drawing (c. 1595), presumably depicting the first act of *Titus Andronicus* (see Figure 1),[6]

[3] Heywood 2004, 241. Heywood himself was the author of a two-part history play chronicling the life of the recently deceased Elizabeth I *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody; or The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth* (1605).

[4] For an analysis of imagination in *Macbeth*, see Kallenbach 2012.

[5] For a study of the censorship of early modern theatre and drama see Dutton 1991.

[6] The details and interpretations of the drawing are complicated, though. See e.g. Levin 2002.

demonstrates that theatrical performance involved a fusing of historical eras. The drawing shows the Gothic Queen Tamora, who was played by a young male actor, in a lavish Renaissance dress with Elizabethan embroidery pleading for the lives of her sons who are wearing costumes in classical style. Facing her is a laurel-crowned man, probably Titus Andronicus, in Roman attire and cuirass, while behind him, two soldiers in two different styles of armour can be observed – one in Elizabethan armour with a bonnet in Spanish style and a scimitar, the other in a German or Gothic 15th century uniform and helmet. Aaron, the dark-skinned moor, is wearing a Roman shirt with sleeves in Elizabethan fashion. The drawing accordingly displays a veritable patchwork of anachronistic and historically imprecise styles that clearly illustrates that the early modern theatre made no pretence of veracity, but rather functioned as an emblematic collage. The Peacham drawing in itself may also, as e.g. Richard Levin has pointed out, be "a 'composite representation' of two or more moments in the play" since it does not correspond fully to any one particular scene from *Titus Andronicus*, including the excerpt from the first act of the play which accompanies the drawing.[7]

Theatrical representation of history thus involved a fusing of a variety of sources and performative means. Imagination and its capacity for feigning lies at the heart of this.

Imagination and early modern faculty psychology

The early modern conception of the mind divided the cognitive faculties into three to five inner wits, each of which had its designated function.[8] This division of the mind usually made a distinction between imaginative, rational and recollective faculties, which were located in three ventricles (i.e. hollow cavities) of the brain. Bacon, as described above, counted three mental faculties – imagination, memory, and reason – while Robert Burton (1577–1640) in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) made a distinction between three 'inner senses' – common sense, phantasy, and memory.[9] Robert Fludd (1574–1637), in contrast, followed the model of Gregor Reisch's influential *Margarita Philosophica* (1503, Figure 2) and set up five faculties as seen in Figure 3.[10]

The cognitive process was commonly envisaged as follows: In the anterior ventricle, imagination copied, mirrored, or transformed sensory impressions received from the five 'outer' senses into mental images. The imagination was either, often inconsequently, labelled or subdivided into *sensus*

[7] Levin 2002, 329.

[8] For an extended analysis of the early modern imagination in both the cognitive, theatrical and dramaturgic context, see Kallenbach 2018, chapters 3–4.

[9] Burton 1977, 159.

[10] Fludd 1617, 171.

communis (common sense, which collected and ordered perceptions), *imaginatio* (imagination, which copied perceptions as *phantasmata*, i.e. mental images) and *phantasia* (phantasy of fancy, which could manipulate these mental images by dividing and combining them anew). The mental images were then passed on to the rational faculties, or sensible reason, located in the middle ventricle, and often subdivided into *cogitativa* and *aestimativa* (cognition and estimation). Whereas the ventricle that lodged imagination was connected to the physical senses, the rational faculty was connected to the divine, intellective world as Fludd's visualisation shows. Finally, the faculty of memory was located in the posterior ventricle, where mental images were stored or imprinted and from where they could later be retrieved.

This cognitive model was, however, an extremely precarious one, not the least due to the central role that imagination played in mediating between sensation and the intellect. Following Aristotle's assertions set forth in *De Anima* (*On the Soul*, c. 350 bc) that "[i]magination cannot occur without perception, nor supposition without imagination"[11] and that "the soul's never thinking without a mental picture,"[12] imagination was essential for rational thought, while no mental images could be created without sensory input. But, Aristotle had also warned, "[w]hile perceivings are always veridical, imaginings are for the most part false."[13] This precarious cognitive model was, for example, described by Fulke Greville (1554–1628) in *A Treatie of Humane Learning* (not published until 1633). Greville added to Aristotle's suspicion of imagination, however, a distrust in sensation. Firstly, he describes how sensation, while it is "Mans first instructor" that ought to "free him from deceipt," in fact "deceiues him most."[14] Then, he continues, "must th'Imagination from the sense|Be misinformed, while our affections cast|False shapes, and forms on their intelligence."[15] Moreover, imagination is so "shadowed with selfe-application|[a]s makes her pictures still too foule, or faire;|[n]ot like the life in lineament in the ayre."[16] In consequence, Greville concludes, "[e]ven through those instruments wherby she [comprehension] works,|Debility, misprision, imperfection lurkes."[17] Lastly, memory, the "Register of Sense|And mould of Arts […] Corrupted with disguis'd intelligence|Can yeeld no Images for mans [sic] instruction"[18] and the

[11] Aristotle 1986, 427b.
[12] Aristotle 1986, III.7, 413a.
[13] Aristotle 1986, 428a.
[14] Greville 1939, Stanza 5, 155.
[15] Greville 1939, Stanza 10, 156. For an account of the problems of visual sensation, see Clark 2007.
[16] Greville 1939, Stanza 10, 156.
[17] Greville 1939, Stanza 18, 158.
[18] Greville 1939, Stanza 14, 157.

understanding has "such a staine |From our corruption."[19] The entire line of cognition is thus characterised by an inherent uncertainty. While sensation was considered deceptive, imagination was conceived as inherently unruly, extremely powerful, and potentially dangerous. The unruliness of imagination involved its capacity for feigning. And it necessitated that reason acted as a guardian of the sound mind.

While imagination was not conceived as an originally creative, or inventive, capacity, but rather as a reproducing faculty,[20] it could, however, feign or re-create the images received by sensation or stored in memory. The subdivision of imagination, inherited from Medieval philosophy, into common sense, imagination and phantasy, was largely dissolved during the 16th century, making imagination the crucial and, as Stuart Clark points out, "single mediator between the incorporeal soul and the corporeal human body."[21] In consequence, rather than it being a capacity for copying sensory impressions, imagination became a capacity for transforming, or corrupting, sensations. This became all the more critical seeing that imagination was believed to be vulnerable to a variety of both internal and external influences – ranging from disease to devilry – that would, in turn, obstruct the rational faculty. For example, Thomas Wright described in *The Passions of the Mind in General* (1601), how the passions of the body might disrupt the mind by triggering "the imagination [to put] greene spectacles before the eyes of our witte, to make it see nothing but greene."[22] The autonomous actions of the imagination were, accordingly, to be suppressed, or regulated, by reason. This was stressed by e.g. Burton, who emphasised, that "this phantasie of ours be a subordinate faculty to reason, and should be ruled by it."[23] The exertion of the authority of reason over imagination was a warrant for the upholding of order, not only of the mind but also of the state by subduing the political imagination. As Bacon warned:

> Neither is the Imagination simply and only a messenger; but is invested with or at leastwise usurpeth no small authority in itself, besides the duty of the message. For it was well said by *Aristotle*: *That the mind hath over the body that commandment which the lord hath over a bondman; but, that reason hath over the imagination that commandment,*

[19] Greville 1939, Stanza 15, 157.

[20] "Elizabethan doctrine pictured imagination as almost literally cutting up its images into parts and then rejoining them into forms that never exist in the external world of nature." Rossky 1958, 58.

[21] Clark 2007, 43.

[22] Wright 1604, 51.

[23] Burton 1800, 133f.

> *which a magistrate hath over a free citizen*; who may come also to rule in his turne.[24]

The misgivings about the capacity of imagination to corrupt the mind, to misrepresent reality, and to disrupt political stability were mirrored the aesthetic debate. The danger being that stirring the imagination would not only infect, affect and destabilise the mind of the spectator but also public order.[25]

Mirrors and shadows

The metaphor of the mirror, or glass, was regularly used to describe both the faculty of imagination (or the mind) and theatrical representation.[26] The reflections of the mirror of imagination were described as likenesses or shadows – again a metaphor often applied to stage actors. For example, Fludd described how imagination "beholds not the true pictures of corporeal or sensory things, but their likenesses and as it were, their shadows,"[27] while Shakespeare let the character Robin describe actors as shadows in the epilogue to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "If we shadows have offended,|Think but this, and all is mended."[28]

George Puttenham (1529–1590), in *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), makes the comparison that "fantasy may be resembled to a glass," followed by the caution that "some be false glasses and show things otherwise than they be indeed, and others right as they be indeed, neither fairer nor fouler, nor greater nor smaller."[29] Greville, in similar terms, describes the faculty of imagination as "[a] glasse, wherein the obiect of our Sense|Ought to reflect true height, or declination."[30] And Fludd (see Figure 3) conceived the world of imagination, the *Mundus imaginabilis*, as a shadow world with the *Umbra terræ* (a shadow of earth) mirroring the sensible world, *Mundus sensibilis*.

While ideally, imagination would mirror the factual reality truthfully, this was, as seen above, not always the case. Accordingly, Puttenham advised that:

> There be again of these glasses that show things exceeding fair and comely, others that show figures very monstrous and ill-favored. Even so is the fantastical part of man (if it be not disordered) a representer of

[24] Bacon 1962a, 382. In consequence, imagining treason was punishable by law since 1571 when a law had been passed "which defined a traitor as one who would 'compass, imagine, invent, devise or intend' harm to the Queen." Butler 2008, 2, see also Lemon 2006.

[25] See Butler 2008.

[26] The conception of imagination as a mirror derives from Plato's view of the sensible world as a copying of the eternal forms or ideas.

[27] Cited in Warner 2006, 127.

[28] Shakespeare 2008, 5.1:414–15.

[29] Puttenham 2007, 110.

[30] Greville 1939, Stanza 10, 156.

> the best, most comely, and beautiful images or appearances of things to the soul and according to their very truth. If otherwise, then doth it breed chimeras and monsters in man's imaginations, and not only in his imaginations, but also in all his ordinary actions and life which ensues.[31]

And in *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon warned that: "the mind of man is far from the nature of a clear and equal glass, wherein the beams of things should reflect according to their true incidence; nay, it is rather like an enchanted glass, full of superstition and imposture, if it be not delivered and reduced."[32] A warning that was repeated in *The New Organon* (1620) where Bacon states that "the human understanding is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly, distorts the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it."[33] The mirror of imagination was thus more likely to be a distorting, and potentially dangerous, mirror.

The theatre too was likened to a mirror, most famously, perhaps, in Hamlet's statement that "the purpose of playing" is to hold "the mirror up to nature."[34] To anti-theatrical critics such as Stephen Gosson (1554–1624), whose *School of Abuse* and *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (written in 1579 and 1582 respectively) were among the most influential treatises in the late 16th century, theatrical imitation posed a real danger, because, Gosson (who was a former actor and playwright) argued, "the expressing of vice by imitation brings us by the shadow, to the substance of the same."[35]

Even the most celebrated defence of poetry, poet and courtier Philip Sidney's (1554–1586) *Apology for Poetry* (1595), conceived the poetic representation as a distorted or, perhaps more precisely, modified image, albeit in a much more affirmative sense. Poetry, he famously argues, feigns the world "better than Nature bringeth forth," and more beautifully, more truthfully, or of a higher truth, than the empirical world renders it; "Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden."[36] What is more, since the poet does not make any pretences of presenting truth, but offers a feigned re-presentation of a higher truth, Sidney claims that "of all the writers under the sun the poet is the least liar, and, though he would, as a poet can scarcely be a liar."[37] Hence, Sidney contends that, in contrast to the historian,

> for the poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth. For, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false; so as the other artists,

[31] Puttenham 2007, 110.
[32] Bacon 1962a, 394–95.
[33] Bacon 1962b, 54.
[34] Shakespeare 1982, III.2, 22.
[35] Gosson 2004a, 108.
[36] Sidney 1977, 100.
[37] Sidney 1977, 123.

> and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies. But the poet (as I said before) never affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes. He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into him a good invention; in truth, not labouring to tell you what is or is not, but what should or should not be. And therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not.[38]

The poet thus makes no claims for an empirical truth, and – transferring this argument to the stage – neither should the spectator believe or seek any empirically truthful representation. Rather, Sidney argues for an ideal truthfulness. As such, the ideal, feigned representation of *Macbeth* evolving from the two unrelated accounts of Scottish history, would be more truthful than the actual accounts of the historical events.

Greville's *A Treatie of Humane Learning* is an example of the deeply ambiguous problem that imagining and mirroring posed. Firstly, in stanza 34, he states that the humane arts are but "[s]eas of errors" and wherein one "[o]f truth finde onely shadowes, and no ground."[39] Later on, he first seemingly dismisses the purposefulness of both music and poetry which are characterised in stanza 111 as "Arts of Recreation" – which is "idle mens profession" concerned merely with "contentation."[40] How, Greville rhetorically asks in conclusion to stanza 112, "*if the matter be in Nature vile,| […] can it be made pretious by a stile?*"[41] While Greville here seems to deem the arts futile with no powers to "enrich the Wit,"[42] the following stanzas seem to turn the argument around with the statement that "in this Life, both these play noble parts."[43] And in stanza 114, Greville grants that poetry, albeit only a shadow of truth, may transform into an instructive medium via the "glasse" of poetic representation:

> And like a Maker, her creations raise,
> On lines of truth, it beautifies the same;
> And while it seemeth onely but to please,
> Teacheth vs order vnder pleasures name;
> Which in a glasse, shows Nature how to fashion
> Her selfe againe, by ballancing of passion.[44]

[38] Sidney 1977, 123–24.
[39] Greville 1939, Stanza 34, 162.
[40] Greville 1939, Stanza 111, 181.
[41] Greville 1939, Stanza 112, 182.
[42] Greville 1939, Stanza 111, 81.
[43] Greville 1939, Stanza 113, 182.
[44] Greville 1939, Stanza 114, 182.

As Maria Philmus (among others) has observed in her study of Greville, "the justification of the two arts [music and poetry] on moral grounds that always formed a primary modality of theoretical treatments of them in the period."[45] This justification relied on the faculties of reason and memory to discipline imagination.

History, philosophy, and poetry

Puttenham turned to memory, claiming that: "There is nothing in man of all the potential parts of his mind (reason and will except) more noble or more necessary to the active life than memory" since memory aids "sound judgment."[46] The events of the past he regards as instructive as examples for future actions.[47] Therefore, Puttenham argues, "the poesy historical is of all other – next the divine – most honorable and worthy."[48] Because the poet may "fashion" the historical material "at his pleasure" Puttenham reasons that "more excellent examples may be feigned in one day by a good wit, than many ages through man's frailty are able to put in ure."[49] Puttenham further makes a distinction between three sorts of histories:

> wholly true and wholly false and a third holding part of either, but for honest recreation and good example they were all of them[50]

Puttenham thus allows for a great deal of artistic, creative license (judging from the Peacham drawing the theatre seems to have employed the third variation), and in the conclusion of *The Art of English Poesy*, he praises the poet's "sharp and quick invention, helped by a clear and bright fantasy or imagination."[51]

Sidney, conversely, would claim that it was in the philosophical character of poetry, that made it purposeful, beneficial and appealing to reason. The philosopher's knowledge, Sidney states, "standeth so upon the abstract and general," whereas "the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be but to what is, to the particular truth of things and not to the general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine."[52] The poet in contrast, Sidney argues, is superior to the philosopher, in that he "coupleth the general notion with the

[45] Philmus 1999, 153. See also Rossky 1958.
[46] Puttenham 2007, 128.
[47] Puttenham 2007, Chapter 19.
[48] Puttenham 2007, 129.
[49] Puttenham 2007, 129.
[50] Puttenham 2007, 130. Puttenham mentions, amongst others, Homer and Xenophon as writers who employed the latter form.
[51] Puttenham 2007, 386
[52] Sidney 1977, 107.

particular example."[53] And, he continues, "where the historian, bound to tell things as things were, cannot be liberal (without he will be poetical) of a perfect pattern […] a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example"[54] Sidney here draws on Aristotle, who had argued that the poet needn't adhere strictly to the actual truth. For example, he states in the *Poetics* (c. 335 bc) that the poet might represent not only "the kind of things which were or are the case;" but also "the kind of things that people say and think; the kind of things that ought to be the case."[55] Hence, in contrast to the historian, who "relates actual events" the poet represents "the kinds of things that might occur."[56] The poet, according to Aristotle, thus goes beyond the actual reality in order to represent, as Stephen Halliwell has put it,

> an imagined world […] in which the underlying designs of causality, so often obscured in the world as we encounter it, will be manifest.[57]

Sidney further notes that "The lawyer sayeth what men have determined. The historian, what men have done," but, he proceeds:

> if this imagining of matters be so fit for the imagination, then must the historian needs surpass, who bringeth you images of true matters, such as indeed were done, and not such as fantastically or falsely may be suggested to have been done.[58]

Arguing for the superiority of poetry over history, and for its being the more philosophical art of the two, Sidney (referring again to Aristotle) states that:

> Truly, Aristotle himself in his discourse of poesy, plainly determineth this question, saying, that poetry is *philosophoteron* and *spoudateron*, that is to say, it is more philosophical and more studiously serious than history. His reason is, because poesy dealeth with *katholou*, that is to say, with the universal consideration, and the history with *kathekaston*, the particular: 'now', saith he, 'the universal weighs what is fit to be said or done, either in likelihood or necessity (which the poesy considereth in his imposed names), and the particular only marks whether Alchiabiades did or suffered this or that.'[59]

However, Sidney is also cautious that poets may abuse the feigning means of poetry: "For I will not deny but that man's wit may make Poesy, which should be *eikastike*, which some learned have defined, 'figuring forth good things',

[53] Sidney 1977, 107.
[54] Sidney 1977, 110.
[55] Aristotle 1995, 1460b.
[56] Aristotle 1995, 1451a.
[57] Halliwell 1986, 135.
[58] Sidney 1977, 109.
[59] Sidney 1977, 109.

to be *phantastike*, which doth contrariwise infect the fancy with unworthy objects."[60] If abused, Sidney warns,

> though I yield that Poesy may not only be abused, but that being abused, by the reason of his sweet charming force, it can do more hurt than any army of words.[61]

Sidney refers here to Plato's distinction between forms of imitation, *eikasia* and *phantasia* concerning likenesses and appearances respectively. Whereas *eikasia* signifies a 'passive' mirroring, Plato's *phantasia* refers to that which "appears, but is not like, an appearance."[62] Consequently, Plato identifies "two forms of the image-making art," namely "the likeness-making and the fantastic."[63] In Sidney's argument, the poetry which is *eikastike* is thus the didactic, instructive feigning subservient to reason, whereas the *phantastike* poetry is the unruly, harmful feigning. Puttenham had likewise made a distinction between the disorderly and orderly imagination, where on the one hand "the evil and vicious disposition of the brain hinders the sound judgment and discourse of man with busy and disordered fantasies," while, on the other hand, the imagination which is "well affected, […] very formal, and […] well proportioned" lets, "as by a glass or mirror, [be] represented unto the soul all manner of beautiful visions, whereby the inventive part of the mind is so much helped, as without it no man could devise any new or rare thing."[64] So while the feigned, poetic representation was in this line of argument precisely *not* an accurate representation but one that – in its idealised and didactic orderliness like a mirror that beautifies – was structured by and appealed to reason.

Turning to Bacon, he too, describes poetry as an imitation of history that "represents actions as if they were present, whereas History represents them as past"[65] and accordingly defines historical drama as "Feigned History."[66]

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[60] Sidney 1977, 125.
[61] Sidney 1977, 125.
[62] Plato 1987, 236b.
[63] Plato 1987, 236c.
[64] Puttenham 2007, 109.
[65] Bacon 1962c, 315.
[66] Bacon 1962a, 343, see also 1963, 503. Bacon further states that: "The division of poesy which is aptest in the propriety thereof, (besides those divisions which are common unto it with history, as feigned chronicles, feigned lives; and the appendices of history, as feigned epistles, feigned orations, and the rest;) is into Poesy Narrative, Representative, and Allusive. The Narrative is a mere imitation of history, with the excesses before remembered; choosing for subject commonly wars and love, rarely state, and sometimes pleasure or mirth. Representative is as a visible history, and is an image of actions as if they were present, as history is of actions in nature as they are, (that is) past. Allusive or Parabolical is a narration applied only to express some special purpose or conceit" Bacon 1962a, 344.

Like Sidney, Bacon characterises poetry by its limitless possibilities for feigning, stating that: "In philosophy the mind is bound to things; in poesy it is released from that bond, and wanders forth, and feigns what it pleases."[67] Bacon, however, in contrast to Sidney, was deeply suspicious of imagination and poetic representation. "The use of this Feigned History" Bacon says, "hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it."[68] Bacon concedes that, as feigned history, poetry is able to represent the historical events better and more justly than the reality, which is "ordinary" and imperfect, and thereby to satisfy "the mind of man" more completely:

> because the acts or events of true history have not that magnitude which satisfieth the mind of man, poesy feigneth acts and events greater and more heroical; because true history propoundeth the successes and issues of actions not so agreeable to the merits of virtue and vice, therefore poesy feigns them more just in retribution, and more according to revealed providence; because true history representeth actions and events more ordinary and less interchanged, therefore poesy endueth them with more rareness, and more unexpected and alternative variations. […] And therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shews of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things.[69]

Hence, he acknowledges that poetry has "had access and estimation in rude times and barbarous regions, where other learning stood excluded."[70] But whereas Sidney strived to align reason and imagination, Bacon conversely aligns reason and history. As Jonathan Dollimore notes, "Bacon retains the Aristotelian categories of poetry and history, but effectively *reverses* their priority."[71] To Bacon, as was seen above, imagination was at all times to be under the control of, rather than in line with, reason.

Imagination, feigning and the hazards of theatrical spectatorship

That the performances of drama on stage might prompt imagination to disrupt the control of reason over the mind of the was a frequent point of attack in the numerous antitheatrical treaties of the late 16th and early 17th century.[72] The misgivings of theatrical feigning were abundant: The theatre distorted reality

[67] Bacon 1963, 503.
[68] Bacon 1962a, 343.
[69] Bacon 1962a, 343.
[70] Bacon 1962a, 344.
[71] Dollimore 1984, 76.
[72] See Barish 1981.

by staging fictitious events, the actors promoted falseness by impersonating fictive and historical characters – masking their true faces behind toxic make-up.[73] Male actors distorted their gender by posing as female characters. Like the infection of the mind could spread and disrupt society at large, the "players of interludes" were likened to a harmful "pestilence" that could, John Northbrooke declared in his 1577 *A Treatise against Dicing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes, with Other Idle Pastimes*, not only infect the mind of the spectator, but indeed also "infect a commonwealth."[74] Theatregoing, then, rendered the mind of the spectator extremely vulnerable.

One argument against the theatre was that the mind of the spectator might be infected by witnessing the feigned performance and its profanities. In the theatre, as for example Thomas Beard, a puritan theologian, argued that:

> The ears of young folk are there polluted with many filthy and dishonest speeches; their eyes are there infected with many lascivious and unchaste gestures and countenances; and their wits are there stained.[75]

Gosson too argued that imitation and impersonation could cause damage to the mind and that "poets in the theaters [could] wound the conscience" of the spectator via the imagination. The theatre, because it entered the body and mind "by the privy entries of the ear" would "slip down into the heart, and with gunshot of affection gall the mind, where reason and virtue should rule the roost" and thus disrupt the mental (and subsequently also the official) hierarchy.[76] In the theatre, the space of blatantly feigned representation, the mirror of imagination turned into "*A Mirrour of Monsters*" as the title of one treatise read.[77]

Counter to such claims, the defences of poetry argued that poets, via their controlled, delightful and didactic feigning, persuaded the spectator to goodness and thus achieved, as Sidney puts it, "the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue."[78] Sidney's mirror would be a mirror of perfection, the feigned, poetic image offering a higher perfection, superior to the earthly reality.[79]

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[73] Karim-Cooper 2006.
[74] Northbrooke 2004, 10.
[75] Beard 2004, 167.
[76] Gosson 2004b, 25.
[77] Rankins 1587.
[78] Sidney 1977, 113.
[79] See e.g. Sidney 1977, 104: "[t]his purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of judgment, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning […] the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of."

Regardless of whether poetic feigning was considered capable of conveying a truthful, instructive image or a deceitful, corrupting representation, the imagination as an essential, potent, but fragile, unstable and deceptive capacity was at the core. The cognitive model of the mind – and the conception of imagination as a brittle and distorting mirror in which shadowy images were reflected – accordingly played an important role in shaping the debate of poetic, theatrical representation and the feigning of reality, including the representation of historical events and characters. A debate that sought to establish the imagination and its poetic feigning either as being in league with the superior faculties of reason and memory or conversely strived to demonstrate how it undermined them. The theatre as a mirror for reflecting history could thus be either an idealising mirror that feigned history in a more truthful mode than the actual events could convey – or a monstrous mirror, that perverted reality by showing false fabrications that presumed to convey historical verity. Even to the proponents of the poetic imagination such as Sidney, it was clear that imagination had to be kept in check. The precarious mental hierarchy was always on the verge of collapsing.

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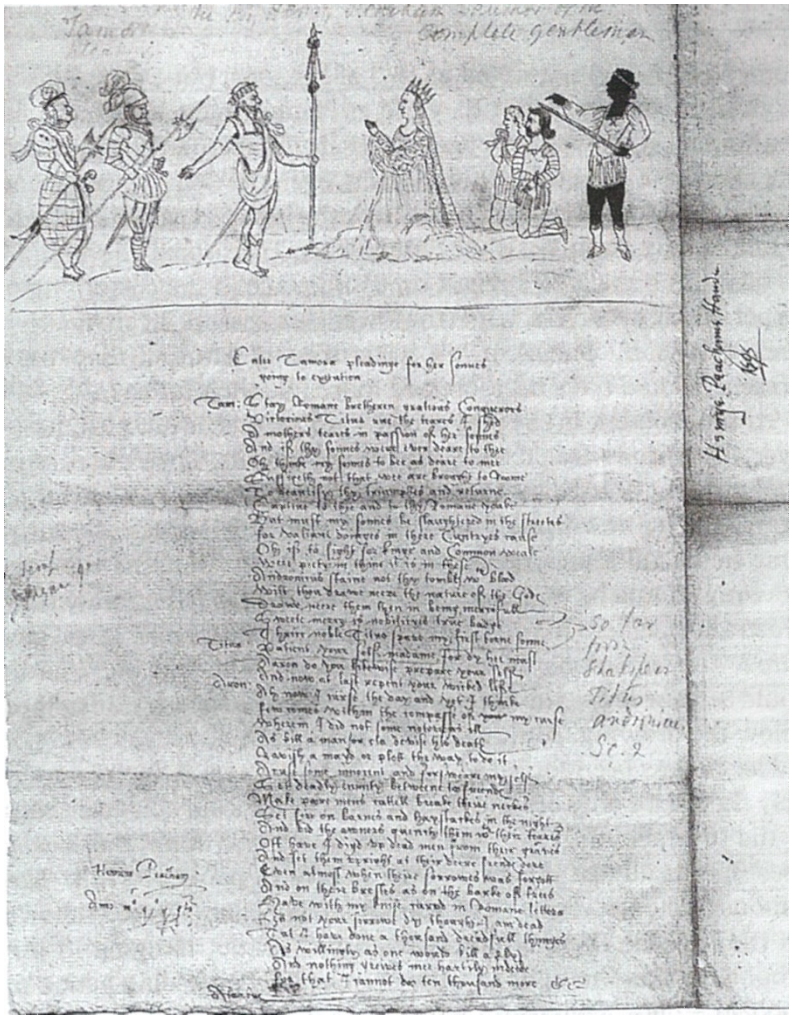

Fig. 1

The Longleat manuscript, or the Peacham Drawing (c. 1595), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

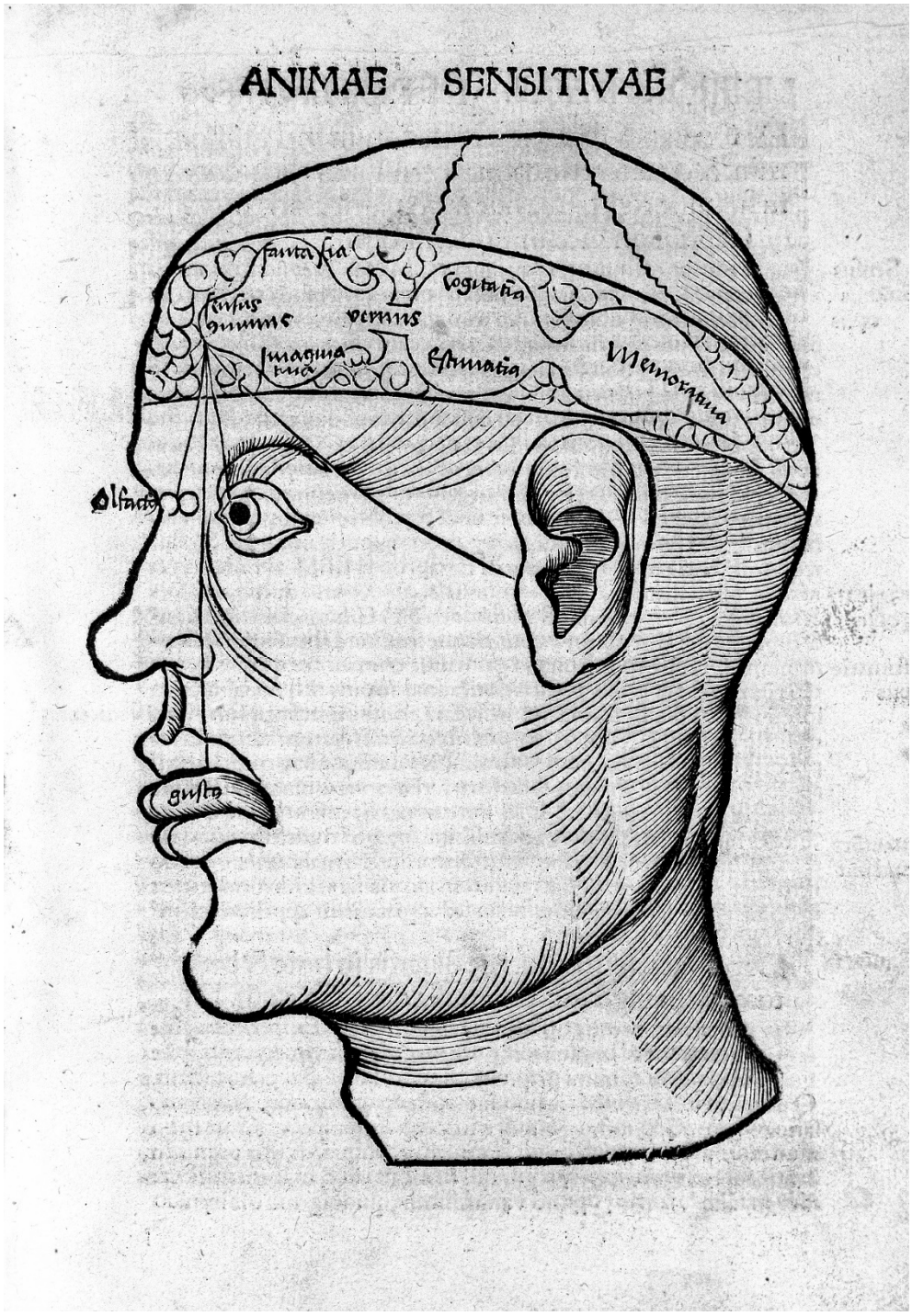

Fig. 2

The faculties of the mind, located in the three ventricles, Gregor Reisch, *Margarita Philosophica* (1503), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 3

Robert Fludd's visualisation of the mental faculties and the Mundus imaginabilis, the shadow world of the imagination in *Utriusque Cosmi Maioris Scilicet Et Minoris Metaphysica, Physica Atque Technica Historia* (1617), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

HISTRIONIC HISTORY:

Theatricality and Historiography in Shakespeare's *Richard III*

By David Hasberg Zirak-Schmidt

This article focuses on Shakespeare's history drama Richard III, *and investigates the ambiguous intersections between early modern historiography and aesthetics expressed in the play's use of theatrical and metatheatrical language. I examine how Shakespeare sought to address and question contemporary, ideologically charged representations of history with an analysis of the characters of Richard and Richmond, and the overarching theme of theatrical performance. By employing this strategy, it was possible for Shakespeare to represent the controversial character of Richard undogmatically while intervening in and questioning contemporary discussions of historical verisimilitude.*

Historians have long acknowledged the importance of the early modern history play in the development of popular historical consciousness.[1] This is particularly true of England, where the history play achieved great commercial and artistic success throughout the 1590s. The Shakespearean history play has attracted by far the most attention from cultural and literary historians, and is often seen as the archetype of the genre. *The tragedie of kinge RICHARD the THIRD with the death of the Duke of CLARENCE*, or simply *Richard III*, is probably one of the most frequently performed of Shakespeare's history plays. The play dramatizes the usurpation and short-lived reign of the infamous, hunchbacked Richard III – the last of the Plantagenet kings, who had ruled England since 1154 – his ultimate downfall, and the rise of Richmond, the future king Henry VII and founder of the Tudor dynasty. To the Elizabethan public, there was no monarch in recent history with such a dark reputation as Richard III: usurpation, tyranny, fratricide, and even incest were among his many alleged crimes, and a legacy of cunning dissimulation and cynical Machiavellianism had clung to him since his early biographers' descriptions of him. From the viewpoint of Tudor historians such as Edward Hall or Raphael Holinshed, Richard's reign and defeat could be read only as divine providence: Richard was England's punishment for Richard II's deposition, and the Tudors represented the restoration of legitimate authority.

[1] For instance, see Ribner 1957 or Levy 1967.

Although scholars have commented on the many ironic disruptions of Tudor ideology at work in *Richard III*, the relationship between theatricality, ideology, and the play's historiography has not yet been satisfactorily addressed. Shakespeare's Richard is a remarkably theatrical creation – simultaneously captivating and horrific. *Richard III*'s reliance on theatricality and metatheatrical rhetoric calls attention to the deeply ambiguous and central intersections of history, Tudor ideology, and theatrical representation: by constantly referring to the theatre, *Richard III* exposes the function of ideology in historical representations. Beginning with a brief presentation of the various ways the historiography of Shakespeare's first tetralogy has been conceptualized, I examine the convergence of early modern historiography, ideology, and aesthetics expressed in *Richard III*'s use of theatrical and metatheatrical rhetoric. Focusing on two scenes in particular – Richard and Buckingham's play-within-the-play and Richmond's accession speech – this article argues that Shakespeare uses theatricality in order to question contemporary ideological representations of history.

Shakespeare's history plays have been the object of extensive interest to literary and cultural historians. One of the main points of contention among scholars relates to the ideological foundations of Shakespeare's historiography. Put simply, the central question is whether the Shakespearean history play is propagandistic in its representation of English history, or whether it engages more critically with contemporary political questions. The first viewpoint is often attributed to the 'Old Historicism' of E.M.W. Tillyard, and the latter is often attributed to the New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt, Johnathan Dollimore, and others.[2] Tillyard argues that Shakespeare follows and confirms the dominant Tudor ideology of his time, often referred to later as the Tudor myth.[3] According to this view, history is a grand, providential narrative, describing the loss of legitimate authority with Henry IV's deposition of Richard II, the tumultuous period of civil wars, and the ultimate rise of the Tudor dynasty with Henry VII's defeat of Richard III in 1485. In this interpretative framework, the Wars of the Roses and the rise of the monstrous Richard III are seen as God's punishment of England. The rise of the Tudors is then framed as a return to order and legitimate authority. Thus, the Tudor myth proposes a view of history which is strongly influenced by divine guidance and providence: history is essentially predestined, and historical persons act in accordance with the greater divine framework.

From the 1960s onwards, literary historians have questioned Shakespeare's conformity with the Tudor myth and Tudor ideology, and

[2] For instance Greenblatt 1988 and Dollimore 1989.

[3] See Tillyard 1944, especially 320–21. Ribner agrees with Tillyard in his assessment of the second tetralogy, see Ribner 1957, 151.

Tillyard's reading of the Shakespearean history plays has been thoroughly criticized. Literary historians have since praised the Shakespearean history play for its complex, undogmatic, critical, humanistic, and/or subversive historiography.[4] However, most scholarship has focused on the second tetralogy (i.e. *Richard II*, *Henry IV part 1 & 2*, and *Henry V*), leaving the first tetralogy (i.e. *Henry VI part 1, 2, & 3* and *Richard III*) less explored. One of the most important studies of Shakespeare's history plays remains Phyllis Rackin's seminal *Stages of History* (1990). Here, Rackin argues for the presence of what she terms a 'Machiavellian view' of historical causation at work in Shakespeare's history plays. According to Rackin, Machiavellian history is a view of historical causation which emphazises human agency and individuals' ability to shape and control the unfolding of history.[5] The Machiavellian understanding of history is opposed to the theological and providential historical thinking of the Medieval period. Rackin claims that the *Henry VI* plays epitomise the Machiavellian philosophy of history in the Shakespearean canon, since the three plays dramatize the disintegration of chivalry, feudalism, and belief in a divine order. Consequentially, this leads to a break with providentialism. However, Rackin is rather dismissive of *Richard III*, claiming that:

> *Richard III* offers a neat, conventional resolution to the problem of historical causation. All the cards have been stacked in advance, and the entire play reads like a lesson in providential history.[6]

It is hard to deny the presence and importance of providence and divine retribution in the rhetoric and dramaturgy of *Richard III*, which, understandably, has led many scholars to conclude that the play's approach to history and historiography was swayed by Tudor ideology. However, the sharp division between apologetic and propagandistic, on the one hand, and critical and/or subversive, on the other, that characterises critical approaches to Shakespeare's history drama, is damaging to a nuanced understanding of *Richard III*. In fact, *Richard III* is a play that is neither exclusively propagandistic nor critical/subversive: it is both, simultaneously. I intend to reveal some of the play's dynamics and ambiguities.

Representing Richard: Historical and literary sources

Many scholars agree that the main purpose and use of history in early modern England was to produce *exampla*, morally exemplary and instructive tales for

[4] For instance, see Greenblatt 1988, Leggat 1988, Watson 1990, Rackin 1991, Pugliatti 1996, Walsh 2009, Parvini 2012, and Bezio 2015.

[5] See Rackin 1990, especially 40–85.

[6] Rackin 1990, 63–64.

the reader to either imitate or oppose.[7] As the Tudor villain *par excellence*, Richard III's story was a rich source for illustrating the dangers of corrupt rule and tyrannical power. The two most important early Tudor chronicles of the reign and life of Richard III were Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia*[8] and Sir Thomas More's *History of Richard III*.[9] Although the largely providential narrative of the *Historia* was undoubtedly highly influential,[10] More's *History* had the more substantial effect on Shakespeare.[11] More writes that Richard was "little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard-favoured of visage", and his birth was no less bizarre, as "he came into the world with the feet forward (as men be borne outward) and, as the fame runneth, also not untoothed...".[12] Short, ugly, hunch-backed, deformed; in short, Richard was born a monster. These physical deformities were later copied by Hall and Holinshed,[13] and incorporated into their own works.[14] Shakespeare frequently mirrors this physical description of Richard, having various characters describe him as a

[7] See Pugliatti 1996. It is worth noting that English history writing in the 16th and 17th centuries was in no way a homogenous genre; instead, it was characterized by many different subgenres, intellectual currents, and historiographic schools – for instance humanistic, antiquarian, and providential – whose methodologies were very different. See Levy 1967, Kamps 2003, and Woolf 2005 for lengthier discussions of early modern English historiography and its intellectual origins. See Grafton 2007 and Schiffmann 2011 for a European perspective.

[8] The *Historia* was commissioned by Henry VII, and the first version was finished between 1512 and 1513, but not published until 1534. It was revised and expanded in two later editions that were published in 1546 and 1555.

[9] More wrote two versions of the *History*, one in English and one in Latin. The *History* was probably composed between 1512 and 1519, but for unknown it reasons remained unfinished at the time of More's death in 1535.

[10] Although Vergil's *Historia* does indeed promote a providential view of history, Hanham 1975 argues against the tendency to discredit Vergil as a Tudor propagandist. See Hanham 1975, 126–29.

[11] For a detailed study of the similarities, parallels, and differences between Shakespeare's and More's conceptions of Richard, see Hallett & Hallett 2011.

[12] More 2005, 10.

[13] Here, I refer to Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548), whose title implies its strong providential tendencies, and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577). As is commonly known, these two works were the prime sources for Shakespeare's history plays. Anderson also notes Richard Grafton's *Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* (1563) and John Stow's *Annales, or a Generale Chronicle of England from Brute until the present yeare of Christ 1580* (1580) as another possible source. See Anderson 1984, 110. For an exhaustive study of the sources of Shakespeare's early history plays, see Goy-Blanquet 2003.

[14] Pugliatti states that "For the Tudor historian, history-writing was not the outcome of enquiry; rather, it almost implied the obligation not to enquire further once what was taken to be the acceptable tradition was established. Almost invariably, writing about history was considered a part of re-writing and telling a matter of re-telling." Pugliatti 1996, 32.

"foul lump of deformity",[15] an "elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog', and as a "slave of nature and the son of hell".[16] The strange circumstances of Richard's birth described by More are also paraphrased in *Henry VI, part 3* by Richard himself:

> I came into the world with my legs forward.
> ...
> The midwife wondered and the women cried,
> 'O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!'
> And so I was, which plainly signified
> That I should snarl, and bite and play the dog.
> Then, since the heavens that have shaped my body so,
> Let hell *make* crook'd my mind to answer it.[17]

Here, Richard explicitly makes clear what is implicit in More's description of his monstrous birth and physical deformities: that his deformity and evil nature are directly linked.[18] This connection between his physical and psychologocial deformity may also be traced back to More's *History*. Moreover, Richard presents himself as morally determined by his deformity, yet paradoxically free enough to choose evil ("let hell *make* crook'd my mind to answer it").[19] Concerning Richard's psychological nature, More writes:

> He was close and secret, a deep dissimuler: lowly of countenance, arrogant of heart; outwardly companable where he inwardly hated, not letting to kiss whom he thought to kill; dispiteous and cruel, not for

[15] *Richard III* 1.2.57.
[16] Ibid. 1.3.227, 1.3.229.
[17] *Henry VI*, part 5.6.71–79, emphasis added.
[18] This description is essentially an example of the body politic of the medieval and renaissance periods, which Ernst Kantorowicz has famously analysed. See Kantorowicz 1997. Marjorie Garber argues that Richard's deformity is a reflection and metahistorical commentary on the distortive process of the writing of history: "Richard is not only deformed, his deformity is itself a deformation. His twisted and misshapen body encodes the whole strategy of history as a necessary deforming and *un*forming – with the object of *re*forming – the past. … Created by a similar process of ideological and polemical distortion, Richard's deformity is a figment of rhetoric, a figure of abuse, a catachresis masquerading as metaphor." See Garber 1987 35, 36.
[19] In his 1916 essay, titled "Some Character-Types Met with in Psychoanalytic Work", Freud defines a personality type he calls 'the exceptions'. The exception is a person who, owing to a traumatic event in early childhood, does not feel that he or she is bound by the same moral constraints that apply to others. As an example of this personality type, Freud mentions Richard, stating that he is an "enormous magnification of something we find in ourselves as well. We all think we have reason to reproach Nature and our destiny for congenital and infantile disadvantages; we all demand reparation for early wounds to our narcissism, our self-love". Freud 1957, 314. Freud's essay presents some valuable insights into the psychological mechanism of Richard, but also gives interesting conclusions concerning the identification dynamic at work between Richard and the audience.

> evil will alway, but ofter for ambition, and either for the surety or increase of his estate. Friend and foe was muchwhat indifferent: where his advantage grew, he spared no man's death whose life withstood his purpose.[20]

The description of Richard as a dissembling, ambitious, and cruel king proved very enduring, and it gained further traction over time. One of the reasons for this is the connection between Richard, deceit, and dissimulation. The concept of dissimulation was politically and ethically problematic, and it occupied a central position in many early modern historiographies, political theories, and history plays.[21] Though this was the case in most of Europe, it was especially present in Elizabethan England, where religious unrest and political conspiracies posed a continuous threat to the country's security and stability. Many of the negative responses to the use of dissimulation derive from its association with the writings of, or rather, with the popular understanding of, the Italian humanist and political thinker, Niccolò Machiavelli.[22] Chapter 28 of the herostratically famous *The Prince* (*Il principe*),

[20] More 2005, 12.

[21] The word *dissimulation* signifies a specific form of deception, in which an individual conceals his or her thoughts or motives from others by remaining silent, by telling half-truths, or speaking or acting hypocritically. The word is closely related to 'simulation', which indicated a more devious or sinister act of deception, in which one directly and consciously lied about, or misrepresented oneself. However, the two words were often used interchangeably or synonymously during the 16th and 17th centuries. In the essay *On Simulation and Dissimulation*, from the 1625 edition of the *Essays*, Francis Bacon distinguishes among "three degrees of this hiding and veiling of a man's self": secrecy, dissimulation, and simulation – the most problematic of the three, since it seeks to hide "a mind that hath some main faults...". In his treatment of the concepts, Bacon warns about the consequences of a reputation for dishonesty, but he nevertheless acknowledges the necessity of secrecy: "The best composition and temperature is to have openness in fame and opinion; secrecy in habit; dissimulation in seasonable use; and a power to feign, if there be no remedy." See Bacon 1962, 17, 18, 19. It is also necessary to note that the use of dissimulation was in no way limited to the political sphere. As a social practice, dissimulation was widely practised by various religious minorities during the 16th and 17th centuries as a way of avoiding persecution, see Zagorin 1990. Dissimulation was also a useful concept for strategic self-representation, as a way of avoiding oppressive political power, see Snyder 2009 and Cavaillé 2002.

[22] The early reception of Machiavelli's work is very extensive and complex and thus has been the object of numerous volumes of scholarly work. In England and France, Machiavelli was initially met with hostility and condemned as irreligious and amoral. However, Machiavelli had a significant number of defenders in England. Sir Richard Moryson referred frequently to Machiavelli in his polemical pamphlets of the 1530s, defending the divorce of Henry VIII and the royal supremacy of the Church, while simultaneously attacking the Pilgrimage of Grace, a popular insurrection in October of 1536, and condemning Cardinal Reginald Pole as a traitor. Bishop John Jewel also understood Machiavelli as an anti-papal historian. See Anglo 2005, 90, 329–30. Many historians have also noted the importance of Machiavellian concepts in English republicanism, especially during the Civil War and the

published in 1532, proved especially provocative and problematic. In a famous and oft-quoted passage, Machiavelli describes the need for a prince to know the art of dissimulation:

> Therefore, a prudent ruler cannot keep his word, nor should he, when such fidelity would damage him, and when the reasons that made him promise are no longer relevant. [...] But foxiness should be well concealed: one must be a great feigner and dissembler. And men are so naive, and so much dominated by immediate needs, that a skillful deceiver always finds plenty of people who will let themselves be deceived.[23]

Machiavelli's political theories were often associated with hypocrisy, deceit, atheism, or at least irreligion, and the notion that 'the end justifies the means'. Reductive as this understanding is, it became very influential, especially in the wake of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, in 1572.[24] This event, where between 5,000 and 30,000 French Huguenots were killed, was later interpreted as a direct result of the influence of political Machiavellianism, and was both condoned and reviled by writers of the period.[25] Arguably the most famous and influential of the condemnations of Machiavelli is Innocent Gentillet's work, commonly known as the *Anti-Machiavel* of 1576. This work had a great impact on the perception of Machiavelli in England.

In Elizabethan England, Machiavelli quickly became a theatrical stock character, known as the Machiavel. One can only think of Christopher Marlowe's prologue to *The Jew of Malta*, which is spoken by a character named Machiavel. Looking at the character of Richard III, it is clear that Shakespeare was indebted to this tradition of popular, melodramatic Machiavellianism.[26] Shakespeare's Richard even identifies directly with the

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Interregnum. See Pocock 1975, Kahn 1994, and Sullivan 2004. For a recent revisionist reading of Machiavelli's ethical philosophy, see Brenner 2009.

[23] Machiavelli 2003, 62.

[24] The massacre caused an international crisis, and later became the subject of Christopher Marlowe's history play, *The Massacre of Paris* (1593), and Nathaniel Lee's play of the same name (1689).

[25] According to popular legend, Philip II of Spain laughed for the only time in known history when he was told the news.

[26] It is unclear to what extent Shakespeare, or indeed any of the other dramatists of the period, had actually read Machiavelli. The first English translation of Machiavelli's *The Prince* was not published until 1640. However, a French translation from 1553 did exist, and it is known that the printer John Wolfe brought an Italian edition of *Il principe* to England in 1584. Thus, it seems plausible that a manuscript translation of the work was circulated in London at the time. Roe 2002 argues that one of the defining features of the Shakespearean history plays is that their representation of politics essentially draws on Machiavellian notions. Roe also notes that Shakespeare's treatment of politics became more and more Machiavellian as time went by.

stage Machiavel, claiming he "can set the murderous Machiavel to school", in *Henry VI – part 3*.[27] However, Richard also owes a great deal to the Vice character from the Medieval allegorical morality play.[28] The Vice was a character who, like Richard, was characterized by his rhetorical brilliance, his equivocation, and his diabolical nature.[29] The Vice was also a humorous, even comedic character, characterized by a "formal incongruity between the serious and the comic", which destabilizes static meanings.[30] Thus, Shakespeare's Richard presents himself as a combination of the Machiavel and the Vice – a plotting, irreligious, dissembling trickster whose mingling of theatrical genres undermines the seriousness of historical representation. But he is also highly conscious of his theatrical genesis. Richard also appeared frequently in other forms of popular entertainment: he was the object of ballads, satires, sermons, and, most significantly for our purposes, in several plays. At least two other plays about Richard III were written and performed before Shakespeare's: Thomas Legge's Latin *Richardus Tertius*, performed at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1580, and the anonymous *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, performed by the Queen's Men and published in 1594. Legge's play was not published until much later, and the similarities between *Richard III* and *The True Tragedy of Richard III* are limited.[31] Richard was also featured in the 1559 edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, where his portrayal follows the general outline of a murderous, villainous tyrant whose downfall and death were God's just punishment for his wickedness, as laid out in the chronicles.

Stage plays played upon scaffolds

Thus, Shakespeare inherited a highly negative and ideological perception of Richard and of English history in which the notion of divine providence plays a central and fundamental role. *Richard III* was probably written in 1593, and dramatizes events which took place between 1483 and 1485. The play tells the story of the rise of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, his crimes, and his ultimate defeat at the Battle of Bosworth Field. One of the most characteristic features of Shakespeare's Richard, and perhaps his most original contribution to the historiography of the king, is Richard's histrionic personality and the

[27] See *3H6* 3.2.16.
[28] *RIII* 3.1.82–83.
[29] See Spivack 1958.
[30] Weinman & Bruster 2008, 26–27.
[31] However, Shakespeare did likely know *The True Tragedy*, and some lines in *Richard III* do indeed mirror *The True Tragedy*, most notably the famous "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!", but it is in *Hamlet* that the most allusions to the anonymous *True Tragedy* occur. See Walsh 2009. For an interesting analysis of the differences between the accession of Henry VII in *The True Tragedy* and *Richard III*, see Kewes 2011.

continuous identification between Richard, the theatre, actors, and acting. Many commentators, critics, and literary historians have noted this identification, but few have examined it in relation to the play's historiography.

Besides Richard's identification with the Machiavel and the Vice, he presents himself as an actor. In *Henry VI – part 3*, Richard famously boasts of his acting abilities, claiming that he "can add colours to the chameleon", and "Change shapes with Proteus for advantages".[32] This identification continues in *Richard III*, and develops further historical significance as Richard takes centre stage, and delivers one of the most famous soliloquies in the Shakespearean *œuvre*. After having given a brief, ironic account of England's new-found peace, Richard voices his growing dissatisfaction with the times and his isolation:

> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
> Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
> By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
> To set my brother Clarence and the King
> In deadly hate, the one against the other;[33]

Lamenting his physical deformities, Richard addresses the audience directly, and informs them of his diabolical plans, making them both his confidantes and co-conspirators. This very self-conscious theatrical dynamic between Richard and the audience forms the basis of much of the play's irony and comedy, as we will later see. It is also important to note that Richard uses theatrical terms to describe his plans – both *plots* and *inductions* have strong literary and theatrical connotations. The line, "determined to prove a villain" may be read in two ways. It may be read as Richard being predestined, by divine providence, to become the villain – a reading that is strongly supported by the importance of curses, prophecies, and dreams throughout the play. This understanding is also in line with official Tudor ideology, which saw Richard as an illegitimate king whose historical role was to be defeated by Richmond. From this perspective, Richard is indeed *determined* by his physical deformities to be villainous, to be the scourge of England, and he seems to accept his historical role. From this perspective, Richard's moral culpability is significantly downplayed, as he is only acting according to his predestined role. In other words, he has no choice but to be "subtle, false and

[32] *3H6* 3.2.191–92.
[33] *RIII* 1.1.28–35.

treacherous",[34] thus denying himself any real historical agency. However, the word *determined* may also mean that Richard has chosen to become the villain, of his own free will. This reading of the lines emphasises the notion of *acting* or *playing*, and by using *prophecies* and *dreams*, Richard very effectively manipulates providential signs to serve his own means. However, these two readings are not mutually exclusive, but they share Richard's transparency with respect to the audience, and his awareness of himself as a historical and theatrical constuct and character.

The motif of theatricality is also central to More's *History*. Shortly after Richard's accession, the citizens of London meet and reflect on recent political events.[35] The immediate context is an episode at Baynard Castle, where Richard has successfully manipulated the mayor of London and the city's aldermen into believing that he is worthy of being king. The entire episode is, of course, a clever deception, orchestrated by Richard and his accomplice, the Duke of Buckingham, to make Richard appear to be a pious, noble duke with no ambitions for power. As the readers of the *History* know very well, this is an obvious deception, as Richard has proven himself to be neither pious nor noble. In fact, this entire scene is the conclusion of Richard's master plan to usurp the throne from his nephew, the young prince Edward, who Richard has declared illegitimate. Ultimately, Richard's performance is successful, and he, ostentatiously reluctant, agrees to be king. When the citizens meet the following day, they describe Richard's accession to the throne by comparing it to a play:

> And in a stage play all the people know right well that he that playeth the sowdaine is percase a sowter. Yet if one should can so little good to show out of season what acquaintance he hath with him, and call him by his own name while he standeth in his majesty, one of his tormentors might hap to break his head, and worthy, for marring of the play. And so they said that these matters be kings' games, as it were, stage plays, and for the most part played upon scaffolds, in which poor men be but the on-lookers. And they that wise be, will meddle no further. For they that sometimes step up and play with them, when they cannot play their parts, they disorder the play, and do themself no good.[36]

More's citizens are very perceptive and aware of the theatrical dimensions of power: they essentially describe politics as a *theatrum mundi*, a theatrical performance of power, in which a shoemaker ('sowter') might play the role

[34] Ibid. 1.1.37.

[35] It has been suggested that this incident was Shakespeare's inspiration for *Richard III*. See Hallett & Hallett 2011.

[36] More 2005, 94–95. Many commentators have noted the dramatic elements of More's *History*. See Hanham 1975, Anderson 1984, Goy-Blanquet 2003, and Hallett & Hallett 2011.

of the sultan ('sowdaine'). Though the political game is remarkably transparent to the citizens, they are well aware of the potential dangers of disrupting the 'kings' games'. This knowledge reduces the citizens to passive 'spectator-subjects',[37] unable to do anything about the situation. Thus, More's *History* presents a particularly bleak view of politics that we also find in Shakespeare's treatment of the incident. In *Richard III*, Shakespeare chooses to translate More's theatrical metaphor into a literal performance, as he presents the entire situation as a spontaneous play-within-a-play.[38] This scene is the dramatic turning point of *Richard III*, since it marks the beginning of Richard's reign, and his ultimate downfall. Immediately before the mayor and the citizens arrive, Buckingham quickly devises a plan that involves Richard playing a pious ascetic man:

> The Mayor is here at hand. Intend some fear.
> Be not you spoke with but by mighty suit;
> And look you get a prayer book in your hand,
> And stand between two churchmen, good my lord,
> For on that ground I'll make a holy descant.
> And be not easily won to our requests;
> Play the maid's part: still answer nay, and take it.[39]

One cannot help but be amused and amazed by Richard and Buckingham's resourcefulness, and their improvised theatrical manoeuvres that follow. In this quotation, we again find an emphasis on acting and theatrical language (Richard must "Play the maid's part"). Whether or not their plan succeeds depends entirely on their performance and their abilities as actors. When the mayor and the citizens of London arrive at the castle, they find Richard absent. According to Catesby, Richard is "Divinely bent to meditation",[40] and the citizens are urged to return the following day. Stressing the urgency of the matter, Buckingham convinces Catesby to disturb Richard, who soon after appears before the mayor, the citizens, and the audience "*aloft, between two*

[37] Hodgdon 1991, 100.

[38] A point of contention among Shakespeare scholars is whether Richard's performance and acting abilities actually fool anyone. Watson 1990 argues that Richard's acting cannot be considered convincing: "What attracts us to Richard is less his consummate skill as an actor than his audacity and his delight in villainy...". By stressing Richard's nerve and *sprezzatura*, I believe Watson downplays the fact that Richard's acting abilities, although they do not fool everyone, do in fact deceive most of the other characters. See Hallett & Hallett 2011 for a comparison of More and Shakespeare's portrayal of the scene at Baynard Castle. Roe examines Richard's audacity by comparing it to Machiavelli's concepts of *virtú* and *virtuoso*. See Roe 2002, 17–21.

[39] *RIII* 3.7.44–50.

[40] Ibid. 3.7.61.

Bishops",[41] as the stage direction says, with a prayer book in his hands, like a theatrical prop. Buckingham urges Richard to claim the throne, since Edward IV's children have been declared illegitimate – a lie which Richard himself had propagated. Just like More's description of the scene, Richard is reluctant and repeatedly rejects Buckingham's pleas, claiming he is neither willing nor able to become king. However, towards the end of the scene, Richard finally gives in, and agrees to become king.

This scene illustrates the full power of Richard's dissimulation and its relationship to the theatre. Moreover, the audience cannot help but be amused by Richard's and Buckingham's gambit, and their successful manipulation of the mayor and the aldermen. The comedic effects of this play-within-the-play derive from the ironic, asymmetric relationship between what the audience know about Richard (that he is *not* a peaceful, pious man with no ambitions to become king), and what the citizens, the audience of the play-within-the-play, know about him. Thus, in this scene, Richard becomes the cunning, dissembling Machiavel and Vice character of the Elizabethan stage, blurring the lines between the serious and the comedic. The effect of this scene is deeply ambiguous. On the one hand, the scene enforces the view of Richard as cynical, dissembling, and Machiavellian, but when we consider the acting advice that Richard and Buckingham exchanged a few scenes earlier, the effects of the play-within-the-play are seen in a different light.

> RICHARD
> Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,
> Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
> And then again begin, and stop again,
> As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?
>
> BUCKINGHAM
> Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
> Speak, and look back, and pry on every side,
> Tremble and start wagging of a straw,
> Intending deep suspicion. Ghastly looks
> Are at my service, like enforced smiles,
> An both are ready in their offices,
> At any time to grace my stratagems.[42]

Recalling the praise of his own acting abilities in *Henry VI – part 3*, Richard assumes the role of the director, carefully instructing Buckingham on how to manipulate and deceive. In describing their acting techniques, both Richard and Bucking describe excessive body language ("quake and change thy

[41] Ibid. 3.7.93, SD.
[42] *RIII* 3.5.1–11.

colour", "Tremble and start wagging of a straw", "Ghastly looks") and violent emotional expressions ("Murder thy breath... As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?", "counterfeit the deep tragedian", "Speak, and look back, and pry on every side") as essential elements of acting convincingly. However, the subtlety of their acting must be seriously questioned. Are the two plotters actually describing convincing emotions and acting techniques, or are they describing the histrionics of melodramatic overacting? Read in conjunction with the hyperbolic and melodramatic acting advice that Richard and Buckingham exchange, the play-within-the-play seems to be a self-conscious theatrical moment, ironically referring to the theatre's role in reconstructing and reconfiguring history, underscoring the theatre's function as a co-creator of ideology. Again, it is important to emphasise that the theatrics of the play-within-the-play both confirm Tudor ideology and also question it through the ambiguity of metatheatrical language.

Playing with providence

As noted earlier, the theme of providence plays a prominent part in *Richard III* and, to a great extent, determines the ways in which characters relate to Richard. Although this is true of many characters, it is expressed most clearly in the character of Queen Margaret, the widow of Henry VI. From her first appearance in act 1 scene 3, Margaret continuously invokes God's retribution on Richard for being responsible of the death of her husband and son. However, as Donald G. Watson makes clear, Margaret's belief in divine justice is primarily motivated by egoistical reasons and her burning desire for revenge:

> Can one entertain the concept of a God who fulfils Margaret's curses or who advances His schemes for the Tudor hegemony through the deaths of young Edward and York? What Shakespeare has accomplished is not the discrediting of the providential ritual of Edward Hall and the other chroniclers, but by displacing this view on to a character who can by no means claim any authority, he makes us question the reductiveness of any simplistic accounting procedure.[43]

The displacement of providence that Watson finds in *Richard III* is especially significant towards the end of the play. On the night before the decisive Battle of Bosworth Fields, Richard and Richmond set up camp on opposite ends of the stage, splitting the stage into two symmetrical spaces.[44] In their tents, Richmond and Richard plan their strategies and go to sleep. During the night,

[43] Watson 1990, 121.

[44] For a detailed analysis of the significance of vertical and horizontal symmetry in Shakespeare's history plays, see Dillon 2012.

the two are visited by ghosts of the people Richard has killed: Prince Edward, Henry VI, Clarence, Rivers, Grey, Vaughan, the two princes in the Tower, Hastings, Lady Anne, and Buckingham (in that order). Some of the murders occur in *Richard III*, whereas others – Prince Edward and Henry VI – take place in *Henry VI – part 3*. One by one, the ghosts confront Richard and curse him, before turning to Richmond, to cheer him on. Brian Walsh has argued very convincingly that this scene "[exemplifies] the human agency that goes into the construction of historical knowledge", as the stage is split into two halves right before the audience, exposing the human activity that goes into theatrical representations of the history.[45] The ghosts' presence alludes to theatrical traditions of the period, but also highlights "the dependence of historical consciousness on the cultural production of theater...",[46] as the presence of the ghosts works as an intertextual reference to the three *Henry VI* plays. Walsh elaborates:

> The ghosts highlight the constructedness of theater and so also foreground the fact that providential theories of history are themselves human constructions… By exposing the imaginative labor that goes into historical representation, Shakespeare suggests that providence itself is an effect that is created to appear innate to the Richard III story.[47]

Walsh's analysis of the ghost scene is very convincing, and effectively draws attention to the question of theatricality in *Richard III* and its relationship to the historiography of the play. However, Walsh does not examine the ways in which providential history is questioned through the character of Richmond. This is particularly relevant with regard to Richmond's final speech, as it is full of Tudor ideology.

Despite Richmond's importance to the narrative and dramaturgy of the play, he is absent throughout most of the play, as he is in exile in France. In fact, Richmond does not appear until the final act of the play, and he is not mentioned before the first scene of act four. Richmond's return from exile, appearance on the stage of English politics, and his almost messianic role in the play function like a *deus ex machina*; a dramatic choice that underscores the artificiality and constructed nature of providence.

Just as the play begins with Richard delivering a monologue, it ends with Richmond delivering a monologue. This creates a strong symmetry in the play's dramatic structure, and it also brings out the contrasts between the two characters. But this symmetrical composition also creates a subtle

[45] Walsh 2009, 158–59.
[46] Ibid. 159.
[47] Walsh 2009, 161.

identification between the two characters *qua* the rhetorical and theatrical strategies they employ:

> We will unite the white rose and the red.
> Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,
> That long have frowned upon their enmity.
> What traitor hears me and says not amen?
> England hath long been mad and scarred herself:
> The brother blindly shed the brother's blood;
> The father rashly slaughtered his own son;
> The son, compelled, been butcher to the sire.
> All this divided York and Lancaster,
> Divided in their dire division.
> O, now let Richmond and Elizabeth,
> The true succeeders of each royal house,
> By God's fair ordinance conjoin together;
> And let their heirs, God, if Thy will be so,
> Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace,
> With smiling plenty and fair prosperous days.
> Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
> That would reduce these bloody days again
> And make poor England weep in streams of blood.
> Let them not live to taste this land's increase
> That would with treason wound this fair land's peace.
> Now civil wounds are stopped; peace lives again.
> That she may long live here, God say amen.[48]

Referring to the white rose of the House of York and the red rose of the House of Lancaster, Richmond delivers a rhetorically brilliant historical account of the devastation of the Wars of the Roses in language strongly infused with notions of divine providence, stressing the need for national reconciliation, order, and the re-establishment of legitimate authority. This is achieved by contrasting the chaos of the civil war of the past with the peace and prosperity that the future Tudor dynasty will bring about. Just as in the ghost scene, Richmond makes clear the link between historical representation and the theatre as he alludes to *Henry VI – part 3* 2.5. Here, a distraught Henry sits alone, contemplating the horrors of war, as a father who has killed his son and a son who has killed his father enter the stage, lamenting their respective fates. By referencing these lines from an earlier play, the role of the theatrical representation of history is highlighted again.[49] Even though the Elizabeth of this quote is Elizabeth of York, Richard's niece, the reference to Queen

[48] Ibid. 5.5.19–41.
[49] Also see Walsh 2009.

Elizabeth I would have been fairly obvious to contemporary audiences. Thus, Richmond creates an ideological link between the historical past and Shakespeare's time, framing history as a teleological movement, moving towards the restoration of legitimacy with the Tudors.

Though Richmond presents himself as the true heir to the throne, his claim to the throne was, in fact, far from being self-evident. The son of Edmund Tudor – 1st Earl of Richmond and half-brother to Henry VI – and Margaret Beaufort – the daughter of John Beaufort, 1st Duke of Somerset and great-grandson to Edward III through his third son, John of Gaunt – Richmond's claim to the throne was dubious at best. The first years of his reign saw several contenders to the throne, insurrections, and pretenders, most notably Perkin Warbeck.[50] In fact, the Tudors never completely secured their position as the legitimate heirs to both the Lancastrian and Yorkist claims.[51] Consequently, Richmond had to construct his legitimacy through rhetorical stratagems, similar Richard's deceptions. By mimicking the language of a sermon ("Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction", "By God's fair ordinance conjoin together", "God, if Thy will be so", and "That she may long live here, God say amen"), Richmond delivers a cunning performance of power, creating a fiction of divine providence and of authority that simultaneously labels all dissent as dangerous ("What traitor hears me and says not amen?", "Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord", and "Let them not live to taste this land's increase/That would with treason wound this fair land's peace") and enforces the complete submission from his subjects. Through his appropriation of the symbolism of York and Lancaster (the white and red rose respectively), Richmond mimics the royal pageantry of the Tudors.[52] Richmond's final speech, although much subtler than Richard's histrionics, is no less theatrical, and consequently, he appears no less Machiavellian than Richard. Commenting on a wider tendency in Renaissance England, Stephen Greenblatt has stated that:

> Power ... is not the ability to levy taxes or raise an army but the ability to enforce submission, manifested in those signs of secular worship – bowing, kneeling, kissing of rings – that European rulers increasingly insist upon. If these signs always have an air of fiction about them ... so much the better, because, as we have argued, one of the highest achievements of power is to impose fictions upon the world and one of

[50] See Ridley 1998, 1–7. The story of Perkin Warbeck's rebellion was later dramatized by John Ford in the eponymous *Perkin Warbeck*, probably first performed in 1634. The play is one of the few Caroline history plays, and one of the last of the English renaissance.

[51] See Bezio 2015.

[52] Ibid., 25–26, 91.

> its supreme pleasures is to enforce the acceptance of fictions that are known to be fictions.[53]

Richmond's strength as a ruler lies in his ability to impose such fictions on the audience, refashioning history as a grand, providential movement on which his authority depends. This is an aspect of Shakespeare's representation of Richmond which has not been sufficiently explored by scholars. Kristin M.S. Bezio notes that the Tudor 'orthodoxy' of Richmond derives from contemporary concerns about royal succession and the fear of another devastating civil war.[54] Focusing on the cathartic elements of Richard's defeat, Ralf Hertel argues that Richard's death "portrays the cleansing of the nation through the rituals of the theatre", and argues that *Richard III* is a cautionary tale about the dangers of partisan and factious politics.[55] Bezio's and Hertel's comments are correct, but they fail to acknowledge the ambiguity that permeates Richmond's speech. However, as I have demonstrated above, Richmond's self-representation as a divinely ordained ruler is a product of a metatheatrical strategy that Shakespeare employs through self-reflective rhetoric and theatrics.

The relationship between performance and theatricality, on the one hand, and royal absolutism and power, on the other, formed a cornerstone of the Tudor dynasty's construction of authority and legitimacy,[56] and in the 1570s and 1580s, efforts were made to stablish bureaucratic structures to monitor, censor, regulate, and control the commercial playhouses.[57] However, as Bezio points out, the theatre was a deeply ambiguous and potentially seditious place:

> In short, while offering a site of governmental ideological dissemination, playhouses nevertheless implicitly threatened the very regime that sanctioned their authority, in large part because of the scope and impressionability of the audience contained within their walls, but also because of the potential of the plays themselves to influence that audience.[58]

Therefore, the theatre had to balance on a knife's edge between conforming to Tudor ideology and exploring potentially subversive subject matter. A useful concept for describing *Richard III*'s engagement with Tudor ideology and historiography is Dirk Niefanger's notion of 'verdeckte Ambiguität'; or

[53] Greenblatt 1980, 140–41; also quoted in Watson 1990.
[54] Bezio 2015, 92.
[55] Hertel 2014, 108, 114.
[56] For instance, see Bezio 2015, Watson 1990, and Greenblatt 1988.
[57] Watson 1990. See Lake 2016 49–58 for a succinct discussion of censorship in late-Elizabethan England.
[58] Bezio 2015, 52.

concealed ambiguity.[59] The idea is that the early modern drama could not openly contradict the official ideology and historiography of the state, owing to various factors such as censorship or state patronage.[60] Therefore, early modern drama had to address problems that were believed to be contrary to the official view through complex aesthetic strategies that were not immediately decipherable; they had to be articulated discreetly, or be concealed.[61] Although Niefanger describes the German context, his concept is equally true of the Elizabethan *fin de siècle*.

I suggest that we find a similar strategy in Shakespeare's representation of history in *Richard III*. The many cases where Richard identifies with actors, identifies with the Machiavel or the Vice, addresses the audience, and frames his deceptions as a play-within-the-play show the fundamental illusive character and 'constructedness' of history, to use Walsh's terms, and official state ideology. They are no more real than the fictions on stage. The same is true of Richmond's concluding speech. The play shows us that his reframing of history in providential terms, and his polarizing rhetorical strategies may be seriously questioned. Thus, Shakespeare lays bare the underbelly of Tudor ideology: that it is built on successful displays of legitimacy and power. Thus, to use Richard's own words, the play does indeed "moralize two meanings in one word",[62] as history is represented both in line with the Tudor ideology, and as a remarkably fictitious, theatrical construction. The metaphors of acting and theatrical language are well-suited to demonstrating this ambiguity. The actor is two things at once: in the moment of performance he is *both* himself and the character he portrays. The history play is fiction *and* historical truth operating at the same time. When *Richard III* constantly uses

[59] Niefanger 2005. In many ways, the idea of *verdeckte Ambiguität* is similar to Greenblatt's notion of containment and subversion. According to Greenblatt, early modern drama's ironic subversions of dominant discourses paradoxically end up confirming the dominant discourses. As Greenblatt has stated in the famous and paradigmatic essay "Invisible Bullets": "Within this theatrical setting, there is a remarkable insistence upon the paradoxes, ambiguities, and the tensions of authority, but this apparent production of subversion is, as we have already seen, the very condition of power. ... It is precisely because of the English form of absolutist theatricality that Shakespeare's drama, written for a theater subject to state censorship, can be so relentlessly subversive: the form itself, as a primary expression of Renaissance power contains the radical doubts it continually produces." Greenblatt 1988. Although such an approach has its merits, the idea that the subversive potential of a work of art inevitably ends up reinforcing the dominant ideological position it sought to displace is problematically absolute. Parvini 2012 presents a similar argument, claiming that new historicist and cultural materialist criticism has resulted in a dehumanizing of Shakespeare's play. Thus Parvini attempts to reinstate what he calls 'humanism' in Shakespeare studies.

[60] See Lytle & Orgel 1981 for a closer look at patronage in the English Renaissance.

[61] Greenblatt 1988.

[62] *RIII* 3.1.83

theatrical and metatheatrical rhetoric, Shakespeare breaks down the borders between historical truth and theatrical fiction. The paradox of *Richard III* is that both these effects are achieved by the play's theatrical and performative representational strategies. In a sense, Shakespeare's aesthetic representation of history is a form of dissimulation, concealing and telling half-truths about the past, but simultaneously pointing these out as fiction and ideological constructions.

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"What Passions Call You These":

Privacy and Metapoetic Foreignness in Marlowe's *Edward II*

By Per Sivefors

This essay argues that Marlowe's Edward II *engages with English history and politics through a metadiscussion of the rhetorical, linguistic and aesthetic foundations of vernacular culture. The play's frequent referencing of Latin, Italian and French suggests a distinction between a public and orthodox understanding of history and politics, and an artful Latinate idiom connected to notions of privacy and Ovidian poetics as well as to non-English, demonised languages. By enriching its modes of expression with snatches of other languages as well as multiplicitous references to specific Latin literary patterns,* Edward II *privileges the irresponsibly 'private' and hence distances itself from a vernacular construction of public history and affairs.*

Frequently, Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* has caused critics problems due to its relatively bleak vision of English politics and history. Indeed, the play's seemingly amoral take on the reign of Edward even caused E. M. W. Tillyard, writing during the second world war, to seek the gist of the play elsewhere than in the political or historical. *Edward II*, Tillyard asserted, is "concerned nominally but not essentially with historical matter", and hence, "Marlowe shows no sense of national responsibility".[1] Even though more recent critics have been less prone to judgements on Marlowe's failure as a patriot, they often point out that *Edward II* shows little of the confidence in eloquence that distinguishes for example his own, earlier *Tamburlaine*. Neil Rhodes, for example, claims that the play's emphasis "is more upon rhetorical failure or impotence than deft repartee", and Mark Thornton Burnett argues

[1] Tillyard 1944, 109. Tillyard, it should be added, claimed his verdict on Marlowe's responsibility to be objective rather than biased: "This is not to decry the play; it is only to suggest what the play is or is not" (1944, 109). But considering the fact that Tillyard's book appeared in 1944, the claim that Marlowe's irresponsibility was mere neutral fact has a remarkably hollow ring to it (at the height of a world war, who would wish to celebrate a poet that showed "no sense of national responsibility"?). In fact, Tillyard's debunking of Marlowe is the more efficient because he denies that it takes place.

that "it is a phenomenon of general linguistic inadequacy that the play rehearses".[2]

In the present analysis, however, I will show that such judgements simplify the play's political and rhetorical concerns. Central to my analysis is the observation that *Edward II* sets up a metadiscussion on the language of poetry. Moreover, this metadiscussion is certainly connected to national politics, although not in the sense of orthodox 'national responsibility'. As this essay shows, *Edward II* is indeed concerned with historical matter, but does so via a focus on the aesthetic and linguistic dimensions of historical representation. Specifically, the play distinguishes between a Latinate language that stands in for the public and orthodox understanding of history and politics, and an artful Latinate idiom connected to notions of privacy and Ovidian poetics as well as to non-English, demonised vernaculars such as French or Italian. By enriching its modes of expression with snatches of other languages as well as multiplicitous references to specific Latin literary patterns, the play, I conclude, privileges the irresponsibly 'private' and hence distances itself from a vernacular construction of public history. Beginning by exploring the context of an emerging sense of privacy in Elizabethan England, the essay then discusses how the foreign in the play is entwined with a metapoetic idiom coloured by especially Ovid. In short, Marlowe's play may, from Tillyard's point of view, be 'irresponsible' – but certainly not because it is unconcerned with historical matter and the rhetorical representation of it.

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Over the last few decades, there has been a considerable amount of debate over the origins of privacy and whether such a notion in our sense did exist in the Renaissance. According to Jürgen Habermas's well-known formulation, a 'public sphere' based upon a separation of the public and private realms is typically an eighteenth-century bourgeois phenomenon, and it would therefore make little sense to apply such a model directly to a pre-Enlightenment context.[3] Moreover, Francis Barker, using a distinctly Foucauldian model for his analysis of *Hamlet*, suggests that in this play, "The public and the private as strong, mutually defining, mutually exclusive categories, each describing separate terrains with distinct contents, practices

[2] Rhodes 1992, 104; Burnett 1998, 92.

[3] See *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas 1989). Andrew Hadfield has argued that numerous texts from the sixteenth century share a desire "to help constitute and participate within a national public sphere", and Hadfield also questions Habermas's evolutionary and teleological theory as a historical model (Hadfield 1994, 5).

and discourses, are not yet extant".[4] At the same time, it would be mistaken to claim either that there were no notions of privacy in the sixteenth century, or indeed that they were not changing. Peter Burke has pointed to how "the withdrawal of the upper classes" entailed the establishment of private areas, such as separate dining-rooms or 'drawing-rooms' (i.e. 'withdrawing-rooms') for the nobility.[5] This withdrawal was also connected to ideas of cleansing oneself from barbarism.[6] Furthermore, Philippe Ariès, who calls England "the birthplace of privacy", observes that diaries were widely kept since the late 1500s, and that solitude was slowly becoming a fashionable attitude, especially among the upper classes. Such taste, however, also depended upon the possibility of a *shared* loneliness: "People became so fond of being alone that they wished to share their solitude with a dear friend, a teacher, relative, servant, or neighbor – a second self" (5).[7]

To a large extent, *Edward II* registers these concerns, although, as I will argue, the play also challenges the structure that the concerns imply. Rather than opting for 'historical accuracy' in his depiction of the fourteenth century, Marlowe establishes an early modern image of friendship already in the play's first lines, where the exiled minion Gaveston is reading a letter from the King:[8]

> 'My father is deceased; come, Gaveston,
> And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend'. (1.1–2)[9]

Later, when they meet for the first time, the King clearly becomes Gaveston's 'second self' by appointing himself "thy friend, thy self, another Gaveston" (1.1.142). In other words, despite the shocking implication behind the idea of 'sharing' kingdoms with one's friend, the depiction of Edward's and Gaveston's friendship seems to reflect an emerging aristocratic taste for seclusion in the form of a shared isolation from the rest of the world.[10] At

[4] Barker 1984, 34.

[5] Burke 1978, 271.

[6] Burke 1978, 270–81; Helgerson 1992, 240–45.

[7] Ariès 1989, 5. True, the idea of the friend as a second self was not new; even early humanists such as Petrarch had argued that "perfect and complete" friendship "means to love a friend as one's self" (Petrarca 1948, 118). I am, however, pointing to a change in social meaning and significance for the figure.

[8] As is well known, writing is ever present on the stage in Marlowe's play; this first letter is followed by a whole series of others, taken in various ways from sources such as Holinshed. For a specific study of the circulation of letters in the play, see Brailowsky 2012.

[9] Citations are to act, scene and line number and will appear parenthetically in the text. All citations to Marlowe's plays, including *Edward II*, are to the Revels Plays editions.

[10] Several discussions of the private and the public in *Edward II* have made use of the well-known 'king's two bodies' argument, sometimes to expand or reject it (see for example Bredbeck 1991, 50–60; Wessman 1999–2000, 6; Hillman 2002, 110; Anderson 2014, *passim*). First discussed in E. L. Kantorowicz's widely influential *The King's Two Bodies*

least in Marlowe's play, however, Edward and Gavenston's relationship is far from the classical, Ciceronian understanding of "friendship of faultless men" as a cornerstone of political stability.[11] Needless to say, the relationshiops of the play are flawed, although the play as a whole does not necessarily distance itself from them or suggest that the alternatives are more attractive.

The emerging cult of solitude was becoming a conventional pose by the late sixteenth century, and the problematic of the private self was frequently reflected in for example portraits of the time. One such image, especially pertinent to the present context, is Nicholas Hilliard's miniature portrait of the Earl of Northumberland, in which the contemplative Earl is depicted in a garden, reclining alone in a melancholy, languid posture, hat and gauntlets tossed aside and a book by his head.[12] Apart from Marlowe's own connections to the Earl, reinforced by his alleged claim in 1592 that the Earl was "very wel known" to him, there is a verbal hint of *Edward II* in the Hilliard portrait too.[13] Above the earl, there is a strange object hanging from a tree: a scale, in which a globe-like sphere is held in balance by a feather. Under the latter is written the word *Tanti*, meaning "worth thus much" or

(1957), which also contained an analysis of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, this doctrine was claimed to be a mystical and medieval remnant that distinguished between the body natural and the body politic; the ideal king brings these two bodies together in his rule. Although hailed by for example Foucault as a forerunner of his own *Discipline and Punish*, Kantorowicz's discussion of the king's two bodies doctrine has been strongly questioned, notably by David Norbrook, who points out that the doctrine was less important and considerably more problematic than Kantorowicz allows and that even royal servants often had a strong sense of the independence of the state from the monarch's person' (Norbrook 1996, 343). See also Lorna Hutson's 'Not the King's Two Bodies', which argues that the legal theories of Edmund Plowden, invoked by Kantorowicz to prove the indispensability of the king's body to sixteenth-century political theory, have been misunderstood and overemphasised by contemporary critics (Hutson 2001, 176–77). I wish to add to these comments that my own reading of *Edward II* sees the distinction between private and public as an *emergent*, not a residual phenomenon. Hence, although I do not reject for example Bredbeck's claim that the play makes the distinction private/public highly problematic, I see such claims from a different historical perspective.

[11] The phrase is Cicero's: "ab amicitiis perfectorum hominum" (*De amicitia* 26.100).

[12] For an analysis of this portrait, see Strong 158–59. Northumberland's image as a world-despising scholar was underlined by George Peele's eulogy to him in *The Honour of the Garter* (1593), which describes the Earl as a recluse who, from "the spacious pleasant fieldes / Of divine science and Phylosophie", beholds "the deformities / Of common errors and worlds vanitie" (Peele 1.245). Peele's poem also contains brief references both to Marlowe (1:246) and the death of Edward II (1.253).

[13] I owe this observation to Kuriyama 2002, 94; for another, more speculative discussion of Marlowe's relationship to Northumberland, see Nicholl 1992, 191–201. Marlowe's claim that he knew the earl can be found in a letter from Robert Sidney to lord Burghley, first published in 1976 by R. B. Wernham; a transcription of this letter is in for example Kuriyama 2002, 210.

"thus much I count it". This verbal gesture of world-contempt is echoed in Gaveston's scorn for the people outside his own relationship to Edward:

> Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers;
> My knee shall bow to none but to the king.
> As for the multitude, that are but sparks
> Raked up in embers of their poverty,
> *Tanti!* I'll fan first on the winde
> That glanceth at my lips and flieth away. (1.1.18–23)

The foreign interjection, marked out by italics in the printed text, signals a retreat both from lords and common people. Hilliard, in his treatise on miniature painting, claimed that one characteristic of such painting was its detachment from the public, its preservation of faces in "priuat maner".[14] Since miniature pictures, often worn on the body in the form of lockets, were intended for one particular recipient rather than for the public, the onlooker became a sharer of the depicted person's passionate solitude. It is little wonder, then, that when Gaveston is later forced into another exile by the lords, he and Edward exchange their portraits in exactly this way: "Here, take my picture, and let me wear thine" (1.4.127).[15] Images could, in other words, symbolise, even replace, physical intimacy; and Gaveston's scornful *Tanti* suggests not only world-contempt but an intimate friendship to which that contempt is juxtaposed.[16]

It may in other words seem as if *Edward II* represents an emerging convention of solitude among the English aristocracy. But the play is, as I will show, more complex in its response to the issue of the private and the public. Importantly for the present discussion, while the exclamation *Tanti* establishes Gaveston as a person seeking a passionate solitude shared with the King, it also serves to identify him as an Italianate foreigner. As a word, *Tanti* does of course have a meaning in Latin, although, as Forker points out,

[14] Hillyard 1981, 64.

[15] Discussions of miniature art have often focused on the public aspects of such privacy; Patricia Fumerton, for example, has pointed to the fact that prospective viewers of private portraits usually had to make their way through an elaborate structure of public rooms, a circumstance which created a double emphasis: "one moved inward, but inwardness could be reached only after running a gauntlet of public outerness" (Fumerton 1991, 71). However, the royal portrait in *Edward II* suggests a different use – a proof of intimacy, carried on body, that does not necessarily imply the kind of public context that Fumerton discusses.

[16] In a twentieth-century postmodernist transformation of that doubleness, Derek Jarman's film version of *Edward II* (1991) has Gaveston replace the *Tanti* with the rather more vernacular *Fuck'em*, an alteration that simultaneously emphasises Gaveston's lower-class origin and Jarman's own anti-rhetorical agenda. As Lisa Hopkins suggests, however, Jarman's change, "while amusing enough, entirely misses the point of its foreignness" (Hopkins 2010, 343) – a crucial feature of Gaveston's character.

in the play it could also be "Marlowe's or perhaps the compositor's spelling of Italian "Tant è"', thus serving as "an early suggestion of Gaveston's foreign affectations".[17] Indeed, while Gaveston is certainly "from France" (cf. above), his Italian manners are often hinted at in the play – his arch-enemy Mortimer Junior disgustedly observes that he wears "a short Italian hooded cloak" and a "Tuscan cap" (1.4.412–13), and in one of the most famous lines in the play, to which I will return shortly, Gaveston wants to entertain the King with "Italian masques by night" (1.1.54).[18] Italian manners and culture certainly raised a great deal of ambivalence among the Elizabethans, and Roger Ascham's railing against Italianate manners in *The Scholemaster* or Thomas Nashe's exclamation in *Pierce Penilesse* that Italy was "the Apothecary-shop of poyson for all Nations' reflect not only the authors" disdain but also the fascination that the subject carried.[19] Especially after the Reformation, this mixture of abhorrence and attraction developed into a number of standard role models of degenerate behaviour. As Ian Frederick Moulton has shown, the two most common archetypal models of the Italianate tended to focus on the political and sexual aspects of degeneracy: "the scheming amoral Machiavellian and the perverse sodomite".[20] Arguably, Gaveston displays elements of both these models: in his advancement on the English territory, he recalls Marlowe's own Machiavel figure, who arrived in England to "frolic with his friends" (*Jew of Malta*, Prologue 4),[21] but his establishment of a private, intimate relationship with Edward also presents the audience with an image of the sodomite. By now, the critical accounts of sodomy and homosexuality in Marlowe's play would require a volume of discussion on their own.[22] Here, I wish only to avoid the quasi-biographical fallacies of seeing *Edward II* either as Marlowe's intentional questioning of normativity or the play's characters as the troubled voicings of Marlowe's own sexuality. In what follows, it will be suggested that the play's

[17] Forker 1995, 142.

[18] For a perceptive discussion of Gaveston and especially Italianate clothing style, see Bailey 2007, 77–102. In particular, Bailey's insistence on "the potency of aesthetic defiance" in *Edward II* can, as my own reading suggests, be extended far beyond the realm of dress.

[19] Ascham 1904; Nashe 1966, 1.186.

[20] Moulton 2000, 117.

[21] Indeed, the word 'frolick' is often used to characterise Gaveston's relationship to Edward; Lancaster complains that the secretly returned minion "here in Tynemouth frolics with the king" (2.4.17), and the queen, who dejectedly anticipates a 'melancholy life', says of her husband: "let him frolic with his minion" (1.2.64–65). Gaveston himself claims that "the shepherd nipped with biting winter's rage / Frolics not more to see the painted spring / Than I do to behold your majesty" (2.1.61–63).

[22] For a recent, and thoughtful consideration of the homoerotic elements in *Edward II*, see Duxfield 2015, 127–35. A detailed overview of criticism is in Logan 2015, esp. 126–27 (n. 6).

provocative thematisation of homoeroticism, privacy and the foreign instead arises from a preoccupation with aesthetic issues.[23]

Thus, although Gaveston is largely identified as an 'other', sexually and linguistically, there is little in the play to contrast with his otherness. Banishment and exile are not balanced by a positively charged English values, as in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, a play often thought to be influenced by Marlowe.[24] In the first act of Shakespeare's play, Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk laments in the wake of banishment:

> The language I haue learnt these forty years,
> My native English, now I must forgo,
> And now my tongue's use is to me no more
> Than an unstringed viol or a harp,
> Or like a cunning instrument cased up –
> Or, being open, put into his hands
> That knows no touch to tune the harmony. (1.3.159–65)

In *Edward II*, however, there is no such vernacular harmony even in the midst of the court. Besides Gaveston, with his foreign manners and exclamations, the Queen is labelled a "French strumpet" (1.1.145) by the King, who himself does not display much power in his use of English; and his main enemy, Mortimer Junior, who begins as a self-confessed patriot, turns out to be a villain full of Machiavellian deceit and trickery. This 'impotence' very much concerns the notion of public speech; but the words of Marlowe's play frequently work on a level that confounds accepted standards of public speech. From such a perspective, the rhetorical failures in Marlowe's play should not be seen in terms of artistic failure, but rather as a questioning of the norms upon which rhetorical success rested.

If this is the case, what was then a morally 'safe' language supposed to look like? In the *Basilikon Doron*, James VI of Scotland – whose similarities to Edward were commented upon at the time – gives some stylistic advice to his son and prospective successor:

> In your language bee plaine, honest, naturall, comely, cleane, short, and sententious; eschewing both the extreamities, aswell in not vsing a rusticall corrupt leid, nor yet booke-language, and Pen and Inke-horne tearmes, and least of all, mignarde and effeminate tearmes.[25]

[23] It should be stressed once more that my perspective here is not 'formalist' in the sense that it sees issues of language and aesthetics as socially isolated phenomena. Rather, I focus on the central concern of a poetic language in *Edward II*, which I see as the basis of the play's thematisation of sodomy and foreignness.

[24] Forker 1995, 36–41.

[25] James 1599, sig. S4^{v}. For an essay that places Marlowe's homoerotic depiction of Edward in the context of contemporary accounts of James VI of Scotland, see Normand 1996.

This could be described as an artful warning against artfulness. Correct, legitimate language is implied to be both refined (since it is *not* the language of the 'rustical' people) and a bulwark against excessive learned subtlety, or, even worse, effeminacy. Hinting at the Puritan affection for plainness, the passage offers an illuminating point of comparison to *Edward II*, for while Marlowe's play certainly marginalises the 'rustical', its allegiances to the artful rather than the self-confessedly 'natural' places it on the side of 'book-language'.[26] But *Edward II* does not set up this conflict as an easy juxtaposition. If the play eschews the idea of a 'natural' language, users of 'book-language' such as the scholar Baldock are not necessarily viewed with sympathy either.

To understand how this complex issue works in the play, I now turn to the metapoetic dimension. Arguably, *Edward II* articulates its issues of foreignness, of the private and the public as a conflict over poetic and dramatic forms. Bruce Smith touches upon the subject when he suggests that Gaveston's first encounter on English ground nods at the genre of the vernacular morality play. Three poor men interrupt Gaveston's monologue with an offer of service, and Gaveston, as Smith points out, instantly falls into the role model of the Nice Wanton: he takes on two of the men, a horseman and a traveller, because they may entertain him with "lies at dinner time" (*Edward II* 1.1.31), but the third one, a weary soldier, is quickly rejected because he cannot provide such entertainment.[27] In other words, this scene is basically a set-up for a morality play; however, Gaveston's subsequent monologue not only represents him as a morality figure but actually transcends the morality pattern and establishes an alternative to it. Gaveston exclaims, "These are not men for me" (1.1.49) once the three are gone, and he gives a clear indication of his preferences in the following speech, which eloquently rejects the implied normativity of the microplay-in-the-play.[28] Gaveston's rejection of the morality situation therefore also turns the scene into a staging of literary judgement. Instead of homespun moralities, this is what Gaveston wants:

> I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
> Musicians that, with touching of a string,
> May draw the pliant king which way I please.
> Music and poetry is his delight;

[26] As Patrick Cheney perceptively observes, "Marlowe almost certainly did not write a nationhood of the common people" (1997, 20).

[27] Smith 1991, 211.

[28] It can of course be argued that Gaveston's rejection of the morality setup is in itself a form of acknowledgement. For a study that stresses Marlowe's indebtedness to the morality tradition, see Ryan 1998; for an alternative view that considers the role of carnival and folk tradition in the depiction of Edward's fate, see Pettitt 2005.

> Therefore I'll have Italian masques by night,
> Sweete speeches, comedies, and pleasing showes[.] (1.1.50–55)

As a piece of aesthetic propaganda, however, this passage is highly ambiguous. Gaveston may appear unsympathetic at this stage, but even his repulsiveness leaves issues unresolved, because he exudes the same paradoxical attraction as for example Machiavel in *The Jew of Malta*. The passage quoted above looks like a violation of the standard Horatian claim that poetry should teach and delight, for while it profusely represents delight, it says little or nothing of 'teaching'. Rather, Gaveston's vision of royal entertainment is rendered in Ovidian and suggestively homoerotic terms:

> Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad,
> My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
> Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay.
> Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
> With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
> Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
> And in his sportful hands an olive tree,
> To hide those parts which men delight to see,
> Shall bathe him in a spring, and there, hard by,
> One like Actaeon, peeping through the grove,
> Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
> And, running in the likeness of an hart,
> By yelping hounds pulled down, and seem to die.
> Such things as these best please his majesty. (1.1.57–69)

This extended and complex image, derived mainly from the *Metamorphoses*, is marked out as private in the sense that it is confined to a theatrical, lyrical representation whose intended audience is limited to the King and Gaveston himself. Its blatant eroticism suggests a language that 'works' not on the level of persuasive public speech, but on that of the peep show. Indeed, although it would be problematic to use the term 'pornographic' in the modern sense, the voyeuristic and detached spectatorial position that it shares with pornography is a recurring feature of the play.[29] The theatricality of Gaveston's vision only

[29] For a rejection of the term 'pornography' in early modern contexts, see Moulton 2000, 8–15. Moulton claims: "It makes no more sense to speak of sixteenth-century English pornography than it does to speak of sixteenth-century English haiku. Neither of these genres existed in that culture, though that did not stop people from writing about sex or writing short striking poems" (2000, 15). However, this view of pornography as a 'genre' is misleading, since unlike the haiku pornography may be visual (images, films) as well as textual (stories, verses and so on). In other words, pornography cannot be reduced to a set of well-defined formal characteristics in the same way as the haiku. Moreover, Moulton tends to overemphasise the differences between early modern erotic writing and contemporary pornography at the cost of any similarities (such as the voyeur position).

adds to that impression, since theatre is posited here as a private and delegitimised form of 'delight' that involves only the two royal friends/lovers. It is from his very skill in letters that Gaveston constructs this model of friendship. As Alan Stewart notes, in the sixteenth century learning was becoming not only a way of gaining patronage: "it could also be a potential route for inscribing oneself as a friend".[30] The Ovidian dimension of this 'private delight' is unmistakable, since the dissolution of public fact into private story is highly characteristic of the *Metamorphoses*, and since Ovid's own voyeuristic delight in the human body is richly evident from the *Amores*, which Marlowe of course translated. Gaveston's representation of erotic entertainment thus evokes not just a morally acceptable, shared loneliness but a language of scandalous detachment that entwines literary and erotic experience without offering a clear ethical corrective. This experience is, to paraphrase Richard Helgerson, an 'anti-prodigal' experience in the sense that it presents the morally harmful without succumbing to the repentance compulsion that characterised poets of an earlier generation, such as Whetstone or Gascoigne.[31] It is true, as Mathew Martin suggests, that the staging of the Actaeon myth "seems to present the history of Edward's reign as the history of law, transgression, and punishment".[32] At the same time, characters like Mortimer Junior in the play hardly represent a positive value of repentance for past misdeeds; as will be apparent, Mortimer himself is exposed as a double-playing Machiavellian deceiver.

In other words, the play does not present a straightforward solution to the conflict between English nobility and Gaveston's Actaeonesque otherness. As Georgia Brown perceptively argues, "The play's specifically Ovidian moments question the very notion of an "Englishness" established on the suppression of the private and emotional spheres", and one such moment is Gaveston's monologue, whose "fantasies of metamorphic wantonness … parody *The Metamorphoses*".[33] I would like to expand the Ovidian implications of Brown's argument here, specifically with regards to Gaveston's monologue, since it will help me to elucidate the characteristically literary concerns that permeate the first scene's depiction of Gaveston.

As suggested, Gaveston is a user of foreign language who, in the course of the first scene, returns to England, rejects a morality narrative and conjures up poetic wantonness in elaborate terms. It could be claimed that this narrative is a blasphemous parody of another, more well-known one – the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son. But the text does little to encourage such a view. Even

[30] Stewart 1997, 125.
[31] Cf. Helgerson 1976, 5.
[32] Martin 2015, 116.
[33] Brown 2002, 166.

though Mortimer Junior later complains of the "prodigal gifts" (2.2.157) that Edward has lavished upon Gaveston, the adjective refers more to extravagance than to particular scriptural models. I would instead suggest that Gaveston represents the imagined return of another, considerably more secular character: Ovid. Renaissance authors, taking the cue from Ovid himself in his *Tristia*, often identified the banished Roman poet with the Actaeon of the *Metamorphoses*. For example, Marlowe's friend Thomas Watson said in his *Hekatompathia* (1582) that Ovid "applied this fiction [of Actaeon] vnto himselfe, being exiled (as it should seeme) for hauing at vnawares taken *Caesar* in some great fault".[34] In other words, to Watson Actaeon was, like Ovid, a pryer into the private areas of people in power, although Watson seems ambivalent about their actual guilt. As for the Actaeon myth in *Edward II*, it serves as an emblematic representation of the fate of Gaveston, who establishes a relationship with the King but is later killed for being a threat to the order dictated by the noblemen. However, it has been argued that Actaeon stands for Edward rather than Gaveston, since Actaeon was of royal descent and since Edward is later torn apart by "yelping hounds" – that is, the enraged noblemen.[35] Gaveston, though, is as much a victim of the barking dogs as Edward, and as François Laroque has pointed out, there is also an intriguing similarity between Gaveston's and Actaeon's names.[36] For reasons given above, Ovid is also implied in this equation. The Roman poet of course never returned from his exile, but, as Cheney has noted, Marlowe at this point converts tragedy into comic erotic myth. Actaeon, pursued by yelping dogs, only 'seems' to die, and he performs this show for the King's private pleasure, which is underscored by a latent sexual pun on the meaning of 'die'.[37] The Actaeonesque fiction of the *Metamorphoses* thus becomes an erotically charged 'happy end' with Gaveston returning as a voyeuristic Ovid who seeks to infuse the English morality stage with his own, irresponsible and Latinate brand of poetic representation.

It is this emphasis on the seeming, on the fictive, that separates Marlowe's play from the sources that he used.[38] In an important essay, Joan Parks has

[34] Watson 1964, 45. As is well-known, the reasons behind Ovid's banishment were the *carmen*, his poetry, which did not fit into the new Augustan sense of morality, and the *error*, usually thought today to be political (Claassen 1999, 29). Marlowe's Gaveston makes the *carmen* more explicit than the *error* in his monologue.

[35] Sunesen 1954, 246; Deats 1980, 311.

[36] Laroque 2000, 168–69. For a third standpoint on this issue, see Wessman 1999–2000, which focuses on the image of Diana and argues that Gaveston "fulfills this Cynthian role as dreamer and impresario" (4).

[37] Cheney 1997, 165.

[38] For Marlowe's treatment of his sources, see Forker 1995, 41–66; Thomas and Tydeman 1994, 341–50.

argued that Elizabethan historians such as Stow or Holinshed presented the simplicity of their language "as a sign of truth and objectivity", and they frequently did so by opposing their writings to 'poetry'.[39] I wish to add to her observation that early modern theorists tended to see history as 'substance' whereas poetry was literally the art of turning emptiness into words. In Thomas Blundeville's *The true order and methode of writing and reading histories* (1574), for example, the author/translator proposes that poets "doe make much of nothing" in their narratives, whereas history writers "ought not to fayne anye Orations nor any other thing, but truely to reporte such speach, and deede, euen as it was spoken, or done".[40] *Edward II*, by contrast to such perspectives, does not highlight artlessness as a desirable aesthetic option. Reversing the historiographic hegemony of substance and emptiness, the play's Ovidian moments underscore the difference to its sources. Hence, Marlowe's account of the historical events puts the narratives of its sources to use while rejecting the theoretical implications behind them, particularly the historians' self-confessed amalgamation of artlessness and veracity.[41] Roughly put, *Edward II* sets the 'artful' and foreign against the 'artless' and vernacular; but it also eschews the idea that the artful should be domesticated into public, humanist subservience. Indeed, expressions of artfulness are either politically dangerous or in need of instant qualification. The legitimising language of common truth and objectivity in other words gives way, as in Gaveston's monologue on the Italian masques, to the language of 'seeming deaths' and 'private pleasures'.

Moreover, as already suggested, this Ovidian language is intermingled in the play with the established image of Gaveston as a foreigner who violates social as well as literary taboos. But although his foreignness seems almost generic in its mixture of French and Italian markers, its different components have specific cultural significance as well. I have previously emphasised the 'Italianness' of Gaveston's appearance, but his French origin is also accentuated in the play. Marlowe's contemporaries often commented upon the linguistic contamination that the Norman invasion forced upon the Saxon English people, although defenders of the Saxon heritage such as Samuel Daniel usually tried to gloss over the impact of that invasion. As Daniel put it, "the accession of strange people, was but as riuers to the Ocean, that

[39] Parks 1999, 284.

[40] Blundeville 1574, sig. E4^{r-v}.

[41] I should clarify, however, that the emphatically 'artless' language of the chronicles does by no means exclude the use of Latin; but when Latin is employed, such as in Abraham Fleming's additions to the 1587 edition of Holinshed, it usually involves a large amount of moralisation (cf. Forker 1995, 126) – a trait that, again, distinguishes *Edward II* from its sources.

changed not it, but were changed into it".[42] In *Edward II*, however, the emerging master narrative of assimilation and anti-Frenchness is circumscribed in a blatant manner. Indeed, Gaveston's status as detached onlooker is sustained throughout much of the longish first scene. "I'll stand aside" (1.1.72), he says as the King enters with his noblemen, including the King's brother the earl of Kent as well as Gaveston's arch-enemies, Mortimer Senior and his nephew. The latter says to the King that he was sworn to Edward's father never to let Gaveston return to England, and the eavesdropping Gaveston exclaims: "*Mort Dieu!*" (1.1.89). Not only does this remark once again identify Gaveston as an 'other'; its sarcastic pun on Mortimer's name also serves to implicate Mortimer in the idea of the foreign and treacherous. (As if underscoring the punning character of Gaveston's exclamation, the lines immediately preceding and following his remark both mention Mortimer's name.[43]) Once again, the play suggests the *absence* of a firm vernacular ground – even Gaveston's worst antagonist is as 'foreign' as himself, and Mortimer the younger later becomes the play's chief conspirator against the realm.

Yet, while Gaveston at this moment is ostensibly detached from the rest of the characters, his lines also serve to transcend that visual boundary and underscore the intimacy between himself and the King. "Well done, Ned" (1.1.97), he comments when Edward rebukes the aggressive Mortimer. The colloquial name form 'Ned' transgresses the arrangement of the stage, separating Gaveston and Edward from the rest of the characters and challenging the notion of legitimate kingship. This pattern is reinforced as the noblemen – except the earl of Kent, Edward's brother – exit and Gaveston enters to the King. In an already-quoted line, Edward claims to be "another Gaveston". As his favourite approaches, the King even compares himself to a classical model of friendship – and love:

> Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules
> Then thou hast been of me since thy exile. (1.1.143–44)

Hylas is the beautiful youth who was lured into a pool by the nymphs when searching for water, bitterly mourned by his lover Hercules. This reference to the 'famous friends' of the classics is very much a humanist convention; later in the play, Mortimer Senior gives a typical list of well-known male friends

[42] Quoted in Jones 1953, 228.

[43] 'For *Mortimer* will hang his armour up'; "Well, *Mortimer*, I'll make thee rue these words" (1.1.88; 90). Marlowe later gives a widespread but false etymology of Mortimer's name: the Dead Sea (*Mortuum Mare* in Latin), connecting the Mortimer family to the crusades (2.4.21–23). In fact, the family name was derived from Mortemer, a village in Normandie; for a brief discussion of this etymology, see Forker 1995, 206.

ranging from (again) Hercules and Hylas to Cicero and Octavius (1.4.390–96). Friendship, however, was generally assumed by the humanists to be a function of virtue; as Castiglione's *Courtier* put it, in Ciceronian fashion, "the friendship of the wicked, is no friendshippe".[44] By contrast, while paying lip service to the humanist idealisation of male friendship, Marlowe's King suggests that friendship – and even the erotic passion it includes in the play – can be separated from political virtue, since his own relationship to Gaveston in fact leads him to jeopardise the stability of his kingdom. This problematic is instantly exposed as Edward, under protest from his brother, starts to heap titles upon Gaveston:

> I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,
> Chief Secretary to the state and me,
> Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man. (1.1.153–55)

But the exact status of Gaveston's duties is wobbly at best – is he primarily secretary to the state or to Edward, or to both?[45] As Stewart points out, the implication of this scene is that "secretarial service to the state at the highest level has necessarily to be mediated in a personal relationship to the monarch".[46] Adding another facet to Stewart's analysis, I would argue that Gaveston's secretarial position also distorts the humanist ideal of the learned government official who combined skills in letters with political ability.[47] Gaveston is 'learned', but it is the supposedly immoral Ovid he cites; he is implicated in the convention of humanist friendship but is not a virtuous friend. The play also emphasises Gaveston's low social position, because Edward's brother says of the titles that the King heaps on his minion:

> Brother, the least of these may well suffice
> For one of greater birth than Gaveston. (1.1.157–58)[48]

Gaveston's rise to power may reflect the humanist dream that merit not noble birth should be decisive for political advancement; yet I would argue that the play reflects that dream in order to debunk it. True, as James Knowles points out, *Edward II* does pit an aristocratic system against one of ability or

[44] Castiglione 1561, sig. P3^{r}.

[45] Critics have noted the possible sexual pun in the phrase "Lord of Man"; see note and reference in Forker 1995, 151.

[46] Stewart 1997, 179.

[47] One might even argue, with David Brumble, that Edward "eschews prudent counselors entirely" and "makes appointments to further his personal pleasure" (2008, 60). Reconciliation of the public and the private are not at stake so much as a rejection of the former.

[48] The extent to which Marlowe altered his sources – especially Holinshed – to lower Gaveston's social position has caused some critical debate (Duxfield 2015, 134). To my mind, it is at least safe to say Gaveston's low origin is a potent source of unease in the play.

cunning.[49] But it should be added that the portrayal of Gaveston implies a rejection of the idea that ability should be used for social acceptance. Rather than placing themselves at the summit of established political hierarchy, Gaveston and Edward in effect withdraw from that hierarchy and place themselves as detached, scornful observers. (In what seems like an act of defiantly political – and anachronistic – anti-Catholicism, Edward throws the bishop of Coventry in prison, but he does so exclusively because the bishop is the cause of Gaveston's exile.) Later in the play, Mortimer Junior provides an apt image of this detachment when he says of Gaveston that

> Whiles other walke below, the king and he
> From out a window laugh at such as we. (1.4.415–16)

In fact, Edward's scorn extends to the idea of ruling itself. When challenged by the noblemen that he is an incompetent ruler, Edward simply responds by suggesting that they "make several kingdoms of this monarchy" (1.4.70) and share them between them,

> So I may have some nook or corner left
> To frolic with my dearest Gaveston. (1.4.72–73)

In this scene, Edward's and Gaveston's scandal is further underscored as Gaveston is presented sitting beside Edward on the throne in front of the noblemen. The stage space thus demonstrates both the intimacy of their relationship as well as its detachment from the public space of the barons (and, indeed, the audience). As Mortimer Senior acknowledges, this outrage combines sex and class:

> What man of noble birth can brook this sight?
> *Quam male conveniunt!*
> See what a scornful look the peasant casts. (1.4.12–14)

Apart from his disgusted observations on Gaveston's low birth, Mortimer Senior provides a Latin tag that translates literally "How badly they suit each other".[50] This tag is adapted from the story of Jupiter and Europa in Book 2 of the *Metamorphoses*: "Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur / maiestas et amor".[51] Love and political rule cannot go together, and Mortimer Senior emphasises the sexual passion between Edward and Gaveston by associating them with Jupiter, who famously dressed up as bull in order to abduct Europa. At the same time, just as in the list of famous male friends that I discussed above, Mortimer Senior acts the humanist, because he covers

[49] Knowles 1998, 12–13.

[50] Forker 1995, 161.

[51] In Arthur Golding's translation: "Betweene the state of Maiestie and loue is set such oddes, / As that they cannot dwell in one" (Golding 1567, fol. 28^{v}).

up the homosexual relationship by seeing it through the lens of a heterosexual one. Moreover, he moralises Ovid by using the reference to the *Metamorphoses* as a condemnation of political imprudence. In that sense, his comments on Gaveston reflect the striving for control both of politically dangerous privacy and the need to impose moral lessons upon the Ovidian poetic representation with which that privacy is entwined. It is true, as Troni Grande observes, that Mortimer and his camp tend to use Latin as a kind of class marker – that they "wear their knowledge of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* like a badge of superiority".[52] However, Gaveston is at least as knowledgeable on the subject of Ovid as any of his enemies, and I would argue that the play explores the variety of uses to which Latin could be put rather than one single social meaning. As I suggest below, Ovidian Latin is even utilised to confer an ironic dimension upon the enemies of the King, so that their attempts at asserting superiority become rather hollow. In the passage cited above, Latin becomes an intrusive entity that both underscores Mortimer Senior's learning and the ambiguous status of that learning; for Mortimer Senior is hardly presented as the master of the situation any more than the rest of his party.

Thus, the issue of Ovidian, foreign-tainted intimacy is not limited to Gaveston's and Edward's relationship. Rather, the play's repeating structure suggests that such intimacy is threatening everywhere. When there is a decision to once more ostracise Gaveston, Edward accuses the Queen of being responsible for that decision and tells her to make the lords recall the decision if she wants to regain his love. The Queen, dismissed by the King as a "French strumpet", complains in an outburst of passion that the King has abandoned her in favour of Gaveston. Comparing herself to the "frantic Juno" abandoned by Jupiter (1.4.178), she wishes that "charming Circe" had changed her shape into a man and Hymen the marriage-god's cup "had been full of poison" (1.4.172; 174). This compendium of references to the *Metamorphoses* is entwined with eroticised privacy as Isabella draws Mortimer Junior aside to plead Gaveston's cause in a dumb show watched by the other lords. Mortimer, who subsumes to her persuasion, eventually becomes her lover. Hence, if Gaveston stages Italian masques by night and draws the King "which way he pleases", Isabella proves herself equally adept at this art, since she stages a show rooted in her own, Ovidian passion and thereby stirs her presumptive lover's sexual interest. Therefore, although the Queen superficially looks like a cliché of feminine behaviour (emotion, doting, subservience), I do not agree with Simon Shepherd's claim that her language is "private and non-functional".[53] Rather, her language is functional precisely because it is

[52] Grande 1999, 191.
[53] Shepherd 1986, 191.

private, since she manages rhetorically to use the realm of privacy to further her *own* interest as much as the King's. As Joanna Gibbs points out, by ingratiating herself both with the King and Mortimer, Isabella enables herself "to act on her own behalf" (169).[54]

Yet Isabella's strategy does little to diminish the King's interest in his minion. Indeed, his fervent exclamations for Gaveston – which liken his sorrow to "Cyclops' hammers" (1.4.312) relentlessly beating upon his heart – are so emotionally uncontrolled that the earl of Lancaster responds in repulsion: "*Diablo!* What passions call you these?" (1.4.318). Unlike Gaveston's French oaths, the Spanish expletive here becomes not so much a sign of foreign affectation as a noa word with which the unspeakably monstrous can be signified. Roger Sales astutely comments:

> Just as Sir Christopher Hatton demonised Catholicism by referring to it as "*diabolica*", so Lancaster is unable to find English words with which to express his disgust".[55]

The sexually and emotionally foreign can only be described in terms of the linguistically (and theologically[56]) foreign. But at the root of Lancaster's disgust is also a fear of political disunion, since Edward states in despair that he would gladly give his crown to Gaveston's enemies if that would bring his minion back (1.4.307–09).[57] In the play, the use of other vernaculars than English is usually linked to uncontrolled passion and/or a dangerous lack of concern for the public realm and dynastic succession.[58]

At the same time, *Edward II* does not only associate its own vision of a licentious, immoral and Ovidian-inspired English with the use of foreign vernaculars. The play also contrasts that vision to an institutionalised and socially acceptable use of Latin. A clear example of this is Baldock the scholar, who now enters the play together with Spencer, a nobleman who is later to replace Gaveston as Edward's favourite. While Gaveston states at the beginning of the play that he shall "bowe to none but to the king" (1.1.19), Baldock and Spencer indulge in conspiratorial gossip about noblemen and preferment. While these characters could be seen as repetitions of Gaveston,

[54] Gibbs 2000, 169.

[55] Sales 1991, 131.

[56] Consider for example Richard Carew's characterisation of the Spanish language: "maiesticall, but fullsome … and terrible like the deuill in a playe" (1904, 292). The linking of the majestic, the diabolic and the Spanish also seems to be implied in Lancaster's remark.

[57] For the political significance of the crown in Marlowe's play, see Preedy 2014, esp. 270–73.

[58] Cf. Peele's *Edward I* (1593), in which Jone of Acone learns that she is the daughter not of the king but of "a leacherous Frier" (Peele 1953–70, 2.166). Falling down in a frenzy, Jone utters a couple of curtailed lines from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, as if suggesting that threats to dynastic order can only be verbalised in non-English speech.

Baldock to some extent comes across as his opposite. For unlike Gaveston, Baldock is an academic intent on social climbing. He is depicted in the play as the tutor of Lady Margaret De Clare, who is married to Gaveston, and "Having read unto her since she was a child" (2.1.30), he is now hoping for a post at the court. His use of language is therefore associated with a 'normal', heterosexual discourse – marriage, social acceptance – rather than the irresponsible homoeroticism of Gaveston.[59] Moreover, although both Gaveston and Baldock are of humble origins in the play, they have markedly different strategies for social advancement. Baldock is characterised by one of his enemies as a "smooth-tongued scholar" (4.6.57); Gaveston, on the other hand, is hardly smooth-tongued given his ability to incite controversy. Moreover, Gaveston's seductive Ovidian dumb shows are replaced by Baldock's and Spencer's impotent academic in-joking, as when Baldock claims to be far above the "formal toys" (2.1.44) of obsequious courtiers:

> I am none of these common pedants, I,
> That cannot speak without '*propterea quod*.' (2.1.52–53)

And Spencer Junior is in on the academic joke:

> But one of those that saith '*quandoquidem'*
> And hath a special gift to form a verb. (2.1.54–55)

There is an element of irony here: Baldock denies that he is a "common pedant", but his Latin phrase, which means "for this reason", is echoed by Spencer in another, which means basically the same thing. As Forker argues, the jocular piece of dialogue seems to imply some distinction between the two phrases; but the point, I would argue, is ultimately that academic Latin is exploited for its powerlessness.[60] The contrast between Baldock and Gaveston therefore also implies a linguistic and aesthetic conflict: academic verb-formers who seek official courtly preferment are nowhere as successful as Ovidian makers of masques who join with the King in withdrawing from the public. Hence, in *Edward II*, when Latin is integrated in a hierarchy of public acceptance and social advancement, it is also exposed as impotent. Indeed, to Baldock, withdrawal from the public is a non-entity – a presumptive court humanist in the style of Sir Thomas Elyot, he is virtually composed of his desire for social status.[61] In the play, the King later escapes

[59] As for Lady Margaret, critics point out that her passion for Gaveston in fact repeats that of Edward for Gaveston verbally, and thus, heterosexual passion is circumscribed by male bonding (Shepherd 1986, 119) or even homosexual desire (Forker 1995, 70).

[60] Forker 1995, 187.

[61] Kate Bennett sees Baldock as "a type of Hypocrisy and a focus for anti-intellectual and anti-clerical satire" (1997, 484), but I would qualify her view somewhat. The depiction of

from the pursuing noblemen together with Baldock and Spencer disguised in a group of monks. Edward rather incongruously asks his men for a philosophy seminar and thereby underscores his fervent desire for the private, the 'contemplative':

> Come Spencer, come Baldock, come sit down by me,
> Make trial now of that philosophy
> That in our famous nurseries of arts
> Thou sucked'st from Plato and from Aristotle.
> Father, this life contemplative is heaven –
> O that I might this life in quiet lead! (4.7.16–21)

Significantly, Baldock makes no response to this request; his erudition is of little meaning to him unless it furthers him socially. Instead, Edward's desire for learned conversation becomes a sign of degradation, as he reels further off into drowsiness and confusion. Once again, academic learning is depicted as powerless, and in the next moment, the betrayed King and his companions are discovered by the earl of Leicester and his companions.

At the same time, as in Gaveston's Italian masques, classical learning *can* work wonders, although interestingly enough, this learning is connected to theatricality and thus to literary and aesthetic issues. Moreover, such theatricality is usually confined to the private realm (as in the case of Gaveston and the King), but when it is not, it demands instant qualification or even denial. When Leicester captures the fugitive King, his reaction at this unguarded moment of excitement is to quote Seneca's *Thyestes*:

> Too true it is: *quem dies vidit veniens superbum*,
> *Hunc dies vidit fugiens iacentem*. (*Edward II* 4.7.53–54)[62]

However, Leicester immediately realises his *faux pas* and cuts off his resounding Latin: "But Leicester, leave to grow so passionate" (4.7.55). Leicester in other words acknowledges that the passionate language of theatricality threatens him even at the very moment of triumph. Evidently, the passion with which Latin is now associated is also linked to notions of effeminacy, for a couple of scenes earlier Mortimer Junior has set up a distinction between military virtue and feminine passion in an admonition to the Queen:

> Nay madam, if you be a warrior,
> Ye must not grow so passionate in speeches (4.4.14–15).

Baldock does not so much satirise *any* intellectual but the *humanist* intellectual whose career depended upon social climbing through competence.

[62] In Jasper Heywood's 1581 translation: "Whom dawne of day hath seene in pryde to raygne, / Hym ouerthrowne hath seene the euening late" (Newton 1581, fol. 31r).

From this context, Leicester's denial of theatrical, passionate speech also becomes a way of averting effeminacy. But it also hints at the issue of Englishness, since Isabella is identified as non-English. Leicester's remark and his self-interruption thus suggest that passion is both un-English and not sufficiently masculine. The baron who captures Edward is in other words subtly depicted as a character where theatricality, effeminacy and un-Englishness threaten to erupt at any moment of excitement.

By contrast, the prime anti-theatricalist of the play is Mortimer Junior, the enemy of Gaveston who goes from being an honest patriot to a Machiavellian usurper conspiring with his mistress – the Queen – to overthrow the King. To depict Mortimer as Gaveston's enemy is, as Cheney points out, Marlowe's biggest alteration of his sources, especially Holinshed.[63] The aesthetic metadimension of Gaveston's and Mortimer's enmity is obvious, for while Gaveston stages Ovidian masques to please the King, Mortimer holds those same "idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows" (2.2.156) in contempt. Indeed, as critics point out, the conflict between Gaveston and Mortimer contains arguments remarkably similar to those of anti-theatrical tract writers such as Gosson or Stubbes.[64] However, Mortimer's ostensible contempt for theatricality is compromised by his own actions, which show him to be as prone towards play-acting as his enemies (although Mortimer is more of a dissembler than Edward or Gaveston). Thus, while pamphlet writers such as Gosson generally wrote from a Puritan standpoint, Mortimer explicitly *plays* a Puritan. When he reveals his plans to dethrone the King's son and become the protector of the realm, he says, with a smattering of legal Latin, that he will manipulate the court proceedings by putting on the hypocritically modest manners of a nonconformist:

> And not unlike a bashful Puritan,
> First I complain of imbecility,
> Saying it is *onus quam gravissimum*,
> Till being interrupted by my friends,
> *Suscepi* that *prouinciam*, as they terme it,
> And to conclude, I am Protector now. (5.4.57–62)

'Imbecility' here means physical rather than mental weakness, and Mortimer claims that his post as protector will be too much of a burden given his bad health, whereupon his friends will emphasise that he has indeed accepted the duty. In other words, despite his ostensible anti-theatricalism, Mortimer becomes both an actor in and a director of a political show. But his deception does not stop at that; like the earl of Leicester before him, he is entangled in

[63] Cheney 1997, 166.
[64] Belt 1991, *passim*; Goldberg 1992, 106.

a passionate Latinity that also hints at effeminacy. A few lines later in his speech, Mortimer quotes the story of Niobe in the *Metamorphoses*: "*Maior sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere*" (5.4.67).[65] As critics point out, the dramatic irony here is that Niobe invites divine punishment by her hubris; but there is also the suggestion of a 'feminine' passion that is always on the verge of taking command. Unlike Leicester, though, Mortimer does not acknowledge this threat by correcting himself. The anti-theatricalists' argument against theatre as effeminising is thus turned against Mortimer himself. Indeed, there is also a hint of the 'perverse sodomite' in his lines

> I view the prince with Aristarchus' eyes,
> Whose looks were as a breeching to a boy (5.4.52–53)

– for Mortimer's positioning of himself as a stern, beating schoolmaster who is in power of the young King's body may also imply a sodomitical gaze, a threat of sexualised intimacy in the midst of public court proceedings.[66] In other words, for all his anti-theatrical sneers, Mortimer is ironically presented here as the exact target of the anti-theatricalists' arguments, particularly their already-mentioned conjunction of Machiavellianism, effeminacy and sodomy. As in several earlier scenes in the play, the presence of Ovidian poetry is entwined with the notion of a threatening privacy, amoral and seductively Latinate.

It is from this perspective that I want to interpret the possibly most famous passage in *Edward II* that deals explicitly with language and its public uses. Before claiming to act the Puritan, and in order to dispose with the captive King once and for all, Mortimer has devised an unpunctuated letter in Latin that can, depending on the reader's inflection, be read in two opposite ways:

> This letter, written by a friend of ours,
> Contains his death, yet bids them save his life.
> *'Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est;*
> Fear not to kill the king, 'tis good he die.'
> But read it thus, and that's an other sense:
> *'Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est;*
> Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst.' (5.4.6–12)

[65] In Golding's translation: "I am greater than that frowarde fortune may / Empeache me" (Golding 1567, fol. 70^{v}).

[66] See Stewart 1997, 84–121. As Stewart argues, although the stereotypical image of the sadistic (and by implication homosexual) schoolmaster is a later construction sometimes superimposed upon early modern accounts, there was certainly an anxiety about the subject of education, beating and homosexuality; such anxiety would have been the more acute when it involved the issue of lineage (1997, 103–4).

Readings of this passage often suggest that it expresses a concern with indeterminacy, and that Marlowe's radicalism would consist in his exposure of that indeterminacy.[67] Janette Dillon, for example, suggests:

> It is a remarkable moment that exposes the language of law, church and state as more dangerously open to corruption than any uneducated discourse could be.[68]

This argument may need some qualification. By the time when Marlowe wrote the play, Latin was no longer *the* language of either law, church or state. If anything, Mortimer's letter could be said to partake in a process of 'othering' Latin and centralising the vernacular that was already in full swing by the late sixteenth century.[69] My point is in other words that Mortimer illustrates the thesis, in the making by the 1590s, that Latin (as well as other languages) had already become less politically reliable than the vernacular. While Mortimer thus claims to be a patriotic defender of his country, he nonetheless comes ironically across as its main enemy. At the same time he has become a secret plotter against the King instead of the publicly sanctioned leader of the lords at the outset of the play. Mortimer – whom Deats terms, along with Isabella, "a pair of conniving, dissembling solipsists"[70] – in fact stages the whole conspiracy as one of concealment from the public, of physical intimacy and secret tokens:

> Within this room is locked the messenger
> That shall convey it [the letter] and perform the rest,
> And by a secret token that he bears,
> Shall he be murdered when the deed is done. (5.4.17–20)

Hidden messages thus carry other hidden messages; secret textual transactions only breed more blood-letting and confusion. The scene reads almost like a parody of humanist friendship, with its dedication to profitable, cultivated studying and reading together. At the same time, Mortimer's unpunctuated letter illustrates a humanist fascination with precisely the power of ambiguity, the power of languages to mean differently. In Roger Ascham's *A report and discourse … of the affaires and states of Germany* (1570), a report in the form of a letter to Ascham's friend John Astley from a diplomatic mission in the 1550s, there is a similar episode where the German emperor and the ambitious duke Maurice lure the landgrave into prison by an ambiguous letter, which promises that the landgrave should not be kept in

[67] For a relatively recent example, see Haber, who argues that not only Mortimer but also Gaveston try to "manipulate and control indeterminacy" (2009, 34).

[68] Dillon 1998, 202.

[69] Blank 1996, 14–15; 41.

[70] Deats 1988, 256.

einig, 'any' prison, although this word is surreptitiously changed to *ewig*, 'everlasting'.[71] In a suggestive moment of intimacy, Ascham receives a record of this 'pretty and notable' manipulation in his notebook from a reliably Protestant German preacher. Ascham muses:

> how soone *einig*, may be turned into *ewig*, not with scrape of knife, but with the least dash of pen so that it shall neuer be perceiued, a man that will proue, may easely see.[72]

True, the ambiguous message is in German rather than in the Latin of Mortimer, but since the duke Maurice in Ascham's account is associated both with Catholicism and Machiavellianism, the parallel is nonetheless suggestive. I would argue, therefore, that the German of Ascham's account plays the same role as Latin does in the scene featuring Mortimer's letter – they are both 'othered' languages in the sense that they are highlighted as examples of ominous ambiguity, and this othering process is fundamentally linked to the idea of concealment from the public. The token that Edward's murderer carries is hidden from view, and the dash of pen in the *Report* "shall never be perceived". Both texts, moreover, do reveal these secrets to their audience, although they do so from remarkably different points of view. As Stewart notes, Ascham's *Report* borrows its methodology from Cicero's *De Oratore*, with its insistence on truthfulness in history writing.[73] On the other hand, as I have previously suggested, Marlowe's play draws attention to its own artfulness and problematic relationship to veracity. The Latin of Mortimer, therefore, is not the Ciceronian Latin of 'truthful' history – it is, as his already-discussed quotation from the *Metamorphoses* reveals, an Ovidian, metamorphic idiom where nothing finally remains what it seems.

Not that order does not conclude the play. Indeed, with the possible exception of *Doctor Faustus*, no other play by Marlowe is so emphatic about its final levelling of transgression and disorder. Mortimer goes from being the representative of public order as a leader of the nobility to being literally alone with the Queen, while the young King Edward III finally enters surrounded by the lords and thus establishes what seems like a firm separation and ordering of the public and the private. Thus, the King, who discloses Mortimer's murderous conspiracy and sends him off to be beheaded, is, as Carla Coleman Prichard claims, "the one who restores order to the empire by normalizing relationships on both a public and a private level".[74] Unlike

[71] Ascham 1904, 161.
[72] Ascham 1904, 161.
[73] See Stewart 1997, 157. Ascham claims that the first point of history writing is "to write nothyng false"; and the second, "to be bold to say any truth" (1904, 126).
[74] Prichard 1998, 30.

Faustus, though, the ending of *Edward II* refuses any kind of metaphysical sanction: as David Bevington points out, the play's defence of kingship "never rests on divine right, but on the inner qualities of the young prince".[75] Moreover, the beheading of Mortimer is not really a 'restoration' of order, for within the world of the play, order is not initially presented as a condition that is first violated and then restored (as in *King Lear* or *Othello*). In fact, although the play opens with the briefest of invocations of dynastic order – "my father is deceased" – it immediately turns that order on its head, since Gaveston is outrageously invited to share the kingdom with his 'best friend', the King. The moral appeal of the ending therefore becomes less pronounced, since disorder is introduced without any firm prior establishment of an alternative. Order, in other words, is 'created' rather than 'restored', which potentially makes it the more arbitrary.

This conflict between the 'creation' and the 'restoration' of order also has a linguistic dimension, which is emphasised in early modern accounts of the boy King Edward III. In the 1520s, John Rastell's *Abridgement of the Statutes*, in a context of celebration of the English language, approvingly cited Edward's decree that all legal cases should be tried in English, and Rastell includes this event in his narrative as a direct forerunner of the "maruellously amended and augmentyd" English tongue under the early Tudors.[76] Linguistic order is here presented as an innovation rather than something restored from ancient times. However, a rough century later, John Hare could praise Edward "for *restoring* in a good decree the use and honour of the English tongue formerly exiled by Normanisme into contempt and obscurity".[77] *Edward II* falls almost exactly between these texts – in the midst of the gestation of a Golden Age myth according to which the honour of the English language, temporarily forgotten but always existing, was to be restored (rather than simply created) by the Elizabethans.[78] The boy King of Marlowe's play, with his reassuringly anti-French, anti-Catholic agenda, does share the English patriotism of Hare's characterisation. Yet, as represented in the play, his command of language comes nowhere near the heights of either Mortimer or Gaveston; instead, he "tears his hair and wrings his hands" (5.6.17), and in

[75] Bevington 1968, 217.

[76] Quoted in Jones 1953, 88.

[77] Quoted in Jones 1953, 231; emphasis added.

[78] Among texts on Edward contemporary to Marlowe's, the anonymous play *Edward III* (1596), which is "full of Marlovian echoes" (Smith 1992, 309), makes a number of interesting nods in the direction of linguistic normalisation. When the king is enamoured with the Scots-speaking countess of Salisbury, he remarks that she "spoke broad, / With epithets and accents of the Scot; / But somewhat better than the Scot could speak" (Armstrong 1965, 102). Presumably, a non-regular kind of English would be less sexually attractive to the king unless it were a milder, 'better' form.

the concluding lines of the play, he offers "these tears, distilling from mine eyes" (5.6.100) as witness of his grief for his father. Hence, the King's physical gestures of sorrow – which, as Forker points out, are Marlowe's invention[79] – suggest not only boyish insecurity but effeminacy as well.[80] Mortimer, the revealed enemy of the realm, is at least on the surface more manly than Edward III, and so, the play confounds any final linking of Englishness, masculinity and linguistic profligacy.

By its refusal to embrace the teleological and morally stable ground upon which late sixteenth-century ideas of the vernacular were footed, *Edward II* thus challenges not only early modern notions of the private and the public; via its interlinked metacritical notions of poetic expression, it also opposes its own view of the poetic vernacular to the idea that poetry should be a function of the public. I have argued that the thematic of withdrawal and privacy in Marlowe's play should be seen from the context of the emerging aristocratic idealisation of solitude in the late sixteenth century. However, the play's entwining of privacy and immoral artfulness suggests a form of withdrawal from the public that is not reconcilable with ideas of English as a politically unifying language. Issues of foreignness play into this conflict, and the French as well as Italian markers of *Edward II* are at the focus of the play, which thus addresses the issue of the foreign by presenting an ever uncertain vernacular ground.

[79] Forker 1995, 314.

[80] As Marie Rutkoski argues, the prince inserts himself in a line of royal minions (including, of course, Gaveston) through his behaviour: "when we … see how the prince voluntarily classes himself in the very category he wishes to demolish, we realize that the role of the minion and the sexual discourse that surrounds it in this play cannot be banished easily" (2006, 286).

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The Re-formation of Antichrist:

Jacobean adaptations of the Battle of Lepanto

By Bent Holm

The Battle of Lepanto, 1571, between the Holy League and the Ottoman Empire became an iconic point of orientation in the early modern European encounters with the Islamic world. In His Maiesties Lepanto *from 1591, James VI of Scotland depicts the Battle as God's victory over Antichrist. It was referred to in James' entry in London in 1604; and it was echoed in Shakespeare's* Othello*, which was premiered that same year. Lepanto played a role in the Jacobean regime's staging of itself. It was re-enacted various times in performances that were given an official design in panegyric publications.*

A two-story historiography

The European victory in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 between the Catholic Holy League under the command of Don Juan of Austria, and the Ottoman Empire became an iconic point of orientation in the early modern European encounters with the Islamic world. The significance ascribed to the event as a proof that the Ottoman Empire was not invincible nor unstoppable, was enormous.

The Battle was not the result of a plan or strategy. An Ottoman army had invaded Cyprus in 1570. When Don Juan's Christian fleet came to the rescue, he realized that the mission was hopeless, and therefore headed for Lepanto where the Ottoman fleet lay at anchor. From the Ottoman point of view, the defeat was a minor episode in a lasting warfare against the Western powers – originally marked by the idea of a re-integration in the Empire, under Ottoman leadership, of the lost western part of the Roman Empire, in a kind of reverse crusade thinking. The Sultan's reaction to the defeat was to rebuild his fleet and double his resolve to control North Africa and the sea routes via Malta and Sicily. In a short time, the Ottoman fleet was reconstructed and the frightening advances were resumed. Six months after the defeat, the Turks had built two hundred new galleys and captured Cyprus – which, by the way, is the scene of Shakespeare's *Othello* that takes place during the Turkish-Venetian wars. Two years after Lepanto, the Venetians signed a peace treaty

acknowledging the Sultan's sovereignty over Cyprus and even paid him a financial tribute. A massive Turkish fleet then seized Tunis.[1] So much for western superiority and triumph.

However, in the western perspective, Lepanto stood as a turning point, God's crucial intervention in the ongoing apocalyptical drama between good and evil. Paolo Veronese's painting from 1572–1573 (see Fig. 1) exposes the two levels. The divine implication in the events, represented by the group of over-size figures in the sky, dominates the upper half of the picture; it shows the presentation of the personification of Venice to the Holy Virgin to the left, surrounded by the patron saints of the participants in the League, Rocco, Peter, Justina, Marcus, accompanied by a chorus of angels. The lower level presents the actual battle. The two halves are divided by a layer of clouds. From the heavenly level rays of light are sent down to the left side, while oblique rays of storm and darkness and arrows of fire, thrown by an angel, hit the right side. The horizontal movement in the painting goes from left to right; on the upper half Madonna is turned to the right, on the lower part the vessels' pennants indicate the wind direction. It is the sun's direction, and even the reading direction. The dynamic is directed against the negative right side. The western part is strong and light and equipped with straight, rank masts, whereas the eastern side is dark and chaotic, marked by more crooked or scattered masts. The overall composition is oriented around a vertical and a horizontal axis, eventually forming a cross. The montage of heavenly and an earthly level implies that the truth about the event is twofold, spiritual and material at the same time. However, the different proportions in the painting demonstrate that the physical aspect is of a minor importance, compared to the heavenly drama, which in all respects takes place above the actual naval battle.

Not only the Catholic side read the Battle as God's intervention in a crucial conflict. It played a significant role even in various Protestant – for instance English and Scottish – contexts, with particular reference to Daniel's prophecies from the Old Testament and the New Testament's Book of Revelation. In such contexts, the adversary would appear to be an incarnation of Antichrist – Christ's diabolical, apocalyptic counterpart. Together with the Spanish Armada, 1588, Lepanto was included in both confessional and national mythologizations of contemporary historiography.

The idea of this article is to focus on the interaction between the actual event on the one hand, and a complex conglomeration of ideological and performative interpretations on the other, with specific regard to King James VI of Scotland – from 1603 James I of England, Scotland and Ireland – and

[1] Cf. Brotton 2017, 64 and 72.

his relation to the Ottoman Empire. The Battle itself was a dynamic event. It was inscribed in an apocalyptical narrative. The encoding was transformed into staged embodiments in ritualized re-enactments. And the performances were published in authoritative versions in official splendour books, based on given formulas. However, there are no absolute distinctions between history, theology and theatre.

Certain wave motions between dynamics and fixations, events and medializations, circumstances and framings, can be observed. But first and foremost, it is about a constant juxtaposition of fact and truth.

Apocalypse soon

Given the geographical conditions it may seem strange that the 'Turk' played a role in the Jacobean mind. Nevertheless, he did. Although the British Islands were remote from the Ottoman Empire, the *mental* front was far from remote. Despite the distance to the theatre of war, the fear was massive. In the late sixteenth century prayers were said in the churches during the fights in the Mediterranean Sea about Malta and in central Europe about Hungary. God was invoked for help to avert the assaults on the Christian world. The point is that what was at stake was Christendom as such. When the Turkish campaign in Hungary was reassumed in 1593 – which initiated the Long Turkish War that lasted until 1606 and aimed even at a conquest of Vienna – a *Policy of the Turkish Empire* was published. It claims that "the terrour of their name doth even now make the kings and Princes of the West […] tremble and quake through the feare of their victorious forces".[2] The archbishop of Canterbury referred to "our sworne and most deadlye enemyes the Turkes", when he preached that if "the Infidels" should prevail in those regions and manage to conquer them completely then the rest of Christendom will be exposed "to the incursions and invasions of the said savage and most cruel enemies the Turks, to the most dreadful danger of the whole Christendom".[3]

It was thus the religious implication of the military challenge that was at stake. But that should be seen against an eschatological backdrop. This apocalyptic aspect of the Turkish peril was inspired by continental conceptions, primarily developed by Martin Luther.

[2] Bergeron 2010, 1. See also Vitkus 2003, 82. Vaughan 1994 describes p. 31 the work as anonymously published in "London: Printed for Iohn Windet 1597". See also Burton 2005, 175 and 204 about the commercial-political relations to the Turkish 'Antichrist'. See also Kenan 2010, 13–64, concerning socio-cultural interactions between the Ottomans and Europe.

[3] In Vitkus 2003, 79–80. See also Dimmock 2005, 76–81.

The continental connection

During Queen Mary's re-catholization of England 1553–1558, almost 300 religious dissenters were burned at the stake, and around 800 persons sought exile in Protestant cities on the continent to avoid the persecutions. Several of them cooperated with the reformers and frequented the Protestant universities; it is the period when a Lutheran historiography was elaborated.[4]

Luther paid great interest in the Apocalypse. Initially, he was not sure of its canonical status, nor of its significance. As for the Turks, in his 95 theses from 1517 that initiated the Protestant Reformation, he implicitly defined them as the scourge of God that could only be averted by refraining from sin. However, Süleyman I's siege of Vienna, 1529, was a real eye-opener to him. Only then did he really understand the message: that the Book of Revelation described the history of the church, and that the papacy and the Ottoman empire filled the role of the arch-enemy, in the shape of the twofold Antichrist. Based on that realization he phrased his comments on the Book and saw to it that it was properly illustrated so the message became clear.

In his dissertations about war against the Turk from 1529, Luther elaborated the apocalyptical motif.[5] He took his point of departure in Daniel's prophecies from The Old Testament, and he identified the four monsters that Daniel saw in his vision as the Assyrian-Babylonian, the Persian-Median, the Greek and the Roman empires. The argument was applied to actual, contemporary historical events meaning that the eleventh horn that emerges from the 'Roman' monster stands for the aggressive Ottoman Empire. Two particularly negative components play roles on the contemporary stage, following a diabolical and a divine scenario: the Pope and the Turk. First, the Pope has been sent out by the Devil in order to kill us spiritually, and then the Turk to kill us physically. These events herald the end of times, the coming of Doomsday and the return of the Saviour. He, who fights the Turk in war, fights the Devil. And he who falls because of the Turk's bloodthirsty cruelty, he will immediately become a martyr. He goes directly to Paradise. The Devil thus deceives himself. For the sooner Paradise is filled up, the sooner the Saviour will return.

Luther's sermon against the Turk calls the citizens to fight against the Ottomans under Emperor Charles' banner. So, although his German majesty is Catholic and the Pope is Antichrist**,** whoever fights the Turk defends Christendom as such.

[4] Firth 1979, 69.

[5] See Holm 2014, 29–38. Principal sources are Luther's treatises "On war against the Turks" and "Military sermon against the Turk", 1529.

Luther came back to the conspiracy model in various connections throughout his career. In one of his *Table Talks* published in 1566, he claimed that:

> Antichrist is at the same time the Pope and the Turk. A living creature consists of body and soul. The spirit of Antichrist is the Pope, his flesh the Turk. One attacks the Church physically, the other spiritually. Both however are of one lord, the devil, since the Pope is a liar and the Turk a murderer. But make a single person of Antichrist and you'll find both a liar and a murderer in the Pope.[6]

The key to the true meaning of actual events thus lay in the continental apocalypticists' statements. Luther's texts had an enormous impact on the conception of the Catholic Church, on the understanding of the Pope as Antichrist, and of the Islamic world, the Ottoman empire, personified in the image of the Turk, as one aspect of Antichrist.

The unholy league

This apocalypsation of history was annexed at an early stage of the reformation process by the English and Scottish reformers. The true identity of Antichrist was introduced by Archbishop Cranmer already in 1536;[7] obviously, it had to do with the tense relationship with Rome under Henry VIII, resulting in the construction of the Church of England in 1534. Also, the figure's duality was soon exposed. In his *Exposicion of Daniell the Prophete*, 1545, the Bible translator George Joye said about Antichrist, that "the Turk, Mahomet, the Popes of Rome, their cardinals, bishops, monks, priests and friars have played, and yet play this part."[8] In *The Image of bothe Churches after the moste wonderfull and heavenly Revelacion of Sainct John the Evangelist*, 1548, the influential churchman and playwright John Bale talked about "the universall or whole Antichriste" or the "bestiall body" of Satan, "comprehending in hym so well Mahomete as the Pope, so well the ragyng tyraunt as the still hypocrite, and all that wickedly worketh are of the same body."[9] In short, the beast from the abyss in the Revelation was:

> The cruell, craftye, and cursed generacion of Antichrist, the pope with his bishoppes, prelates, priestes, and religiouse in Europa, Mahomete with his dottinge dousepers in Affrica, and so forth in Asia and India.[10]

The reformers' depiction of the fundamental conspiracy is pretty unequivocal.

[6] In Vitkus 2003, 60.
[7] Bauckham 1978, 100.
[8] Bale, *The Image*, sig.b.vii,v., quoted from Bauckham 1978, 95.
[9] Quoted in Bauckham 1978, 61.
[10] Ibidem.

The most influential book of English Protestantism next to the Bible, and one of the most widely spread and widely read texts in Elizabethan England at all, was the historian John Foxe's imposing *Acts and Monuments*, also known as 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs', first published in 1563. The book, that was made accessible in public halls, cathedrals, churches etc., contains a history of the Church, including the sufferings of Protestants under the Catholic Church, "speciallye in this realm of England and Scotland", and an identification of Antichrist with the papacy. It was edited several times, for instance in 1596, after the renewed Turkish campaign in Hungary. In the second edition from 1570 Foxe inserted a long account of the "history of the Turkes", stating that even though the Turk seems to "to be farre off, yet do we nourish within our breasts at home, that [which] may soon cause us to feele his cruell hand and worse, if worse may be, to overrunne us: to lay our land waste: to scatter us amongst the Infidels" and claiming that "the whole power of sathan the prince of this world, goeth with the Turkes",[11] in the well-known internalization manoeuvre – stating that the Turk's power is due to our own sins. Furthermore, he included a section on *Prophecies of the Turke and the Pope, which of them is the greater Antichrist*. He related the Turks' incursions in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean to the usual apocalyptical context, ending up in reflections on the existence of two churches, that of Christ and that of Antichrist. The Church of England is the Church of Christ, whereas the adversary includes both the Pope and the Turk. The demonization of the Turks gave an argument for a powerful reformation of the English church: the Turkish threat was due to the need of a radical showdown with Catholicism.

Foxe also used dramatic forms to convey his message. In his allegorical 'comoedia apocalyptica' *Christus Triumphans* from 1556, he combined history and prophecy, thus anticipating the periodisation he elaborated in *Acts and Monuments*. The satanic characters perform, according to the place where they act, in different disguises. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, Psychephorus becomes Hypocrisy, dressed as a Franciscan, Adopylus becomes the Catholic King etc. Antichrist is devil and man, like Christ was God and man. It appears even that the Pope is one of his identities. However, his time is limited, his power is restrained. He participates in a divine scenario.

This correlation between prophesy and historiography and the doctrine of the two churches including the papacy as Antichrist was dominant in the late sixteenth century. The effect of the false church's acts was close at hand: the actual persecutions, the martyrs under Queen Mary's reign. The threat of new

[11] In Vitkus 2003, 61, cf. Dimmock 2005, 79 and Bauckham 1978, 165.

persecutions, carried out by the false church, was still there, given the nation's alleged disobedience to the Gospel. On the other hand, the Apocalypse assured, as a consolation, that the power of Antichrist was not unlimited. The Reformation was per se part of the final, apocalyptic battle. The expectation of the end of times was real. When Elizabeth took the English throne 1558 she was hailed as "A noble conqueror of antichrist and of his wicked kingdom."[12] A medal from 1587 presents her enthroned in triumph over a seven-headed apocalyptical beast.

In his *Sermons upon the whole booke of Revelation*, 1596, the preacher George Gifford proclaimed that the fire-breathing cavalry of the sixth trumpet represented the Turks, and that:

> No man of judgement […] can doubt, that this revelation revealing and describing all the greatest calamities and plagues that should come upon men in the world, should not set foorth the kingdome of the Turkes.[13]

This view was followed up by Arthur Dent in his *The Rvine of Rome* from 1603, when he says that the first four trumpets describes the gradual growth of heresy within the church, making way for the coming of Antichrist, and the fifth and sixth trumpet foretold the parallel rise and growth of papacy and the Turks including a comparison of Muslim and papist doctrines.[14]

These ideas were not just reserved to the theological field. In 1570 the poet John Phillips wrote in his A Friendly Larum or Faythfull Warnynge to the True-harted Subiectes of England. Discoueryng the Actes and Malicious Myndes of those obstinate Papists that hope (as they term it) to haue theyr Golden Day for instance that:

> If Mahomet, that prophet false,
> Eternity do gain,
> Then shall the pope, and you his saints,
> In heaven sure to reign.[15]

The enemy of God showed two primary faces that furthermore tended to merge. Protestant writers called for a battle against the Roman Catholic regime a crusade against "the second Turke", and Roman Catholicism was

[12] Thomas Becon in 1564 quoted by Bauckham 1978, 128.

[13] George Gifford, *Sermons upon the whole booke of the Revelation*, 1596, 173. Quoted after Bauckham 1978, 98.

[14] With the lengthy subtitle that predicts that *the power and authoritie of Rome, shall ebbe and decay still more and more throughout all the churches of Europe, and come to an vtter overthrow euen in this life before the end of the world*. Cf. Ball 1975, 81–82. The idea lived on during the 17th century, cf. op. cit. p. 87.

[15] After Burton 2005, 129.

equated to Islam in for example *De Turco-Papismo*, published in London in 1599, after catholic accusations of *Calvino-Turcism* in the year 1597.[16]

That the Pope is Antichrist became a solid dogma to the Elizabethan Church of England, also shared by James. The Turks rose and fell as an anti-christian threat; the papacy was a more constant adversary.

The apocalyptic Armada

The ascription a higher meaning to actual events was a general feature in the era. Even the Spanish were supposed to conspire with Antichrist. Consequently, an enormous significance was attributed to the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 – a year that according to various calculations was assumed to imply the end of the world and the second Coming of Christ. Allegedly, Spain's aggression was due to the Pope's fury because of Elizabeth's restoring the pure faith in her realm; and the victory was due to a divine intervention. Evidently, Protestant England had a special role to play in God's cosmic drama.

The event provoked reflections on the biblical prophecies in both England and Scotland. In his Ane Frvitfvll Meditatioun contening ane plane and facill expositioun of ye 7.8.9. and 10. versis of the 20. Chap. of the Reuelatioun from 1588, King James stated that "Of all the Scriptures the buik of the Reuelatioun maist meit for this our last age",[17] and demonstrated that it dealt with state affairs, including the Armada. Furthermore, he saw a connection between the Spanish and the Turks. However, Antichrist had been overthrown by an alliance of secular and spiritual powers.

Similarly, in his book about the church's liberation from Antichrist from 1590, the French Protestant Jean Baptiste Morel saw the defeat of the Armada as a result of combined divine and human efforts, that had been prophesied in the Revelation; and once the papal Antichrist had been destroyed, the alliance should turn against the Turks and liberate the churches of the East. Elizabeth was an instrument of God's in the fight for the true faith and against Rome.[18]

Also, the mathematician John Napier's influential *A Plaine Discouery of the whole Reuelation of Saint John,* Edinburgh 1593, was written in the aftermath of 1588; in both dedication and text he called upon James and other

[16] Schmuck 2005, 14.

[17] In Ball 1975, 22–23. See also Christiansson 1978, 166–70.

[18] Bauckham 1978, 179, Elizabeth was celebrated as, or compared to, the holy Virgin. They shared date of birth in Thomas Dekker's play *The Whore of Babylon* from 1607 Elizabeth is portrayed as Titania, the Fairie Queene, the greatest enemy of the Empress of Babylon, who suffers her severe defeat in a version of the Armada victory. She inflicts on the beast its final mortal wound.

princes "without pitie, ruth, and mercie to procede with all possible extremitie against that devilish seat [of Rome] to the utter extirpation thereof."[19]

The Jacobean gaze

As King of Scotland James deliberately moved his politics in the English direction, including a rapprochement of the Scottish church to the English structure. After the completion of the French reign in 1560 – James' mother, Queen of Scots Mary Stuart, was queen consort of Francis II who died that year – English books were spread among the population. John Foxe's important work took a great number of its examples from Scottish ecclesiastical history and it was well known, also in Scotland. The Scottish reformation was much influenced by continental and English concepts.

In 1586 James entered a 'league of amity' with England which was formalized in the shape of a personal union at his accession to the English throne in 1603. In connection with his enthronement, a number of his texts were reprinted in England. For instance, his *Daemonologie* from 1597, echoed in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*,[20] and his interpretation of the Apocalypse. James' book was just one title among a number of publications about the books of Daniel and Revelation by other authors. The general experience of living in pivotal times was reinforced by the passing of the throne from Tudors to Stuarts.

James was also a poet. In his poem, *His Maiesties Lepanto*, originally written in 1591, and re-edited in 1603, he inscribes the Battle in a cosmic historiography. James mobilizes the highest and the lowest forces, God and the Devil, in the battle about the true faith's victory or defeat. It is the very power and credibility of God that is at stake. James' fundamental ideas, as expressed in the poem, accord with the era's general theological conceptions, including Antichrist as a powerful actor on the eschatological stage. Events are signs. They have a meaning. In the beginning of the poem the Devil mocks, scorns and ridicules God, referring to the Turk's strength and power. God therefore sends his arch-angel Gabriel to rouse the Venetians to fight the threatening infidels. Like another Virgil, James sings the battle, which:

> fought was in Lepantoe's gulfe
> Betwixt the baptized race
> And circumcised Turband Türkeş
> Rencountring in that place.[21]

[19] Firth 1979, 138. About Muhammad ibidem, 143.

[20] See Holm 1999,1–11.

[21] Rhodes, Richards & Marshall 2003, 94. For a systematic introduction to the relation between Lepanto and *Othello* see Jones 1968, cf. also Matar 1999, 143–44. Matar is not crystal clear when he says that the radicalized formulations "were not in the original Scottish

The battle takes place as an encounter on life and death, a fight man against man, the good against the evil. Eventually, it turns out that God is stronger than the Devil, it all ends well with the defeat of the Turks and thereby – according to the *Chorus Venetus* and the final *Chorus Angelorum* which puts the event into its true cosmic perspective – with God's victory over Antichrist!

As an emphasizing of his anti-Catholic and anti-Islamic sense of responsibility, James elaborated the ideological interpretation of the Battle in the re-edition of *His Maiesties Lepanto* in 1603. It was an important task. Both Scotland and England had been re-catholicised for a time in the sixteenth century, entailing both persecutions and exiles. James' queen, Anne, was suspected of being Catholic – and probably was. In his preface to the London edition of the poem James therefore attempted to lay down a smokescreen on the slightly delicate matter that it was an alliance of Catholic powers led by Don Juan of Austria who fought the Battle, by underlining, that he does not write in praise of a foreign 'Papist bastard', and that it is not about one single person's deed, but about the victory of God. He also draws a frontline to the predecessor's, Elizabeth's, more pragmatic policy towards Islamic Constantinople. After having been excommunicated by the Pope in 1570 Elizabeth looked for the commercial and military potentials – for instance against Spain – in a positive relation to the Ottoman Empire. In her letters to the Sultan, she referred to Protestantism and Islam as monotheistic religions, unlike Catholicism. Her trade treaty appeared even as an important promotion of Christianity! Furthermore, this took place in a context of a European discussion of a united campaign against the Turk, "this Babylonian nabugadnazar and Turkish Pharaoh so near in our noses."[22] The partly pro-Turkish line – but not the trade – was abandoned by James as soon as he took office as the ruler. He even considered approaching Spain for a united front against the Turks, the common enemy of Christendom.

The Turkish focus

James' particular interest in the Turkish theme is reflected in a number of works that were published in the year of his ascension, for example, Richard

version but only in the English 'translation' that was prepared for the English press. At his accession, the king wanted to emphasize his anti-Muslim stance". However, the 'original Scottish' version means the poem in its manuscript form, before it was printed for the first time in 1591. This was done in Edinburgh, and so far the poem is still 'Scottish', even though linguistically anglicised and supplied with the de-radicalizing formulations. A really 'English' version *His Maiesties Lepanto, or heroicall song being part of his poeticall exercises at vacant houres* was only published at James' enthronement in 1603. See Cragie 1955–1958 for philological realia, and Rhodes, Richards & Marshall 2003, 94–106 for annotated text.

[22] Augustine Curio, *A notable History of the Saracens*, published in English in 1575, cf. Burton 2005, 64–65.

Knolles' *The Generall Historie of the Turks, from The first beginning of that Nation to the rising of the Ottoman Familie: with all the notable expeditions of the Christian Princes against them. Together with the Lives and Conquests of the Othoman Kings and Emperours Faithfullie collected out of the best Histories, both auntient and moderne, and digested into one continuat Historie until this present yeare 1603.* The book was specifically dedicated to King James and refers explicitly to his interest in the matter. It describes the Turk as "the present terrour of the worlde".[23] Knolles praises James' poem about Lepanto:

> and the rather, for that your Maiestie hath not disdained in your *Lepanto*, or *Heroicall Song*, with your learned Muse to adorne and set forth the greatest and most glorious victorie that euer was by any of the Christian confederat princes obtained against the *Othoman* Kings or Emperors.[24]

And he emphasizes, that exactly James' vigilance is this barbaric enemy's greatest terror! Knolles depicts the Turk as a lurking greedy lion – the way the Bible describes the Devil – ready to swallow the entire world including "the famous illands of Rhodes and Cyprus".[25] He recounts the Battle of Lepanto meticulously, including the prelude, for instance the Venetian senate's debates about the perilous position of the island of Cyprus which by the way make up a major part of the first act of Shakespeare's *Othello*.

As a matter of fact, Knolles' work is one of Shakespeare's inspirations for *Othello* from 1604, the year of James' ceremonial entry in London, concerning both the backdrop of the plot, the Turco-Venetian wars, and the plot itself, Knolles' history of the Ottoman officer Ionuses Pasha and his irrational jealousy towards his wife, the Christian Greek woman Manto, which ends up in murder.

Another typical example is *The Ottoman*, the English version, published in 1603, of the Venetian Lazzaro Soranzo's an anti-Turkish treaty *L'Ottomano* from 1599. Soranzo describes the Turk's corruption, cruelty and despotism, with particular reference to the ruling sultan Mehmet III, with whom the Western powers at that time were engaged in a fierce war. The Turk is waging war not in order to obtain peace, as the Christians do, but simply for war's sake. If Venice gives in to his attack, it will mean a blow to the entire Christendom, which then is in danger of succumbing to the Evil Empire. The

[23] See Parry 2003.

[24] Cf. Jones 1968, 48.

[25] Vaughan 1994, 24. Brotton's dating, 7–8 d 274–89, of *Othello* to the late Elizabethan era is problematic, due to for instance Shakespeare's indisputable knowledge of Knolles' book from 1603. James put an end to Elizabeth's policy of alliance with the Islamic world, especially the 'Turks' – the threatening foe in the tragedy.

text concludes with a call for a preventive European campaign to conquer Constantinople.

Correspondingly, the domino theory was suggested by Abraham Ortelius in his *Epitome of the Theater of the World*, also from 1603: apart from the territories the sultan has already taken, he "threatens two doe wors if God inspire not the hartes of the Christian Princes vnitedlye two resistance testing him."[26]

Re-enactments

Militarily the Occident was not the stronger part, compared to the Ottoman Empire. The sixteenth century was marked by Ottoman victories – the conquest of Belgrade, Rhodes, most of Hungary, Cyprus – and the Turks' dramatic pressure on Vienna, Italy, Corfu, Malta, Poland. In 1603, the year of James' coronation, the they controlled a considerable part of Eastern Europe. The Mediterranean Sea was a high-risk zone. The Turks dominated the eastern Mediterranean and harassed the western by means of institutionalized privateering that took vessels, cargoes and crews to be sold as slaves. The pirates sailed as far north as to the British Isles and even to Iceland where several hundred people were taken as slaves.[27] The military humiliation caused fear and demonization. England was no dominant maritime or commercial power. The English did not act from a position of superiority. Europe was indeed colonizing, expanding; but it was also the subject of colonization – Europe was *being* colonized.

Seen in that perspective, the construction of the enemy image was also a defensive reaction. Lepanto was an iconic motif in that connection, even in performative versions.

Already in 1572, the Battle of Lepanto was staged in a masque performance.[28] At James' son Prince Henry Frederick's baptismal celebration in 1594, the fundamental antagonism was performed in tournaments between Christian knights and Turks and Moors.[29] Also, *Othello* should be understood in that context. The first documented performance of *Othello* was for the royal court and took place in 1604. When in the ending the title character talks about: "a turbaned Turk […] the circumcised dog",[30] he apparently quotes his majesty's poem, which describes the "circumcised Turband Türkes".

Othello takes place during the fourth Venetian-Turkish war 1570–1573, between the Ottoman Empire and the Christian league, not least about the

[26] After Vaughan 1994, 23–24.
[27] Cf. Helgason 2018.
[28] Walsh 2015, 26–44.
[29] Bergeron 2010, 2.
[30] Shakespeare 2008, 396.

extreme Christian outpost Cyprus. The war reached its peak in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 that temporarily broke the Turkish military naval power. But, as seen above, Cyprus was lost to the Turks the following year and remained Turkish for 300 years. However, this is not what happened on the stage. In Shakespeare's tragedy, the Turkish fleet goes down in a furious storm, resulting in the salvation of the island of Cyprus from the devastating threat. What happens is that another iconic event interferes. The Spanish Armada had threatened the English island in 1588 – and subsequently in 1596, 1597 and 1598, in other words pretty close in time – and each time it had been scattered by storms and perished in the waves, all of which was seen as a divine intervention that wiped out the odious, Popish enemy: *Afflavit Deus et dissipati sunt*, 'God blew and they were scattered', according to a commemorative medal.[31] The parallel to the description in *Othello* is striking. The writing of the story follows a scheme that represents a deeper truth than the actual events. Both Lepanto and the Armada lie behind *Othello.*[32] In both cases, God proves his superior might. Implicitly the Pope and the Turk merge into the evil enemy of God's people, that is crushed by a superior force. Apart from the Turks, the evil force in *Othello* is represented by Jago, whose name has Spanish connotations – Santiago being the iconic Spanish patron saint.

Lepanto played a role in the regime's staging of itself**.** The religious significance of the Battle permeated various royal performative activities, including James' ceremonial entry in London in 1604. The staging of this significant event, which involved, among others, Ben Jonson and the Shakespearean actor Edward Alleyn, referred to both the Battle and the king's poem: on a triumphal arch Apollo pointed "his right hand with a golden wand in it [...] to the battel of Lepanto fought by the Turks, (about which his Maiestie hath written a Poem)."[33]

The Battle was re-enacted in various connections, in re-coded appropriations of the event. James' poem was echoed in staged naval battles. In 1610 Henry Frederick's inauguration as Prince of Wales was celebrated in various spectacular ways, including Richard Burbage, the first interpreter of

[31] In the Islamic view the Spanish were hit by "a sharp wind", sent by God, referring to the Qur'an's description of the divine wind that punished the polytheistic people of Aad; unlike Protestantism, Catholicism was understood as polytheistic, and the victory was interpreted by Ottomans and Moroccans as a sign that God was on Elizabeth's side. Cf. Brotton 2017, 149.

[32] In the Spanish perspective, the two campaigns were literally seen as parallels, both of them being severe blows on the 'infidel' enemies, the Muslims and the Protestants. The ceremony used before the Battle of Lepanto was therefore repeated when the Armada raised its banner. See Brotton 2017, 146.

[33] Thomas Dekker, *The Magnificent Entertainment given to King James*, 1604, quoted in Bergeron, 1971, 78. See also Jones 1968, 49.

Othello, among the performers; moreover, that same spring *Othello* was performed at The Globe Theatre. During the celebrations, a battle between British and Turkish ships was fought on the River Thames, ending up in a magnificent pyrotechnical explosion of a Turkish fortress.[34] Apart from the political and religious message it appears to be a compensatory rewriting of the actual inferiority, given the devastating inroads, the Turks inflicted on the British Mediterranean traffic. Especially London and Bristol were haunted by loss of seamen. The representations of heroic Englishmen who defeated and enslaved the Turks were literally fiction.

James aimed at a unification with the continental Protestants against the Catholic Habsburgs and eventually a common front against the Ottomans in Central Europe. Princess Elizabeth's wedding in 1613 to Friedrich, Elector Palatine, was a strategical move in that respect. Six years later, Friedrich was crowned as King of Bohemia but lost his kingship after only one year in connection with the events that triggered the Thirty Years' War. After that brief reign, Elizabeth, known as the 'Winter Queen', became the ancestress of the Hanoverian English royal house.

Among the activities that preceded the magnificent wedding was a performance of *Othello* for the royal family, and during the wedding celebrations in London a naval battle was performed on the River Thames. It was introduced with a pyrotechnic performance of St. George defeating the dragon[35] – symbolizing England's crushing of the evil forces. Explicitly, the encounter referred to "the happy and famous Battell of Lepanto" that England strictly speaking had no part in, and implicitly to both James' poem and to the Spanish Armada.[36] The battle involved a number of 36 Christians ships and Turkish galleys, sailing out from "a Supposed Turkish or Barbarian Castle of Tunis, Algiers, or some other Mahometan fortification", and was attended by thousands of spectators – comprising the royal family from Whitehall. Four floating fireworks fortresses and Algiers city built on the shore were presented. The Turks took first the Venetian Catholic ships. But when the "English navie" appeared and was met with cheers, the Turk was fought all the way. The British vanquished the infidels' fortifications:

> and tooke prisoner the Turke's Admirall, with divers Bahsawes [:pashas] and the other Türkes [...] which prisoners were [...] convoyed to the King's Majestie as a representation of pleasure, that to his Highness caused delight, and highly pleased all there present.[37]

[34] Cf. Matar 1999, 145–48.
[35] Bergeron 1971, 96.
[36] Bergeron 2010, 6; Matar 1999, 146–50.
[37] Matar 1999, 148.

The 'Turks' were subjected to the royal supremacy. The construction of the naval battle cost staggering sums, which far exceeded the already costly court masques. Theme and message had the highest priority.

The celebrations continued in Bristol, the other city that was particularly plagued by Turkish piracy. Once again, a naval battle between Turks and Christians, the crescent and the cross, was performed, once again for an audience of thousands, and with Lepanto allusions and appeals to the Christian rulers to unite and expel the Turks from Europe.[38] Once more God – who is able to tame the wild sea and the Turk's fury as well – secured the valiant Englishmen the glorious victory. The purification effect of the subjugation of evil was completed when the defeated 'Turkish' prisoners were handed over to Queen Anne, "Which captives brought before here Grace, on bended knees did crave / For Mercy, which here Majestie with pardon granted them". The conclusion was that those who will "undermine our state [shall end up] entrapped in the self-same snare, they did the others lay",[39] with an implicit allusion to the Gunpowder Plot, also known as the Jesuit Treason, of 1605.

These re-enactments of the Battle are comparable to the counterfactual basic situation in *Othello* when the Turkish fleet perishes in a furious storm off Cyprus with the Spanish Armada's downfall by divine intervention as a subtext.

What matters is the fundamental antagonism, not the historiographical accuracy. The re-enactments imply an embodiment of the memory of the original event which thus is re-formed, passed on and kept alive. The royal performances were subsequently given an official design in panegyric publications – in short, the authorized, ultimate version which then became *the* historical truth, *the* memory of the event. In the official depictions, the performances appeared to be brilliant successes. Internal, un-official documents show however that not all went well in the 1613 re-enactment in London; participants were seriously injured, one got both hands blown off, another lost both eyes, several persons were burned or otherwise badly injured, and maybe even worse: it seems the king was not amused. The official report about the performative event involved a pre-existing matrix. The narrative was written a priori.

The given frame of interpretation is part of the context. When James eight years after the second staged naval battle actually attacked Algeria, it ended as an embarrassing defeat with an outrageous sequel when the British fleet in frustration in a pure pirate manner attacked and looted a French and a Dutch

[38] Bergeron 1971, 98–99; Matar 1999, 149.
[39] Bergeron 1971, 99.

vessel, in short, their Christian brethren. But it only went wrong on the actual battlefield. According to the official version, this was a story about "God assisting our labours"[40] – another glorious victory in the fight against the infidels was won. The historiographical matrix was active and effective.

Conclusion

In the Jacobean perspective, Lepanto merged with the Spanish Armada as an example of God's actual and symbolic intervention in history, implicitly suggesting an assumption that king and country were elected and protected by providence, regardless of the fact that the Holy League who had defeated the Turkish Armada belonged to the papacy, as Veronese's painting emphasized. Strictly speaking, the papacy was part of the unholy league of God's enemies, the conspiracy with the Turk, which represented Antichrist.

The Lepanto event was part of a dynamic military and ideological trial of strength. From the Christian point of view, it was a turning point in the ongoing confrontation with the Ottoman Empire, and at the same time a point of no return in the eschatological drama about the second coming of Christ, preceded by the fights with Antichrist who according to the Lutheran interpretations of the Scripture was identified as the Pope and the Turk. Conversely, in the Catholic optics, Luther and the Reformation represented Antichrist.

A movement has been observed from event to interpretation of event, to performance of the interpretation of the event, to the description of the performance of the interpretation of the event, and even to interactions with proper theatrical stagings, like Shakespeare's *Othello* – that by the way is just one out of a considerable number of 'Turkish' plays.[41]

The transformation of the event into a narrative could be termed a historiographical mythologization, and correspondingly the transformation of the event into stagings as a performative ritualization. The Shakespearean actors' participation in the royal festivities and the performances of *Othello* during the celebrations suggests the blurring borders between theatricality, performativity and rituality.

Numerous signs indicated that the end was near, even natural disorders such as the Stella Nova, discovered in 1572 by Tycho Brahe. In England, it was seen as a reappearance of the Bethlehem star, this time announcing the return of Christ. In Germany and Denmark, the message was supposed to be that godless and heathen Turks, Tatars and Muscovites would gather against

[40] Matar 1999, 151.

[41] Cf. Burton 2005, 11 and 257–58 (list of titles).http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Travels_of_the_Three_English_Brothers - cite_note-0#cite_note-0

Christendom, acting as a scourge, with which God would punish us for our sins, so we should ask God for forgiveness, make penitence and renounce on sin.[42]

Reality was, and is, also a matter of definition, including kaleidoscopic ideological, political, commercial, military etc. concerns. The real text about Lepanto was written by the context, in transformational processes from fact to truth.

That people nevertheless, at the same time as Time was about to run out, managed to live a normal life in a pragmatic reality, planning their future, deals, heritage etc. is not a contradiction, only a paradox.

[42] Cf. Bauckham 1978, 151. For Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden see Fink-Jensen 2010, 72–81. God had created the stars once and for all. Obviously, the appearance of a new star heralds a new era.

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Fig. 1

Paolo Veronese, *The Battle of Lepanto*, 1572-1573 (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice). Oil on canvas, 169 x 137 cm. Originally placed in the church of St. Peter Martyr on Murano, commissioned by Pietro Giustinian of Murano who took part in the Battle. Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

"Dios juzga de la intención":

Questioning Conquest in Lope de Vega's *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*

By Sofie Kluge

On the backdrop of contemporaneous eschatological historiography, evangelical ideology and Columbus-hagiography, Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega's The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus *(c. 1598) tackles current problems such as the crisis of the Spanish empire and the flourishing of the "Black Legend", going back to their origin in the late 15th century discovery of the New World. Exploiting the ambiguity-creating device of the play-within-the-play in a central scene showing Columbus' alleged divine calling in what appears to be a daydream, the play urges its audience to reconsider the Genoese admiral's mental sanity – was he a great visionary or in fact a raving madman? – and, in continuation, to reflect on the nature of historical truth, historical character and the historical causality linking past and present (late 15th century discoveries and late 16th century imperial crisis as fatally interrelated momenta). In sum, what results from Lope's ingenious exploitation of the aesthetic device of secondary dramatization is, thus, a problem-oriented historiography of the Discovery and Conquest of America, aimed at enhancing spectators' critical re-assessment of one of the most crucial events in Spanish history.*

When Lope de Vega wrote *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* (*The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*) a century had passed since the Discovery, but the Spanish Conquest of America was continuously steeped in controversy. In the wake of Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (*Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1542. Fig. 1), issued following the so-called Valladolid Debate of 1550–1551 concerning the rights of the indigenous people,[1] Spain was still

[1] Were these, as Las Casas argued, equals who should be treated as any other citizen of Spain? Or were they – as the friar's opponent, the official historian to the Spanish king and Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, argued in his book *Democrates Alter, sive de justis causis apud Indios* (1544) on the backdrop of Aristotle's *Politics* 1,4 with its idea of "natural slaves" – primitives who deserved nothing better than the subjugation by

striving to get to grips with the 'savage within' who had shown his ugly face during the transatlantic adventure.[2] Of course, Carlos V had listened to the criticisms put forward by Las Casas and others against the colonizers' inhuman treatment of the indigenous people, promulgating in 1542 the Leyes Nuevas de las Indias (New Laws of the Indies. Fig. 2) which put the native Americans under the protection of the Spanish Crown.[3] Yet notwithstanding the Emperor's attempt to thus control the damage that the Conquest unquestionably inflicted on Spain's international image, anti-Hispanic sentiment was growing in many European contexts during the 16th century.[4] In the eyes of the English, the French, and – not the least – the Dutch, the Spaniards' overseas barbarities only confirmed the impression of their European abuses, notably their oppression of Protestantism in the Spanish Netherlands. Thus, the Valladolid Debate not only directed focus at the atrocities committed by the Spanish in their colonies; it also provoked a more general European debate on the allegedly cruel and religiously fanatic character of Catholic Spain.

Indeed, both these intricately intertwined polemics seemed to culminate around the time when Lope was working on his Columbus play. In 1598, one possible year of its composition,[5] Bartolomé de las Casas's description of the Spanish transgressions was published by Johannes Saur in Frankfurt in a spectacular Latin edition, *Narratio Regionvm Indicarvm per Hispanos qvosdam dauastatarum verissima* (Fig. 3), with illustrations by the Protestant Belgian engraver Théodore de Bry (1528–1598).[6] While the Latin text

a superior race (a mainstream sixteenth-century idea which Las Casas early in his career did not abrogate in relation to African slaves, but finally regretted in his *History of the Indies*, 1561)?

[2] For an account of this process with specific reference to literature, see Simerka 2003.

[3] It should be noted that Las Casas (1494–1566) was himself at first a *hacendado* (slave owner) in the New World, on the island of Hispaniola (modern-day Haiti), and a defender of the *encomienda* (patron system). He changed his mind after participating in the conquest of Cuba, 1513, where he "saw [...] cruelty on a scale no living being has ever seen or expects to see" (quote from Las Casas's own writings in Sullivan 1995, 146). In 1514, he gave up his slaves and in 1515 he returned to Spain in order to raise a debate (Wagner and Parish 1967, 13–15).

[4] In fact, anti-Hispanic sentiment had also circulated before Las Casas, primarily in Italy (another territory partly appropriated by the Spanish). For an account of anti-Hispanic sentiment before Las Casas, see Arnoldsson 1960.

[5] *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* was first published in *Parte IV* of Lope's plays (1614). However, specialist have long since concluded that it is among the playwright's earliest dramatic productions. Most modern critics date it between 1598 and 1603, see Shannon 1989, 43.

[6] This edition was translated from the French edition of 1579 which followed the Dutch of 1578 and was followed by translations into English and (1583) and German (1599). The predominantly Protestant context of these sixteenth-century translations clearly testify to the religious bias of contemporaneous anti-Hispanism.

naturally furthered the spreading of Las Casas's text in erudite milieux without their own translations, the illustrations worked their powerful magic divulgating anti-Hispanic propaganda to an illiterate public (Fig. 4). Following this milestone publication, the inhuman cruelty of the Spanish would be a recurrent topic in seventeenth-century European literature and political propaganda.[7] What the early 20th century Spanish historian Julián Juderías y Loyot would later term Spain's *leyenda negra*, the Black Legend, was consolidated.[8] The then mightiest power in the West was branded with an unhealthy mixture of spiritual obscurantism and inhuman brutality for centuries to come.

However, besides Las Casas and a few other humanist clerics,[9] were there no dissenting voices inside of Spain? None who would nuance the bestial image of their country? Where were, for instance, the period's numerous gifted artists and writers? What did the first dramatists to write a play about the Discovery and the Conquest,[10] the king of the Spanish stage, Lope de Vega, think?

Golden Age Theater and Ideology

Considering the enormous dramatic potential of the Discovery as well as of the Conquest, it is certainly a puzzling fact that there should be only 23 extant *comedias indianas* (Indian plays) in the vast corpus of Golden Age theater.[11] By the end of the 16th century, the Spanish *comedia* was already a well-developed art form – indeed it was the dominating art form – practiced by almost all the most gifted writers of the day. Be they ever so few, one would therefore expect these plays to make interesting statements about this milestone of Spanish history and the single most polemical chapter of the country's past.

[7] See Gibson 1971.

[8] Juderías y Loyot 1914. The Black Legend is still a hot topic, at least in research. Interesting work has recently been done by the Black Legend research group at University College London. See, for example, Rodríguez Pérez, Sánchez Jiménez & Den Boer 2015; or Sánchez Jiménez 2016.

[9] For example, the Salamanca theologian, Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546), who in his *De Jure belli Hispanorum in barbaros* (1532) emphasized that the premises of 'just war' was wholly lacking in the case of the Indies.

[10] See Soufas 1999: "*El descubrimiento del nuevo mundo por Cristóbal Colón* [sic!] was the first play written in Spanish about the New World encounter" (321).

[11] Lope alone is believed to have written over a thousand plays, of which approximately four hundred are extant. For the number of Indian plays, see Zugasti 1996. Glen Dille explains this scarcity of *comedias indianas* referring to: 1) the lack of prestige associated with the New World; 2) the lack of artistic models; and 3) the general scepticism concerning the motives of the conquistadores, placed under suspicion especially after the publication of Las Casas's book (1988, 495–496).

Given the well-known restrictions imposed on contemporaneous writers, this was, of course, not so simple. Lope de Vega and his colleagues formed part of a community with zealously guarded rules of religious, political, and artistic utterance,[12] a fact which has led many twentieth-century scholars to conclude their simple adherence to official ideology (since they were not critical of this ideology in the modern sense, that is: did not raise their voices in dissent, openly criticizing those in power). Yet, just because they were not contenders, were they necessarily camp followers? And if neither contenders nor camp followers, what were they? Questions such as these have dominated Golden Age theater scholarship for nearly 40 years. I shall therefore briefly resume the state of the art.

Following the publication of Spanish historian José Antonio Maravall's work on seventeenth-century Spanish culture,[13] the Golden Age theater was for a long time seen as the extended arm of what was considered the 'unholy alliance' between Habsburg imperialist politics and Counterreformation Catholicism. It was, in other words, seen as a propaganda machine. Especially following the publication of the English translation of Maravall's work,[14] his contention, that this theater was essentially an instrument of political and social control,[15] became a critical common place. Ideology became the pivotal point of cutting edge Golden Age theater studies, inside and – especially – outside of Spain.[16] For decades to come, political critique was the dominating critical attitude, a tendency that arguably survives to this very day. Although recent years have definitely seen a significant revision of the propagandistic approach issuing from Maravall's work,[17] a certain resistance to the idea of Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón being reflective, independently thinking artists certainly persists. Thus, recent studies of the American theme

[12] For a good overview of authors' life in the Golden Age, see Tietz, Trambaioli & Arnscheidt 2011.

[13] See especially Maravall 1975. However, Maravall's treatment of the Golden Age theater in this study was a direct continuation of his earlier work (1972).

[14] Maravall 1986.

[15] See Maravall 1972: "El teatro español es, ante todo, un instrumento político y social, no responde a una preocupación o finalidad ética e incluso es mínima la parte que en él se ocupa de temas religiosos" (19) (The Spanish theater is, first of all, a political and social instrument; it does not respond to any ethical preoccupations or ends and even the part played by religious themes is minor.).

[16] See, among others, (widely differing) studies by Cascardi 1997; Küpper 1990; Brownlee & Gumbrecht 1995. In the same tradition, Cañadas 2005 studies the politics of Spanish Golden Age and Tudor-Stuart theater.

[17] Among the most evident signs of this revision is *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 65,1, 2013, a theme issue dedicated to Maravall's legacy in *comedia* studies (notably, the essays by Laura Bass, 1–13, and Ruth MacKay, 45–56). See, however, also the much earlier revisionist essay by Poppenberg (1990).

in Golden Age theater perpetuate the unfavourable view of the Golden Age stage as affirming, rather than questioning, the legitimacy of the Conquest.[18]

Considering that the three major dramatists of the period were all either friars or ordained priests, they cannot, of course, be thought of as critical of the evangelical mission *per se*. Every Christian would naturally want God's joyful message to be spread as far as possible. Yet they may, as recent scholarship affirms, have been more to the side of Bartolomé de las Casas, or at least more problem-oriented in their treatment of the *conquista* than their clerical gowns would seem to suggest.[19]

The Play: Form and Content

Formally speaking, *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* is a regular three-act *comedia*, the Spanish Golden Age term for a play.[20] Act 1 begins in Europe, with Columbus's attempts to raise money for his first expedition and his preparations for the journey, ending with the Catholic Monarchs' decision to sponsor the adventure. Act 2 plays out on the sea voyage on board the *Santa María de la Inmaculada Concepción* (Holy Mary of the Immaculate Conception) and in the New World, depicting the Indian world and various facets of the cultural encounter between the Spaniards and the indigenous people of South America, ending with Columbus's return to Europe. Act 3 describes the moral corruption of the Spanish soldiers in

[18] See, notably, Castillo 2009. In the introduction (4), Castillo essentially repeats Carey-Webb's argument (1992) about the Indian as the "Other" of Spanish-European culture which at first appears to challenge, but in the end simply confirms the ideology of "sameness". A similar argument is found in Nelson 2016: "My claim is that the so-called realistic representation of New World Otherness on the stage of Counter Reformation Spain is better understood as the channeling of hegemonic imperialistic discourses through a domesticated image of Otherness, or the emblematization of the Amerindian Other" (80). In older texts, such as Laferl 1992, or Rose 1998, we find a less postmodern, more genuinely maravallesque version of the propagandistic paradigm.

[19] Despite his generally negative presentation of Spanish Golden Age dramatists' engagement with the New World as ethnocentric and oppressive, Dille noted a contradiction in Lope de Vega's treatment of the American enterprise in *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* (1988, 498). Following this observation, a number of articles have focused on the play's ambiguity toward the Conquest – perhaps more accurately: toward the *conquistadores* – the most interesting contribution being, in my view, that of Castañeda 2010, adequately describing the *comedia* as a space "para reflexionar sobre las causas históricas de la miseria del presente" (37) (to reflect on the historical causes of present misery). See also Castells 2000, though dubiously claiming the singularity of Lope's critical rendering of the Conquest; Lauer 1993, underscoring the critical element of the *comedia de conquista*; McKendrick 2000, demonstrating the reconstructive tendency of Lope's theater; Simerka 2003; Dixon 1992, pondering that "From a devoutly Catholic and strongly monarchical Spaniard of 1600, we could hardly expect more sympathy for the Indians, or a sharper critique of many of his compatriots" (259).

[20] Concerning the Spanish use of the term *comedia* for 'play', see Kluge 2010, 157–204.

America during the Admiral's absence: their lust after the local women and fornication; their mutual rivalry; their greed for gold; and assaults on the natives. However, the last Act also depicts the upsurge of Christianity among the indigenous people, ending with Columbus's triumphal entry with parrots and half-naked Amerindians at the court in Barcelona and the onstage baptism of a handful of heathens.

As this brief resume demonstrates, Lope's *comedia* has a wholly recognizable historiographical basis and is, as such, essentially a *comedia histórica* or what we could term a history play.[21] Yet, as noted by various critics, it is also in many respects a rather typical Lopean comedy, the expectable amorous intrigues here only carried out by noble Indians instead of the usual Spanish *galanes* and *damas* (gentlemen and ladies);[22] finally, through its apparent celebration of Columbus's person, it bears resemblance to the *comedias hagiográficas* or *comedias de santos* (saints plays). Still, the main generic frame of *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* is undoubtedly the history play, a genre that Lope perfectioned in Spain at the same time that Shakespeare wrote his two tetralogies about English medieval history.[23] It is well-known how the Spanish dramatist aspired for the position of royal historiographer,[24] and according to the standards of early modern historiography the play is quite accurate, even if it – also in accordance with contemporaneous historiography – contains elements which we would today consider blatantly incompatible with a serious historiographical approach. These include the appearance of the Devil and the miracle in Act 3 where a new cross appears in the same spot where the Indians have just removed the original one planted by Columbus (the *peripetia* that brings about the natives'

[21] Thus, the main sources of the play are easily identifiable: Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (Seville, 1535) and López de Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias* (1553; edición facsimilar, Lima 1993). For a discussion of the historiographical sources of *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*, see Campos 1949.

[22] See, for instance, Brotherton 1994, who sees the *comedia* mold as something which poses a problem for Lope's handling of the material: "How was Lope to dramatize the tale of the Genoese navigator? Could the *comedia*, that form of theatre largely devised and developed by Lope himself, accommodate such a historico-hagiographical piece within its highly conventional structure?" (34).

[23] Like Shakespeare Lope was the perfectioner rather than the inventor of the history play. Forerunners of Lope's *comedia histórica* include Juan de la Cueva's *El Saco de Roma*; *La muerte del Rey Don Sancho*; *La libertad de España por Bernardo de Carpio*; *Tragedia de los siete Infantes de Lara* (all published in 1583). The name of Miguel de Cervantes can also be mentioned in this context (e.g., *La Numancia*, 1585).

[24] Lope himself said so much in one of his letters. See Lope de Vega 1939–1945 vol. III, 45.

final conversion to Christianity).[25] However, most foreign to modern-day historiographical taste is surely the allegorical tableau occupying the stage in what may be termed the Tribunal Scene of Act 1, which I will subsequently discuss in some detail. In my view, this particular scene deserves special attention because it presents what New Historicists would call a 'negotiation' of the Conquest. This negotiation ultimately affirms the transcendental meaning and, hence, the legitimacy of the Spanish appropriation of the New World; and yet it employs a highly ambiguous aesthetic form – the literary dream – which, contrary to what recent criticism of the play asserts, ends up bathing Columbus's transatlantic enterprise in a highly equivocal *chiaroscuro* lighting. In the end, I argue, the play leaves it to the spectator to decide whether Columbus was in fact a saintly visionary figure, carrying God's word to the heathen as his name suggests,[26] or a madman who through his initiation of imperialism brought calamity upon calamity on Spain, marred by demonic delusions.

The Tribunal Scene

Near the end of Act 1, after the serial rejections of Columbus's endeavour by an array of scornful European princes, and immediately before the Admiral's final agreement with the Catholic Monarchs, Lope presents a little play-with-in-the-play or *apariencia* as it was termed in the theatrical discourse of the period.[27] This allegorical *tableau vivant* bears rather clear resemblance to the

[25] Thus, Lope, e.g., followed López de Gómara in his description of how the devil made his appearances to the natives (Act 3, 2730–2790).

[26] Christoforos, "Carrier of Christ", alluded to in Act 3, 2871–2874.

[27] See Ruano de la Haza's description of the *apariencias* (I quote at some length here, because of the relevance of the passage): "Las apariencias, que se revelaban al público de los corrales corriendo una o varias de las cortinas que podrían cubrir los nueve espacios de la fachada del teatro [...] desempeñaban más bien la doble función de instruir al público y de provocar su admiración mediante la presentación de un lienzo, cuadro o *tableau vivant* que no tenía a menudo mucha conexión con el espacio escénico en que se estaba desarrolando la acción, aunque en ciertas ocasiones sirviera para determinarlo. Si el decorado teatral del Siglo de Oro se conformaba más o menos con un principio de verosimilitud realista, la apariencia rompe los límites de lo natural para existir en un plano diferente de la realidad escénica, como sucede, por ejemplo, al comienzo de la segunda jornada de *La conquista de México*, de Fernando de Zárate: "Descúbrese una cortina y véase un trono en alto donde esté sentada la Providencia Divina y en las gradas del trono la Religión Cristiana"." (2000, 225) (The *apariencias*, which were revealed to the playhouse audience by drawing one or more of the curtains covering the nine spaces of the theater façade [...], performed the double function of instructing the audience and eliciting its admiration by presenting a painting, a scene or a *tableau vivant* which, though it may sometimes determine it, oftentimes had little connection to the scenic space where the action played out. If the theatrical décor of the Golden Age [described by Ruano de la Haza in anterior chapters] corresponds to a principle of realist verisimilitude, the *apariencia* breaks the limits of the real to exist in a plane different from the scenic reality, as can be seen, for example, at the beginning of the second Act of Fernando

so-called *autos sacramentales* (sacramental acts), the specifically Spanish one-act religious spectacles that originated in the medieval moralities and mysteries but flourished especially from the end of the 16th century.[28] In this conspicuous scene, a tired and vexed Columbus is carried on the wings of his Imagination to a heavenly courtroom.[29] Here, Christian Religion and Idolatry – the heathen divinity of the New World – are negotiating the legitimacy of the Conquest before Divine Providence, as supreme court judge, and the theater spectators as court room audience. More concretely, in this scene, Idolatry prosecutes the would-be conquistador for stealing her long-term property, the "Indias de Occidente", and handing it over to Christian Religion, alleged kingpin of the entire affair. She (who, notwithstanding her implication in the case, acts as the Admiral's counsel for defense) for her part claims that the Indies were bequeathed to the Church by Christ in his testament and accuses Idolatry of unlawful acquisition in the first place, thus in effect proposing the Conquest as *reconquista*. Idolatry in turn denies this and so the negotiation of the rightful ownership of the Indies fluctuates back and forth, echoing the countless contemporaneous civil procedures on possession and inheritance claims. Even if there is never any real doubt about who is right and who is wrong,[30] the court room/theater audience is in fact allowed to hear both sides and the legitimacy of the transatlantic enterprise is, indeed, negotiated in the manner of a civil lawsuit explored in a comic vein by other Golden Age dramatists.[31]

Thus, on what may be termed the second level of representation – presumably one of the upper spaces of the theater façade (Fig. 5) – Lope

de Zárate's *La conquista de México*: "A curtain is drawn and up high a throne is discovered, whereon Divine Providence is seated, and in the stands of the throne, Christian Religion").

[28] These spectacles formed an integral part of the Corpus Christi celebrations and were, as such, liturgical. Lope de Vega wrote quite a few *autos*, but Calderón is universally recognized as the master of the genre. For an introduction to the genre, see Parker 1935; for a more in-depth critical exploration, see Poppenberg 2003.

[29] Scene instructions read: "Levántele en el aire, y llévele al otro lado del teatro, donde se descubra un trono en que esté sentada la Providencia, y a los lados la Religión Cristiana y la Idolatría" (Columbus is raised into the air and carried to the other side of the theater where a throne is unveiled in which Providence is seated and, at her side, Christian Religion and Idolatry.) (Lope de Vega 2001, 113–114).

[30] Idolatry herself boasts her relation with the devil and her suppression and brainwashing of the indigenous people. Furthermore, the sudden appearance in court of the character Demon, who claims that the *rey católico* is led not by faith but by greed, can be seen as rather detrimental to Idolatry's cause, slandering the perhaps most unequivocally emblematic heroic character of Spanish history.

[31] See, for example, Cervantes's *El juez de los divorcios*, published in the *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos* (1615). This is not the place to discuss Lope's tragicomic propensity (Morby 1943, 207–209), but the courtroom triviality of the Tribunal Scene can thus be seen as a comic device and, hence, as a vehicle of the play's essentially tragicomic outlook.

discusses in dense allegorical form what he will subsequently thematize in a more naturalistic vein on the first level of representation or the play's reality plane – the central stage – at the beginning of Act 3: the question whether the Spanish Crown's economic motives and, especially, the Spanish soldiers' unashamed greed for the New World's silver and gold jeopardize the high spiritual ideals of the evangelical mission. There are clear parallels between the discussion in the heavenly courtroom and the subsequent events of the play. However, as could be expected, considering the ideological climate of the period, the scene ends with Providence's overruling Idolatry's claim to the New World, endorsement of Columbus's quest (accordingly, of the Conquest), and jubilant praise of the Spanish king, Fernando el Católico, known for his promulgation of the Christian faith:[32]

Idolatría — No permitas, Providencia,
hacerme esta sinjusticia
pues lo lleva la codicia
a hacer esta diligencia.
So color de religión,
van a buscar plata y oro
del encubierto tesoro.

Providencia — Dios juzga de la intención
Si El, por el oro que encierra,
gana las almas que ves,
en el cielo hay interés,
no es mucho le haya en la tierra.
Y del cristiano Fernando,
que da principio a esta empresa,

[32] As many scholars have noted, in this play, Lope draws clear parallels between the *reconquista* (the recovering of the Iberian peninsula from the Moors) and the *conquista* as two intricately intertwined facets of Spain's blooming Golden Age, beginning his play with Fernando's siege of Granada, 1492. However, as Castañeda notes, the triumphal mood of the 1490s depicted in the play would have clashed with the outlook of Lope's audience: "En este período, existió una aguda percepción del agotamiento de los ideales del siglo anterior [...]. Es posible trazar una relación de causalidad entre esta percepción de declinación nacional y lo que se entendía como el fracaso moral y económico de la impresa imperial" (2010, 37) (In this period, there was an acute awareness of the exhaustion of the ideals of the preceding century [...]. It is possible to see a causal relation between this awareness of decline and what was seen as the moral and economic disaster of the imperial enterprise). This not only places the play at the center of Lope's general attempt to reconcile his audience with the fatal events of the past (McKendrick 2000, 42-104); it also gives it quite an edge, as the audience's horizon will inevitably have placed Columbus's enterprise in an ambiguous light (as the beginning of imperial disaster). This fits very well with the essential ambiguity issuing from Lope's use of the dream that I am discussing here.

toda la sospecha cesa.
(*El nuevo mundo*, Act I, 768–782).[33]

IDOLATRY
Do not allow [Religion], dear Providence, to do this injustice to me. The Spaniards are spurred on by avarice, and under the cloak of religion they seek the hidden treasure of silver and gold.

PROVIDENCE
God will be the judge of the intentions of the conquest. If He, through the baits of gold, wins the souls of the natives, there is just cause for it in the heavens, so there should be no surprise that there is also a just cause on earth. And since it is the Christian Ferdinand who undertakes this enterprise, let all doubts cease.[34]

The essentially metatheatrical[35] Tribunal Scene can be interpreted in two directly opposed ways, leading to directly opposed interpretations of the play's overall message. It can, of course, be interpreted as Lope's way of justifying the unfortunate chain of events propelled by Columbus's discovery: Spain's imperial project as intricately intertwined with the abysmal late sixteenth and seventeenth-century moral and economic crisis.[36] According to this interpretation, the tribunal scene is a more or less straight-forward apology and a clear-cut means of religious appropriation: here, Lope simply tells his audience that God sanctioned the transatlantic enterprise.[37] However, leaning on the conclusions of my study of Lope's successor, Pedro Calderón de la Barca's only American play, *La aurora en Copacabana* (Dawn in Copacabana, around 1664), which, according to my reading,[38] uses scenography in a very similar way to question its own immediate message, I

[33] Lope de Vega 2001, 116.
[34] Lope de Vega 2001, 117.
[35] Metatheatrical in the sense of commenting on or reflecting on the theatrical action that unfolds on the first level of representation (the stage itself).
[36] For a description of the late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cultural crisis, see Kluge 2010, 28–42.
[37] See Terradas 2009, 31: "A través de él [el juicio divino] se descubre la verdadera naturaleza del Almirante y la verdadera naturaleza del proyecto. Es un acto de introspección y, al mismo tiempo, de colectivización de lo religioso sin el cual la empresa económica hubiese carecido de alma y de justificación ante el cielo y ante Europa." (Through it [the divine judgment] we discover the Admiral's true nature and the true nature of his project. It is an act of introspection and, at the same time, of collectivizing religion without which the economic enterprise would have lacked both soul and justification – before Heaven and before Europe.).
[38] See Kluge 2017.

argue that the Tribunal Scene is in fact the backbone of what I will term Lope's problem-oriented depiction of the Conquest. In *La aurora en Copacabana*, Calderón exploits the essential equivocalness of the stage – theater of truth or showroom of vanities?[39] – to question his own evangelical script. In *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*, I suggest, Lope performs a similar inquiry exploiting the fundamental ambiguity of the oneiric vision.

Ambiguity of the Dream

Literary dream visions are, of course, old as Western literature itself. From the very beginning, they served as a device to express the experience of something that transgresses what may broadly be termed the rational worldview. From Homer (*Iliad* 1), Plato (*Gorgias*; *Republic* 10) through the Bible (e.g., *Genesis* 20:1–15; *Kings* 3:4–15; *Revelations*) and Roman literature (Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*) to the great visionaries of the Middle Ages (Hildegard; Birgitta; Catherine; Meister Eckhardt), dreams serve as means of communication between humans and the Beyond. However, as it happens, communication is not unequivocal. Hence, a recurrent element of the literary dream tradition is a reflection on the origin of the dream: does it come from the gods/God? From the Devil? Or is it a mere product of the human imagination? In direct continuation hereof, and of importance to my argument here, another general trait of literary dreams is that they carry with them the problem of what kind of truth value can be attributed to them. In a very fundamental way, dreams question our sense of orientation, epistemologically speaking. As René Descartes famously pointed out, veracious dreams pose the problem of how we can actually know if we are sleeping or awake (*Meditationes de prima philosophia* 1, 1641).[40]

[39] For a discussion of the period's equivocal conception of the theater, see Kluge 2010, 205–236.

[40] See Descartes's argument (2005/1901, 1,5): "Praeclare sane, tanquam non sim homo qui soleam noctu dormire, & eadem omnia in somnis pati, vel etiam interdum minùs verisimilia, quàm quae isti vigilantes. Quàm frequenter verò usitata ista, me hîc esse, togâ vestiri, foco assidere, quies nocturna persuadet, cùm tamen positis vestibus jaceo inter strata! Atqui nunc certe vigilantibus oculis intueor hanc chartam, non sopitum est hoc caput quod commoveo, manum istam prudens & sciens extendo & sentio; non tam distincta contingerent dormienti. Quasi scilicet non recorder a similibus etiam cogitationibus me aliàs in somnis fuisse delusum; quae dum cogito attentius, tam plane video nunquam certis indiciis vigiliam a somno posse distingui, ut obstupescam, & fere hic ipse stupor mihi opinionem somni confirmet." ("Though this be true, I must nevertheless here consider that I am a man, and that, consequently, I am in the habit of sleeping, and representing to myself in dreams those same things, or even sometimes others less probable, which the insane think are presented to them in their waking moments. How often have I dreamt that I was in these familiar circumstances, that I was dressed, and occupied this place by the fire, when I was lying undressed in bed? At the present moment, however, I certainly look upon this paper with eyes wide awake; the head which I now move is not asleep; I extend this hand consciously

Already in Homer we find the conviction that there are two kinds of dreams: the prophetic and benevolent ones, sent by the gods, and the illusory and dangerous ones which are not to be trusted. Bernard de Clairvaux, preaching on the *Song of Songs* in the twelfth century (*Sermones super Canticum Canticorum*, c. 1136) makes a similar observation, emphasizing that some of the dream-like images in the *Song* and in the ecstatic visions of the mystics are sent by God, while others are sent by the Evil One and are therefore extremely dangerous.[41] In both the Graeco-Roman and Judeo-Christian forms, literary dreams and visions are consequently tainted by the problem of legitimacy. A suspicion of not being true clings to them. Needless to point out, surely, Renaissance literature would only increase the aporia surrounding the literary dream, now closely tied not only to ever-suspect fiction, but also (as a major work such as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1596, suggests) to the 'spectral' para-world of the emerging secular stage: that grey zone in-between the real and the non-real that was not only the turning point of the new Cartesian philosophy, but also a particular obsession of many of the greatest Spanish Golden Age writers. Building my argument, I shall give a few examples.

Firstly, proclaiming the period's official view of dreams, as it were, Sebastián de Covarrubias's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Treasure of the Castillian or Spanish tongue, Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1611) underscores the untrustworthiness of dreams, touching also on their relation to revelations:

> SOÑAR, del verbo Latino, as. Son ciertas fantasias, que el sentido comu rebuelue quando dormimos, de las quales no ay que hazer caso, y solos aquellos sueños tienen alguna apariencia de verdad, por los que los Medicos juzgan el humor que predomina en el enfermo y no entran en esta cuenta las reuelaciones santas y diuinas.[42]
>
> DREAM, from the Latin. These are certain fantasies which our reason [common sense] stirs up when we are a sleep, which are not to be taken seriously, since only those dreams have some appearance of truth in which Doctors identify the humour that predominates in the sick, and the saintly and divine revelations do not belong to this category.

Secondly, Lope's contemporary, the ingenious poet and satirist Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645), provides an excellent example of how Spanish

and with express purpose, and I perceive it; the occurrences in sleep are not so distinct as all this. But I cannot forget that, at other times I have been deceived in sleep by similar illusions; and, attentively considering those cases, I perceive so clearly that there exist no certain marks by which the state of waking can ever be distinguished from sleep, that I feel greatly astonished; and in amazement I almost persuade myself that I am now dreaming.").

[41] Clairvaux 1994, 4, iii: 3–4.

[42] Covarrubias 1611, 1308.

Renaissance writers used the literary dream as an instrument of epistemological inquiry. In his *Sueños* (Dreams), written around 1608 or only a few years, presumably, after Lope's play, Quevedo used the literary dream to question, in a satirical vein, the current conception of right and wrong, while at the same time covering his back by wrapping his dream vision in a cloak of epistemological ambiguity. Who knows if dreams come from God or are merely the products of idle imagination? Thus the prologue to "El sueño del infierno" ("Dream of Hell"):

> [...] como sé que los sueños las más veces son burlas de la fantasía y ocio del alma, y que el diablo nunca dijo verdad por no tener cierta noticia de las cosas que justamente nos esconde Dios, vi, guiado del ángel de mi guarda, lo que se sigue, por particular providencia de Dios;[43]

> [...] knowing as I do that, in order to prevent our having certain knowledge of those things which God rightly withholds from us, most dreams are but deceptions of the imagination or diversions of the spirit; and believing, furthermore, that Satan yet never uttered the truth; I saw, under the guidance of my guardian angel and by the special providence of God, what is recounted hereafter [...][44]

After reading the narrator's prologue, the reader must decide for himself whether he believes the things subsequently reported about Hell to be true or not (a question that would not have been exceedingly difficult in the case of the *Sueños*, given their ostentatively self-referential and playfully intertextual quality). Still, the text very clearly demonstrates the fundamentally ambiguous Renaissance attitude towards oneiric visions – an attitude which had very serious consequences, it should be mentioned, for the period's mystics whose dream-like visions were subjected to intense Inquisitorial scrutiny and sometimes condemned as heresy.[45]

Though he may have been more malicious and more funny than most, Quevedo was far from the only one among his contemporaries to use the literary dream tradition as a means of questioning reality, nor were his *Sueños* the most famous work to do so. Indeed, my third and last example is surely the most obvious: Calderón's *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a Dream*, 1635). Here, the dream/reality aporia is taken one step further. Here, we find not only a questioning of reality from the viewpoint of the dream, but a further questioning of this questioning. Life is a dream, the protagonist, Segismundo,

[43] Quevedo 1991, 171–172.

[44] Quevedo 1989, 93. For a discussion of this text with regard to the dream tradition, see Kluge 2004.

[45] The mystical visions recorded in Teresa of Ávila's autobiography, *Su vida* (1588), written on demand of her confessor who feared heresy, is a famous example.

realizes: a fleeting, insubstantial, phantasmagorical interim before the final awakening to the afterlife. Yet, he also realizes that dreams themselves are dreams, which means that not even this insight can be trusted, being, as it is, also a mere product of the essentially untrustworthy human imagination. In Calderón's famous philosophical drama, the result is an abysmal epistemological regress, a dizzying stumbling from one reality plane to the next:

SEGISMUNDO. [...] Sueña el rey que es rey, y vive
con este engaño mandando,
disponiendo y gobernando;
y este aplauso que recibe
prestado, en el viento escribe,
y en cenizas le convierte
la muerte (¡desdicha fuerte!);
¡que hay quien intente reinar,
viendo que ha de despertar
en el sueño de la muerte!
[...]
Yo sueño que estoy aquí
destas prisiones cargado,
y soñé que en otro estado
más lisonjero me vi.
¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.
¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,
una sombra, una ficción,
y el mayor bien es pequeño;
que toda la vida es sueño,
y los sueños, sueños son.[46]

SEGISMUNDO The king dreams he is a king,
And in this delusive way
Lives and rules with sovereign sway;
All the cheers that round him ring,
Born of air, on air take wing.
And in ashes (mournful fate!)
Death dissolves his pride and state:
Who would wish a crown to take,
Seeing that he must awake
In the dream beyond death's gate?
[...]

[46] Calderón 1998, 156–157.

'Tis a dream that I in sadness
Here am bound, the scorn of fate;
'Twas a dream that once a state
I enjoyed of light and gladness.
What is life? 'Tis but a madness.
What is life? A thing that seems,
A mirage that falsely gleams,
Phantom joy, delusive rest,
Since is life a dream at best,
And even dreams themselves are dreams.[47]

This highly disturbing mind labyrinth is, in the end, not so far from the Tribunal Scene in Lope de Vega's *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* as may first appear. Here, too, the medium of the literary dream interferes, as it were, with the immediate message communicated – the divine endorsement of the Conquest – framing it with epistemological uncertainty and ambivalence.

Problem-Oriented, Performative Historiography

Lope's Columbus-play surely provides interesting evidence of the mark that the sixteenth-century New World debate impressed on contemporaneous Spanish artists and thinkers. Through the anxiety-provoking confrontation with its own dark side – so *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* suggests – the official evangelical self-understanding of the Spanish was latently shaken, at least in those who thought deeply on the matter. Lope obviously did think quite a lot about it, writing a handful of plays about a theme that only very few of his Golden Age writer colleagues dared to address.[48] Indeed, it may be supposed that, in the wake of the Valladolid Debate and Las Casas's report, the 'Fénix' and other pensive minds came to question the appropriateness of the Conquest, even while wishing to remain loyal to their country, their faith, and their king.

As the rounded form of his first America play shows, with its happy ending, demonstratively endorsing the standing cultural order (Catholic-Habsburg imperialistic-evangelical ideology) through Columbus's triumphal entry at the end of the play, Lope's superior historiographical vision was in the end able to assimilate *conquistador* brutality, and even to celebrate it in the figure of the Genoese Admiral.[49] However, the conformism implied herein was by no

[47] Calderón 1873, 78–79.

[48] The poet Luis de Góngora y Argote's famous diatribe against navigation in *Soledades* I, 366-505 should, of course, be mentioned here. For a discussion of this famous passage, see Kluge 2002.

[49] Thus, Columbus's entry at the court in Barcelona in Act 3 may have been staged like a virtual triumphal entry. Scene instructions read: "Colón, de camino, seis indios bozales,

means without its challenges. The Tribunal Scene, that I have been discussing here, wrapped as it is in a mysterious and essentially ambiguous dream-blanket, clearly indicates the underlying nub of this process. It reveals that, beneath its homage to Columbus, *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* entails a tentative revision of the politico-religious conquistador mentality in its capacity as unreflective and militant Christian Eurocentrism. Indeed, Lope's *comedia* can, I argue, be seen as a very subtle piece of cultural critique, spurred on by the fervent debate on Spanish conduct overseas and dominated by thoughtful meditation. At the same time, and in close relation to this critique, the play can be fruitfully approached as a specimen of performative historiography, shrewdly exploiting the devices of the dream and the play-within-the play in order to reach out to its spectators and stimulate their reflection on the nature of historical truth.

On the face of it, *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* does indeed seem to solve the tensions between its own present and the past – the polemic surrounding the Discovery and Conquest of the New World – referring to a higher reality acted out on the second level of representation. However, as I have argued, to a contemporaneous audience, the fact that this higher reality is presented in the form of a dream vision would necessarily place the scene in a highly ambiguous light. Taken together with Lope's rather negative representation of the Spanish soldiers' behaviour in Columbus's absence in Act 3, generally acknowledged by critics, the overall historiographical position of the play may be seen as problem-oriented if not, in fact, as I have said, as critical. Rather than seeking to close down discussion by imposing a specific view, Lope's dramatic New World historiography appears to re-open the question of the legitimacy of the Conquest by posing the question whether Columbus was a great visionary or a raving lunatic with pronounced Illuminist propensities.[50] In the end, the rather equivocal message of *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* appears to be captured in the line that gave title to my article: "Let God be the judge". As with all other things, humans can question and inquire, but the legitimacy of Columbus's dream vision and the ensuing transcendental meaning of the Conquest melts into air: evaporates, that is, like the dream visions of the night at sunrise; or like a play whose ultimate meaning is ultimately left with the spectator.

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medio desnudos, pintados; un paje con un plato de barras de oro, y otro con papaguayos y halcones." (Enter Columbus in traveling attire, six newly arrived, half-naked and painted Indians, a page with a plate of gold and another with parrots and hawks.) (Lope de Vega 2001, 276–277).

[50] The Illuminists, in Spanish *alumbrados*, claimed to have unmediated intercourse with God who allegedly revealed His will directly to them in dreams and visions. Illuminism was branded as heresy by the Inquisition in the middle of the 16th century.

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Fig. 1

Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevissima relacion de la destruycion de las Indias* (Seville 1552; USTC no 335515), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 2

Leyes y ordenanzas nueuamente hechas por su Magestad para la gouernación de las Indias y buen tratamiento y conseruación de los Indios (Nov. 20, 1542), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

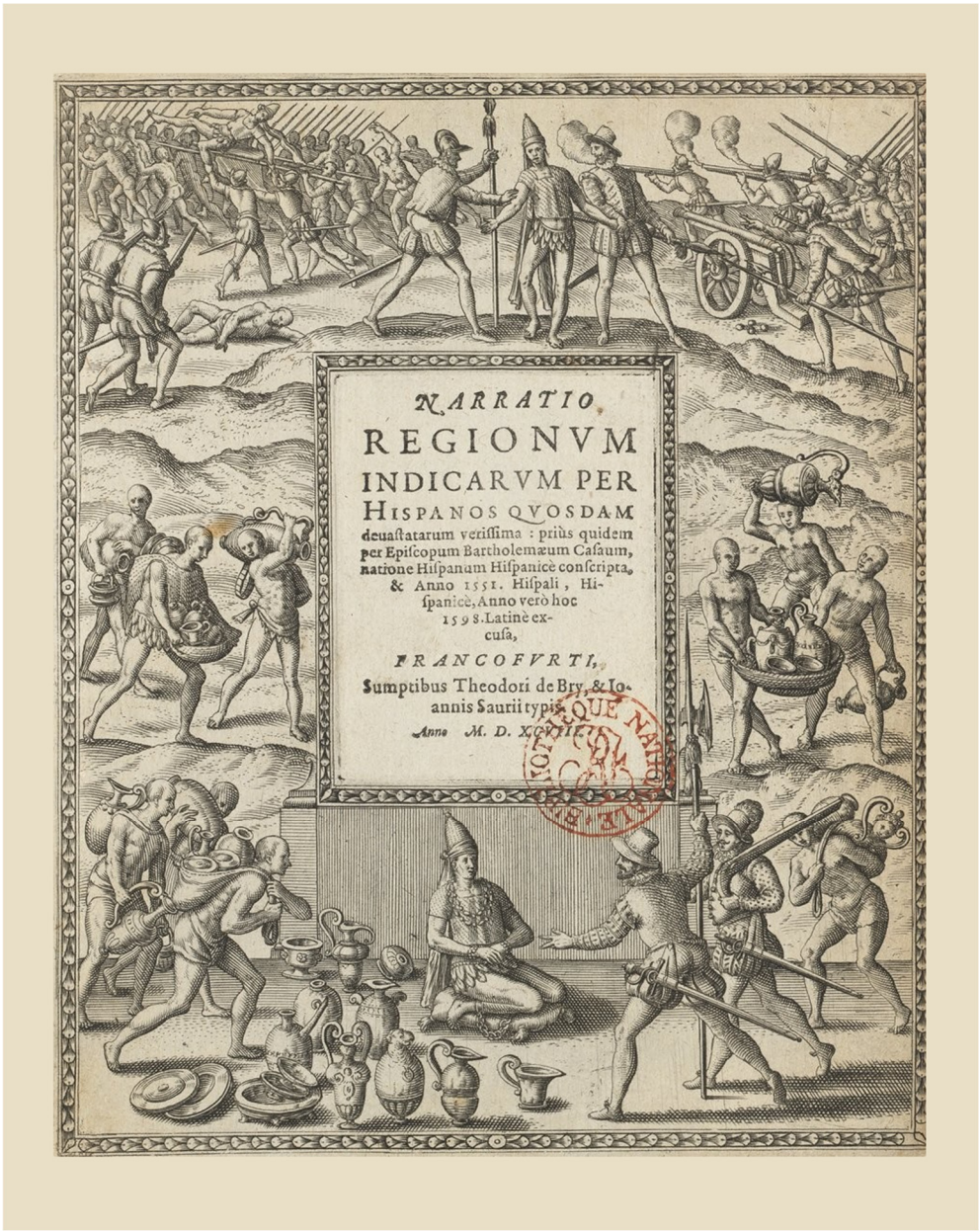

Fig. 3

Bartolomé de las Casas, *Narratio regionum indicarum per Hispanos quosdam deuastatarum verissima* (Frankfurt am Main 1598; USTC no 676778), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

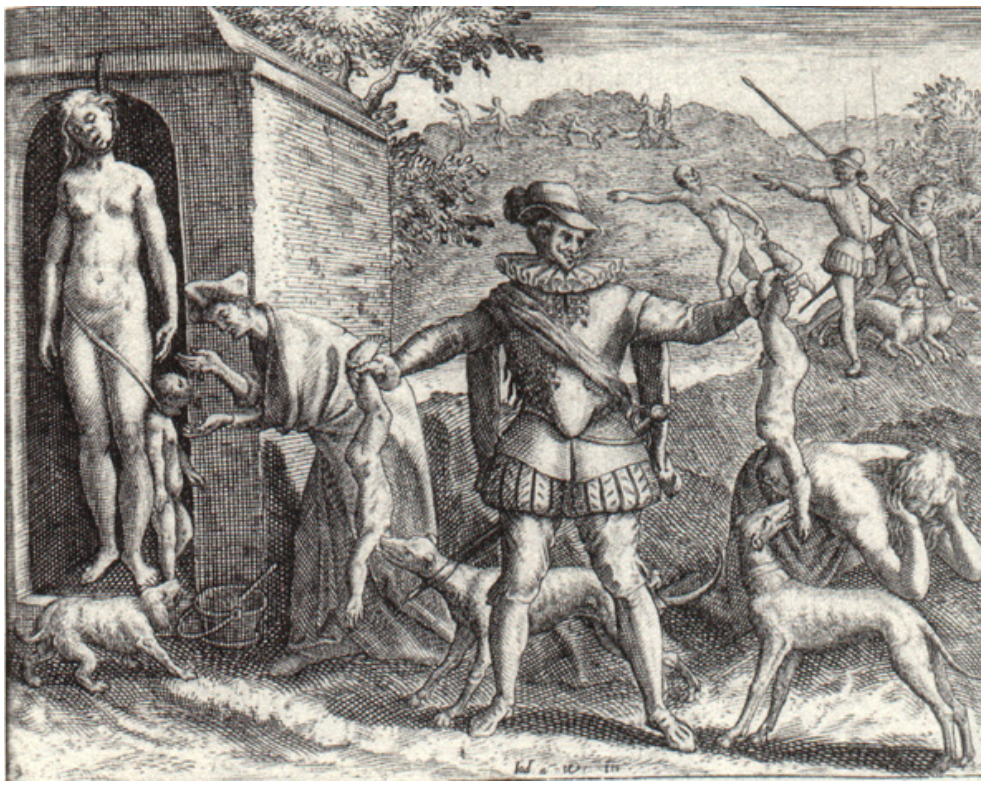

Fig. 4

Théodore de Bry, narratio 14: Spanish soldier feeding Indian children to his dogs. In: Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevissima relacion de la destruycion de las Indias* (Seville 1552; USTC no 335515), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

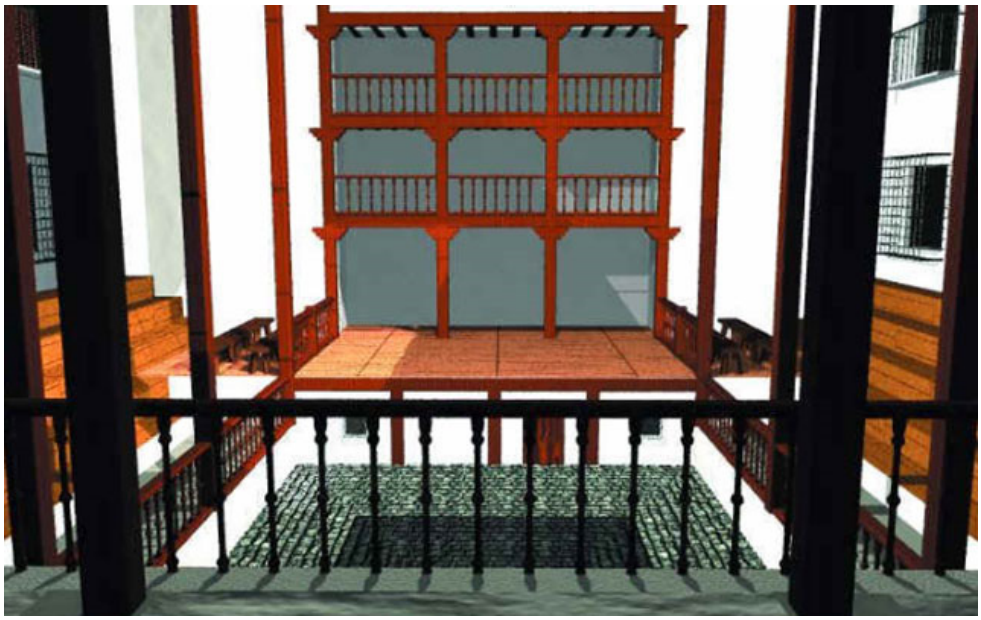

Fig. 5

The stage of the Corral del Príncipe in Madrid seen from the gods (east wing). Illustration by Manuel Canseco reproduced from: Ruano de la Haza, *La puesta en escena en los teatros comerciales del Siglo de Oro*, unpaginated appendix 5 (Madrid 2010).

Between Verisimilitude and History:

The Case of Jean Racine's *Bajazet*

By Kristoffer Schmidt

In January of 1672 Jean Racine's tragedy Bajazet *premiered at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris. In the wake of its initial success, criticism concerning the historical authenticity of the tragedy began to appear. This article suggests that some of the contemporary criticism towards* Bajazet *was a consequence of the challenge to neoclassical verisimilitude in* La Querelle du Cid. *This is followed by a source study of* Bajazet *in order to understand Racine's own idea of verisimilitude and historical authenticity in 1672 as well as to challenge claims that Racine primarily based* Bajazet *on undisclosed sources.*

Introduction

In January of 1672, Jean Racine's five-act tragedy *Bajazet* premiered at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris. Its initial success lasted about two months with approximately 25 performances.[1] Today *Bajazet* is one of Racine's lesser-known plays and opinions about its qualities differ. It has been termed Racine's problem play.[2] Some view it as one of the highlights among Racinian tragedies[3] while others regard it as a second-rate tragedy at best[4] or even as non-Racinian.[5] This discrepancy is partly due to the contemporary oriental theme of *Bajazet*, which Racine primarily based on oral sources. A typical Racinian tragedy has either a classical or a biblical theme and therefore relies on older written sources.

Even though Racine claimed to use mostly oral and thus unobtainable source material to create *Bajazet*, several scholars have chosen to focus on the historical/literary sources of the play.[6] In fact, there is a tendency to reject Racine's claim to historical authenticity in *Bajazet* as mere "tales" and "no more than hearsay presented as historical fact".[7] Others have backed up

[1] Brereton 1951, 173–74.
[2] Campbell 2005, 87–90.
[3] E.g.: Ubersfeld 1967, 53.
[4] E.g.: Robinson 1926, 110.
[5] Vinaver 1951, 69.
[6] Campbell 2005, 89.
[7] Karam 2010, 51.

similar claims with meticulous comparisons of *Bajazet* and actual events.[8] Furthermore, some scholars assert that Racine chose to conceal perhaps his most important source, a *nouvelle* written by the French poet and novelist Jean Regnault de Segrais, and instead pretended to base *Bajazet* solely on historical sources.[9] These claims correspond with the general view of Racine as a playwright who preferred psychological verisimilitude to historical authenticity or as Christopher J. Gossip has formulated it:

> [Racine's] claims to historical accuracy [in *Bajazet*], however, should not mislead us. There is next to no local colour in *Bajazet* or indeed in the other tragedies with a contemporary foreign background. Conventional staging did not allow it, and in any case dramatists are more concerned with psychological interest than with topographical accuracy or scenic *vraisemblance*.[10]

Thus, Racine's verisimilitude – or the appearance of being true – seems to justify his historical inaccuracy. However, at the premiere of *Bajazet* in 1672 a debate about verisimilitude as opposed to historical authenticity had raged for some time. The debate started in 1637 with *La Querelle du Cid*. This quarrel was a result of Pierre Corneille's tragicomedy *Le Cid* (1637). Despite its immense success, Corneille was heavily criticized for ignoring neoclassical norms of dramatic practice. One of the central critics Georges de Scudéry argued that Corneille in *Le Cid* disregarded the rules of verisimilitude in favour of actual historical events. Hereby, Corneille violated moral ethics by communicating the bad morals of the actual historical persons, *Le Cid* was based upon, to the theatregoing public. Corneille would later respond that in the case of *Le Cid* historical truth mattered more than verisimilitude.[11]

Scudéry's criticism and Corneille's response reveal that it was possible to challenge the neoclassical ideal of verisimilitude by referring to historical accuracy. Thus, the hypotheses of this contribution is that in the case of *Bajazet*, claims of historical inaccuracy justified by verisimilitude becomes problematic. This is because studies of Racine's "problem play" tend to overlook 17th century criticism of verisimilitude as a philosophic concept.

In order to either prove or disprove this notion, Racine's claim of historical authenticity in *Bajazet* as well as contemporary reactions to the play are examined in chronological order. This is followed by a source study of the play in order to understand Racine's own conception of historical authenticity

[8] Akalin 2016, 189–202.
[9] E.g.: May 1948, 152–64; Rohou 1992, 190; Maskell 2004, 103; Carlson 1993, 106.
[10] Gossip 1981, 60.
[11] Lyons 1999, 123–25.

in 1672. The source study also questions the notion that Racine primarily based *Bajazet* on undisclosed sources. We begin however, with a summary of *Bajazet*.

The plot of *Bajazet*

Bajazet takes place at sultan Amurat's seraglio in Constantinople. The sultan Amurat is not present, but away on a military campaign against the Persians. He has left behind his wife and temporary ruler Roxane along with his grand vizier Acomat and his confined half-brother Bajazet. Acomat sees his absence from the military campaign as clear evidence of Amurat's disapproval of him and plans a coup d'état. Having received information from a confidante by the name of Osmin about fierce Persian resistance and a rebellious atmosphere among Ottoman soldiers, Acomat decides to put his plan into action. The intention is to overthrow Amurat and replace him with his half-brother Bajazet. Acomat has already thwarted an order from Amurat to have Bajazet executed by killing the messenger. Roxane, who is in love with Bajazet, is the key to the success of Acomat's plan, since she can legitimize Bajazet's ascension to the throne.

The challenge is to convince Roxane that Bajazet truly loves her. Here Acomat receives help from a daughter of the Ottoman line by the name of Atalide. Being a confidante of Roxane, she delivers letters of love from Bajazet to Roxane. Acomat plans to marry the self-same Atalide to assert his power. Unbeknown to Acomat, Atalide has no interest in marrying him. She and Bajazet have secretly become lovers. Her efforts to assure Roxane of Bajazet's affections to the sultana is entirely an attempt to save Bajazet from his execution.

Despite Atalide's and Acomat's reassurances, Roxane is not convinced and hesitates. Instead, she arranges a secret meeting with the prince. At the rendezvous, she finds no evidence of his affections for her. She then decides to catch him off guard by setting up another meeting, where she without warning demands his hand in marriage. His reaction will reveal his true feelings for her. Bajazet rejects her demand. When she reminds him that she has the power to carry out Amurat's execution he rejects her again. He is arrested but avoids imprisonment. Both Acomat and Atalide urge him to appease Roxane in order to save his life, which he reluctantly agrees to.

Bajazet manages to reconcile with the sultana, but when Atalide receives news of this from her slave Zaire and Acomat, she realizes that the prince and the sultana have become lovers. Fearing that Bajazet no longer loves her, she confronts him and threatens to commit suicide. Bajazet attempts to calm the jealous Atalide by asserting that he made no promises to Roxane. Unknown to the two lovers Roxane overhears the conversation. Once again, she

questions Bajazet's affections towards her and suspects that Atalide has feelings for Bajazet. While Roxane ponders, a second confidante arrives with the news that the Ottoman forces have beaten the Persians and taken Babylon. This time the sultan has sent his most ruthless slave Orcan. Despite what she has heard, Roxane is still unsure about Bajazet's feelings towards her and Atalide's feelings towards Bajazet. Thus, she is undecided on whether to intervene against Orcan, whose actual reason for being in Constantinople is to kill Bajazet.

By tricking Atalide into thinking that Roxane will obey Amurat's orders and execute Bajazet, Roxane intends to reveal Atalide's true affections for Bajazet. When Atalide faints after hearing the lie, her deceit is revealed. Bajazet still has the benefit of the doubt, and Roxane decides to go through with Acomat's original plan. However, Roxane discovers a hidden letter in Atalide's possession, which reveals Bajazet's love for Atalide.

A scorned Roxane now plans to carry out Amurat's execution orders. She is however willing to give the prince one last chance. At a final meeting between the two, she offers him the opportunity to reign with her and escape his death sentence. To earn her trust, he must first prove his loyalty by witnessing the execution of Atalide. When he pleads for Atalide's life, his fate is sealed. Roxane orders him to leave the room. Orcan and a group of eunuchs await his departure and have him killed. Now, Roxane learns that Acomat has taken the capital. Not knowing whether to trust the grand vizier, she runs off stage to confront him. Meanwhile Atalide attempts to discover Bajazet's fate, as Acomat enters the stage also looking for the prince. Atalide convinces herself that Bajazet has survived when her slave Zaire reveals that Orcan has killed Roxane. Hope turns into despair when Osmin enters the stage. He reveals that Orcan acting under orders from Amurat has assassinated Roxane and Bajazet. Orcan himself has lost his life by the hands of a vengeful mob. Realizing that Bajazet is dead Atalide commits suicide. Fearing that his treachery will eventually lead to his execution Acomat flees the country.

The Ottomans on the French stage

Bajazet was not the first French play based on recent oriental history. From the second half of the 16th century the East and in particular the Ottoman Empire witnessed a sharp increase in interest among European playwrights. There were different reasons for this. Firstly, there was an increase in travel literature and historical accounts about the large neighbour to the East. This made a, albeit culturally biased, source material concerning Ottoman history accessible to the French and European reading public. Secondly, the fact that the Ottoman Empire was the largest contemporary threat to Christianity

evoked both curiosity and fear among Europeans. Under Suleiman I's rule, the Ottoman Empire grew to become a formidable adversary to the Christian Europe after Ottoman forces defeated Hungarian forces in a series of battles in Hungary and forces of the Knights Hospitaller on the Island of Rhodes. Suleiman I's fleet dominated the Mediterranean and his forces even managed to lay siege to Vienna. These achievements earned him a status among Europeans as a feared but also admired warlord, who gave him the epithet "the Magnificent".

Despite the sultan's achievements, events within his seraglio marred Suleiman I's reputation and left a noticeable mark on the cultural history of European and especially French theater. At the center of these events was Suleiman I's consort Hurrem Sultan known to Europeans by different variants of the name Roxolana. This concubine of Ukrainian decent shocked the European and Turkish public when she married Suleiman I in 1533 or 1534. As early as 1552, the French public could read a negative characterization of her in Paolo Giovio's *Histoires de Paolo Jovio*. Her reputation in France deteriorated even further in 1556 when two French translations of Nicholas de Moffan's pamphlet *Soltani Solymanni horrendum facinus on proprium filium* were published. Moffan revealed that Roxolana, who he characterized as a wicked woman, had successfully plotted to have Suleiman I's son Mustafa executed. Mustafa's execution was sensational news in Europe and the events were quickly adapted to the theater. In France Gabriel Bounin's *La Soltane* (1561), Jean de Mairet's *Le Grand et Dernier Solyman ou la mort de Mustapha* (1635), Charles Vion Dalibray's *Le Soliman* (1637) and Jean Desmares' *Roxelane* (1643) were all based on the execution. Others such as George Scudéry in *Ibrahim ou l'Illustre Bassa* (1643) and Tristan l'Hermite in *La Mort du Grand Osman* (1646 or 1647) based their plays on other "contemporary" events from the Ottoman Empire.[12] Racine must have had at least partial knowledge of these plays when he wrote *Bajazet.* One indication of this is the name of the main female character Roxane, which is a variety of Roxolana.

Still, none of the abovementioned plays came close to the success of *Bajazet*, and while most of the older plays were based on an already published source material,[13] Racine would have us believe that *Bajazet* was not.

The first preface and Racine's sources

Racine presented his theoretical framework in the prefaces of his tragedies. Here he justified his plays and defended himself – sometimes arrogantly –

[12] Yermolenko 2010, 23–35.
[13] One exception is l'Hermite's *Osman* or *La Mort du Grand Osman.*

against critics. Another recurring theme was Racine's seemingly thorough assessment of his source material. He provided references to historians even if the subject of the tragedy was mythological or biblical. At the same time, he firmly proclaimed his right as a dramatist to reinterpret and rewrite the historical facts or ancient models.[14]

The preface in *Bajazet* fits this description partially. On the one hand, Racine revealed a number of sources and reserved the right to make artistic changes. On the other, his source material was notably different from that of his other tragedies, which he disclosed in the first two lines of the preface: "Quoy que le sujet de cette Tragédie ne soit encore dans aucune Histoire imprimiée, il est pourtant tres-veritable. C'est une avanture arrivée dans le Serrail, il n'y a pas plus de trente ans".[15] (Although the subject of this tragedy has not yet appeared in any printed history, it is nevertheless very true. It is an incident that took place in the seraglio not more than thirty years ago). In other words, the 17th century reader was about to read a tragedy based on a historical authentic, contemporary and unpublished incident.

Racine then went on to introduce his actual sources. Most important was the French ambassador to Constantinople from 1619 to 1639 Count de Cézy, whose actual name was Philippe de Harlay. He had been: "fut instruit de toutes les particularitez de la mort de Bajazet"[16] (informed of all the particulars concerning Bajazet's death). After Harlay's return to France in 1640, he entertained courtiers with the story. Racine became aware of the story through one of these courtiers named: "Monsieur le Chevalier de Nantoüillet", who: "je suis redevable de cette histoire, & mesme du dessein que j'ay pris d'en faire une Tragédie"[17] (I am indebted for this story and even for the project of turning it into a tragedy). Thus, Racine's source was second hand if not third, since Harlay himself heard about Bajazet's executions from others. The man behind Monsieur le Chevalier de Nantoüillet was a cavalry captain of the Régiment de la Reine (Queen's regiment) by the name François Duprat. The level of influence Duprat may have had on the design of the tragedy is difficult to determine, but it is curious that Racine acknowledged a relatively unknown cavalry captain's artistic influence of turning an Ottoman execution into an actual tragedy.

This transformation also required alterations to the historical account:

> Mais comme ce changement n'est pas fort considerable, je ne pense pas aussi qu'il soit necessaire de le marquer au Lecteur. La principale chose à quoy je me suis attaché, ç'a esté de ne rien changer ny aux mœurs, ny

[14] Sidnell 1999, I p. 257.
[15] Racine 1672, [3].
[16] Racine 1672, [3].
[17] Racine 1672, [3].

> aux coutumes de la Nation. Et j'ay pris soin de ne rien avancer qui ne fust conforme à l'Histoire des Turcs, & à la nouvelle Relation de l'Empire Ottoman.[18]
>
> However, since these changes are inconsiderable, I do not think it necessary to point them out to the reader. The main principle […] was not to change anything relating to the morals and customs of the nation. And I took care not to suggest anything which did not conform with [*Histoire de l'État Present de l'Empire Ottoman*]

Histoire de l'État Present de l'Empire Ottoman was a French translation from 1670 of the English ambassador and historian Paul Rycaut's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*. The work consists of three books. The first focuses on the polities, the second on the religion and the third on the military of the Ottoman Empire.[19] It contains no particularities regarding the execution of the historical equivalent to Bajazet, Bayazid. Instead, Racine used *Histoire de l'État Present de l'Empire Ottoman* as a sort of fact-checker to assess whether the tragedy accorded with Ottoman customs. Racine also sought the help of Harlay's successor as ambassador to Constantinople de la Haye:[20] "qui a eû la bonté de m'éclaircir sur toutes les difficultez que je luy ay proposées"[21] (who was kind enough to enlighten me on all the problems that I proposed to him).

Thus, Racine provided just enough information to give the reader an overall presentation of his sources, without divulging details about artistic alterations. Compared to the level of detail in Racine's other prefaces this short summary was uncharacteristic. Usually Racine would discuss discrepancies between historians or in detail justify his own take on a story. This made Racine vulnerable to criticism, especially criticism that focused on the historical accuracy of *Bajazet*.

Contemporary reactions

Racine's contemporaries had different opinions about the quality of *Bajazet*. At the French court, the tragedy was well received and the abovementioned 25 performances within the first two months verifies that *Bajazet* enjoyed some initial success. The success on stage was however, followed by criticism from Racine's opponents.[22] One of the harshest critics was Marie de Rabutin-Chantal de Sévigné, better known as Madame de Sévigné, who in her

[18] Racine 1672, [3].
[19] Rycaut 1670.
[20] Racine may also have meant Jean de la Haye's son and successor as ambassador to Constantinople Denis de La Haye.
[21] Racine 1672, [3].
[22] Sayer 2006, 189.

correspondence with her daughter, Françoise-Marguerite de Sévigné, made it clear that *Bajazet* was no masterpiece:

> Le personnage de Bajazet est glacé; les mœurs des Turcs y sont mal observées; ils ne font point tant de façons pour se marier; le dénouement n'est point bien préparé; on n'entre point dans les raisons de cette grande tuerie[23]
>
> The character of Bajazet is glacial, the customs of the Turks are ill observed, they do not care much about ways of being married, the end of the play is badly managed, [and] there are no reasons for such a great slaughter

There can be no doubt that *Bajazet* is the most violent of Racine's tragedies and therefore Sévigné's criticism holds some merit. Still, it is a well-known fact that her disapproval of *Bajazet* was biased because of her friendship with Racine's rival Corneille. Sévigné became acquainted with Corneille at an early age and they formed an unbreakable friendship. When the rivalry between the two dramatists began, Sévigné stood firmly by her old friend.[24] It is in this light we must read Sévigné's judgement. She also revealed her support of Corneille in the letter as she ended her criticism with a comparison of the mediocre qualities of *Bajazet* to those of Corneille's impressive œuvre.[25]

Corneille himself had nothing positive to say about *Bajazet*. Having witnessed a performance of the tragedy, he informed his disapproval to Jean Regnault de Segrais:

> Je me garderois bien de le dire à d'autres qu'à vous, parce qu'on diroit que j'en parle par jalousie; mais prenez garde, il n'y a pas un seul personnage, dans le *Bajazet*, qui ait les sentiments qu'il doit avoir, et que l'on a à Constantinople; ils ont tous, sous un habit turc, les sentiments que l'on a au milieu de la France.[26]
>
> I should be careful not to say it to any other than to you, because it would be said that I speak of it out of jealousy; but beware, not a single character in *Bajazet* feels as it should and as people have in Constantinople; they all have below their Turkish habits, the feelings we all have in the middle of France.

As the quotations reveal both Sévigné and Corneille took issue to the staging of Ottoman character, which of course was the one thing Racine assured his readers would be consistent with the truth. Corneille felt that the tragedy

[23] Sévigné 1756, II 98.
[24] Tilley 1936/2016, 120–22.
[25] Sévigné 1756, II 98–99.
[26] Quoted in: Guizot 1854, 228.

lacked a proper description of the barbaric and morally corrupt Ottoman. Instead, the Bajazet-character made it possible for the Ottomans to possess moral qualities usually reserved for Europeans. Corneille's criticism seems to echo his defence of historical accuracy from *La Querelle du Cid* although this time he was the critic. Positive characterizations of the Ottoman did exist, but these were few and far between, and the most common opinion of the Ottoman was negative. An example of this can be found in one of Racine's own sources, Rycaut's *Histoire de l'État Present de l'Empire Ottoman*. Racine undoubtedly used Rycaut's account when he wrote *Bajazet*.[27] Still, he replaced Rycaut's overall unfavourable portrayal of the Ottomans with a far less critical description,[28] thus abandoning his own promise from the preface of changing nothing of the morals and customs of the Ottoman by taking: "care not to suggest anything which did not conform" with *Histoire de l'État Present de l'Empire Ottoman*.

Another to address the issue of the Ottoman character was Jean Donneau de Visé, who shortly after the publication of *Bajazet* wrote a review of the play in his own literary magazine *Mercure Galant*. Unlike other critics, Donneau de Visé acknowledged Racine's portrayal of the gallant Ottoman character. As evidence, he referred to a letter from a certain Monsieur Du Loir (Nicolas Du Loir) to the French man of letters François Charpentier, which he had read in Du Loir's *Les Voyages dv Sievr dv Loir* from 1654.[29]

Donneau de Visé's compliment seems somewhat hollow since the rest of the review is one long rejection of the historical authenticity of *Bajazet*. Using *Les Voyages dv Sievr dv Loi* and perhaps other historical accounts of The Ottoman Empire Donneau de Visé dismissed central circumstances in the tragedy. He concurred that Amurat IV under his campaign against Babylon had two of his brothers executed. A third was spared because the sultan had no children to succeed him. However, of the two executed siblings, none of them had the name Bajazet. This led Donneau de Visé to conclude that the name was fictional. In addition to a missing name, two of the main characters could not have been present in the seraglio at the time of Amurat IV's campaign against the Persians. The first of these was Roxane, since the sultana accompanied him on his campaign. The second was Tabanıyassi Mehmed Pasha (called Mahament Pasha by Donneau de Visé), whose name might not be recognizable to the reader. Mehmed Pasha was the grand vizier of The Ottoman Empire. Therefore, Mehmed Pasha became Acomat in Racine's tragedy. Furthermore, the character of Acomat did not coincide with the historical Mehmed Pasha, because the grand vizier was not disgracefully

[27] May 1948, 156–59.
[28] Maskell 2004, 101–03.
[29] Donneau de Visé 1672, 70–72.

left behind in the Ottoman capital contemplating his revenge. Like Amurat IV's favourite sultana, Mehmed Pasha participated in the campaign and even led a successful attack on the city of Erivan (Yerevan). Upon his return to Constantinople, he was celebrated for the victory.[30]

In short, Donneau de Visé attempted to question the historical accuracy of *Bajazet*, while its artistic qualities or lack thereof had little interest to him. To a great degree, Racine's own preface was the reason for Donneau de Visé's criticism. Racine's claim that only small changes had been made to the original story tempted critics like Donneau de Visé, who like Sévigné was one of Corneille's supporters,[31] to haul Racine over the coals if historical inaccuracies were discovered.

The second preface

It took four years before Racine responded to his critics. He did so by adding a new and extended but also noticeably different preface to *Bajazet* in his *Œuvres de Racine* (1676).

Here he began with a short introduction of the central male royal Ottoman family members in the time before, under and after the execution of the historical Bayazid. Afterwards, Racine repeated his statement from the first preface that the details of Bayazid's death had yet to appear in any historical account.[32] Racine then introduced his main source of the tragedy, Harlay, who:

> fut instruit des amours de Bajazet & des jalousies de la Sultane. Il vit mesme plusieurs fois Bajazet, à qui on permettoit de se promener quelquefois à la pointe du Serrail sur le canal de la Mer noire. Monsieur le Comte de Cézy disoit que c'étoit un Prince de bonne mine. Il a écrit depuis les circonstances de sa mort. Et il y a plusieurs Personnes de qualité, & entre autres Monsieur le Chevalier de Nantoüillet,[33] qui se souviennent de luy en avoir entendu faire le recit lors qu'il fut de retour en France.[34]

> was informed of Bajazet's love affair and the sultana's jealousy. On several occasions, he even saw Bajazet, who was sometimes permitted to walk on the cape of the seraglio along the Black Sea channel. Count de Cézy described him as a prince of good looks. He has since written

[30] Donneau de Visé 1672, 66–69.
[31] Campbell 2005, 92.
[32] Racine 1672, [3].
[33] It should be noticed that several English translations omits the phrase "& entre autres Monsieur le Chevalier de Nantoüillet", e.g.: Racine 1967, II 3; Racine 2010–12, II 30; Racine 2012, 80. Racine omitted the sentence for the first time in the 1697-version of *Bajazet*. This was probably because Duprat had died two years prior. Racine 1865, II 476.
[34] Racine 1676, II [68].

> of the circumstances of his death. And there are several persons of quality, among others Mr. Chevalier de Nantoüillet, who remember having heard him recount the story after he returned to France.

Seemingly, trivial facts like Harlay witnessing the noble Bayazid's strolls outside the physical compounds of harem was Racine's attempt to refute claims from critics like Donneau de Visé who contested the existence of the Ottoman prince. The placing of Bayazid in the genealogy of the royal Ottoman family and the reference to a written account by Harlay about the prince's execution were also attempts by Racine to strengthen the historical authenticity of the play. It is unlikely that Racine ever read or even saw Harlay's account. Nevertheless, he must have had some knowledge of its existence. Thus, he was willing to imply that the death of the tragic figure Bajazet mirrored the death of the historical Bayazid.

What about Racine's other sources? Unlike the first preface, Racine made no mention of de la Haye or *Histoire de l'État Present de l'Empire Ottoman*. Duprat was still credited but not as Racine's main source. Thus, the source behind Racine's main source from the first preface became the centre of attention in the second preface. It has been argued that the omissions in the second preface was Racine's attempt to safeguard himself from his own misleading account of his sources. The assertion is that despite stating the opposite in the first preface Racine probably never received any help from de la Haye nor did Duprat retell Harlay's account to Racine. Instead, he may very well have come across the ambassador's names in *Histoire de l'État Present de l'Empire Ottoman*, and used them as references in the preface to strengthen the historical authenticity of the tragedy.[35] Assumptions like this is based on a recurring discussion of whether Racine refrained from disclosing all of his sources and among these the most important.[36]

The question of Racine's main source

Despite Racine's claims in the prefaces, scholars have been reluctant to accept Duprat's reiteration of Harlay's account as the main source of *Bajazet.* The reason for this is that two older and published writings have noticeable resemblances with the plot in *Bajazet*. One is Jean Regnault de Segrais' *Floridon* (1656–57) the other is Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. Concerning the latter there can be no doubt that plot and certain elements have noticeable similarities, such as the tragic love triangle between two lovers and a queen whose husband is absent because of a war campaign. Although accusations of plagiarism existed in the 17th century, e.g. Scudéry's criticism of *Le Cid*,

[35] May 1948, 158–59.
[36] May 1948, 152–64.

there was usually nothing dubious about adapting hidden sources in ways, which today would pass for plagiarism. In the case of *Bajazet*, several source studies reveal that *Aethiopica* was a major influence on Racine,[37] and there is no reason to dispute this. It is however debatable that Segrais' *Floridon* was an even more important source of inspiration.

From 1656 to 1657 Segrais published a series of *nouvelles* in his *Les Novvelles Françoises, ov les Divertissemens de la Princesse Avrelie*. The sixth of these entitled *Floridon* is a 154-page long *nouvelle*, which like *Bajazet* was based on the execution of Bayazid.

Here one of three main characters, a female slave named Floridon, has obtained a high rank within the seraglio through her close relationship with the valide sultan – i.e. the mother of the reigning sultan. Floridon becomes embroiled in a love triangle between herself, the valide sultan and the sultan's brother and close friend Baiazet (Segrais' spelling). While sultan Amurath is away on his military campaign against the Persians, he entrusts his mother – Baiazet's stepmother – with the rule of Constantinople. In the sultan's absence, the valide sultan and Baiazet become lovers. In order to keep the affair secret the valide sultan assigns her trusted servant Floridon with secretly distributing love letters between the two. The correspondence results in occasional meetings between Baiazet and Floridon, who quickly fall in love. For some time, the two young lovers are able to keep their affair a secret. After a while the valide sultan grows suspicious and discovers the romance. Due to her affection towards Baiazet the valide sultan agrees to spare the lovers and even allows them to meet secretly once a week. Meanwhile, after the successful sacking of Babylon Amurath's campaign against the Persians has stagnated. His personal guard, the Janissaries, no longer follows his orders to invade Persia and instead demand to return to their family and loved ones in Constantinople. When the sultan threatens them to obey his command, they in turn threaten him with revolting and placing Baiazet on the Ottoman throne. Fearing for his life Amurath dispatches a trusted messenger to Constantinople to kill his brother. Aware of Amurath's attempt of fratricide and out of love for Baiazet the valide sultan counters the command. She accuses the messenger of being an imposter and has him executed. Unfortunately for Baiazet, the valide sultan's love for him quickly turns into a furious jealousy, when she discovers that the prince and Floridon disregard the rules of their love affair. Despite her anger, the valide sultan cannot persuade herself to kill Baiazet. However, the arrival of a second messenger from Amurath seals Baiazet's fate, since the valide sultan is no longer willing

[37] Lange 1916, 145–62; Collinet 1988, 399–415; Forestier 2006, 427–28; Williams 2011, 275.

to protect him. In the end then Baiazet is executed although without the many specifics as in *Bajazet*. Floridon is spared and gives birth to Baiazet's child, who the valide sultan in turn cares for deeply.[38]

It seems quite clear why several scholars would argue that Segrais' *Floridon* was an undisclosed main source.[39] The resemblances are on both structural and thematic levels. On a structural level the sultan, in both *nouvelle* and tragedy, is an absent but central character, who orders the execution of his popular half-brother. At first, powerful and amorous women – in *Floridon* the valide sultan and in *Bajazet* Roxane – counter the order. Their affection for the sultan's half-brother turns into jealousy – a main theme in both stories – when they discover that he does not return their love and instead declares his love for two other women. Consequently, the valide sultan and Roxane transform from guardians to executioners, who eventually carry out the sultan's orders.

Despite structural and thematic similarities, there is no smoking gun, which proves the link between *nouvelle* and tragedy. For example, jealousy might be a central theme for both Segrais and Racine, but for the latter it is a recurring theme both before and after *Bajazet*.[40] In addition, whereas jealousy is the dominant theme in both stories political intrigue is also of some importance in *Bajazet*. Furthermore, even though the plots have structural similarities there are several differences, especially if we compare the character roster in both stories. The most obvious of course is the fact that the valide sultan and the sultana Roxane are not the same person. In addition, the plot of *Floridon* is far less complex than that of *Bajazet* with its larger set of characters. There is also the case of the character Acomat. In *Floridon* he is an old eunuch at the Seraglio, who along with Floridon acts as messenger for the valide sultan and Baiazet. He is a minor character and has no major influence on the actual story. The Racinian Acomat is the grand vizier of The Ottoman Empire at the time of the sultan's campaign in Persia. His character is that of a selfish schemer, who plays a major role in the attempt to forge a relationship between Bajazet and Roxane. Evidently, discrepancies such as these does not prove that Racine was unacquainted with *Floridon* before 1672. Nevertheless, they do prove the point that Racine's use of *Floridon* is disputable, which has made some contemporary scholars hesitant to unreservedly confirm the link between *Floridon* and *Bajazet*.[41]

[38] Segrais 1656–57, II 3,1–3,153.

[39] E.g.: May 1948, 152–64; Sick 2004, 78–80, Maskell 2004, 103; Worth-Stylianou 1999, 189–92.

[40] For example, *Andromaque* (1667), *Britannicus* (1669) and *Phèdre* (1677). Sick 2004, 80.

[41] E.g. Worth-Stylianou 1999, 190; Sayer 2006, 186.

What also makes the link between *Floridon* and *Bajazet* difficult to confirm is the lack of information about Racine's alleged main source François Duprat. Notes of conversations or correspondence between Duprat and Racine that reveal the captain's account of Bayazid's death as well as his artistic influence on *Bajazet* have never been discovered and probably never will. It is equally difficult to establish if and how Duprat and Racine became acquainted. They had a mutual friend in Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, but not until 1674 did Boileau-Despréaux and Racine become friends.[42] Thus, we are left in the dark as to what information Duprat passed on to Racine.

What about Duprat's own source? Harlay's oral accounts about the Ottoman Empire seem to have been a crowd-puller. Apart from entertaining French courtiers, his accounts of the Ottoman court and the intrigues in the seraglio was widely sought after by Parisians. Harlay had many stories to tell. One of these concerned a power struggle between the Ottoman sultan Osman II and the Janissaries, which led to the fall, imprisonment and killing of Osman II.[43] According to some this account – although never authenticated – became a main source of inspiration for a tragedy, which preceded both *Floridon* and *Bajazet*. The tragedy in question is *Osman* or *La Mort du Grand Osman* written by Tristan l'Hermite and first performed between 1646 and 1647.[44] Despite its inferiority compared to the writings of Moliere, Corneille and Racine *Osman* has been called one the most interesting tragedies by a lesser-known French-classical playwright.[45] One of its qualities was Tristan l'Hermite's close attention to historical detail. Unfortunately, due to Tristan l'Hermite's incompetence as a playwright the historical accuracy of *Osman* does not make up for its poor quality.

As Racine mentioned in the second preface Harlay not only talked about the execution of Bayazid he also wrote it down. The claim is somewhat vague yet not untrue. At the time of Harlay's ambassadorial duties, he had an extensive correspondence with French officials and friends about everything from everyday pursuits to major political intrigues within the Ottoman seraglio including Bayazid's execution. Even though, it is improbable that Racine was thinking of this correspondence when mentioning a written account by Harlay the letters still gives us an idea of what Duprat may have told Racine.

In a letter dated the 7th of September 1635 to the French king, Harlay gave his official report of the execution.[46] Having captured Erivan (Yerevan) the

[42] Sayer 2006, 214.
[43] Bernardin 1967, 262.
[44] Bernardin 1967, 261–62.
[45] Lockert 1968, 163–66.
[46] Transcribed in: Jasinski 1958, 10–11.

sultan sent a messenger to Constantinople with orders to give thanks to God for the good fortunes of the war. Harlay recalled how the victory was celebrated for three days. Under the festivities, a captain from the Janissaries by the name of Bachy accompanied by a eunuch arrived at the capitol with orders from Amurat IV to kill his two brothers Bayazid[47] and Soliman. The orders were handed to the deputy of the grand vizier. Accompanied by approximately thirty men the deputy, the captain and the eunuch proceeded to the two brothers' quarters in the seraglio under the pretext of informing the details of the capture of Erivan. While the eldest brother Bayazid chose to believe this, Soliman suspected deceit, grabbed his sword and attempted to gain access to his brother's quarters. After some turmoil where one of the princes was wounded by throwing himself through a window the two brothers were captured and strangled with the customary Ottoman bow string. Harlay noticed in his letter that Amurat IV's mother (Mahpeyker Kösem Sultan) opposed the killing of Soliman, arguing that Bajazet was the only one to be executed, since he was merely the sultan's half-brother.

Harlay then went on to account for the circumstances, which resulted in Bayazid's death. Bayazid, who was one year younger than Amurat IV, had difficulties containing himself within the boundaries of the seraglio. Ignoring several warnings from Kösem Sultan he wished to emancipate himself in a way Ottoman custom did not permit. Worried that Bayazid eventually would take flight Kösem Sultan advised Amurat IV to threaten Bayazid to obey Ottoman customs. Amurat IV acted differently. Instead, he ordered the execution of Bayazid and Soliman. His reasons for this decision was pre-emptive. If one of these two princes disobeyed the wishes of a sultan occupied by a distant war, it could undermine the sultan's power.

Harlay reiterated the story to the French statesman Claude Bouthillier in two letters from the 7th of September 1635 and the 10th of January 1636. Here Harlay repeated the circumstances leading up to the execution as well as Amurat IV's reasons for having his brothers executed:

> Sa Hautesse avait été avertie que ces deux princes prenaient un peu plus de liberté dans leurs promenades et dans leurs plaisirs que ne comporte la coutume ottomane. C'est pourqoi, craignant qu'ils ne prissent l'essor, il s'est porté à cette résolution.[48]
>
> His Highness had been warned that these two princes took a little more liberty in their walks and in their pleasures than the Ottoman custom

[47] Like Racine Harlay spelled Bayazid Bajazet. To distinguish between the fictional character in *Bajazet* and the historical Bayazid, I have used the spelling Bayazid, whenever historical sources are referenced.

[48] Jasinski 1958, 11.

> allows. It is for this reason, fearing that they will take the rise, he has taken this resolution.

He also mentioned a peculiar distrust between Amurat IV and his mother, since the former sent another envoy to Constantinople to examine whether the valide sultan indeed had carried out his execution orders. Like the letter from the 7th of September 1635, we receive little information about the offenses that lead to the execution.

However, in a letter on the 10th of March 1640 addressed to a Mr. de la Barde[49] Harlay would again bring up the death of Bayazid and reveal further details about the prince's life.[50] The occasion was the death of Amurat IV, who Harlay portrayed as a devout and scrupulous ruler. He was also impotent, which lead to a general fear of life among the women in the seraglio who could not bear him a child. Officially, the sultan had a six- or seven-year-old son, but it was not his own. Two unnamed yet trustworthy Ottoman sources had informed Harlay that the actual father was Bayazid. Bayazid, who was dearly loved by the sultan's mother, had fallen in love with a beautiful concubine[51] of the seraglio and favourite of the valide sultan. When Kösem Sultan realized that Bayazid had gotten the young woman pregnant she chose not to disclose anything to Amurat IV. Instead, she arranged for the girl to live outside the seraglio under the protection of confidante. The fact that Bayazid and Amurat IV were born only one year apart made it easier for people to believe that the child was indeed the sultan's son.

If we compare Harlay's remarks with *Floridon* and *Bajazet,* it becomes quite clear that Segrais' depiction of historical events was more accurate. The comparison also reveals that some sections from *Floridon* does not occur in Harlay's account but are present in *Bajazet*, e.g. the intercepted letters – although this was a recurring plot twist in almost every *nouvelle*.[52] The context of the four letters must have coincided well with Harlay's accounts at the French court. Still, they are not exact depictions of his account as Harlay himself implied in the letter to de la Barde, who had to wait on the ambassador's return to France to get the complete story.[53]

Scholars who accept Racine's use of *Floridon* present various explanations as to why Segrais remained an uncredited source. Evidently, a historical account was not the same as a *nouvelle* and as Valerie Worth suggests Racine

[49] Probably the theologian Denis de la Barde.

[50] Harlay mentioned that his description was a repetition of a now missing letter he had written to Mr. de Chavigny – probably Léon Bouthillier – on the 28th of April 1639. Jasinski 1958, 12.

[51] Harlay referred to her as "une belle fille". Jasinski 1958, 12.

[52] Sayer 2006, 193.

[53] Jasinski 1958, 12.

in some ways did not need to reference his French counterpart, because *Floridon* was a fictional work and therefore had the "dubious status of prose fiction".[54] Still, *Floridon* was more than prose fiction. It was a *nouvelle historique*, which Segrais himself stressed in his long introduction to the actual *nouvelles* of *Les Novvelles Françoises, ov les Divertissemens de la Princesse Avrelie.* Here Segrais created a fictional situation where a group of women discuss the importance of the *roman* and *nouvelle*. One of the women, the Princess Aurélie, who represents Segrais' own views, states that:

> il me semble que c'est la différence qu'il y a entre le Roman, & la Nouuelle, que le Roman écrit ces choses comme la bien-sceance le veut & à la maniere du Poëte; mais que la nouuelle doit vn peu dauantage tenir de l'histoire & s'attacher plustost à donner les images des choses comme d'ordinaire nous les voyons arriuer, que comme nostre imagination se les figure.[55]
>
> it seems to me that the difference between the *roman* and the *nouvelle* is that the *roman* concerns things dictated by literary decorum and as poets do, but the *nouvelle* must stay closer to history and attempt to show the images of things as we ordinarily see them rather that as we imagine them.

In other words, the *nouvelle historique* held historical merit. It is important to emphasize that Segrais like Racine and others shared the concept of verisimilitude.[56] However as mentioned above, Segrais was far more devoted to historical accuracy than Racine, and it is plausible that *Floridon* came even closer to Harlay's oral accounts than what we can deduct from his four letters.

Jean Rohou has presented another argument for Racine to leave out Segrais. He maintains that Racine would not credit an author as well as a genre he found unworthy of his own stature.[57] This is a mere assertion without any evidence presented to suggest that Racine thought lesser of the *nouvelle historique* and Segrais' writings. First, Segrais and the *nouvelle historique* might not have been as popular as Racine and his tragedies, but in 1672 Segrais was an esteemed author, who ten years before had become a member of the Académie française, an honour Racine did not achieve until ten years later. Second, as John Sayer has pointed out that:

> in Bajazet, Racine comes closest to the novel and short story writers of his day, particularly to the *nouvelles historiques et galantes*, on which

[54] Worth-Stylianou 1999, 189.
[55] Segrais 1656–57, I 1,240–41.
[56] Forno 1972, 50.
[57] Rohou 1992, 190.

> he may well have drawn, and whose authors he may have consulted in fashioning the most unusual and innovative among his tragedies.[58]

It seems equally plausible to suggest that Racine did not reference Segrais, simply because he was unacquainted with *Floridon* in 1672. To understand this argument we must turn our attention to the accessibility of information in 17th century France.

If our sole intention was to make *Bajazet* undergo a critical source study, the conclusion would probably resemble something like the following:

> while the play [*Bajazet*] might, given such diplomatic input, constitute something of an "official story," it is also at best a third-hand account of an event, no doubt modified and embellished through these several tellings, perhaps closer to gossip. One must view then with some suspicion Racine's claim for the "très véritable" […] nature of his subject. Further, Racine claims to have authenticated his play through consultations of written histories of the Ottomans. But these, too, are second-hand accounts, produced by European outsiders (not that "insider" history would not have its own bias).[59]

Nevertheless assumptions like this, does not consider historical circumstances that might have influenced Racine's assessment of the authenticity of his alleged main source. First, the idea that Duprat was a third-hand account was likely unimportant to Racine. The fact that Duprat was a man of quality was of higher importance. Second, with today's easy access to online search engines, public libraries etc. it is difficult to imagine the challenges that faced 17th century authors who sought information on a subject such as the Ottoman history. As Paul Mesnard has shown, there were several French publications on Ottoman history from where Racine could have read about Bayazid and his ill fate.[60] Still, it is unclear if Racine knew this literature, which incidentally only gave brief descriptions of the Ottoman prince and his death. In other words, it is impossible to give an accurate depiction of Racine's knowledge about contemporary Ottoman history outside the mentioned sources in the first preface. In fact, the incorrect contestation of Bayazid's existence in the *Mercure Galant* reveals that even Donneau de Visé based his criticism on a sparse and insufficient source material – probably only *Voyages dv Sievr dv Loir* since the majority of other available historical accounts of Ottoman history mentioned Bayazid.[61] Therefore, it is somewhat misleading

[58] Sayer 2006, 196.
[59] Longino 1998, 50.
[60] Mesnard 1865–90, II 447–72.
[61] Loir 1654, 221–54.

when one scholar states that: "Donneau de Visé displayed a quickly acquired expertise and denounced the play [*Bajazet*] for its inauthenticity".[62]

Conclusion

As mentioned above, scholars have pointed out that any claim from Racine about historical authenticity should be taken with a pinch of salt. He may have taken great care to show his tragedies' accordance with historical fact, but like many of his neoclassical contemporaries, he was more concerned with verisimilitude than historical accuracy. A comparison of the plot in *Bajazet* and Harlay's correspondence gives us a good indication of how much he changed to fit the story to the theatre. However, Donneau de Visé's and Corneille's critique of *Bajazet* indicates that after *La Querelle du Cid* historical authenticity had become an important sign of quality within the French theatre. Furthermore, one should be careful to disregard Racine's own interest for historical authenticity. The fact that Racine in the first preface (1672) claimed that he had based the play on a true unpublished account, and the fact that he reinforced this claim in the second preface (1676) seems to suggest that he valued historical authenticity even though psychological verisimilitude was of greater importance.

As to the question of Racine's use of *Floridon* we are none the wiser. The evidence examined cannot entirely refute the link between *Floridon* and *Bajazet*, but it does prove the point that we should be equally cautious to accept it. A definite proof of the link will probably never appear. Despite this, Segrais' *Floridon* is of vital importance, when we attempt to examine Racine's sources in *Bajazet.* Whether or not Racine actually read *Floridon*, the *nouvelle historique* and Harlay's correspondence still comes closest to a recreation of Racine's alleged source material.

[62] Longino 1998, 51. Later in his career, Donneau de Visé acquired a more extensive knowledge about contemporary Ottoman history. Sixteen years after his review in *Mercure Galant* he published a biography on the Ottoman sultan Mehmed IV, who ruled after Ibrahim and Murad IV as well as a collection of sources regarding Gabriel de Guilleragues and Pierre de Girardin, ambassadors to the Ottoman court at Constantinople under Mehmed IV and Soliman III. In the first, he touches upon Amurat IV, but never the sultan's fratricides. Donneau de Visé 1688a; Donneau de Visé 1688b.

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BUSENELLO'S SECRET HISTORY:

An allegorical reading of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* *

By Magnus Tessing Schneider

The 1623 publication of Procopius' Secret History *shocked the scholarly world. The ancient historian's rejection of his official account of the reign of Justinian I forced humanists to reflect on the general reliability of historical sources. The article suggests that Giovan Francesco Busenello's libretto* L'incoronazione di Poppea *(1643) reflects the challenge posed by Procopius' book. Though its portrayal of historical figures adheres to Tacitus'* Annals*, it plays with the possibility that even Tacitus himself was deceived by Machiavellian rulers. Did he, for example, condemn Nero and Poppaea while praising Octavia because this was the truth, or because Octavia was, in fact, a superior politician who had managed to craft a favourable epitaph for herself?*

> Nerone innamorato di Poppea, ch'era moglie di Ottone, lo mandò sotto pretesto d'ambasciaria in Lusitania per godersi la cara diletta, così rappresenta Cornelio Tacito. Ma quì si rappresenta il fatto diverso. Ottone, disperato nel vedersi privo di Poppea, dà nei deliri e nelle esclamazioni. Ottavia, moglie di Nerone, ordina ad Ottone che sveni Poppea. Ottone promette farlo; ma non bastandogli l'animo di levar la vita all'adorata Poppea, si traveste con l'abito di Drusilla ch'era innamorata di lui. Così travestito entra nel giardino di Poppea. Amore disturba e impedisce quella morte. Nerone ripudia Ottavia, nonostante i consigli di Seneca, e prende per moglie Poppea. Seneca more, e Ottavia vien discacciata da Roma.[1]
>
> Nero, in love with Poppaea, Otho's wife, sent the latter to Lusitania under the pretext of an ambassadorship in order to enjoy his dearly beloved. This is how Cornelius Tacitus represents the facts, but here

* Some of the points made in this article have already been presented in the program article for my 2011 production of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at Københavns Musikteater (Schneider 2011). I would like to thank the anonymous reader from *Renæssanceforum* for several valuable suggestions, and Prof. Ellen Rosand for checking my English.

[1] Giovan Francesco Busenello: *L'incoronazione di Poppea, opera musicale*, "*Argomento*". Quotations from the libretto are taken from Busenello 2016. Translations from Italian are the author's unless otherwise stated.

> they are represented differently. Desperate at being deprived of Poppaea, Otho bursts into ravings and exclamations. Octavia, Nero's wife, orders Otho to kill Poppaea. Otho promises to do so, but lacking the courage to take the life of his adored Poppaea, he disguises himself with the clothes of Drusilla who had been in love with him. Thus disguised, he enters Poppaea's garden. Cupid disturbs him and prevents her death. Despite Seneca's advice, Nero repudiates Octavia and marries Poppaea. Seneca dies, and Octavia is expelled from Rome.

This is how Giovan Francesco Busenello, the librettist of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, summarized its action when publishing his complete dramas in 1656, long after its premiere in Venice in 1643.[2] Not surprisingly, several commentators have noted the overt liberty with which he reorganized the historical events: in fact, Otho became governor of Lusitania four years before Poppaea's coronation; he and Octavia were never involved in an attempt to murder her; and Seneca died three years after the coronation and Octavia's expulsion and execution. In the present article I will argue, however, that Busenello's explicit irreverence towards the main source of his plot – the *Annals* of the second-century Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus – was not merely a defence of poetic license. By telling his readers that "the facts" are "represented differently" in Tacitus and in the opera, he jokingly suggests that the two types of text hold similar claims to accuracy, as if both of them reflect a free adaptation of historical events. With this provocation, the poet directs our attention to a central theme of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*: the essential unreliability of historical narratives, especially when written by historians describing their own times. The drama suggests that the chroniclers of history might deliberately have deceived their readers for political reasons. Or they might have been deceived themselves by rulers or politicians who skilfully managed to manipulate their public image.

Procopius and Theodora's mantle

Two decades before the premiere of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, the scholarly world was shaken by a publication that ignited an intense debate about the relation between power and historical truth. In the early 1620s, Nicolò Alemanni, custodian to the Vatican Library, had discovered a manuscript of the long-lost *Anekdota* (Unpublished Writings) by the sixth-century Greek historian Procopius of Caesarea in the papal collections. Procopius was well-known for his *Wars of Justinian*, an eight-volume account of the Byzantine emperor Justinian I's wars against Persians, Vandals and Goths, and for his

[2] *L'incoronazione di Poppea* is sometimes described as the first opera based on a historical subject, though this distinction belongs to *Il Sant'Alessio* by Giulio Rospigliosi and Stefano Landi, which premiered in Rome in 1631.

Buildings of Justinian, a panegyric about the same emperor's building projects. But the relatively positive image of Justinian and his empress Theodora, which Procopius presented in these official accounts, was undermined by the devastating attack on the couple in his unofficial account, which Alemanni published with a parallel Latin translation in Lyon in 1623 as the *Arcana historia* (Secret History). As Procopius states in the preface, "it was not possible, as long as the actors were still alive, for these things to be recorded in the way they should have been", but in the unpublished version he intended to disclose, "not only those things which have hitherto remained undivulged, but also the causes of those occurrences which have already been described."[3] Although Alemanni omitted the most shockingly graphic accounts of Justinian's and Theodora's sexual excesses in his edition, the book still emerged as a violation of the mystical aura of absolute kingship. Indeed, Procopius' book has been described as the seventeenth century's "most vexed and discussed work in late-Roman literature."[4] For example, the English lawyer Thomas Ryves – a staunch supporter of the Stuart dynasty – objected in 1626 that the *Secret History* "did not seem to pertain to the infamy of this emperor more than to the injury of all kings and leaders", for which reason Justinian's misdeeds had better remain covered by a "veil of silence".[5]

The rending of this veil especially affected the image of Theodora, a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church. In *The Wars of Justinian*, hers is largely an image of imperious majesty, as appears from the inflammatory speech to her courtiers during the Nika revolt of 532:

> May I never be separated from this purple, and may I not live that day on which those who meet me shall not address me as mistress. […] as for myself, I approve a certain ancient saying that royalty is a good burial-shroud.[6]

To seventeenth-century Italians, this heroic image might even be said to have its visual counterpart in one of the famous mosaic panels from 547 that adorn the basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna (little more than a hundred kilometres south of Venice): surrounded by court ladies and eunuchs, a golden-haloed Theodora, carrying a chalice, dazzles like a religious icon in her lavishly bejewelled crown and purple mantle (see Fig. 1).

[3] Procopius 1935/1998, i.

[4] Mazzarino 1959/1966, 103.

[5] *Imperatoris Iustiniani defensio adversus Alemannum*, London, "*Argumentum*" (non-paginated), 8; quoted from Bullard 2009, 26, 27. The first English translation of the *Anekdota*, *The Secret History of the Court of the Emperor Justinian*, which appeared in London in 1674, became a model for the critique of the absolutist ambitions of the Stuarts, inspiring multiple 'secret histories' during the following decades.

[6] Procopius 1914, vol. 1, I.xxiv.

In the *Secret History*, however, Procopius claimed that Theodora had been a courtesan and actress before her marriage to Justinian, and that she had committed a number of repulsive crimes after ascending the throne. One of the most conspicuous was plotting the murder of Queen Amalasuntha of the Ostrogoths in 534. In *The Wars of Justinian*, Procopius had related how Amalasuntha, who was held captive on an island in Lake Bolsena by her co-ruler Theodatus, had secretly asked for Justinian's help, offering to put the whole of Italy into his hands in return for an exile in Byzantium. Intending to grant her wish, the emperor sent as ambassador to Italy a certain Peter "who was one of the trained speakers in Byzantium, a discreet and gentle person withal and fitted by nature to persuade men",[7] but when he arrived, Amalasuntha had been killed on the orders of Theodatus. In the *Secret History*, however, the facts were 'represented differently':

> At the time when Amalasuntha, desiring to leave the company of the Goths, decided to transform her life and to take the road to Byzantium, as has been stated in the previous narrative, Theodora, considering that the woman was of noble birth and a queen, and very comely to look upon and exceedingly quick at contriving ways and means for whatever she wanted, but feeling suspicious of her magnificent bearing and exceptionally virile manner, and at the same time fearing the fickleness of her husband Justinian, expressed her jealousy in no trivial way, but she schemed to lie in wait for the woman even unto her death. Straightway, then, she persuaded her husband to send Peter, unaccompanied by others, to be his ambassador to Italy. And as he was setting out, the Emperor gave him such instructions as have been set forth in the appropriate passage, where, however, it was impossible for me, through fear of the Empress, to reveal the truth of what took place. She herself, however, gave him one command only, namely, to put the woman out of the world as quickly as possible, causing the man to be carried away by the hope of great rewards if he should execute her commands. So as soon as he arrived in Italy – and indeed man's nature knows not how to proceed in a hesitant, shrinking way to a foul murder when some office, perhaps, or a large sum of money is to be hoped for – persuaded Theodatus, by what kind of exhortation I do not know, to destroy Amalasuntha. And as a reward for this he attained the rank of Magister, and acquired great power and a hatred surpassed by none.[8]

Is it possible that this account of Theodora's secret ordering of the murder of Amalasuntha inspired Ottavia's secret ordering of the murder of Poppea in Busenello's libretto? It certainly seems significant that both narratives deal

[7] Procopius 1919, vol. 3, V.iv.
[8] Procopius 1935/1998, xvi.

with a Roman empress who has gone down in history as a blameless icon of fortitude but whose purple mantle, shockingly, turns out to conceal corruption: doubting the emperor's character, and fearing for her own position, she goes behind his back and orders an outwardly virtuous subject to murder her rival. While there is no direct evidence that Busenello had read the *Secret History*, there is some evidence that it was known to his fellow poet Giulio Strozzi, likewise a member of the Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti, and author of the libretto for *La finta savia*, which opera preceded *L'incoronazione di Poppea* on the stage of the Teatro dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo in the 1643 carnival. In 1644, Strozzi published a collection of eulogies to the famous singer-actress Anna Renzi who had created the role of Ottavia the year before, opening his introductory essay with the following comparison of Renzi to Theodora:

> Poi che il Mondo non hà più di quei Cesari, che portino le Teodore dalle scene al Trono, e dal Teatro al Talamo Imperiale, non è manchevole al meno di conoscitori del merito di Anna Renzi, mentre tanti belli ingegni si sforzano di consacrar alla Gloria il nome d lei nel Tempio dell'Eternità.[9]
>
> While the world no longer possesses those Caesars who bring the Theodoras from the stage to the throne, and from the theatre to the imperial marriage bed, at least it does not lack connoisseurs of Anna Renzi's merit, since so many *beaux esprits* strive to anoint her name with glory in the Temple of Eternity.

Since it was in the *Secret History* that Procopius revealed that Theodora had been an actress before her marriage to the emperor, we must conclude that Strozzi was familiar with at least some of the leaks of the seditious book, and hence Busenello is likely to have been so as well. Strozzi's employment of that quintessentially Baroque metaphor of the *theatrum mundi* is potentially rich in allegorical meanings, furthermore. Like Renzi, Theodora could be described as an actress with a formidable ability to deceive beholders, but she used this talent for political ends, successfully forging a virtuous epitaph for herself in spite of her crimes.[10] The connection drawn between Renzi's and Theodora's artistry has further allegorical implications: if the heroes and heroines of history turn out to be mere roles performed for a credulous posterity, then historical accounts have no more claim to authenticity than history plays, which at least make no secret of their illusoriness. Especially considering that Busenello raised a question mark above Tacitus'

[9] "*Anna Renzi romana, elogio di Giulio Strozzi, tratto dal libro secondo de' suoi Elogii delle donne virtuose del nostro secolo*", in Strozzi 1644, 5.

[10] For my analysis of Anna Renzi's theatrical persona, see Schneider 2012, 269–91.

representation of historical facts, it is remarkable, furthermore, that it was the actress of Ottavia whom Strozzi compared to Theodora. Was it perhaps Renzi's portrayal of the former empress that brought the latter empress to his mind? This would certainly agree with the way the operatic Ottavia arguably embodies the principle of historical revisionism, Busenello playfully presenting his libretto as the 'secret history' of Tacitus' *Annals*. To further understand the presence of both Tacitus and Procopius in his work, however, we must first look at how Tacitus was read in Venice in the period.

Tacitus and the political spectacles

The complex reception of Tacitus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has long been recognized as an important context for understanding *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.[11] In 1528 the attitude towards the Roman historian among Renaissance humanists was summarized as follows by the Florentine statesman Francesco Guicciardini, a friend of Niccolò Machiavelli: "Se vuoi cognoscere quali sono e [sic] pensieri de' tiranni, leggi Cornelio Tacito"[12] (If you want to know the thoughts of tyrants, read Cornelius Tacitus). After the fall of the Florentine Republic two years later, however, he revised his statement:

> Insegna molto bene Cornelio Tacito a chi vive sotto e tiranni il modo di vivere e governarsi prudentemente, così come insegna a' tiranni e modi di fondare la tirannide.[13]
>
> Cornelius Tacitus is very good at teaching those who live under tyrants how to live and conduct themselves prudently, just as he teaches tyrants ways to establish their tyranny.

In other words, Tacitus was, like Machiavelli, the potential teacher of tyrants as well as of their subjects. His role as a teacher of the former was strengthened after 1559, when Machiavelli's most important historical-political works – the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* and his notorious treatise *Il principe* (both published posthumously in the 1530s) – were placed on the papal index of prohibited books. From now on, it was no longer possible to refer to Machiavelli in other than damning terms, but since rulers and courtiers still employed Machiavellian ideas about political manipulation and the ends justifying the means, they simply replaced him

[11] On the influence of Tacitism on the opera, see Fenlon & Miller 1992, 11–20; Holzer 1993, 81–84; Heller 1999, 51–62; Heller 2003, 145–52; Moretti 2010, 164–209. The close connection between Tacitism and Machiavellianism has not received much attention from these scholars, however (excepting Moretti). On the general reception of Tacitus in the period, see Stackelberg 1960; Etter 1966; Schellhase 1976.

[12] Guicciardini 1857, maxim CCC, 171; see Schellhase 1976, 95.

[13] Guicciardini 1857, maxim XVIII, 87; see Schellhase 1976, 96.

with Tacitus, from whom they managed to extract many useful precepts. This explains why Renaissance 'Machiavellianism' was replaced by the 'Tacitism' that dominated European political thinking from around 1580 until the middle of the seventeenth century.[14]

The conflation of Machiavelli's and Tacitus' thinking under the single heading *ragion di stato* (Reason of State) occurred in Giovanni Botero's influential *Della ragion di stato*, which was published in Venice in 1589. Having visited various European courts, Botero had been highly amazed, he wrote,

> il sentire tutto il dì mentovare Ragione di Stato, et in cotal materia citare hora Nicolò Machiavelli, hora Cornelio Tacito; quello, perche dà precetti appartenenti al governo, & al reggimento de' popoli; questo, perche esprime vivamente l'arti usate da Tiberio Cesare, e per conseguire, e per conservarsi nell'Imperio di Roma.[15]
>
> to hear the Reason of State mentioned all day long, and to hear Niccolò Machiavelli and Cornelius Tacitus quoted on this subject: the former for offering precepts regarding the government and control of the people, and the latter for describing so vividly the arts employed by Emperor Tiberius in both obtaining and keeping his domination of the Roman Empire.

Not only was *ragion di stato* evil, Botero maintained, but it simply did not work in practice, since the stability of any reign depends on a certain amount of mutual trust between the ruler and the people, and hence he attacked Tacitus as well as Machiavelli for offering dangerous advice to princes and for corrupting political life. The ancient historian had suddenly become a controversial figure.

The principles of Tacitism – here understood as the Machiavellian reading of Tacitus with the aim of providing rulers with practical precepts – was established in the *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* from 1594 by Scipione Ammirato, court historian to the Tuscan grand duke. As a good Catholic, Ammirato never mentions Machiavelli by name, though his book is, in fact, an apology for the Machiavellian rules, which are attributed to Tacitus. Ammirato's rhetorical move consists in subjecting the *ragion di stato* to religion, but since the two are incompatible, he virtually encourages princes to practise religious hypocrisy.[16] That Tacitus is mainly used to slip Machiavelli in by the back door is implied in Ammirato's title, which echoes the title of the former's book on Livy. It has been pointed out that the tendency among absolutist advisers to call their studies of Tacitus *discorsi* (discourses)

[14] Etter 1966, 1, 15; Schellhase 1976, 151.
[15] Botero 1589, dedication (unpaginated).
[16] Stackelberg 1960, 127.

in itself betrays their dependency on Machiavelli who had founded the genre of historical-political commentary.[17]

An alternative view of Tacitus and Machiavelli was introduced by the anti-absolutist writer Traiano Boccalini in his satire *De' ragguagli di Parnaso* (1612–13) as well as in his massive *Comentari sopra Cornelio Tacito*, on which he worked from around 1590 until his mysterious death in 1613. Boccalini agreed with Botero that princes' study of Tacitus was harmful, and he claimed, speaking out against Ammirato, that *ragion di stato* was "una legge utile a gli Stati, ma in tutto contraria alla legge d'Iddio, e de gli huomini" (a law useful for the states, but in every respect contrary to the law of God and of men).[18] However, since princes had become Tacitists (or Machiavellians) anyway, Boccalini found it better to teach their subjects to see through their deceits by providing them with Tacitus' "occhiali Politici" (political spectacles),[19] in effect using the princes' own weapon against them. Towards the end of his commentary, Boccalini issued this emphatic warning:

> Guardatevi dunque voi, che negotiate con i Principi da i concetti malitiosi, e dall'empiastro di morbide parole, perche quando dolcemente cantano, all'hora crudelmente incantano. L'interesse, la lingua loro muove, non la giustitia, ne l'amore del ben publico.
>
> Pochi arrivano ad intendergli, però che parlano in cifra. Guai à chi si ferma sù la superficie delle loro espressioni lavorate al torno, per ingannare i semplici, e per erudire i saputi. Chi ben misura il genio del Principe con il di lui interesse, non troverà molto difficile ad indovinare, quali sono i suoi fini & i disegni benche mascherati fra gli enigmi di speciose parole![20]

> You who negotiate with princes: beware of their wily conceits and of the plaster of their smooth words, for their sweet song is a cruel allurement. Their speech is driven by self-interest, not by justice and not by love of the public good.
>
> Few people get to understand what they say, for they speak in ciphers. Woe to him who stops at the surface of their utterances, which are adapted to deceive the simple and to instruct the knowledgeable by turn. The man who knows how to gauge the spirit and self-interest of the prince will not find it difficult to guess what his ends and plans are, although they are masked behind the enigmas of specious words!

Unlike Botero and Ammirato, Boccalini did not regard Tacitus (or, by implication, Machiavelli) exclusively as an adviser to rulers. He was "il vero

[17] Stackelberg 1960, 81, 83.
[18] Boccalini 1613, vol. 2, "*Ragguaglio LXXXVII*", 401.
[19] Boccalini 1613, vol. 2, "*Ragguaglio LXXI*", 341.
[20] Boccalini 1677, vol. 1, 93.

maestro degli huomini accorti" (the true teacher of shrewd men), whose lessons could be used in a cynical and evil way by princes and in a critical and healthy way by their subjects.[21] In the eyes of the Church, however, even this anti-authoritarian reading of Tacitus was essentially heretical, and Boccalini faced great dangers towards the end of his life. In 1611, therefore, he moved to Venice, also preferring the aristocratic republicanism of the Adriatic state to the absolutist monarchies found everywhere else on the peninsula. Here, too, it was impossible for him to get his controversial Tacitus commentary published, however, the Senate arguing – along the lines of Botero – that

> veramente della dottrina di Cornelio Tacito è stato rampollo il Macchiavelli et altri cattivi autori destruttori d'ogni politica virtù, i quali da quest'autore, come nelle semenze è la cagione degli arbori, et delle piante, hanno havuto la sua origine et il nascimento [...].[22]
>
> Machiavelli and other evil authors who have destroyed every political virtue are truly the descendants of the doctrine of Cornelius Tacitus, and they found their origin and birth in this author, just as the seeds are the cause of the trees and plants […].

Boccalini died in 1613, apparently poisoned by assassins sent from Rome. But though his commentaries did not appear in print before 1677 – in a clandestine and heavily abridged edition published in Geneva – he created the specifically Venetian brand of Tacitist historiography, with its emphasis on scepticism and the critique of power.[23] As Peter N. Miller says, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, too, is "written the way the best history was written in the Venice of the first half of the seventeenth century, and, as a result, it needs to be read as a Tacitist text."[24] This does not mean that the opera slavishly follows Tacitus' account in the *Annals*, nor that it is a piece of propaganda.[25] I will argue, however, that the aim of Busenello's drama was essentially the same as that of Boccalini's writings, i.e. to train the critical faculty of the public by encouraging them to behold the world through political spectacles, theatrical illusion serving as a metaphor for political deception.

In fact, the opera features no less than three Tacitist counsellors who all conspire against each other, striving to promote the interests of the competing parties. Arnalta, Poppea's nurse, echoes Boccalini in her insistence that

[21] Boccalini, *Ragguagli*, vol. 3, 207, quoted from Stackelberg 1960, 133.
[22] Quoted from Stackelberg 1960, 91.
[23] Fenlon & Miller 1992, 12–14. See also Holzer 1993, 82–83.
[24] Fenlon & Miller 1992, 20. See also Heller 1999, 55.
[25] Cf. the objection to this claim in Holzer 1993, 79–80, 83.

Poppea should mistrust the words of Nerone and his courtiers, and anticipate the vengeance of Ottavia. Ottavia's Nutrice, on the other hand, echoes Ammirato and similar absolutist advisers when insisting that the empress should secretly revenge herself on her faithless husband by taking a lover. Busenello subtly points to this connection by letting her allude both to the standard title of the princely manuals in Tacitism and to the Latin title of Procopius' *Secret History*, suggesting that a queen's 'secret history' will remain such:[26] "fa riflesso al mio *discorso*, / ch'ogni duol ti sarà gioia" (reflect on my discourse, and every sorrow will turn to joy) (288–89), she sings, later adding that her mistress needs to learn "della vendetta il principale *arcano*" (the chief secret of revenge) (307). It is worth considering the allegorical implications of the fact that the two nurses probably were sung by the same singer in 1643.[27] This might not only suggest that their two branches of Tacitism ultimately represent a single perspective, but also that the two characters share a secret history of their own: the spectators might ponder whether they are, in fact, one person, secretly supporting both teams and not taking sides before it is certain who will be Nerone's empress.

Seneca, too, echoes the absolutist advisers, his scene with Nerone featuring another reference to the Tacitist manuals when the emperor orders him to shut up: "Lascia i *discorsi* io voglio a modo mio" (Drop your discourses: I want it my way) (423). While Iain Fenlon and Peter N. Miller construed this scene as a struggle between brute force and Neostoic reason, Wendy Heller pointed out that Seneca's ideological frame of reference is actually *ragion di stato* here.[28] The ambiguity seems deliberate on the poet's part: the smooth-tongued courtier uses the word *ragione* four times in the scene (412, 430, 438, 459), glibly conflating the Tacitist and the Neostoic concepts of reason.[29] This semantic mobility probably implies a parody of Ammirato who indulged in a similar play on the different connotations of the word *ragione* in his attempts to invent moral alibis for an essentially amoral political practice.[30]

While Poppea, Ottavia and Nerone are all offered Tacitist advice by their various counsellors, they react differently, and they are partly characterized through the difference in their responses. Troubled by the notorious depravity of the dramatic action, scholars have long discussed which character, if any,

[26] Cf. Schneider 2012, 291.

[27] See Schneider 2012, 265–66.

[28] Fenlon & Miller 1992, 68–70. Heller 1999, 71–73. See also Rosand 1985, 58–64; Moretti 2010, 200–5.

[29] For a thorough discussion of Neostoic philosophy as a context for understanding *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, see Fenlon & Miller 1992, 21–31. However, their discussion lacks a clear distinction between the very different concepts of Neostoic reason and Tacitist *ragion di stato*.

[30] Stackelberg 1960, 125.

represents its voice of virtue, or at least the viewpoint of the audience; but perhaps a satisfactory answer has not been found because the question is not the right one. Perhaps we should not search for the most *virtuous* character, but for the most *skilful* character, i.e. for the one who best manages to project a virtuous image with the help of the joint principles of Tacitist statecraft and illusionistic stagecraft. By introducing the subversive perspective of the *Secret History* into the historical narrative of the *Annals*, Busenello suggests that even the most perspicacious sceptic among historians, i.e. Tacitus himself, might have been duped by appearances fabricated by crafty political minds. "What if," the opera seems to ask, "Nero and Poppaea were not quite as despicable in real life as Tacitus thought? Perhaps they were just less skilful politicians than Octavia, who has gone down in history as a paragon of virtue…"

The perspective of Boccalini's political spectacles might also affect our interpretation of the final scene, furthermore, in which Poppea is crowned as empress by the Consoli and Tribuni, and as the terrestrial Venus by Venere and Amore. Traditionally, scholars have pleaded either for a *moralistic* or for a *carnivalesque* reading. Supporters of the former suggest that the original audience was fully aware of the destiny of the historical lovers: the pregnant Poppaea died three years after her coronation when Nero allegedly kicked her belly in a fit of anger, and the emperor himself committed suicide another three years later when he was overthrown after alienating the Roman elite.[31] Supporters of the latter theory suggest that the ending should rather be regarded as a paradoxical encomium, or a comic reversal of the moral order, in the festive and playful spirit of the carnival season.[32] There is no reason to refute either of these interpretations, both of which are made possible by the allegorical structure of the drama, but it should be stressed that *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, despite frequent claims to the contrary, is not really an opera about the struggle between vice and virtue. Its central theme is the writing of history as a lesson in politics; and in the historiographical perspective Nero and Poppaea did not lose because they died violently but because they are remembered as some of the worst villains to have trod the earth. The opera suggests that the reason they are remembered this way is less their wicked actions than their unwillingness to conceal their real motives through the application of *ragion di stato*. After all, their actions in the drama are not more abominable than those of Ottone, Ottavia and Drusilla who also

[31] This interpretation was apparently introduced by Nino Pirrotta in "*Monteverdi's Poetic Choices*" (1968), in Pirrotta 1984, 316. It is also defended in Rosand 1985, 34–35; and Fenlon & Miller 1992, 92; but see Holzer 1993, 88.

[32] Interpretations along these lines are found in Carter 1997, 180–83; Ketterer 1998, 394–95; Muir 2007, 113–18.

plot the death of a rival for the sake of their self-interest. But because Seneca's death sentence is pronounced in public, whereas the assassination of Poppea is planned in private – as was, according to Procopius' *Secret History*, the assassination of Amalasuntha by Theodora – Nerone will go down in history as an emblem of villainy, whereas Ottavia will be remembered as an emblem of offended innocence.

Significantly, the operatic empress does not owe this triumph to her statecraft alone, i.e. to her skill at manipulating the other characters, but also to her stagecraft, i.e. to her skill at manipulating the audience by means of acting and singing. Yet her success is only potential, since sceptics among the spectators might remember Boccalini's admonition to remain mindful of the motives of princes and courtiers in order to perceive what lies beyond the "sweet song" of their cunning conceits. Ottavia scornfully refuses when the Nutrice encourages her to take a lover, and when Seneca encourages her to rejoice in her misfortune, since this will, posthumously, adorn her with the eternal lustre of virtue. But are her refusals sincere? In the 1643 production, arguably, the opera suggested that the real reason the epitaph of the historical Octavia was more virtuous than Nero's might be that she, 'in fact', did heed Seneca's advice, but without telling anyone. She concealed her emotions in the manner of a true Tacitist, "in *tacit*urne angoscie" (taciturn anguish) (272). In order to explain this point, however, we must turn to the portrayal of the role by Anna Renzi.

The serpent, the mirror and the woman with two faces

In an earlier article about the 1643 production of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, I first proposed that the characters of Virtù, Ottavia and Drusilla most likely were performed as a triple role by Anna Renzi who is known to have portrayed Ottavia. My arguments can be summarized as follows:[33]

a. During the first thirty years of Venetian opera (1637–68), productions apparently featured up to thirteen singers, including up to four women. However, the first production known to have featured more than two women was mounted in 1648, whereas *L'incoronazione di Poppea* features three characters that would seem to call for a female performer: Poppea, Ottavia and Drusilla. The remaining female characters (nurses, goddesses, minor characters) could have been performed by castratos.

b. As the leading female singer of the time, Anna Renzi would probably have required to be at least as much on stage as Anna di Valerio who sang Poppea. However, Ottavia's role is not only considerably smaller

[33] For the extended argument, see Schneider 2012.

than Poppea's; it is half the size of the twelve other roles Renzi is known to have sung during her career.

c. Renzi was known as an operatic quick-change artist, her other roles involving violent contrasts in dramatic mood, mainly playing on contrasts between shrewdness and simplicity, and between tragedy and comedy (occasioned by feigned madness, disguises, or other kinds of deception); this corresponds to extreme contrasts in musical style and vocal tessitura. Furthermore, her other characters were invariably united with one of the male leads in the end, which would fit the doubling of Ottavia and Drusilla.[34]

d. A number of lines in the libretto are best explained as hidden references to the doubling, often in the form of internal jokes.

e. Some of the poems describing Renzi's performance in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* refer to characteristics of her role that are incompatible with Ottavia's character but would fit that of Drusilla.

f. The expansion of Ottavia's role in the 1651 Naples production suggests that the role was too small for a leading singer originally. Furthermore, the inserted music blurs the original difference between Ottavia's and Drusilla's musical styles, suggesting that an emphatic contrast between the two characters was no longer deemed necessary.[35]

In 1643, the judicious among the spectators might have seen the doubling not merely as an occasion for virtuoso acting in contrasting roles, though it was certainly also that; they could have seen Drusilla as being the empress in disguise. I will discuss this possibility in depth in what follows. I have previously described the quick-change act in Act Two – when Anna Renzi would have left the stage as Ottavia only to re-enter as Drusilla ten measures later – as probably the supreme feat of her double performance.[36] But the transformation would only have been possible if Renzi wore Ottavia's costume on top of Drusilla's. If we keep this in mind, it emerges that the text contains a number of references to the costume of the empress. In the morning after Nerone has left Poppea's palace, she sings that hope is "il genio lusingando, / e mi circondi in tanto / di regio sì, ma imaginario manto" (flattering my spirit while shrouding me in a royal yet imaginary mantle) (196–99). In some lines that were only set to music in the Naples version she

[34] Heller has also noted the curious absence, in Ottavia's case, of "the pairing with an appropriate man that was the birthright of every Venetian operatic heroine" (Heller 2003, 138).

[35] Heller has also drawn attention to Ottavia's "chaste and austere musical representation – an assiduous avoidance of sonorous singing – that contrasts strikingly with […] the florid melodiousness that characterizes the exuberant Drusilla" (Heller 2003, 139).

[36] Schneider 2012, 279–80.

adds: "S'a tue promesse io credo, / già in capo ho le corone" (if I believe your promises, the crown is already on my head) (202–3). Reference to the empress' mantle and crown recurs in Seneca's first soliloquy, in which he reflects that

> Le porpore[37] regali e imperatrici,
> d'acute spine e triboli conteste
> sotto forma di veste,
> sono il martirio a' prencipi infelici;
> le corone eminenti
> servono solo a indiademar tormenti.
> Delle regie grandezze
> Si veggono le pompe e gli splendori,
> ma stan sempre invisibili i dolori.

> The royal and imperial mantles, woven with sharp thorns and caltrop thistles, are the affliction of unhappy princes in the shape of clothes; the eminent crowns serve merely to adorn torments. People see the pomp and splendour of royal greatness, but the pains always remain invisible. (387–95)

In the allegorical world of the seventeenth-century stage, the tangible and the abstract were closely linked, so Ottavia probably wore a purple mantle and a crown, both of which the Consoli and Tribuni would then bestow on Poppea in the coronation scene. The hopes of the new empress then finally materialized as she, in one sense, assumed the iconic identity of her predecessor. While Seneca believes that Ottavia's mantle and crown conceal invisible pains, Ottavia herself, repenting of her impious demand that Jupiter strike Nerone with lightning, implies in a similar way, hinting at the layered nature of her identity, that "errò la superficie, il fondo è pio, / innocente fu il cor, peccò la lingua" (my surface erred, but my depth is pious; my heart was innocent, but my tongue sinned) (275–76). Whether Ottavia's surface conceals piety, pain or something else on a moral level, on the theatrical level it conceals Drusilla.

In what follows, I will develop this interpretation by centring on the allegorical combination of three key metaphors that connect the two characters: the serpent, the mirror and the woman with two faces. The combination of exactly these metaphors, which may serve as a key to Renzi's triple character, is found in Cesare Ripa's influential emblem book *Iconologia*, published in seven editions between 1593 and 1630. Ripa suggests the following depiction of the virtue of Prudence (*Prudenza*):

[37] According to Florio 1611, one of the meanings of *pórpora* is "a Kings coronation, robe [sic] or mantle."

DONNA, con due faccie, & che si specchi, tenendo un Serpe avvolto ad un braccio.

Le due Faccie, significano, che la Prudenza è una cognitione vera, & certa, la quale ordina ciò che si deve fare, & nasce dalla consideratione delle cose passate, & delle future insieme.

L'eccellenza di questa virtù è tanto importante, che per essa si rammentano le cose passate, si ordinano le presenti, & si prevedono le future. Onde l'huomo, che n'è senza, non sà racquistare quello, che hà perduto; nè conservare quello, che possiede; nè cercare quello che aspetta.

Lo Specchiarsi, significa la cognitione di se medesimo, non potendo alcuno regolare le sue attioni, se i proprii difetti non conosce.

Il Serpe, quando è combattuto, oppone tutto il corpo alle percosse, armandosi la testa con molti giri: & ci dà ad intendere, che per la virtù, che è quasi il nostro capo, & la nostra perfettione, debbiamo opporre à' colpi di Fortuna tutte l'altre nostre cose, quantunque care: & questa è la vera prudenza. Però si dice nella Sacra Scrittura: *Estote prudentes sicut Serpentes*.[38]

A woman with two faces, who looks in a mirror while holding a serpent wrapped around one arm.

The two faces imply that Prudence is a true and certain knowledge, which prescribes what is to be done and is born out of a joint consideration of past and future things.

It is most important to excel in this virtue, for it is thus that past things are remembered, present things are directed, and future things anticipated. Therefore, the man who has none cannot recover what he has lost, nor preserve what he possesses, nor find what he waits for.

Looking in a mirror implies knowledge of oneself, for nobody can control his actions if he does not know his own flaws.

A struggling serpent opposes blows with its whole body, arming its head with many turns, and lets us understand that we must oppose the strokes of Fortune with all that which we possess, however dear to us it may be, since this virtue is almost our head and our perfection: this is indeed true Prudence. Therefore, it says in the Holy Scriptures: "Be wise as serpents".

In his theatricalization of Ripa's allegory, Busenello retained the concrete images but gave each of them a slightly different meaning, which points to theatre as illusion and deception. Thus, while Ripa used the two faces of Prudence to suggest that the prudent person simultaneously remembers the past and anticipates the future, Busenello uses the image to suggest that the prudent person is 'two-faced' (*a due facce*), in the sense of double-dealing –

[38] Ripa 1593, 224.

or doubling. The two-faced woman is the actress who plays both the tragic character of Ottavia and the comic character of Drusilla, but it might also refer to Ottavia disguising herself as Drusilla.

Secondly, while Ripa uses the serpent to suggest that the prudent person twists and bends to avoid the blows of fortune, Busenello uses the image to suggest that the prudent person 'sloughs of her skin', in the sense of changing her identity, literally by pulling off her clothes, or her costume (*spogliarsi*). The serpent is Drusilla who sloughs off her dress when Ottone turns into her, but it might also refer to Ottavia sloughing off her costume when she turns into Drusilla. This duplicitous conception of the serpent is barely implied by Ripa who quotes the passage in the Gospel of Matthew where Christ teaches his disciples how to act in adversity:

> Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.[39]

In the Vulgate translation, the wise serpents are *prudentes*, and the harmless doves *simplices*, a combination possibly parodied in that of the prudent Ottavia and the seemingly simple Drusilla who indeed delivers an inspired testimony when brought before her king for the sake of her love, successfully uniting the qualities of the serpent and the dove. In Busenello's libretto, the image of the serpent (*serpente* or *serpe*) occurs three times in the text. It is introduced by Arnalta at the beginning of the opera: "Mira, mira Poppea, / dove il prato è più ameno e dilettoso, / stassi il serpente ascoso" (Look, look, Poppaea: where the meadow is most pleasant and delightful, the serpent lies in wait) (231–33). Poppea, however, fails to take account of this advice and of the possibility that Drusilla, one of her *confidenti* (trusty friends) (1195) – rather than Ottavia – might be the innocent-looking meadow in which she least expects an attack. A similar lack of precaution is displayed by Ottone in his soliloquy at the end of the act when he first considers killing Poppea in order to forestall his own elimination: "Vo' prevenir costei / col ferro o col veleno. / Non mi vuo' più nutrire il serpe in seno" (I will prevent her from doing it, with my sword or with venom; I will no longer nourish a serpent in my bosom) (620–22). Ottone identifies Poppea with the venomous serpent, but he fails, like Poppea herself, to take account of the possibility that the

[39] *King James Bible* 1611, Matthew X.16–20.

innocent-looking Drusilla, who now makes her first entrance, might be the serpent, i.e. Ottavia having sloughed off her purple mantle and crown. The last occurrence of the metaphor is when Ottone enters Poppea's garden, wearing Drusilla's dress and holding a sword:

> Eccomi trasformato
> d'Ottone in Drusilla,
> no, non d'Ottone in Drusilla,
> ma d'uomo in serpe, al cui veleno e rabbia
> non vide il mondo e non vedrà simile.

> Look at me, transformed from Otho into Drusilla; no, not from Otho into Drusilla but from a man into a serpent the like of whose venom and rage the world has neither seen nor ever will see. (1235–38)

The word *trasformato* contains a deep theatrical truth, for if Drusilla is merely a costume, has Ottone donning that costume not indeed been transformed into Drusilla, just as Poppea donning Ottavia's mantle and crown is later transformed into the empress? Monteverdi has completed the transformation by letting Ottone 'don' Drusilla's musical style as well at the beginning of his soliloquy; his first two lines are set as one of her typical dance-like and melismatic airs, before he drops into his own tormented and wavering recitative style, as he comes close to realizing that he has now himself become the serpent he thought Poppea was, and that she thought Ottavia was, but who was always the sweet and tender Drusilla.

Let us now turn to the last of the three images, the mirror (*specchio*), or the act of mirroring (*specchiare*). While Ripa uses this image to suggest that the prudent person knows himself, Busenello uses it to suggest that the prudent person is a reflective surface (*superficie*) that mirrors the gaze of the onlookers, or spectators, in the sense of manipulating their visual-emotional perception, by letting them see what she wants them to see. The image occurs twice in the text. In Act One, Ottavia is tormented by the thought of Nerone nestling in Poppea's arms, observing that

> il frequente cader de' pianti miei
> pur va quasi formando
> un diluvio di specchi in cui tu miri
> dentro alle tue delizie i miei martiri.

> the frequent dropping of my tears will form, as it were, a flood of mirrors, in which you may behold my afflictions within your delights. (260–63)

And in Act Three Drusilla addresses these words to the audience before confessing to the attempted murder of Poppea: "O voi ch'al mondo vi chiamate amici, / deh specchiatevi in me: / questi del vero amico son gli

uffici" (O you who call yourselves friends in this world: ah, mirror yourselves in me! These are the duties of the true friend) (1349–51). The mirror is the reflecting surface that projects the image of Ottavia, the tragically wronged wife, and that of Drusilla, the tragically wronged friend, into the mind of the dewy-eyed onlooker; but it might also refer to the act of theatrical playing itself, mirroring the vices and virtues of the spectator rather than those of the imagined characters. Since neither the mirror image nor the dramatic character has any identity of its own, they can deceive us, and so Ottavia and Drusilla might deceive the spectators in the auditorium, just as they arguably manage to deceive Nerone, the onstage spectator.

The emblematic identification of Anna Renzi's triple role with the virtue of Prudence serves as a hint as to which virtue exactly is represented by the figure of Virtù in the prologue, which character Anna Renzi probably also portrayed. The virtue of Prudence itself is only referred to once, and negatively, viz. when Virtù calls Fortuna "rea chimera delle genti, / fatta dea degli'imprudenti" (blameful chimaera of mankind, made a goddess by the imprudent) (26–27). In the libretto, however, the concept 'caution' (*cautela*) is used synonymously with 'prudence', specifically in relation to the assassination plot. "Discorro il modo / più cauto e più sicuro / d'una impresa sì grande" (I am considering the most cautious and safe procedure for such a great enterprise) (1033–35), Ottone explains to Ottavia when she tells him to kill Poppea, the verb *discorrere* echoing the standard titles of the Tacitist *discorsi* in political prudence. Like a mirror image, Drusilla reflects his concern two scenes later when he confides in her about Ottavia's order: "ma circospetto va, cauto procedi" (but be circumspect; proceed cautiously) (1151), she tells him. Yet in stark and significant contrast to her own call for caution in Act Two, Drusilla maintains after her capture by Arnalta and the Littori in Act Three that "credula troppo e troppo incauta fui" (I was too credulous and too incautious) (1324). As spectators, we may not be convinced by Drusilla's profession of incautious (imprudent) credulity; but it convinces Nerone, which is ultimately what matters to her.

Like the cardinal virtue of Prudence, that of Fortitude (*fortezza*) is sometimes associated with Drusilla in the libretto; but this association, too, abounds in ambiguity. The latter virtue is referred to three times and always in conjunction with the ideal of 'constancy' (*costanza*), Busenello apparently implying that these concepts are to be regarded as synonymous within the drama, just as 'prudence' and 'caution' are synonyms. In Act One, Seneca tells Ottavia that

> Tu, dal destin colpita
> produci a te medesma alti splendori
> di vigor, di fortezza,

glorie maggiori assai che la bellezza.
[...]
Ma la virtù costante
usa a bravar le stelle, il fato e'l caso,
giamai non vede occaso.

> Struck by destiny, you yourself create splendid displays of strength and fortitude, glories far greater than beauty. […] But the sun never sets on constant virtue, wont to outplay the stars, fate and chance. (337–40, 345–47).

Shortly after he has given his advice to the seemingly sceptical empress, Seneca learns of his imminent death from Pallade and envisions his own splendid display of virtue in the face of adversity: "Venga la morte pur: costante e forte / vincerò gli accidenti e le paure" (Let death come: with constancy and fortitude I shall triumph over chance and fears) (400–1). Finally, when Drusilla – having silently followed the advice Seneca gave Ottavia in Act One – has impressed the gullible Nerone with what he thinks are her "salutifere bugie" (salutary lies) (1414) in Act Three, the emperor pardons her with a final praise of the virtue:

vivi alla fama della mia clemenza,
vivi alla gloria della tua fortezza,
e sia del sesso tuo nel secol nostro
la tua costanza un adorabil mostro.

> live in the fame of my clemency, live in the glory of your fortitude, and may your constancy serve as a revered example for your sex throughout our age. (1415–18)

The noun *mostro* occurs twice in the drama, both times to describe Drusilla: Nerone uses the word in the sense of 'example', whereas Arnalta chasing the supposed Drusilla out of Poppea's garden uses it in the sense of 'monster' (1288). Given the two-faced nature of Anna Renzi's role, Nerone's praise of Drusilla as "un adorato mostro" of constancy emerges as no less ironical than her own avowal of incaution.[40]

Neostoicism versus Machiavellianism

In Busenello's libretto, the above-mentioned mirrors of Ottavia and Drusilla also refer to two very different literary works, both of which belong to the didactic genre known as the 'mirrors for princes' (*specula principum*). The first of these is Seneca's essay *On Mercy* (c. 55–56), in which the dedication to Nero opens with Seneca's stated intent "modo speculi vice fungerer et te

[40] On the perception of courtiers as 'two-faced' among Venetian intellectuals, see Heller 1999, 62.

tibi ostenderem perventurum ad voluptatem maximam omnium" (to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror, and thus reveal you to yourself as one destined to attain to the greatest of all pleasures).[41] Seneca's moral essays were an important inspiration for the Neostoic movement founded by the Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius in the late sixteenth century, which gave special prominence to the virtue of Fortitude, or constancy, as implied by the title of Lipsius' influential philosophical work *On Constancy, Especially in Times of Public Evils* (1583–84). Combining Senecan Stoicism with Christian ethics, Lipsius advocated freedom from the emotions, submission to the will of God and patience when fortune strikes.

The second 'mirror for princes' was Machiavelli's *Il principe*, along with the treatises of his Tacitist followers. "Ne luogo alcuno è, dove più manifestamente si scorga la perfezione, ò mancamento di chi governa, che nello specchio dell'istoria" (Nor can the perfection or failings of rulers anywhere be descried more manifestly than in the mirror of history), as Scipione Ammirato wrote in the introduction to his *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito*.[42] In contrast to Seneca and the Neostoics, Machiavelli and the Tacitists favoured the virtue of Prudence, divesting the word *virtù* entirely of its moral content and using it in the sense of 'skill' or 'ability'. Machiavelli was of the opinion that fortune only governs half of the world, leaving the other half to be governed by our free will.[43] The prince who relies entirely on fortune is lost when it changes, so in order to constrain its ravages, he needs two things: virtue, i.e. ability or prudence, and opportunity, success depending on his ability to use opportunities to his advantage.[44] It is therefore inaccurate to describe Poppea as a Machiavellian character, as some scholars have done.[45] In fact, her actions are invariably imprudent: she believes in the unchanging benevolence of fortune; she relies on the passions of the unpredictable Nerone; she fails to heed the sound advice given by Arnalta;

[41] Seneca, "*De clementia*", in Seneca 1928, 356–57.
[42] Ammirato 1598, "*Proemio*" (unpaginated).
[43] Machiavelli 1962, 121.
[44] Machiavelli 1962, 27.
[45] Holzer 1993, 88; Moretti 2010, 205–9. In fact, the latter's persuasive suggestion that Ottavia's and Ottone's conspiracy draws inspiration from Machiavelli's analysis of Tacitus' account of the Pisonian conspiracy against Nero in the *Discorsi sopra la deca di Tito Livio* – including the advice that the prudent conspirator communicates with no one – might have suggested to him that the truly Machiavellian character in the opera is Ottavia, not Poppea; see Moretti 2010, 190–94. Others have observed, too, that Poppea, "who trusted her future to appearances, was indeed putting herself at the mercy of Fortune and circumstances" (Fenlon & Miller 1992, 53). Carter's assertion that "Fortuna does not do badly in the opera", whereas "Virtù certainly takes a fall", which hardly fits with the submission of *both* goddesses to Amore in the prologue (Carter 2002, 272–73), relies on the premise that the imperial crown, and not secret revenge or a virtuous reputation, is Ottavia's objective.

she dangerously alienates the spurned Ottone; and she trusts the unreliable Drusilla to visit her when she is most vulnerable. Significantly, even Amore describes her as "l'incauta" (the incautious one) (1212), Busenello setting her imprudence off against the prudence of her enemies. If we see Drusilla and Ottavia as one joint character, they publicly suffer the outrages of fortune by projecting an image of fortitude and constancy while they secretly take arms against them by acting with prudence and caution. In this way, the two-faced woman emerges as a theatricalized, allegorical mirror for princes, conflating the didactic mirrors of Stoics and Machiavellians along with their key virtues.

Let us now go through the opera while we adopt the viewpoint that Virtù, Ottavia and Drusilla are not three separate characters, but one, appearing under various guises. In the prologue, Fortuna says to Virtù: "Già regina, or plebea, che per comprarti / gl'alimenti e le vesti / i privilegi e i titoli vendesti" (Formerly a queen, now a plebeian, you sold your privileges and titles to buy your nourishment and clothes) (10–12). The lost royal privileges and titles are those of the deposed empress, which Ottavia exchanges for the clothes (*vesti*) of Drusilla and for the nourishment (*alimenti*) of revenge. Notably, Ottavia adopts the noun *alimento* in Act Two in a speech that was only set to music in the Naples version:

> la vendetta è un cibo
> che col sangue inimico si condisce.
> Della spenta Poppea su 'l monumento
> quasi a felice mensa
> prenderò così nobile *alimento*.
>
> revenge is a sustenance that one sauces with the blood of one's enemy. As if at a heavenly banquet, I shall consume this noble nourishment on the tomb of the deceased Poppaea. (1066–70)

After the prologue, Virtù becomes Ottavia who first listens to the advice of the Nutrice (the Tacitist mirror for princes) who suggests that the best way of taking revenge on the unfaithful Nerone is to take a lover. Next, she listens to the advice of Seneca (the Neostoic mirror for princes) who suggests that the admiration aroused by the display of fortitude in adversity compensates for suffering. Sloughing off her imperial mantle and thus transforming herself into Drusilla, Ottavia then chooses Ottone as the tool of her revenge. Prudently, 'Drusilla' makes her move in the exact moment he has been spurned by Poppea and therefore is most likely to let himself be used and shaped according to her self-interest. "A te di quanto son, / bellissima donzella, / or fo libero don" (I hereby make a free gift to you of everything that I am, fairest maiden) (636–38), Ottone promises, and this is exactly what Ottavia (here as Drusilla) wants to hear.

In Act Two, Ottone repents of his murderous thoughts, however: "Cambiatemi quest'anima deforme, / datemi un altro spirto meno impuro" (Change this deformed soul of mine; give me another spirit less impure) (996–97), he prays to the gods. Now it is Ottavia herself who makes her calculated entrance at the right moment. She exacts from him a promise to kill Poppea and suggests that he change not his soul for a purer one, but his clothes for those of a woman.[46] Sloughing off her mantle once more, Ottavia then re-enters as Drusilla a moment later, offering him "l'anima in pegno e la mia fede" (my soul and my faith) (1133), and assuring him that "E le vesti e le vene / ti darò volontieri" (I will willingly give you my clothes and my blood) (1149–50). Here she alludes to his change of clothes as indeed a change of souls, though not necessarily to a purer one, as Ottone apparently hoped. Assuming that Drusilla is helping him when offering him her clothes and her identity, he is unaware that it is, in fact, *he* who is forced to keep the promise he made to her in Act One when offering to make a "free gift" to her of "everything that I am". At the same, time Drusilla helps him keep the promise he made to Ottavia in the previous scene when he agreed to remove Poppea: Ottone's two promises are reflections of each other, like the women to which they are made.

At the end of the opera, after Drusilla and Ottone have tricked Nerone into pardoning them for their attempted murder of his beloved,[47] the two-faced woman makes two final exits from the stage. First she makes her Machiavellian-Tacitist exit, as Drusilla, following the advice of the Nutrice, prudently taking revenge on her husband when receiving his solemn permission to go into a laughter-filled exile with her lover.[48] Then she makes

[46] Ottavia's decision to order the assassination of Poppea – after her apparent rejection of the Nutrice's and Seneca's advice in Act One – has puzzled scholars. According to Carter, "Ottavia's sudden shift may be necessary for the resolution of the plot, but it does leave us nonplussed" (Carter 2002, 291). Heller refers to Ottavia's "seemingly inexplicable shift from victim to villainess as she uncharacteristically (and ahistorically) persuades Ottone to murder Poppea" (Heller 2003, 170). If we accept that Drusilla is Ottavia in disguise, however, the empress' order emerges as a logical consequence of intervening events.

[47] Fenlon's view of Drusilla as "the female counterpart of Seneca" and as "the counterweight to the inconstancy of both Poppea and Ottavia" (Fenlon & Miller 1992, 87) has been rejected by several scholars. As Carter notes, Drusilla is clearly lying when describing herself as innocent in the attempted murder of Poppea (Carter 1997, 178). However, his description of Nerone's clemency as "a surprising exemplar of (good) royal behaviour" (Carter 2002, 274) misses the point that the emperor is fooled by Ottone and Drusilla when accepting the former's claim that a remorse-ridden life is worse than death, and the latter's claim that she had no hand in the attempted murder.

[48] Interestingly, though Heller believes that Ottavia fails to learn the lesson of the Nutrice "precisely as intended", she notes that her adoption of the Nutrice's key (D) in her initial response to her proposal "would seem to indicate that she briefly considers the advice"; and

her Senecan-Neostoic exit, as Ottavia, following the advice of Seneca, creating an appropriate epitaph for herself through her display of fortitude as she claims to go into a tear-filled exile.[49] According to the 1643 scenario, Ottavia appeared "deposto l'habito Imperiale" (divested of her imperial attire) in this scene.[50] But if she was no longer wearing Drusilla's costume beneath the purple mantle, what was she then wearing after having sloughed off her skin one last time? We cannot know, but Benedetto Ferrari seems to refer to the ambiguity of the character Anna Renzi was representing in this moment when he wrote, picking up an image used to describe Drusilla earlier in the drama:

> Non è Ottavia, che lagrime diffonde
> Esule, esposta à le spumose arene;
> È un *mostro*, che con note alte, e profonde
> Acrescer va lo stuol de le Sirene.
>
> It is not Octavia who sheds her tears, exiled, exposed on foamy sands; it is a *monster* which, with notes high and deep, enhances the Sirens' flock.[51]

Alternative facts

With his publication of Procopius' *Secret History*, Nicolò Alemanni had suggested to Italian readers that the purple mantle of the saintly Empress Theodora apparently concealed licentious and murderous intentions that nobody had suspected. In his dramatic adaptation of Tacitus' *Annals*, Busenello then suggested that the purple mantle of the equally saintly Empress Octavia might potentially have concealed similar corruption. This

"while she rejects the Nutrice's teachings on sexual pleasure, the lesson on revenge may well have found its mark" (Heller 2003, 167–68).

[49] On the juxtaposition of the two 'exiles', see Schneider 2012, 283–84. Notably, Holzer observes that Ottavia's speech echoes Seneca's *Consolatio ad Helviam*, written during his own exile (Holzer 1993, 91). In Heller's opinion, however, Ottavia "*will* die at the hands of Nerone", and despite Busenello's poetic licences, "history ultimately wins" (Heller 2003, 153). Here, it is taken for granted that the spectators will project their awareness of the execution of the historical Octavia onto the opera, though neither the libretto itself nor the poems written in response to the 1643 production support such a reading. Notably, while Heller assumes that Ottavia rejects Seneca's advice just as she rejects the Nutrice's, this "seems particularly ironic when read against the backdrop of history: the historical Octavia, after all, did precisely what Seneca advised" (Heller 2003, 168). In my reading of the opera, I argue that Ottavia indeed follows Seneca's advice. However, I would agree when Heller observes that Ottavia's final lament – in contrast to the standard laments of operatic heroines – "is in some respects a public utterance" (Heller 2003, 173).

[50] "*Scenario*", in Rosand 2007, 396.

[51] Benedetto Ferrari, "*Per la Signora Anna Renzi romana insigne cantatrice rappresentante Ottavia ripudiata, e comessa all'onde entr'uno schifo*", in Strozzi 1644, 28. Translation quoted from Schneider 2012, 249.

'secret history', however, would only be visible to the spectators who beheld the stage through political spectacles, i.e. to those who know "how to gauge the spirit and self-interest of the prince". The natural inference to be made from the fact that Ottavia is unhappy as Nerone's empress is that she is perfectly willing to leave her crown to Poppea if her historical reputation remains spotless.

While this is the concrete secret history of Busenello's and Monteverdi's opera, its general theme is not the relative viciousness of the historical figures who populate it. *L'incoronazione di Poppea* is an operatic history drama about the very unreliability of political narratives, in which ancient history serves as a mirror for contemporary politics. Rulers who manipulate facts in order to achieve their personal ends are not only a modern phenomenon. Awareness of the necessity of distinguishing between seeming and being in political communication goes back at least to Machiavelli who maintained that, although a prince does not need to possess the qualities of piety, honesty, humanity, integrity and religion, "è bene necessario parere di averle" (it is most necessary that he seems to possess them).[52] Renaissance writers were aware that the ruler's successful maintenance of this pretence depended on his control of propaganda. The same year that saw the publication of *Il principe*, 1532, also saw the publication of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, and the following lines may well have served as one of the inspirations for Busenello's treatment of Nero:

> Nessun sapria se Neron fosse ingiusto,
> Né sua fama saria forse men buona,
> Avesse avuto e terra e ciel nimici,
> Se gli scrittor sapea tenersi amici.[53]

> No one would know if Nero was unjust, nor would his reputation perhaps be less good, and nor would earth and heaven have been his enemies if he had understood how to stay friends with writers.

Unlike Nero, Octavia stayed friends with Seneca, the celebrated writer who was thought to have immortalized her in the historical tragedy *Octavia*, one of the main literary sources of the libretto.[54] This might be the reason why she saved her reputation, the libretto playfully suggests, though her virtuousness might well have been illusory. To the seventeenth century, no medium or art form was considered better suited to communicate and disclose political illusionism than the theatre, which epitomizes the difficulty, or even the impossibility, of distinguishing between being and seeming. As Jan Kott

[52] Machiavelli 1962, 87.
[53] Ariosto 1913, XXXV.26.
[54] Cf. Schneider 2012, 285–88.

observed, "real tears and feigned emotions are the very nature of acting";[55] hence there is no way of telling where the actor (the tears) stops and the character (the emotions) begins, which is particularly evident when the actor performs more than one character within the same show. As operagoers, we want to be moved and seduced; we are naturally inclined to see our own emotions reflected in those of the operatic character. But *L'incoronazione di Poppea* repeatedly reminds us that the character on stage is but an image, a disguise, an illusion, which has been created with the sole purpose of moving, seducing, manipulating us. This process of manipulation is analogous to the way we are being manipulated by rulers and politicians beyond the safe confines of the theatrical space – and for more sinister reasons. The real tears of the feigned character mirror the emotions of the spectator; but by subtly reminding us that what we behold is a mere reflection, and by allowing us to see ourselves being manipulated emotionally, the spectacle offers instruction to the mind, encouraging us to always think critically.

[55] Kott 1984, 212.

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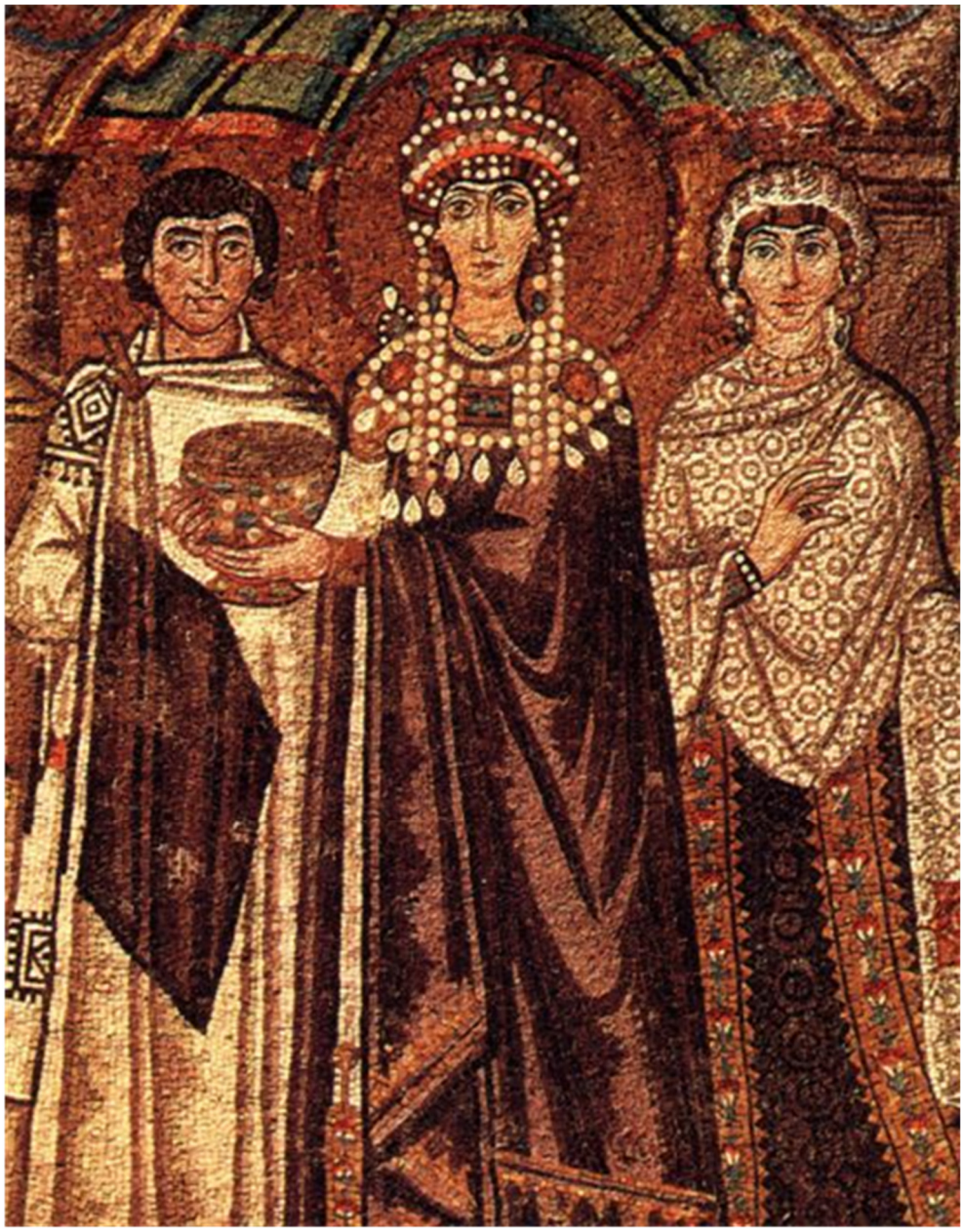

Fig. 1

Empress Theodora, mosaic panel in the Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna (547), Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

Event and Recurrence:

On the Representation of Astronomical and Historical Time in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

By Christian Dahl

Departing from Reinhardt Koselleck's theory of historical time my paper investigates how Shakespeare represents famous events from the fall of the Roman Republic within a structure of recursivity. Julius Caesar *(1599) is a history play which – in a manner typical of the genre – seeks to reduce an extended span of historical time to a linear narrative of decisive key events, but at the same time Shakespeare goes at length in this play to integrate these events within a cyclic structure of time through numerous references to the Julian calendar, to Roman holidays and to the hours of the day. These references are instanced by a widespread confusion among the dramatis personae concerning date and time – a curiosity that scholars explain by reference to the rivalry in Shakespeare's own time between Catholics and Protestants concerning the old Julian and the new Gregorian calendar. My paper will discuss the play's focus on the calendar as an expression of order that serves both historical and political purposes.*

Among the vast and heterogeneous corpus of historical drama from the renaissance, William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599) stands out as one of the few plays, which have regularly been both read and staged since its likely first performance at the opening of the Globe Theatre in London 1599. Roman history was a popular topic in 16th and 17th century historical drama, and *Julius Caesar* belongs to a whole group of Roman plays in Shakespeare's works that were inspired by Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch (these include *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* but not the historical fictions of *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline*). Roman plays were not only popular in Shakespeare's London, but in all parts of Europe where theatre was rising, which attests to the era's remarkable interest in ancient history.

One of the attractions of history plays was that they could imitate history in a way that would allow early modern theatregoers to imagine that they had direct access to the past. The poet John Weever aptly captured Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* as a vantage point to ancient history from where the Globe's spectators could imagine themselves as Romans at the Capitol:

> The many-headed multitude were drawne
> By *Brutus'* speach, that *Caesar* was ambitious.
> When eloquent *Mark Antonie* had showne
> His vertues, who but *Brutus* then was vicious?[1]

In a similar vein another writer, Leonard Digges, later praised Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* as a "ravishing" immersion into Roman history that was unlike anything other playwrights had yet achieved:

> So have I seene, when Cesar would appeare,
> And on the Stage at halfe-sword parley were,
> Brutus and Cassius: oh how the Audience
> Were ravish'd, with what wonder they went thence;[2]

What theatre gave spectators like Weever and Digges was a perceptible experience of history, something that was sensed with the eyes and ears, as if witnessed directly, without the mediation of a chronicler. However, in so far as we can talk of historical experience in theatre, it is important to distinguish between primary experiences, which appear as singular, and secondary experiences, which are experienced as recursive. It is quite likely that the ancient Romans who first witnessed the orations of Brutus and Mark Antony after the murder of Caesar perceived these events as surprising and unique. Rigorist historians sometimes tend to reserve the notion of historical experience only for those who witness historical events at first hand. However, experiences emerge not only when they are first made, but also when they are repeated, collected and shared for instance by historians or poets. For better or worse, the presumption (fundamental to humanist historiography in the 16th century) that we can learn from history is based on this condition. As Reinhart Koselleck has pointed out in an essay on historical experience:

> Experiences are singular, when they are made, but even so repeatable, when they are collected. As such every history that is constituted on experience and can be deduced from it, has a double aspect. Singular and even surprising events evoke experiences and call forth (hi)stories (*Geschichten*) but even so will accumulated experiences help to structure (hi)stories (*Geschichten*) at mid-distance.[3]

[1] John Weever: *The mirror of martyrs, or The life and death of that thrice valiant capitaine, and most godly martyre Sir Iohn Old-castle knight Lord Cobham*. London: Printed by V[alentine] S[immes] for William Wood, 1601, p. A3.

[2] Digges' "Eulogy" was first printed in the Second Folio edition of Shakespeare's collected works (1632). Quotations from *Julius Caesar* are from David Daniell's edition of *The Arden Shakespeare* (1998).

[3] Koselleck 2000, 27. My translation.

According to Koselleck this double structure of experience explains why the axiom of recursion has been so fundamental for historians, not least in antiquity and the renaissance.[4] Exemplary in this respect is Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, whose popularity in Shakespeare's time owed to its fulfilment of the Ciceronian doctrine of *historia magistra vitae*, history as a teacher for future generations.

But since events can both be experienced as singular and recursive, Koselleck argues that the axiom of recursion must be complemented with an axiom of singularity. However obsessed renaissance historians were with historical recurrence, the remarkable rise in historical interest that accompanied early modernity owed, as Daniel Woolf has pointed out, to a widespread and deep-felt sense of historical change: history was not just a reservoir of past and repeatable experience, but it also became a means to explore novelty and change.[5] Progressive historians of the 18th and 19th century would later privilege singular events over recursion. Yet, as Koselleck points out, singularity and recursion are not exclusive but complementary of one another, and it is therefore often misleading to distinguish between circular and linear historiographies as the discussion of Shakespeare's concept of history tends to do.[6] Just as even the progressive historians of the 19th century, who envisaged the course of history as an evolution of monumental events, had to accept that even the most unique historical events are situated within a context of recurrence, so the early modern belief that ancient history could still serve as a guide to political and moral life often met with contradictions. When renaissance humanists and antiquarians sought to uncover the ancient world for present purposes, they would, as the intellectual historian J.G.A. Pocock has noticed, often discover a world that was disturbingly different from their own.[7] One can for instance think of the ancient republican contempt for monarchy, which was radically different from early modern perceptions (which generally saw monarchy as a superior form of government), or one can consider the conflicting views on suicide that separated ancient writers from Mediaeval and early modern readers for whom suicide was a sin. Both themes are important in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Thus, the first two acts of the play explore

[4] Koselleck 2000, 34–41.

[5] Woolf 2003.

[6] In his influential introduction to Shakespeare's histories, David Scott Kastan distinguishes between two competing models of time in Elizabethan historiography: "one providential and fundamentally linear, derived from the patristic and mediaeval historical writings; and one, exemplary and essentially cyclical, derived from the traditions of late classical historiography", cf. Kastan 1982, 12. As Kastan demonstrates, Shakespeare's histories do not fit easily into any of these models.

[7] Pocock 1987, 1.

republican anxieties towards Caesar's ascension to monarchical power, which lead to their assassination of him in the third act, and in the final act of the play the defeat of the conspirators at the Battle of Philippi leads to a series of spectacular suicides that are performed on the stage.

The interplay of singularity and recurrence also resurfaces when we look at the pivotal event of the play, the assassination of Caesar, both in its original historical context as well as in Shakespeare's dramatic representation. The murder of Caesar on the "Ides of March" in 44 BC was a singular event, a decisive turning point in the history of the Roman republic, but at the same time it was embedded within certain recursive structures that contribute to its meaning. Caesar was thus not assassinated on an arbitrary time and place, but at a Senate meeting during the festival of Mars.[8] Senate assemblies were scheduled to take place with regular intervals in the religious and political calendar of the Roman republic, and as we shall see the date was carefully chosen for both practical and symbolic reasons. For the conspirators it was quintessential that the exceptional event of murdering Caesar could be presented as a restoration of order – an order which had not least been disturbed by Caesar's reform of the old Numan calendar.[9] In this respect event and recurrence are reciprocal, whether we regard history as cyclical or linear, and whether we believe we can learn from history or not.

Academic interest in the historiography of Shakespeare's history plays began with E.M. Tillyard, author of *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1942) and *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944), who emphasised that the Tudor mind was deeply affected by the idea that history repeats itself and iteratively sought to grasp the present through historical parallels. Later Marxist and New Historicist consecrations of early modern histories have on the one hand continued Tillyard's historiographical approach to Shakespeare's histories while on the other hand criticising Tillyard's emphasis on theological order.[10] According to Tillyard, the early modern concept of history "grows quite naturally out of theology and is never separated from it",[11] and for him historical recursion thus expresses a providential idea of universal order in what he calls the "chain of being".[12] Later generations have found it easier than Tillyard to separate history from theology, at least in the case of

[8] The Shakespearean "Ides of March" (March 15) derives from the Roman *Idus Martiae* and refers to the middle day (*idus*) of the month of Mars.

[9] In the old republican calendar, the term of the consuls and the censorial financial year began on *Idus Martiae*, and through the first centuries of the empire the Senate assembled on that day cf. Mommsen 2010, 375–77 and Ramsay 2000, 448.

[10] See for instance Kastan 1982, 13–15, and Franco Moretti 2005 (originally 1983), 48ff.

[11] Tillyard 1991, 17.

[12] Tillyard 1972, 33–44.

Shakespeare, but often with the consequence of neglecting how history in Shakespeare relates to nature and cosmic order.

The reading of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* I will present in the following seeks to approach the relationship between historiography and nature from a different angle than Tillyard's by investigating the ordering of time in Shakespeare's play. I am particularly interested in this play's focus on the calendar – more precisely the Julian calendar – as an expression of astronomical order that can serve both historical and political purposes. *Julius Caesar* abounds with references to calendars and clocks. The play meticulously counts down the hours to the planned assassination on March 15, but surprisingly the majority of references to clocks and calendars are caused by the characters' repeated uncertainty of time and date. This temporal confusion has often been dismissed as a mere curiosity, but in fact it refers directly to Caesar's most ambitious and conflict-provoking reform, which was the institution of the Julian calendar.

The astronomic ordering of time into a calendar is fundamental to any society, a fact that is perhaps best observed when calendars are reformed, as happened both in the last years of Caesar's reign and again in Shakespeare's own time, when Pope Gregory X revised the Julian Calendar. Two years before his assassination, Caesar replaced the old lunar-based calendar of the Roman republic, with a heliotropic calendar of 365.25 days. This reform was both the result and cause of political unrest. The old Numan calendar, whose institution was an important element in the foundation of the republic, had become unmanageable during the civil wars, as it was based on the phases of the moon and could therefore only be equated with the solar year through occasional addition of intercalary months. The new Julian calendar which was based on the solar year was much easier to handle, as it just required the addition of a single day in leap years, but nonetheless the reform met with serious opposition from members of the Senate, who saw Caesar's calendar reform as an expression of hybris, equivalent to his desire to be crowned. As Plutarch writes in North's translation:

> But his enemies, notwithstanding, that enuied his greatnesse did not sticke to finde fault withall. As *Cicero* the Orator, when one saide, to morrow the starre Lyra will rise: yea, said he, at the commandement of *Cæsar*, as if men were compelled to say and thinke by *Cæsar's* edict.[13]

Calendars not only serve the practical organisation of political and religious communities with their recurrent assemblies, activities and feasts, but they are also essential to the presence of history in collective memory. While the anniversary of Caesar's death on March 15 is still noticed in almanacs, not

[13] Plutarch & North 1595, 786.

least thanks to Shakespeare, the birthday of Alexander the Great or the anniversary of the Battle of Marathon are never commemorated for the simple fact that we are no longer attuned to the ancient Greek calendar.[14]

The Temporal Structure of *Julius Caesar*: Continuities and Discontinuities

Like most other plays of its kind, *Julius Caesar* condenses events covering a long span of time, stretching from the celebration of Lupercal in February 44 BC, when attempts were made to crown Caesar – an incident which provoked the conspirators to assassinate him – and to the Battle of Philippi in October 42 BC, when the armies of the conspirators were defeated. Actions that historically unfolded over two years are thus reduced to a two-hour stage version in which events are presented as they are presumed to have been experienced by the involved persons; that is directly and without the intermediary of a historical narrator or chronicler. As can be seen from the poems of Digges and Weever this way of presenting history directly, without narrative intermediaries, was one of the great attractions of historical drama, and the concealment of all secondary sources (Plutarch, Suetonius etc.) are therefore a precondition of historical mimesis.

Before we proceed, let us briefly resume the chronological structure Shakespeare's play, which condenses events from two decisive and turbulent years at the end of the Roman republic. Act One opens with the celebration of the Lupercal Festival in Rome after Caesar's victory over Pompey in February 44 BC. Here Brutus, Cassius and Caska discuss Antony's ambiguously failing attempt to crown Caesar in front of the Roman people, and the three conspirators decide to meet the following night; meanwhile a Soothsayer warns Caesar to "beware the Ides of March", a warning that Caesar dismisses. Act Two is set in Brutus' home where the conspirators meet to plan their coup the following day. Act Three begins on the following morning, the Ides of March, when Caesar in spite of bad omens and warnings prepares to go to the Senate, where eventually the conspirators will stab him. This act concludes with Brutus' and Antony's famous speeches on Caesar where Antony manages to pit the plebeians against the conspirators. Act Four displays Antony and Octavian's take-over of power in Rome before it switches to Asia Minor where Brutus and Cassius are struggling to maintain the rebellion. Act Five concludes with the death of the conspirators at the Battle at Philippi, which historically took place in October 42 BC.

The first three acts are presented as an almost seamless sequence and, though the Elizabethans were zealous readers of almanacs, few spectators and

[14] The Nicene Creed's incorporation of Easter from the Hebraic lunar based calendar into the Julian solar calendar (in 325 AD) offers of course the most important exception to this rule.

readers would have noticed how discreetly Shakespeare joins the famous "Ides of March" with the less famous Roman festival of Lupercal which took place a full month earlier, and where Mark Antony without success tried to crown Caesar.[15] Neither are there any indications from Act Four and Five that two year separate the death of Caesar and the Battle of Philipp nor that the Battle lasted for weeks. Instead Shakespeare gives the impression of a swift confrontation.

The play uses different devices of compressing time: In the final battle Act (a recurring feature in Elizabethan histories) the unity of time, place and action gives an impression of pace, whereas the speed of time is indicated in the first three acts by verbal indications of time and date: The scenes from the Lupercal Festival take place in the middle of the day (cf. 1.1.2), when Cassius, Caska and Brutus agree to meet the following night (1.2.289, 303); In the preceding scene Caesar is warned to "Beware the Ides of March" (1.2.18),[16] and First Act ends with the Caska, Cicero and Cassius who must brave the elements in a "perilous night" (1.3.47). Act Two takes place during the night, beginning with Brutus who gazes the stars and ending with the break of dawn at the Ides of March. Act Three begins after Caesar has awoken from portentous dreams and follows him from hour to hour on his way to the Senate. After his murder, this continuity of time collapses and the spectators are presented with scattered glimpses of horrifying events from the civil unrest that concludes with the final battle. Thus, the dissolution of political order in Rome is expressed through the dissolution of temporal order.

While the temporal structure of the play, at least in the first three acts, follows the astronomical cycle of the day quite fluently, chronology poses a recurrent problem for the central characters of the play. As many commentators have noted, the conspirators are constantly uncertain about dates and the time of the day. This certainly becomes obvious in Act Two which opens with Brutus' exclamation to his servant: "What Lucius, ho / I cannot by the progress of the stars / Give guess how near to day" (2.1.1–3). The reason for Brutus' lack of astronomical orientation soon turns out to be that he is uncertain of the date. "Is not tomorrow, boy, the first of March?", he asks Lucius who does not know and is sent to "look in the calendar"

[15] Plutarch & North 1595, 786.

[16] In Shakespeare (and Plutarch), only the "Ides of March" is a dangerous day, but other sources such as Suetonius and Valerius Maximus report that the soothsayer (whose real name was Spurinna) had predicted that Caesar would be especially vulnerable between Lupercal and *Idus Martiae*, presumably for the practical reason that he had to be in Rome during this period. Having just returned from the field after his victory over Pompey (which Shakespeare invokes on several occasions in the play), it was Caesar's plan to launch a new military campaign against the Parthians soon after *Idus Martiae*, where he would be guarded by loyal soldiers. See Ramsay 2000.

(2.1.40–42). At the arrival of the conspirators, Lucius returns to his master with the words "Sir, March is wasted 15 days" (2.1.59). Later in the scene, the conspirators disagree as to where and when the sun will rise, and Caska, who will be the first to stab Caesar, draws his sword and exclaims:

> Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises,
> Which is a great way growing of the south,
> Weighing the youthful season of the year.
> Some two months hence, up higher toward the north
> he first presents his fire, and the high east
> Stands as the Capitol, directly here. (2.1.105–10)

Caska's celestial identification of Caesar with the moving sun is contrasted by Caesar who – in the seconds before the conspirators draw their swords – compares himself at length with the immovable Northern star ("I am constant as the northern Star", 3.1.60–67).

Comparisons of rulers with celestial spheres were commonplace in the early modern world, and had been so since antiquity, a fact which clearly indicate the tendency to equate historical time with natural time that was dominant before the 18th century. As astronomy guides the ordering of time in the quotidian practice of measuring time by looking at the sky for Shakespeare's conspirators, so it did for historians and chroniclers, whose ideas of cyclic recursions refer to the revolution of the celestial bodies. Similarly, cosmic order served as a model of political order, and cosmic disorder as an omen of political unrest.[17] It is therefore highly significant that the murder of Caesar is preceded by unnatural celestial phenomena that were mentioned by several Roman sources and which in Shakespeare's play are vividly presented, notably in the vivid descriptions by Caska, as the unnatural and "perilous storm".

Anachronisms

While Shakespeare's play does not explicitly address the Julian calendar reform, it nonetheless alludes to it indirectly in ways that will not have escaped attention in 1599. For as Siegfried Burckhardt first pointed out in his essay "How not to Murder Caesar", the frequent anachronisms and

[17] Shakespeare's most elaborate expression of this doctrine is found in Ulysses' speech in *Troilus and Cressida*, where cosmic order is described with political metaphors: "The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre | Observe degree, priority, and place, | And therefore is the glorious planet Sol | In noble eminence enthroned and sphered | Amid the other; whose med'cinable eye | Corrects the influence of evil planets, | And posts like the commandment of a king, | Sans check to good and bad. But when the planets | In evil mixture to disorder wander, | What plagues, and what portents, what mutiny, | What raging of the sea, shaking of earth, | Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors, | Divert and crack, rend and deracinate | The unity and married calm of states | Quite from their fixure!" (1.3.84–100).

confusions of time in the play, which were previously disregarded, had a special significance at the end of the 16th century where the calendar again became an object of controversy, now between Catholics and Protestants.[18] Already in the 15th century it had become obvious that the Julian calendar's determination of the tropical year as 365.25 days was inaccurate by eleven minutes and fourteen seconds. Slowly this inaccuracy became visible as equinox had regressed by one day every 128 years. By the 1560'ies the incongruence between the solar year and the Julian calendar had expanded to 10 days, and it had become obvious that the calculation of Easter as the first full moon after equinox was not exact. For this reason. The Catholic Church decided during the last session of the Council of Trent to reform the calendar, and in 1582 Pope Gregory X introduced a new calendar, which excised 10 days of October. The Gregorian calendar was soon adopted in Catholic countries, but in Protestant countries the calendar reform was rejected for ideological reasons as a product of the Counter-reformation. As a consequence, Protestants and Catholics celebrated the same holidays on different days, though Protestants with a knowledge of astronomy knew that their official calendar was incorrect.[19]

In 1598 and 1599, at the time when Shakespeare wrote and first staged *Julius Caesar*, the difference between the two calendars calculation of Easter came to an extreme with a five-week difference. The confusion and frustrations were best expressed in a Scottish pamphlet that circulated in London in early 1599, when Shakespeare was writing his manuscript:

> In the yeare of our Lord 1598 lately by past, according to the decree of the Nicene Councell, and the Late Kalendar, set out by Lilius [author of the Gregorian calendar], Easter day fell upon the twelfth daie of March in the olde Kalendare and Almanacks whereby we yet reckon in England and Scotland: And Whit Sunday upon the last daye of Aprill: And Fastings even upon the twenty foure of Ianuary: Whereas after the vulgare maner and count, Easter daie was celebrate that yeare the sixteenth daie of April; Whit Sunday, the fourth of Iune: And Fastings eve, the last of February. Yee see the distance betweeene the one calculation and the other is more then the space of a Month: what errour it way growe to by process of time it is easie by this example to perceive.[20]

This pamphlet clearly indicates that Brutus' and the conspirators' difficulty with synchronising the calendar and orienting themselves by looking at the sun and the stars had a deep resonance in 1599, when the discrepancy between holidays calculated from the official Julian calendar and the astronomically

[18] Burckhardt 1968, 3–21.
[19] Poole 1998, 57–69.
[20] Pont 1599, 61.

more correct Gregorian calendar had brought the distance between Catholic and Protestant holidays to a maximum.[21] But at the same time these calamities only added to the vivid early modern interest in the calendar, which had made almanacs a bestselling commodity in early print culture, second only to the Bible. In publications from the era like John Harvey's and John Dee's almanacs, English readers were carefully introduced to the Julian calendar and its reformation of the old Roman calendar with regard to the leap year.

Holidays, anniversaries and other red letter days played an important role in the lives of the Elizabethans, as can be seen from the immense popularity of almanacs in early modern print culture both in Catholic and Protestant countries. Since calendars serve to produce synchronicity and stability over time, their temporal regimes rarely become an object of political conflict, but as we have seen, this nonetheless happened both in the times of Caesar and after the Reformation when the emergence of national churches led to national articulations of the calendar. During the reign of Elizabeth, the calendar was, as David Cressy has pointed out, transformed into an expression of a distinctively national Protestant culture with celebrations of not only old religious holidays but also anniversaries of national importance like the royal Accession, the defeat of the Spanish Armada etc.[22] The calendar had become a political concern and an emblem of royal power that along with its practical uses served to preserve national memory. As the affirmation of the new Protestant order in which royal power and religious power were united, the Common Book of Prayer thus opened with a perpetual almanac that was authorized by the queen. Critics have speculated that the opening of *Julius Caesar*, in which two zealous tribunes rebuke the Plebians for their celebration of the Lupercal with the words "Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home! / Is this a holiday?" (1.1.1–2) alludes to the Puritan attacks on old Catholic holidays, several of which were abolished or renamed during the reign of Elizabeth. This was for instance the case of the celebration of Corpus Christi, where annual plays and pageants had been performed, until they were repressed by the Puritans.[23] Certainly, the Romans were also familiar with such attempts to

[21] On this background the original readers of North's translation must have felt that Plutarch was addressing an issue of recurrent and acute relevance in his discussion of Caesar's calendar reform: "For the Romaines, vsing then the ancient computation of the yeare, had not only such incertainty and alteration of the moneth and times, that the sacrifices and yearely feastes came by litle and litle to seasons contrarie for the purpose they were ordained; but also in the reuolution of the sunne (which is called Annus Solaris) no other nation agreed with them in account: and, of the Romaines themselues only the priests vnderstood it." Plutarch & North 1595, 785–86.

[22] Cressy 1989, ix–12. See also Hutton 1994 and Poole 1998.

[23] According to Sohmer, Julius Caesar's markers to the liturgical calendar employs the technique of the York Cycle of Corpus Christi plays, cf. Sohmer 1999, 71–74.

invent or redefine holidays for political purposes. To mention just two telling examples, a resolution of the Senate from 45 BC elevated the anniversaries of Caesar's major victories to the status of *feriae* (holidays), whereas Cicero and Brutus in their resistance to Mark Antony sought to institute an annual commemoration of Brutus' famous ancestor, Junius Brutus (who expelled the last king of Rome and became a founding father of the Republic).[24]

While Shakespeare thus had plenty of historical reasons to relate the temporal regime of Julius Caesar to his own present, *Julius Caesar* has nonetheless frequently been accused of anachronism. When Brutus sends his servant to look in the almanac, he seems more modern than ancient to many readers (though this probably bothered Shakespeare's later critics more than his contemporaries). In particular, the frequent mentioning of clock strikes in Act 2 has disturbed critics because the Romans measured time by sundials and clepshydrae, not by mechanical clocks with bell strikes.[25] Nonetheless, the symbolic function of the clock strike is important, because it serves to stress Caesar's temporal regime and a sensible and recognisable way. As Shakespeare and his contemporaries knew from Caesar's *Commentaries* (cf. *2. Henry VI,* 4.7.56), he not only reformed the calendar, but also set the clocks of Rome. Certainly, it is no coincidence that all exact indications of time in the play relate to the person of Caesar, and consequently they disappear from the play after his death. In particular Act Two is obsessed with calculating time. In scene 1, the conspirators nightly meeting is interrupted by a clock strike ("BRUTUS: Peace! Count the clock. CASSIUS: The clock has stricken three," 2.1.191). The following scene takes place at Caesar's house in the morning, where the senators have come to bring him to the Senate, and it portrays the tight schedule of a Roman pontifex maximus, who must carefully plan his political business by the hour (2.2.114–21):

> CAESAR: (…) What is't o'clock?
>
> BRUTUS: Caesar, 'tis strucken eight.
>
> CAESAR: I thank you for your pains and courtesy.
> [enter ANTONY]
> See Antony, that revels long a-nights,
> Is notwithstanding up. Good morrow, Antony.
>
> ANTONY: So to most noble Caesar.
>
> CAESAR: Bid them prepare within.
> I am too blame to be thus waited for.

[24] App. B Civ. 2.442; Dio Cass. 43.44.6; Cic. Ad. Brut. 23.8. See Rüpke 2011, 122.
[25] Dohrn-van Rossum 1996, 17–28.

> Now, Cinna. Now, Metellus. What, Trebonius,
> I have an hour's talk in store for you…

Precision and constancy are decisive for Caesar, who in spite of bad omens refuses to cancel his meeting in the Senate (this predilection is stressed by his final self-comparison with the North Star). But while he makes his way to the Senate, a nerve breaking race against time is taking place as Portia and Artemidorus are simultaneously trying to reach him in order to intervene with the impending catastrophe. In the crowd, Portia accidentally meets the Soothsayer, who warned Caesar against the Ides of March, and she asks him what time it is ("PORTIA: What is't o'clock? SOOTHSAYER: About the ninth hour, lady," 2.4.23–24).

According to Burckhardt, it is not Shakespeare who must be accused of anachronism but Brutus who stubbornly adheres to the old calendar and has not reckoned with "the new Caesarean style", which manifests itself with the clock strike.[26] Indeed, there are plenty of indications that Brutus seeks to recur to the old order of the Republic. What urges him to act is the legacy of his famous ancestor, Junius Brutus, who delivered Rome from monarchy. In this way, the doctrine of *historia magistra vitae* and its underlying idea of historical recurrence drive him to act, but instead of instigating a rebirth of the Republic (a revolution in the original, astronomical meaning of the word), the assassination of Caesar leads to an entirely unexpected situation with Mark Antony and Octavian as the new autocrats.

While Burckhardt was certainly correct to recognise that the clock strike in Act Two is more than a notorious blunder, he is too quick to exculpate Shakespeare of anachronism. In a previous scene, we hear for instance of the Roman plebeians throwing their hats in the air, as only modern men would do. Such anachronisms are important, and not only for pedants of historical correctness, because they indicate a sense of continuity between Shakespeare's own world and that of his Romans. In spite of different views on suicide and kingship, the Romans and the Elizabethans share for him more or less the same world of experience. Such a view is in accordance with humanist historiography, as expressed by Machiavelli in his declaration that "he who would foresee what has to be, should reflect on what has been, for everything that happens in the world at any time has a genuine resemblance to what happened in ancient times."[27] While Shakespeare in all his historical plays antedating the death of Queen Elizabeth (who had produced no Tudor heir) was fascinated with succession crises and the violent deposition of rulers, his portrait of the fall of the Roman Republic does not herald the advent

[26] Burckhardt 1968, 9.
[27] Machiavelli 1970, 517.

of the empire as a historical necessity. Historical progress was not an issue for him, and certainly not in the way it became for later generations of writers and historians.

Concluding remarks

What captivated spectators like Weever and Digges who watched *Julius Caesar* in performance was perhaps not merely the illusion of looking directly into the past, but also the possibility of recognising their own presence from a different perspective. The way Shakespeare refers to clocks and calendars certainly invited them to do so. As philosopher Paul Ricoeur writes in his *Time and Narrative* "the time of the calendar is the first bridge constructed by historical experience between lived time and universal time."[28]

At the basis of astronomical observations, the calendar orders time along units of cosmic recurrence that imply the lived cycles of the day and the year, while at the same time serving to calculate the separation of years over long time spans such as the one separating the death of Caesar from the reign of Elizabeth. As we have seen, Shakespeare's invocation of the Julian calendar and the measuring of time served to stress the continuity between ancient Rome and his own present in a way, which must have been recognisable to his audience.

But though calendars derive from astronomical observation, they are never transparent expressions of natural order. As both Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory experienced, calendar reforms were perceived as exactly the opposite, as disturbances of order and custom. "Ce fut proprement remuer le ciel et la terre à la fois" (It was a right removing of Heaven and Earth) writes Michel de Montaigne, advocate of recursive experience *avant la lèttre*, in an outburst of indignation about the papal reform which he deeply resented.[29] That calendars are not innocent translations of natural order, but instruments of political organisation, was felt even more deeply in Protestant countries like England which, while maintaining the old Julian calendar, reshaped the religious and national holidays in a significant way that served to shape collective memory for political ends. Shakespeare knew this, as the conflict with the tribunes ("Is this a holiday") makes explicit. Tillyard was undoubtedly right to relate the early modern doctrine of history repeating itself to a wider idea of natural order, but before subscribing to any further theological interpretation on behalf of Shakespeare, we must beware that that history in his *Julius Caesar*, does not repeat itself in the image of nature's

[28] Ricoeur 1990, 105.

[29] Montaigne 1962, 1002, but see also p. 988. Montaigne reflects on the calendar reform in essays 10 and 11 ("Des mesnager sa volonté" and "Des boytteux") from the third volume his *Essais* (1585). The English translation is John Florio's.

perfection, but rather in the image of an imperfect and politically contested calendar that nonetheless binds his own age to that of the Romans.

Like other successful histories, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* exploits, as we have seen, what Koselleck has termed "the double aspect of experience", and he does it for his own dramatic purposes, balancing the singular and extraordinary event – the assassination of Caesar – against a structure of recursion that makes it possible for audiences to relate their own experiences to the unfamiliar and remote past. Many narrative representations of past history seek to do so in one way or another. Yet the extraordinary thing about Shakespeare's representation of great historical events in *Julius Caesar* is the way in which he uses the temporal regimes of the calendar and the clock as a recursive structure to complement, translate and commemorate a pivotal moment in history. The recurrent confusion of time and date in the play, which relates the time of Caesar to Shakespeare's own era, can be seen as an example of history repeating itself, but instead of thinking of recurrence as repetition, it would perhaps be more accurate to see it as displaced (or parallel as Plutarch would say). For as the history of the Julian calendar shows, recurrence always involves displacement.

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La puesta en escena de la historia sagrada a comienzos del siglo XVI:

La batalla de los ángeles en la dramaturgia visionaria de Juana de la Cruz

Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida

If so far Juana de la Cruz's Auto del Asunción *has been studied in relation to a long tradition of Assumption plays looking at the theatrical instructions given by her at the end of one of her sermons, this article proposes to connect this play with other texts by this visionary woman to focus on the battle of angels and demons that is depicted in this corpus. A rather crucial episode of sacred history such as the falling of Lucifer into Hell is, thus, presented within very different frames: the homiletic* (Libro del conorte)*, the theatrical* (Libro de la casa y monasterio) *and the hagiographic* (Vida y fin de la bienaventurada santa Juana de la Cruz).

Para Ángeles Blázquez Gil, este estudio sobre los ángeles

1. ¿La primera dramaturga en lengua castellana?

En el *Libro de la casa y monasterio* del convent de Cubas de la Sagra llamado Santa María de la Cruz, manuscrito todavía inédito, nos encontramos con un par de autos que se han editado en los últimos cincuenta años (Juliá Martínez 1961, 326–334; Surtz 1982, 29–37; Luengo Balbás 2015, 629–637; Rodríguez Ortega 2016, 246–257).[1] Estas piezas teatrales se pusieron probablemente en escena bajo la supervisión de una mujer visionaria, Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534), que adquirió gran fama en su época como santa viva, y que podría considerarse como la primera dramaturga en lengua castellana, aunque este aspecto de su escritura no ha merecido toda la atención que se merece.

[1] Este artículo se enmarca en el Proyecto I+D de MINECO/FEDER "La conformación de la autoridad espiritual femenina en Castilla" (Ref. FFI2015-63625-C2-2-P; 2016-2019) y en el Instituto del Teatro de Madrid de la Universidad Complutense. El *Libro de la casa* lo ha editado en 2017 María Victoria Curto Hernández en el catálogo de santas vivas del proyecto mencionado: http://catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es.

Juana de la Cruz, terciaria franciscana del monasterio de Santa María de Cubas, nació en 1481 y murió en 1534. Su vida fue un tanto agitada en cuanto que tuvo que disfrazarse de hombre para entrar en el convento y escapar a un matrimonio no deseado, la acusaron de nepotismo, y durante un tiempo le prohibieron predicar en público, si bien salió de todo esto bien parada y murió con loores de santidad.[2] Coetánea de la beata dominica María de Santo Domingo, también visionaria y con quien ha despertado un interés conjunto en varias historiadoras feministas, Sor Juana sigue siendo bastante desconocida para muchos especialistas del Medievo y de la temprana Edad Moderna, aunque seguramente esto cambie si se la consigue canonizar.[3] Conocida en sus tiempos como "la santa Juana" (de ahí el título de la trilogía que el famoso dramaturgo barroco, Tirso de Molina, compuso sobre su figura), a su celda acudían autoridades y personajes famosos de la corte como Cisneros, Fernando el Católico, el Gran Capitán o Carlos V para verla y oírla, si bien no ha sido llevada a los altares por problemas con el contenido de su libro de sermones visionarios: el *Libro del conorte*. Una obra cuya calidad literaria justificaría su inclusión en el canon de la literatura peninsular, y que contenía mensajes controvertidos para la época, como la defensa de la Inmaculada Concepción (véase Triviño 2006, xxxiii).[4]

Que el primer teatro femenino castellano provenga de la mano de una mujer visionaria no nos debe extrañar demasiado. Seguramente influyó el hecho de que las visiones se presten a una suerte de drama mental donde se aprecia la influencia de las representaciones religiosas, además de la de los libros de contemplación de la época. Angela de Foligno o Brígida de Suecia vivieron experiencias visionarias propiciadas por representaciones teatrales de la Pasión de Cristo; y en la Península, aunque las cofradías de Semana Santa no aparecen en Castilla, León o Andalucía antes de 1520, existían dramatizaciones anteriores de la Pasión en algunas hermandades, y la celebración de la Semana Santa y la Pascua en calles, plazas, iglesias o conventos tenía una veta teatral. Las procesiones religiosas, todo un gran teatro con finalidad propagandista, también influyeron en el imaginario de las visionarias y lo proveyeron de material para detalles de sus escenas (Sanmartín Bastida 2012, 275–276).

Por otro lado, los mismos trances de las visionarias castellanas de finales del siglo XV y comienzos del XVI (anteriores a Santa Teresa) tenían mucho de teatral, tanto en la manera de adoptar las voces de los seres celestiales como

[2] Para un resumen breve de la biografía de la franciscana véase Cortés Timoner 2004.

[3] En estos últimos años un grupo de franciscanos están promoviendo en Roma la causa de su canonización por confirmación de culto.

[4] No compartimos la opinión de Triviño 2006, xxiii, de que el nivel literario de Juana de la Cruz es muy inferior al de otra predicadora clarisa, Isabel de Villena.

de introducir bailes y gestualidad de manera prominente, un fenómeno que se puede enmarcar en un contexto europeo que se remonta al siglo XIII. En algunos casos, las visionarias hablaban directamente con los habitantes del Cielo o re-actuaban la historia sagrada (María de Santo Domingo), y en otros eran testigos directos del pasado contado en las Escrituras. Este es el caso de la franciscana Juana, autora del libro de sermones mencionado transcrito por una tal María Evangelista hacia 1509.[5] En el *Conorte* la mayoría de sus discursos ofrecen una dramatización de episodios bíblicos y una descripción explicativa de los festejos musicales que se celebran en el Cielo. El ambiente festivo es, de este modo, casi una constante en la obra, pues en los sermones se dedica un extenso espacio al motivo de la celebración. Estas recreaciones litúrgicas no eran raras en ambientes monásticos femeninos, pero además en Juana podemos ver un eco de la creencia de que en el Paraíso había juegos, bailes y risas, como en el Cielo de la *Divina comedia* de Dante, donde se festejaba con danzas.[6] Quizás estos sermones de Juana se puedan explicar, como sugiere Cátedra 2005, 93, por un oficio de monjas "predicadoras" que adoptarían beatas como Juana o María de Ajofrín al exponer las lecciones de las Escrituras a las novicias por la mañana. En este sentido, hay que decir que el lenguaje de Juana, con la fuerza de sus descripciones, alegorías y preguntas retóricas (englobadas en lo que podría clasificarse como visiones imaginativas frente a las espirituales e intelectuales), era común en la predicación de la época, pues podemos encontrar uno semejante en los sermonarios y libros espirituales que circulaban por entonces (Triviño 2005, 99–100).

Sabemos que, cuando entraba en trance, Juana cambiaba el registro de la voz según hablaran unos u otros. En la hagiografía escrita por sus compañeras, con María Evangelista también a la cabeza, la *Vida y fin de la bienabenturada virgen sancta Juana de la Cruz*, se nos muestra que durante sus sermones Juana adquiría un gesto hermoso y se sucedían a través de ella distintas voces, entre las cuales se encontraba la del mismo Dios,

[5] Esta fecha aparece en los dos manuscritos que conservan el *Libro del conorte*: Esc. J-II-18 y SS. Ritum Proc. 3074 del Vaticano, según nos indica García de Andrés, que edita el primero (*Conorte* I, 71), pero parece que el proceso de escritura pudo prolongarse más años, pues en el *Libro de la casa* (fol. 20r) se nos dice que de los trece que duraron sus sermones (duración que corrobora la *Vida y fin*, fol. 31r) solo en los dos últimos se escribió el libro (con lo cual nos situaríamos en fechas más tardías). A partir de ahora cito el *Conorte* y la *Vida y fin* de forma abreviada, y la primera obra a partir de la edición de García de Andrés, corrigiendo acentuación y puntuación en algunos casos.

[6] Esto no nos debe extrañar si recordamos unas palabras de Eugenio Asensio 1954, 385: "Históricamente abundan las pruebas de que en España, en el siglo XV […], el canto coral y la danza acompañaban los júbilos colectivos". Para las danzas celestes y litúrgicas, véase Massip 2013, 268–277.

produciéndose un cambio en el tono y timbre de sus palabras, en un proceso prolongado en el tiempo.

> Donde quiera que aquella graçia le tomava, se quedava como muerta, aunque muy hermosa, aora fuese en el coro o refitorio, o en otro qualquier lugar de la casa, a qualquier hora del día o de la noche que hera voluntad de Dios, e muy a menudo, y no a una hora, ni breve el spaçio e tiempo que estava elevada, mas tres horas, y çinco y siete y doze. Esto al prinçipio de sus elevaçiones, e andando el tiempo, diole Nuestro Señor muy copiosamente esta graçia, que estava un día y una noche, e algunas vezes quarenta oras. (*Vida y fin*, fol. 21v)

Entonces comenzaba el teatro del trance, que ella observaba desde lejos, transportada al Cielo. Un teatro que contenía música, diálogo, escenario, atrezo y baile, y en el que los personajes podían hacer de actores, como veremos; y un teatro que, tras su representación, con las palabras "a significar", dejaba paso al desvelamiento de lo contemplado. Durante el trance visionario los personajes del sermón son los encargados de explicar su significado, tantas veces alegórico: como se dice en el prólogo al *Conorte*, Cristo se expresa "en figuras y semejanzas" (*Conorte* I, 227).[7] Se podría hablar entonces de dos voces principales: la de una tercera persona que introduce la voz del Señor, y la de este, que explica directamente lo que pasa en la escena visionaria. Es Dios, siempre hablando (introducido por verbos de dicción), quien nos cuenta todo lo que sucede en los episodios de la historia sagrada. Y es Juana quien pronuncia las palabras "en persona de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo" (*Conorte* I, 227).[8] Pero además de estas voces, variando según los episodios bíblicos que se relatan, aparecen otras que hablan en estilo directo.

Aquí nos interesa que los espacios ocupados por los seres celestiales que se mantienen en este permanente diálogo pueden volcarse en las calles y las plazas castellanas, pues en algunos casos, dentro de la visión, se invita y se ordena hacer la representación en lugares extraconventuales. Esto es muy interesante porque de algún modo la historia sagrada que se representa en el Cielo se convierte en el modelo a seguir en el convento y fuera de él, con Dios como director de escena corrigiendo los guiones mal entendidos y dirigiendo desde arriba: el teatro sirve así de nexo de unión entre el Cielo y la Tierra. Muchas veces los sermones tienen como punto de partida algo que sucede en la segunda esfera: la celebración de la liturgia y las procesiones que se

[7] En este prólogo del *Conorte* se nos explica que el Señor habla con Juana (llamándola Juanica) mientras le muestra lo que sucede en el Cielo (*Conorte* I, 227).

[8] Esta expresión la encontramos en la *Vida* de Juana (*Vida y fin* 29v, 32v), así como en textos de otras visionarias, en los momentos en que adoptan la voz del Señor, para explicar la cualidad ventrílocua de las palabras pronunciadas.

observan desde el Cielo y cuyo clamor se escucha en lo alto mueven a comentar al Señor (y a veces a otros seres celestiales) el festejo, estimulando una rememoración paralela en el Cielo que se ofrece como paradigma, como si se tratara de un espejo de doble dirección (véase Triviño 2006, xxiii). Para ello se despliega toda una panorámica de un Paraíso con alcázares donde habitan los bienaventurados, que cuenta con una plaza de grandes recepciones en la que se preparan las mesas para los ágapes: toda una ciudad celeste donde el Señor (en un lugar inaccesible en su trono de la Santa Trinidad) convoca al son de la trompeta.

Preocupado por la fidelidad a la historia de los contenidos de la *performance* ritual, el Señor da instrucciones de cómo se debe llevar a cabo la puesta en escena, como sucede en el final del sermón de la fiesta de San Lorenzo o de la fiesta de la Asunción, como veremos. Así, al final de la primera fiesta, Dios toma la palabra para pedir la representación de un auto fijándolo para el día de San Esteban (por petición de este santo) por ser el de la remembranza de los mártires: "Porque este auto y otros algunos que en este santo libro están escritos y mandados, querría el soberano Dios —dijo Él mismo— que se hagan en todas las ciudades y villas y lugares de cristianos" (*Conorte* II, 1068). Es decir, hay un mandato divino de que los sermones de Juana sean representados, y esta representación del imaginario visionario amplía el primer público de sus revelaciones: si se trata de un texto en principio dirigido a otras mujeres: sus compañeras monjas, la audiencia se ensancha bajo el mandato de Dios. En todo caso, por la importancia de lo ritual en el convento, convendría no separar la liturgia del *Libro del conorte* porque a la secuencia de las fiestas oficiales del año se une la celebración celeste que se le revela a Juana. Estos sermones prestan a la fiesta del día profundidad teológica en su interpretación de la Biblia, y podrían entenderse como una muestra de una práctica teatral arraigada en los conventos del siglo XVI, donde canciones y procesiones eran parte de rituales dramáticos, algo que también atestiguan la hagiografía de la *Vida y fin* y el *Libro de la casa* de su convento. Así, aunque Dios mande representar los autos en villas y ciudades, los que conservamos en el último manuscrito nos hablan de una representación teatral de carácter más bien privado (Muñoz Fernández 1995, 98).

Precisamente, el texto que aquí quiero comentar, que se encuentra dentro de uno de los autos a los que me he referido al comienzo de este trabajo, se reproduce de distintas formas en el *Libro del conorte* y en la *Vida y fin* de Juana. Eso es lo que ha llamado mi atención y me lleva a analizar aquí este episodio: el hecho de que el mismo relato de la historia sagrada (en este caso procedente del Apocalipsis) se reproduzca en tres obras relacionadas directamente con Juana. Se trata de una batalla celestial, muy reproducida en las artes visuales de la época y seguramente abordada en el corpus homilético

(a través del cual pudo llegar a Juana), que desemboca en la expulsión del infierno de Lucifer. Una batalla que aparece nada menos que en tres textos coetáneos ligados a la existencia de Juana: 1) en el libro de la *Vida y fin*; 2) en el *Libro del conorte*; y 3) en el *Libro de la casa*, donde se recogen episodios y propuestas de oraciones y celebraciones de Juana junto con hechos milagrosos de su comunidad, compilado seguramente varios años después de su muerte (Oteiza 2016, 19).[9]

2. La batalla de los ángeles

Los ángeles ocupan un lugar fundamental en el imaginario de Juana, quien tiene uno siempre al lado que le aconseja y acompaña, Laurel: un ángel de la guarda que hace de compañero constante de su alma (véase Salmos 91, 11–12; Mateo 18, 10). Tanta relevancia adquieren estas figuras en su obra que los investigadores han intentado acercarse a ellos desde perspectivas multidisciplinares.[10] En este estudio me interesa que estos ángeles, además de dedicarse a la música, aparezcan con cierta frecuencia en forma de milicia celestial, inspirándose en ese ejército que, según nos cuenta el Apocalipsis (12, 7–9), libra una lucha victoriosa contra Satanás (en forma de dragón) y contra los ángeles rebeldes, que son arrojados del Cielo.[11] Este ejército suele estar capitaneado por el Arcángel San Miguel, venerado como guardián del Paraíso y de la Iglesia, protector de los caballeros cristianos (y entre los judíos, del pueblo del Israel) y reflejado en las artes visuales siempre con una espada. Él es el arcángel encargado de la lucha contra los enemigos del Señor, y especialmente contra el Demonio (véase Judas 1, 9).[12]

Aunque la armadura no es un atributo primigenio de los ángeles, el ejército celestial es un motivo recurrente en la iconografía medieval y proporciona otro tipo de jerarquía a la de los nueve coros de ángeles (Gorgievski 2010, 40): por esta tradición pictórica, pero también por una oral (sermones,

[9] En el catálogo citado en la nota 1 se editará próximamente también la *Vida y fin*, que ha permanecido inédita hasta ahora, como el *Libro de la casa*, al contrario que el *Libro del conorte*.

[10] Como Jessica Boon (2018), quien ejemplifica con ellos la fluidez del género masculino/femenino presente en todo el texto de Juana (curiosamente, esta visión del género, que ha sido resaltada como discurso feminista o *queer*, no pareció despertar suspicacias en su época). Sobre el cambio de género en los ángeles, véase Jones 2011, 31, y para un panorama teológico de la visión de los ángeles de Juana, García de Andrés 2012, 209–236. Los ángeles de la guarda refuerzan esa idea de comunicación entre la esfera celeste y la terrenal que aparece en su teatro visionario.

[11] Cuando el Apocalipsis o Libro de la Revelación se incorporó al Nuevo Testamento en el siglo II d.C. este relato se convirtió en el canónico de los orígenes del Demonio (Oldridge 2012, 22).

[12] En el Islam también existe un ángel San Miguel, aunque tiene menos importancia que Gabriel (Jones 2011, 92).

liturgia), el motivo pudo llegar a mujeres iletradas como esta franciscana, quien, frente a su coetánea María de Santo Domingo (que prefiere en sus revelaciones el tema del *miles Christi* o caballero de Cristo), dirige recurrentemente su interés hacia este batallón de los ángeles. Para probarlo, antes de ir a la angelomaquia mencionada, veamos un ejemplo de esta milicia.

> Dijo el Señor: Que estando Él así, hecho Niño, en poder de aquellas gentes, empezó a crecer poco a poco. […] Y que después que fue crecido y tornado como de primero estaba […], viendo los bienaventurados cómo aquellas gentes le trataban tan mal a Él y a su preciosa madre, vinieron, a deshora, muchedumbre de caballeros celestiales, con vestiduras y armas más resplandecientes que el sol, y le tomaron a Él y a su gloriosa madre y les sacaron del poder de aquellas gentes que tan mal los trataban. Y así como los caballeros celestiales les hubieron sacado del poder de aquellas gentes, vinieron los nueve coros de los ángeles trayendo muchos tronos y tálamos muy ricos y adornados y claros, y suplicaban a su divina Majestad y a su preciosa Madre se asentasen en cada uno de ellos. Y allí, delante, cantaban y tañían muy dulcemente […].
>
> Y los caballeros bienaventurados que vinieron y los sacaron del poder de aquellas gentes como infieles […] significaban los santos ángeles […]. (*Conorte* I, 792–793)

En el teatro de su trance, los ángeles de Juana podrán ser actores, casi siempre mezclados con los bienaventurados del Paraíso: en una ocasión, la caballería celestial participa en una representación teatral, donde se recordarán los martirios de los santos.

> Y dijo el Señor que luego salieron todos los santos ángeles a un prado muy verde y florido, y que, a deshora, apareció Él allí, y con Él nuestra Señora la Virgen María y el glorioso san Juan Evangelista y todos los que resucitaron el día de la gloriosa resurrección […]. Y que siendo allí ayuntados todos los gloriosos santos y santas al llamamiento de las trompetas, fueron mudados todos los santos ángeles como hombres de pelea muy armados, y con espadas y lanzas y pavesas, y otras muchas maneras de armas muy agudas de pelear. […]
>
> Y dijo el Señor que así como Él y Nuestra Señora y todos los otros bienaventurados fueron asentados, luego empezaron los santos ángeles a hacer la remembranza de los martirios de los santos, esgrimiendo las armas sobre ellos y diciendo a muy altas voces:
>
> –Decid, vosotros y vosotras, ¿a quién adoráis o a quién creéis? (*Conorte* II, 1321–1322)[13]

[13] También los ángeles representan a los santos apóstoles en una visión que tiene Juana en la *Vida y fin*, fol. 71r.

Como vemos, en estos ejemplos los ángeles alternan las armas con los instrumentos de aire (trompetas) y de cuerda (seguramente tañían arpas) –unos instrumentos musicales que también aparecían tocados por ellos en el Apocalipsis (trompetas: 8, 2; arpas: 15, 2; cf. 14, 2).[14] Pero además de producir música, los ángeles soldados podían bailar, mezclados con los bienaventurados del Paraíso. Esto se aprecia en la danza de espadas descrita por Juana, donde ángeles músicos y bienaventurados realizan, espada en mano, toda una coreografía dirigida por Cristo.[15]

No obstante, me interesa especialmente la batalla aludida al comienzo de este epígrafe, en la que nuestros protagonistas se presentan sin instrumentos, por su recurrencia y porque el episodio constituye otro modo de conexión entre el Cielo y la Tierra diferente al que en los sermones estructura el motivo de la celebración. Además, fue la narración señalada de Juan Evangelista la que completó, según Oldridge 2012, 23, el proceso por el que la figura de Satán del Antiguo Testamento se erigió en rival poderoso de Dios como comandante de toda una hueste de demonios menores. En el *Libro del conorte*, este relato de la historia sagrada aparece contado directamente por Juana en boca del Señor en el sermón 56, con una sugerencia de puesta en escena al final del 46; en cambio, en el *Libro de la casa* se presenta dramáticamente al inicio del segundo *Auto de la Asunción* (los dos autos de la Asunción se desarrollan en la vigilia y el día de la fiesta respectivamente); mientras que en la *Vida y fin* de Juana la batalla celestial la cuenta a esta visionaria su ángel guardián, Laurel.[16] En los tres casos, Juana la relataría a sus compañeras de beaterio, que son quienes la ponen por escrito, aunque con respecto a los autos se ha dudado sobre la posible autoría de la franciscana.[17] Sea como sea, la escritura de esta batalla no procede directamente de la mano de Juana, sino de unos transcriptores (generalmente la comunidad de monjas encabezada por María Evangelista) que la escuchan o ponen en escena.[18]

[14] Sobre los ángeles y los instrumentos musicales véase el estudio introductorio de Jones 2011, 18–20.

[15] Sobre este baile en la obra de Juana, véase Rebeca Sanmartín y Francesc Massip 2017.

[16] Al primer auto del *Libro de la casa* se le llama también *Auto de la sepultura* por el *íncipit* del manuscrito, pero en su encabezamiento aparece titulado como *Auto de la Asunción*.

[17] Juliá Martínez 1961, 243 & 246, apuesta por un sacerdote informado de la tradición teatral de su tiempo, a quien acusa de torpeza y premiosidad por "gravísimos errores" de ritmo y rima. En general, se reconoce que Juana supervisó la puesta en escena de la obra (Surtz 1990, 3, se refiere a los autos del *Libro de la casa* como "plays they [las monjas] performed under her direction"; véase también Barbeito Carneiro 2007, 288). La última propuesta de Rodríguez Ortega 2016, 230–231, es más cautelosa, pues para esta investigadora, aunque el auto se representaba en tiempos de Juana, pudo sufrir variaciones hasta la compilación del *Libro de la casa*, ya en el siglo XVII.

[18] El *Conorte* parece que fue una obra compuesta por varias manos, aunque las compañeras atribuyan a la analfabeta María Evangelista (de nombre muy simbólico) el

Si hasta ahora se había estudiado el segundo *Auto de Asunción* de Juana solo teniendo en cuenta las instrucciones teatrales del sermón 46 y las obras de tradición asuncionista (Juliá Martínez 1961, Rodríguez Ortega 2016), proponemos aquí, considerando la presencia de la angelomaquia, relacionarlo con la *Vida y fin* y los sermones 56 y 57 del *Conorte*. La representación asuncionista y la difusión del relato bíblico de la caída de los ángeles estaría entonces contextualizada en diferentes marcos: en el homilético (*Libro del conorte*), el teatral/dramático (*Libro de la casa*) y el hagiográfico (*Vida y fin*).[19] Respecto a la dispersión de materiales del *Libro del conorte*, esto no nos debe extrañar pues parece que hubo un trabajo de compilación por parte del capellán del convento posterior a la transcripción que hizo María Evangelista, y es posible que no encadenara siempre las escenas a la manera propuesta por Juana.[20]

En cuanto al relato del Apocalipsis que aquí nos interesa, en el capítulo 12 (3–4) se habla de un gran dragón rojo que arrastra la tercera parte de las estrellas del Cielo, interpretadas como los ángeles rebeldes que combatieron con San Miguel y sus ángeles. Esa batalla terminó con la expulsión de los ángeles malos, arrojados a un infierno desde donde saldrán a poblar la Tierra, obligando a los cristianos a llevar armaduras para defenderse de ellos, como nos recuerda San Pablo (Efesios 6, 11–12).

Sin duda, llama la atención que el Apocalipsis, el género literario bíblico al que más se parecen los sermones según Triviño (2006 xxii), interese tanto a las visionarias, porque es probable que a esta obra también se refiriera María de Santo Domingo cuando, supuestamente, decía que poseía un libro escrito por la mano de Juan Evangelista (Sanmartín Bastida 2012, 328).[21] Lo cierto es que tanto ella como Juana parecen sentir predilección por este género, y en el caso de esta última tiene tanta importancia en su obra (pues su contenido está diseminado en los sermones) que Boon (en prensa) propone encuadrarla en un género apocalíptico mariano que presenta la figura de la Virgen como

resultado final (Oteiza 2016, 18, nos recuerda la posible colaboración de sor Catalina de los Mártires y sor Catalina de San Francisco).

[19] Creo que no se puede hablar de un género poético en los dos autos del *Libro de la casa*, como propone Triviño 2005, 102, sin fundamentar la propuesta y considerándolos, un tanto anacrónicamente, como autos sacramentales (cf. Rodríguez Ortega 2016, 231, quien los considera más cercanos a los misterios medievales).

[20] Este posterior trabajo de reordenación hace que podamos encontrarnos en el *Conorte* una recopilación de materiales relativos a la misma fiesta procedentes de diversos años (véase Triviño 2006, xxxiii–xxxiv).

[21] Juana hace referencia a este libro como fuente de autoridad, como se aprecia en *Conorte* II, 1067: "Y dijo el Señor: No debe ninguna persona dudar haber en su santo reino caballos muy preciosos y olorosos que, escrito es en el Apocalipsis, que vio San Juan salir del Cielo caballos".

un agente activo en el Más Allá.[22] Pero, ¿cómo llegó esta obra a las monjas/beatas de la época?

En los grandes monasterios benedictinos el Apocalipsis era leído a través de los comentarios del Beato de Liébana, presentes en tantos fondos conventuales; pero circuló asimismo en ámbitos femeninos: Cátedra 2005, 61 & 68–69, encuentra en un inventario del siglo XIV de un convento cisterciense el comentario a esta obra que hizo Joaquín de Fiore, agrupado entre los libros del refectorio (es decir, que se leen a la hora de la comida). Especialmente los *signa iudicii*, los signos que aparecerán antes del Juicio Final (abordados por Gonzalo de Berceo en su famoso poema), están presentes como tradición textual de difusión independiente en conventos, de modo que el Apocalipsis circula también a través de textos medievales intermedios (véase Cátedra 2005, 96 & 99).[23] No obstante, seguramente el conocimiento del Apocalipsis llegaría a Juana por su empleo en la liturgia, pues a partir del IV Concilio de Toledo el libro entró a formar parte de la misma, y ciertos pasajes se solían recitar con ocasión de determinadas fiestas, por ejemplo el capítulo 12 el día de la fiesta de San Miguel (como se ve en el sermón 56), aunque en el caso de Juana lo encontremos también versionado para el día de la Asunción (segundo auto e instrucciones del sermón 46) que celebra la fiesta mariana, así como en la fiesta de los ángeles del sermón 57, donde se reproduce la batalla de María con el dragón del Apocalipsis (véase cap. 12, 1–6, 13–17), tras otra disputa entre San Miguel y Lucifer sin expulsión a los infiernos.[24]

De todos modos, aunque la fuente de la franciscana está en el libro de Juan Evangelista, hay que recordar que en el Antiguo Testamento existían dos pasajes que relataban la caída de un rey arrogante (Isaías 14, 12–14; Ezequiel 28, 12–19), que los Padres de la Iglesia interpretaron como una narración de la caída de Diablo, a la que también hará referencia Apocalipsis 20, 1–3, y 2 Pedro 2, 4. Reforzada por esta tradición interpretativa, Juana nos presenta esta batalla de un modo particular: de las opciones que había para interpretar la rebelión del Demonio, Juana opta por la muy extendida de que no solo fuera debida a su soberbia (aludida también en 1 Timoteo 3, 6), sino a la imposición

[22] Boon relaciona este género con el papel de la devoción por María en la Reconquista y la justificación del nuevo imperio castellano a través de la retórica apocalíptica. Además, hace hincapié en la importancia de los ángeles en la narrativa popular apocalíptica.

[23] Parte de esta obra se tradujo al romance para la *General Estoria* alfonsí (se conserva su inicio en el manuscrito E6 de El Escorial). Para la General Estoria como "Biblia historial", véase Morreale 1980, y como Biblia romanceada, la fundamental introducción codicológica de Sánchez-Prieto Borja 2002. Agradezco a Álvaro Bustos el haberme llamado la atención sobre estos medios de difusión de la obra.

[24] Sobre esta disputa, véase el artículo de Boon, en prensa, sobre el Apocalipsis mariano en Juana de la Cruz.

del Padre de que acepten la autoridad de Cristo, una criatura de la Tierra, algo que sin duda chocaba con la idea jerárquica que se establecía en las regiones del Cielo, plasmada en los nueve coros de los ángeles.[25] Ya no se trata solo de que Lucifer quiera igualarse a Dios sino de que no quiere someterse al Hijo. Asimismo, Juana opta por situar la angelomaquia antes de la encarnación y ascensión de Cristo (*Vida y fin*, fol.117r) y de la ascensión de la Virgen a los Cielos (esta se produce al finalizar la batalla celestial), frente a otra tradición, procedente de la literatura apócrifa (*Libro del combate de Adán*), que sitúa esta batalla en la época del Paraíso terrenal, antes de la creación de Adán y Eva (véase Massip 1999, 241–242).

De las tres obras relacionadas con Juana que nos cuentan esta batalla celestial el relato más extenso es el del sermón 56 del *Conorte*, que, como hemos visto, la sitúa en la fiesta del arcángel San Miguel y no en el día la Asunción (aunque haya instrucciones para representarla en el sermón 46, que celebra esta fiesta mariana), porque es el arcángel quien en el Apocalipsis derrota al demonio en forma de dragón y capitanea la milicia de ángeles. En el *Conorte* la historia aparece contada por la divinidad, esa voz en quien siempre delega Juana (y la tercera persona que introduce la visión) para explicar las celebraciones litúrgicas y las Escrituras. No obstante, como en toda su obra, la Santa Trinidad ocupa también un lugar importante debatiendo los sucesos que se ponen en escena durante el sermón.

Por otro lado, Juana, en este relato, al igual que en la *Vida y fin*, tiene muy presentes los diferentes niveles de ángeles, distinguidos por el número de alas que poseen. Ángeles masculinos hermosos y lindos, con caracterización más pormenorizada en el *Conorte* que en el *Libro de la casa*, donde cumplen un papel performativo en la batalla pero en el que solo habla Lucifer. En el auto de esta obra ya no relata la historia el Señor, como en el *Conorte*, ni el ángel custodio de Juana Laurel, como en *la Vida y fin*, sino que el episodio es actuado directamente, en redondillas y verso romanceado (como también sucede en el primer auto de la Asunción), con acotaciones de por medio indicándonos los movimientos de los protagonistas. Podríamos postular entonces que hay un progreso en la dramatización del relato, suponiendo que el primer estadio fuera la narración. Así, si en *la Vida y fin* la batalla celestial es un pasaje plenamente narrado aunque se reproduzcan voces, la dramatización aumenta en el *Conorte* y se hace teatro en el *Libro de la casa*, donde va a formar parte integrante del segundo auto, que podemos por ello también relacionar con el sermón 57 del *Conorte*, en el cual María vence a Satanás-dragón. Lo cierto es que este último sermón es una extensión novedosa de la lucha entre ángeles buenos y malos del

[25] Juana establece nueve coros, siguiendo la tradición más extendida (*Conorte* II, 1229), pero para otras jerarquías de ángeles de números variados véase Jones 2011, 80–85.

56, aunque Lucifer ya se encuentre en el averno. Seguramente, el emparejamiento de San Miguel y la Virgen en el capítulo 12 del Apocalipsis es lo que funciona en este texto, así como el que motiva que la angelomaquia inicie el *Auto de la Asunción*, una originalidad a la que volveremos al final de este trabajo.[26]

Pero la mejor manera de vislumbrar como sería esa puesta en escena de la angelomaquia con posterior caída al infierno que proyecta Juana es leer el final del sermón 46, recogido en el apéndice de este artículo por el material que nos proporciona sobre el teatro conventual. Allí Dios explica cómo se debe representar la Asunción de la Virgen, introduciendo la angelomaquia, que no aparece en el sermón (por lo cual podemos sospechar que el ensamblaje de sermones realizado *a posteriori* pudo no responder cronológicamente a la predicación de Juana, como ya hemos señalado). Nos topamos entonces con unas indicaciones que preanuncian el sermón 56, y que parece se seguían en la representación del segundo auto del *Libro de la casa* (véase fol. 40r). Leer estas indicaciones nos lleva a apreciar la conciencia teatral de la franciscana, y que se pueda postular su autoría de al menos el segundo auto del *Libro de la casa*.[27]

Juana nos propone en este final del sermón 46 que el auto sea representado por niños, ofrece algún un consejo económico, y añade alguna escena y detalle que no aparece en el segundo auto del *Libro de la casa* (señalados en el apéndice), como la bendición final y entrega de galardones con canto final de los ángeles, que sí está en el sermón 56.[28] Asimismo, nos encontramos con el papel primordial que jugaba la música en sus sermones, menos presente en los autos del *Libro de la casa*, aunque incluyen canto. Finalmente, este apéndice nos sirve para percibir la importancia que da Juana en su predicación a la necesidad de la puesta en escena de lo que se le representa en sus visiones.

[26] La iconografía de la época también realizaba esta unificación de motivos identificando a la mujer que vence al dragón con la Virgen. En la época de Juana, como hoy en día, se leería el capítulo 12 del Apocalipsis (que encerraba tanto la angelomaquia como el triunfo de María) en el Oficio Divino de la fiesta de San Miguel. El dragón del Apocalipsis que lucha con la Mujer (la Virgen) remite claramente a la serpiente tentadora y a Génesis 3, 15 ("pongo enemistad entre ti y la mujer"). Lo interesante es que en la fiesta de la Asunción se recuerde este conjunto de referencias.

[27] Para Rodríguez Ortega 2016 232 & 238, la presencia de las instrucciones que adjunto en el apéndice nos indica que se representó en tiempos de Juana, cosa que no tiene tan clara con respecto al primer auto, que postula pertenece a una tradición anterior y es de distinta autoría. Esta investigadora piensa que el segundo auto pudo existir antes de Juana pero que ella dirigiría su puesta en escena (236 & 239; para la materialización de las instrucciones, véase 238). En cambio, el catálogo de teatro del XVI de García-Bermejo Giner 1996, 53, sitúa la composición de este auto en torno a 1510.

[28] Debo decir que, aunque hay pequeñas diferencias entre las instrucciones y el *Auto de la Asunción*, vista la libertad que deja Juana a sus actores (véase la nota final de este trabajo) no parecen relevantes.

En este sentido, llama la atención que, siendo la batalla celestial uno de los episodios que necesitaban el decorado del averno, este no aparezca, si bien este aspecto es coherente con la escasa presencia del infierno en su obra.[29] Excepto en la *Vida y fin*, donde cuenta sus visiones del Más Allá, Juana no parece especialmente interesada por el hábitat de Lucifer, ni por esas fieras fauces que abren su dominio, tan representadas en el teatro de la época: solamente en la figura del Demonio, especialmente como híbrido de ángel caído y animal, centra Juana su descripción.[30] No habrá entonces, entre sus instrucciones escénicas, una enorme boca de dragón con fauces dentadas para designar la entrada en el averno, aunque su uso escénico (con más o menos sofisticado artilugio) aparezca documentado desde el siglo XIII y en lugares como Cervera, Tortosa o Toledo en el siglo XV, así como en otros Corpus y entremeses de la angelomaquia de la Corona de Aragón (Massip 1999, 240, 242 & 247–248).[31] En el auto de Juana todo se ciñe a un decorado rudimentario (seguramente por tratarse de una celebración privada) presidido por el juego simbólico que, como veremos, desempeñan sillas y luces. Podemos imaginarnos que este auto se representaría en el convento (niños o monjas), y que habría sillas arrojadas por doquier: porque las sillas, distribuidas desde la creación de los ángeles (*Vida y fin*, fol. 116v), tienen una importancia fundamental dentro de la estructura de ese Cielo que se configura como ciudad paralela a la Tierra, en la que se mantienen las jerarquías sociales (véase *Conorte* II, 1348).[32] Enmarcada en ese esquema entendemos la relevancia de la acción de Lucifer en el segundo auto del *Libro de la casa*, quien intentará poner su silla delante de la de su Criador e, incluso, ocupar la del Señor, antes de que este le castigue abajándole y subiendo alto a los ángeles vencedores, quienes muestran una humilde reticencia (1209 &

[29] Massip 1999, 240, describe así la puesta en escena del infierno en el teatro medieval: "Situados en lados opuestos, uno ante otro, el infierno (oeste) y el paraíso (este) se erigen en los dos polos de eternidad que cierran el resto de decorados, es decir, el espacio mundano, perecedero y mudable, la escena efímera. Una disposición que suele aparecer en casi todos los grandes espectáculos de tema religioso, si bien la presencia infernal es imprescindible en tres episodios: el combate de Miguel con los ángeles rebeldes, la bajada del Cristo resucitado a los infiernos y la entrada de los condenados en los dominios de Satanás en el día del Juicio".

[30] En este sentido, podemos decir que Juana contradice a Oldridge 2012, 8, para quien es más difícil imaginarse el Cielo que el infierno (véase también Luengo Balbás 2015, 269–271).

[31] En Toledo, cerca de donde procedía Sor Juana, el infierno se construye con aros cubiertos de papel, engrudo y telas negras que se abren en una boca de dragón (Torroja Menéndez & Rivas Palá 1977, 49).

[32] Rodríguez Ortega 2016, 231 & 236, propone que este auto lo llevaran a cabo feligreses de la parroquia por contar con muchos personajes (frente al *Auto de la sepultura*) y la necesidad de que hubiera niños (véase también, sobre el público amplio de las representaciones de Juana, Barbeito Carneiro 2007, 285).

1215).[33] Veamos ahora un pasaje del diálogo entre Dios-Padre y Lucifer (que se enfrentan de modo más directo en el *Auto* que en los otros textos, favorecidos por la estructura del diálogo), el cual nos muestra plásticamente la rebeldía que produce en algunos ángeles la llamada a la adoración a Cristo.

Lucifer – Baja, baja de lo alto
tú que ansí nos amenazas
y veremos en lo bajo
quién tiene maiores alas.
Yo tengo alas tan lindas
que si empieço de bolar
tengo de poner mi silla
delante la Magestad.
(Aquí toma Lucifer la silla y la arroja en alto y dize)
A mí tenéis de adorar
todos quantos sois criados
y si otra cosa pensáis
ayámoslo a las manos. (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 5r)

En el *Conorte* este arrojar de las sillas se hace más intenso y colectivo:

> Y diciendo estas cosas y muchas blasfemias, tomaban de las sillas y piedras preciosas que allí estaban y arrojábanlas hacia en alto, pensando de dar al Señor con ellas y derribarle de allí abajo. Y dijo el Señor que, como ellos tenían las manos y las uñas tan grandes y fieras, no solamente tomaban una silla en cada mano, mas diez o doce, y las arrojaban en alto con grande furia […]. (*Conorte* II, 1210)

En el pasaje del *Auto* hemos visto a Lucifer presumir de alas lindas. Y en la segunda parte del sermón 56 encontraremos descripciones detalladas de los ángeles, de sus vestiduras, pendones y joyas (Dios llega a decir que se quiere adornar con los ángeles, a la vez que con paramentos y cortinas: *Conorte* II, 1215), para las que sin duda se inspiraría Juana en el arte circundante, donde aparecían con tanta frecuencia ángeles guerreros (véase Giorgi 2005).[34] En la *Vida y fin* también hay alusiones a su belleza, pero el orgullo de los ángeles malos por su físico solo aparece dramáticamente desarrollado en la *amplificatio* del *Conorte*, donde unos cuantos se manifiestan de manera repetida como presumidos en exceso, frente a la humildad de los otros.

[33] Para la ciudad del Cielo en Juana de la Cruz, véase Luengo Balbás 2015, 242–250. San Miguel era de una jerarquía inferior a Lucifer, pues tenía seis alas en vez de las doce de aquel (*Conorte* II, 1216).

[34] En el arte peninsular del XV podemos encontrar fácilmente retablos de la angelomaquia (véase Massip 1999, 246–247). Para diversas muestras de la plasmación de la batalla celestial en el arte europeo de la época, véase Gorgievski 2010, 41 & 44–46.

> Y como ellos se veían tan lindos y claros y hermosos, hablaban unos con otros y decían:
> –Mira cuán lindo soy.
> Y otros decían:
> –Mirad qué tengo yo de alas. […]
> Y decían los unos:
> –Más alas y más pintadas tengo yo.
> Y respondían los otros:
> –Pues nosotros no tenemos alas, mas bien contentos estamos con lo que el poderoso Dios nos dio. (*Conorte* II, 1206)

Esta conversación se sitúa entre vuelos y juegos de rayas hechos con varas (los ángeles) y lanzas (Lucifer) en los alcázares donde habitan (*Conorte* II, 1208–1209). Un aspecto lúdico que precederá al bélico que se desencadenará progresivamente en el *Conorte*, dibujado por un juego de luces que enmarca una acotación del *Auto*.

> (Ahora se matan las luzes y queda escuro y comiençan a hazer ruydo como de pelea, y habla el Padre y dize tres vezes que cese la pelea, y a cada vez cesa, y la postrera vez habla el Padre maldiziendo a los malos y en cayendo los ángeles malos encienden las luzes). (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 5v)

Seguramente a la idea siempre simbólica de la luz y la oscuridad pudo ayudar también la imagen de Lucas 10, 18, donde Jesucristo asegura haber visto a Satán caer como un rayo del Cielo. Este juego de luces, clave en la rudimentaria puesta en escena conventual (como se puede percibir también en nuestro apéndice), aparece explicado en la *Vida y fin*, como si, en la enmarañada red textual de la batalla celestial planteada por Juana, un texto acabara contextualizando al otro.

> Tornando la bienabenturada a preguntar a su sancto ángel: "¿Pues cómo, señor, se les tornó la claridad a los que ansí escuros estavan, según dize vuestra señoría?"; respondió el sancto ángel diziendo: "En la hora que el Señor se nos mostró en su esençia y exçelençia y claridad y hermosura, luego nos vimos todos claros. Y a nós mesmos se nos tornó la claridad en viendo la de Dios". (*Vida y fin*, fol. 117v)

Volviendo a los protagonistas del drama, en un paralelismo establecido por Juana en este episodio entre los ángeles y los seres humanos, la Trinidad decide probar a los primeros en cuanto a la obediencia (*Conorte* II, 1211–1212). Es decir, se presupone una cierta desconfianza divina previa, aunque en el *Conorte* la autoridad da tres días a los ángeles malos para rectificar su actitud, amonestándoles con amor *(Conorte* II, 1209), tres días que no aparecen en el segundo *Auto de la Asunción* ni en la *Vida y fin* y a los que, como veremos, Juana concede mucha importancia para otorgar veracidad a

su versión de la historia sagrada. Así, a lo largo del sermón 56, los ángeles serán una y otra vez probados y tentados por Dios, que hace de espectador de la batalla, y por ello tarda en socorrer a los ángeles buenos cuando son golpeados por los malos: una actitud pasiva que repetirá en el siguiente sermón, el 57 ya mencionado, hasta que la Virgen los ayude.[35]

En esta igualación con los hombres en cuanto sufrientes de una prueba divina como si fueran nuevos Job (que permite al Señor predicador animar a su público humano a ganar como los ángeles el Cielo "por su lanza y trabajo": *Conorte* II, 1216), los ángeles buenos adoptan una disposición doméstica, pues, tras la batalla celestial, se dedican a barrer y limpiar la suciedad que se queda en el Cielo (*Conorte* II, 1214). Pero al tiempo que se produce esta suerte de rebajamiento, debo decir que los ángeles de Juana, personajes multiformes y dúctiles, también pueden ser igualados a la divinidad, en tanto que María y Cristo se transforman en ángeles durante dos episodios de los sermones 56 y 57 (*Conorte* II, 1217–1218 & 1231).[36]

Frente a esta pintura de los ángeles, los demonios son animalizados, como en tantos cuadros de la época, e incluso en las representaciones teatrales, donde los actores se agenciaban de pilosidades y cuernos (Massip 1999, 255–257). Ya no se presentan solo desnudos o con figuras bestiales, sino directamente transformados en serpientes, culebras, osos, lobos, perros, toros, leones y dragones (*Conorte* II, 1210), dentro de la afición de Juana por los animales en sus visiones. Frente a Lucifer, un hediondo dragón lleno de cabezas, colas, ojos, espinas y uñas, su hueste aparece con un aspecto más unificado que destaca por una única cola que agitan todos (*Conorte* II, 1211), el mal olor y unas largas uñas, que servirán como garfios, garrotes o disciplinas (también presentes en el teatro de la época: Massip 1999, 259–260). Por su parte, San Miguel es representado no con una espada sino con una lanza tricorne (símbolo de la Santa Trinidad: *Conorte* II, 1212), que seguramente acompañaría a su actitud desafiante en el *Auto* expresada mediante un adverbio deíctico que enfatiza el aquí y el ahora performativo de la escena: "Salga luego a pelear/ el que se toma con Dios/ que lo quiero yo vengar/ muramos *aquí* los dos" (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 5r).[37]

En el *Auto* los rasgos físicos apenas están señalados, pero en el *Conorte* se presta mucha atención a estos detalles, del mismo modo que se concretiza el tiempo de la acción: tres días dura la prueba de los ángeles buenos y tres horas

[35] En ningún momento se podrá plantear la batalla entre el Creador y su criatura, pues el Demonio no puede igualarse a quien lo crea: de ahí esta delegación de la lucha en terceros.

[36] En la transformación de Cristo, Juana juega con su consideración como Ángel del Buen Consejo presente en una versión de Isaías 9, 5.

[37] Al uso teatral del deíctico vuelve en la escena final cuando el Padre le llama junto a Él: "Michael, mi grande amigo,/ ven *acá* pues lo has ganado" (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 7r).

la batalla (II 1209, 1213).[38] También al escenario dedica más atención el libro de los sermones: la caída del Demonio y sus acólitos está así descrita en el *Conorte*: "Y que así como sonó la voz, luego empezaron a caer con muy grande estruendo, y cayeron, a deshora, todos aquellos espíritus malignos tan espesos como la lluvia cuando cae del Cielo y tan recios como rayos y relámpagos" (II, 1213); una descripción que aparece prácticamente repetida en la *Vida y fin*: "Y luego se hizo grande estruendo estando todo en tinieblas. Y con fuerte estallido cayeron de súpito más espesos al infierno que la nieve, ni el granizo, ni la lluvia, ni el hollín quando apriesa cae y el biento le trae alrededor" (fol. 118r). Podemos imaginarnos cómo serían estos estrépitos en la caída al infierno por las representaciones de la época, con fragores originados con calderos, tinas o yunques repicados (Massip 1999, 249), aunque probablemente en el convento se emplearían los primeros objetos junto a redobles de tambores, tan presentes en los sermones de Juana; y se haría contrastar este ruido caótico con los cantos y música armoniosa que acababa acompañando a los ángeles buenos, como vemos por el texto del apéndice o por el final del sermón 56.[39] Lo que no es probable es que el mal olor se reflejara con quema de azufre y fuegos de cierto tipo, como en las representaciones más sofisticadas de entonces (Massip 1999, 250); sin embargo, el buen olor de los ángeles buenos pudo estar significado por esos incensarios y rosas que sujetan en el *Conorte* (II, 1215 & 1218) en tanto cantan, bailan y tañen. En cualquier caso, en cuanto a técnicas de escritura, son los textos del *Conorte* y de la *Vida y fin* los que más se aproximan entre sí, como hemos visto, favorecidos por su carácter narrativo.

Tras la caída, en la *Vida y fin* (fol 118v) y en el segundo auto del *Libro de la casa* (fol. 5r) quedan las sillas vacías donde debían estar los ángeles malos; sillas que se reocupan en el *Conorte* según las distintas jerarquías (II, 1215), y de las que en el *Auto* ocupa el primer puesto la Virgen entre cantos sacados del Cantar de los Cantares, tan del gusto de Juana (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 6r). Estas sillas además introducen la mirada de Dios como público: "Hazedor de maravillas,/ Señor Dios que nos criaste,/ mira las sillas vazías/ de aquellos que derribaste" (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 6r); y algunas de ellas, en la *Vida y fin* (fol. 118r–118v), se dejan misteriosamente vacías esperando las criaturas divinas o humanas que se sienten en ellas, es decir, no son ocupadas

[38] En el auto Juana no alude a la fealdad y monstruosidad que adquieren los demonios, ni los presenta desnudos, seguramente porque este era un rasgo no representable (en todo caso, la desnudez se fingía con maillots de color carne o, en los demonios, con revestimiento de pelos y figuras; agradezco a Francesc Massip el apunte).

[39] El sermón 56 y el final del 46 (véase apéndice) alargan el episodio deteniéndose en los coros de ángeles: la canción que entonan tras la batalla y la música que producen contrastaría con las voces disonantes y los gritos de los demonios.

inmediatamente por la Virgen como en el *Auto*, siendo la *Vida y fin* la única obra de las tres que no fusiona la tradición de la Asunción con la angelomaquia (recordemos que el sermón 56 tampoco fusiona estas tradiciones, frente al 46 o el 57 del *Conorte*). De modo que la batalla acaba con una simbólica reocupación de sillas que tenía su apoyo en la iconografía: así en una pintura anónima del siglo XIV del Louvre la mitad de las sillas reservadas a los ángeles debajo del trono de Dios están vacías (Gorgievski 2010, 41).

Con esta narración dramática de la angelomaquia el Señor corrige la versión que circula en la Tierra (de acuerdo a su actitud instructora en las celebraciones que señalé en el primer apartado de este artículo), y así la franciscana establece la versión definitiva, superior a todas las escritas en la historia previa de la Iglesia, corroborada en su *Vida* y celebrada en su monasterio, haciendo hincapié en la novedad de la espera de tres días, como si la del *Conorte* fuera la versión más acabada:

> Y declaró el Señor diciendo que, aunque tienen acá en la Tierra escritas algunas cosas de la creación de los ángeles, y del caimiento y venganza de los malos y soberbios y de la santificación de los ángeles buenos, y de los gozos y consolaciones que Él les ha dado y da cada día y dará para siempre, que no está todo tan entero y cumplido como ello fue. Porque los que lo escribieron no lo vieron ni supieron ellos así como Él mismo, que los crio y derribó a los que erraron contra Él. […] Y dijo el Señor: Dicen algunos que, como Lucifer y los otros espíritus de maldad pecaron, luego los derribó y destruyó Él; los tales no dicen verdad, que primero los esperó por tres días y los amonestó muchas veces. (*Conorte* II, 1219)[40]

3. Final: Sobre la batalla celestial y el *Auto de la Asunción*

En este trabajo he señalado solo algunos desarrollos y diferencias entre los textos que nos cuentan la batalla celestial, con la intención de que este ejemplo sirva para hacerse una idea del gran teatro visionario que despliega Juana. Parece claro que a Juana le atrae esta historia porque es protagonizada por ángeles y le intrigaba su historia bélica, que reproduce de manera única nada menos que en las tres obras producidas por su mediación. Lo que no podemos saber es el orden de escritura de estos textos: si Juana empezó por el relato más largo, el del *Conorte*, pasó por el siguiente en extensión de la

[40] Cf. esta seguridad en la versión de Juana con las precauciones de la introducción al *Conorte* II, 227: "Y si en este dicho libro y libros que de él se puedan hacer fuere alguna cosa que parezca no bien dicha, no se ha de echar la culpa al mismo sapientísimo Espíritu Santo, el cual dice, hace y enseña todas las cosas muy perfectamente, sino a quien lo escribió, porque pudo la péndola errar o la memoria en algo trascordarse".

Vida y fin, y desembocó en el teatro del segundo auto del *Libro de la casa*, o si la cronología fue la contraria. Independientemente de que el *Libro del conorte* precediera al de la *Vida y fin* porque este se escribe en los últimos años de su vida, completándose tras su muerte (Triviño 2005, 104; Ibáñez 2016, 13), y de que el *Libro de la casa* sea posterior por el tipo de letra y porque incluye sucesos de otras monjas del monasterio (aunque el *Auto* fuera compuesto o celebrado, siguiendo las indicaciones del sermón 46, al tiempo de sus sermones), lo cierto es que la versión del *Conorte* parece la más completa y definitiva, a juzgar por las propias palabras de Juana señaladas.

Por otro lado, enmarcado en el contexto homilético, el *Auto* se podría postular como *lectio* transformada en representación en una línea de interpretación defendida hace unos años por Cátedra 2005, 128. Seguramente el buen olfato teatral de Juana la llevaría a recordar y recrear las representaciones de la angelomaquia que pudo contemplar en Toledo. Ciertamente, lo que ella nos presenta es una manifestación tempranísima de puesta en escena de la historia sagrada que va más allá de tropos y autos religiosos al uso (*Ordo Prophetarum*, *Visitatio sepulchri* u *Officium Pastorum*) representados en las iglesias del Bajo Medievo europeo y castellano (véase Gómez Moreno & Sanmartín Bastida 2002, 1088–1091). Pero Juana pudo nutrirse de los misterios que se celebraban en la Catedral de Toledo durante el siglo XV: como documentan Torroja Menéndez y Rivas Palá, en esta centuria hubo una *Visitatio sepulchri* con las tres Marías, una presentación de Cristo en el templo, y, más importante, una *Rrepresentacçión de Nuestra Señora de la Asumpçión* en los tiempos de la juventud de Juana (véase Torrojas Menéndez y Palá Rivas 1977, 191).[41] Tal vez una Juana de doce años, durante el Corpus toledano de 1493, la contempló antes de irse al monasterio de Cubas, y la obra pudo llevarse a Illescas, de la misma diócesis, donde vivía en la casa-palacio de un tío suyo (véase Gómez López 2004, 1234). Aun así, lo más probable es que este auto asuncionista de la catedral toledana no incluyera una angelomaquia, sino que tuviera relación con el auto XXXII del *Códice de Autos Viejos* (de la segunda mitad del XVI y con piezas religiosas de tradición medieval), algunos de cuyos versos coinciden con los del primer auto del *Libro de la casa* o *Auto de la sepultura*.[42]

[41] Asimismo, entre 1493 y 1510, se representaron treinta y tres obras en la catedral: entre otras, los autos *El pecado de Adán*, *Los santos padres*, *La tentación de Cristo*, el *Auto de la degollación de San Juan*, el *Auto del Bautismo de Cristo*, el *Auto del sacrificio de Abraham* y el *Auto de la Ascensión*.

[42] Quirante Santacruz 2001 pone en relación el auto XXXII del *Códice de Autos Viejos* con el auto representado en la Catedral de Toledo con motivo del Corpus a través del *Auto de la sepultura* del *Libro de la casa*. Para un análisis más detallado de la filiación de los autos de la Asunción de este códice y, en general, de toda la tradición asuncionista medieval peninsular, con edición de textos incluida, véase Juliá Martínez 1961.

¿De dónde sacaría entonces Juana que hubiera en el segundo auto una angelomaquia previa a la Asunción de la Virgen, y que además esté provocada por una anunciada ascensión (y reinado) de Cristo en los Cielos, no por la de María? Aunque la angelomaquia está presente en el teatro del XVI, no se encuentra unido a la Asunción en la *Leyenda áurea* ni en los evangelios apócrifos (véase Rodríguez Ortega 2016, 234–235) este episodio que resta importancia a la protagonista de su día y que de hecho acaba con San Miguel hablando y cerrando la función.[43] Sin duda, nos encontramos con uno de los rasgos más originales de la obra de Juana (o del convento, si no aceptamos su autoría), que ella puede justificar por esa corrección del guion que persigue Dios, y que sería también factible explicar por la fusión de la Virgen del Apocalipsis y su derrota del dragón con la batalla celestial, sin necesidad de pensar que "desvió el tema", como comenta Juliá Martínez 1961, 246.[44] Si consideramos la predilección por el Apocalipsis mariano y los ángeles que muestra Juana en su obra quizás no es sorprendente que en su convento se haga precisamente teatro con el *Auto de la Asunción* al tiempo que los ángeles conservan protagonismo re-interpretando el libro de Juan Evangelista.

De todos modos, debo decir que Juana reconoce la dificultad de su empresa: en la *Vida y fin* asegura que el episodio de la batalla celestial y la caída de los ángeles rebeldes es un relato complicado de escribir. Esto lo comenta en un bello pasaje que quiero recoger, como colofón, pues en él Juana reflexiona sobre esta dificultad en boca de su ángel Laurel antes de que este cuente cómo sucedió todo, y después de que ella le pregunte por qué los buenos quedaron tan bellos, y los malos sucios y hediondos.

> Cosas son esas que, para te las declarar, será menester mucho espaçio, y tú alcanzar alto entendimiento, porque las cosas que en el Çielo pasaron y se contrataron entre Dios y los ángeles, buenas y malas, antes

[43] Hay algunas obras del *Códice de Autos Viejos* donde encontramos alusiones a la batalla de los ángeles y la caída de Lucifer: la *Farsa del Triunpho del Sacramento* (LXXXI) y el *Aucto de acusación contra el Género Humano* (LVII); también aparece en *La victoria de Cristo* de Bartolomé Palau, pero estas obras no son de temática mariana (agradezco a Mercedes de los Reyes el apunte). Por otro lado, la angelomaquia está presente en celebraciones medievales desde al menos el siglo XV, por ejemplo en el Corpus catalán o en un torneo napolitano (Massip 2003, 108–109 n127), y hubo demonios, aunque sin batalla (el tono era lúdico), en una *Representació de l'Assumpció de Madona Sancta Maria* de Tarragona (Juliá Martínez 1961, 204–210; Massip 2008, 246–247, la sitúa en 1388).

[44] Juliá Martínez atribuye este desvío a una exaltación de la Concepción de la Virgen que, según él, se anuncia en la copla colofón incluida en su edición (1961 334), que no aparece en el manuscrito, aunque sí una alusión a la oración por la concepción de María que se recita el día de la Asunción (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 39v). Por otro lado, también esta relación de la angelomaquia con la Asunción puede encuadrarse, como me sugiere Ángel Gómez Moreno, en un desarrollo de la tipología bíblica de evolución por contraste (luz-Virgen y oscuridad-Lucifer, lucha frente a armonía final), favorecido en este caso por el juego de luces.

> que cayesen los dañados en el hondón del infierno y quedasen las buenas, piadosas y justas limpias con su Dios y criador […], no se podían scrivir por vía humana, ni bastaría papel, ni tinta, ni abía péndola que lo sufriese. (*Vida y fin,* fol. 116v)

Mas en esto, como en otras cosas, Juana no se amilana y se lanza en numerosas tentativas a explicar lo difícil. Como resultado, tenemos una batalla celestial que corrige la versión oficial de su tiempo y que nos muestra a toda una directora de escena, dramaturga y compositora que merece la pena descubrir entre los muros conventuales de inicios del siglo XVI. Ciertamente, se podría postular que ella compuso los autos del *Libro de la casa*, dado el sentido dramático de sus textos y por la propuesta de puesta en escena del segundo que adjuntamos. Creemos que nuestra lectura de este *Auto de la Asunción*, contextualizado con las angelomaquias presentes en la *Vida y fin* y en el *Conorte*, nos invita a contemplar al menos esta posibilidad.

Apéndice: Instrucciones para la puesta en escena de la batalla celestial[45]

Y dijo su divina Majestad: Que hagan en la tierra una remembranza y auto muy devoto y provechoso para las ánimas y personas fieles, el cual auto y remembranza ha de ser del ensalzamiento y asunción de la misma Reina de los Cielos y del caimiento de los ángeles.

Y ha de ser hecho de esta manera: Que han de hacer un tablado muy alto y adornado y empamentado, como a manera del Cielo y con algunos asentamientos a manera de sillas, y allí una silla más alta y adornada que todas, y en ella asentado uno muy apuesto y vestido y autorizado, el cual esté puesto en lugar de Dios Padre. Y por semejante, estén en las otras sillas y por todo el tablado muchos niños y mancebos de buen parecer, y todos muy vestidos y apuestos y con alas pintadas como ángeles.[46] […]

Y luego ha de hablar el que está en la silla más alta en lugar de Dios Padre, con voz muy autorizada y poderosa, cantando lo más preciosamente que pudiere. Y ha de amonestar a todos aquellos que están hechos como ángeles

[45] Tomo este fragmento del *Conorte* II, 1101–1103, suprimiendo las frases que se refieren al papel de la Virgen y no al de los ángeles, y contrastándolo con la edición de Triviño 2006, 154–156. Corrijo la puntuación y acentuación de ambas ediciones.

[46] Rodríguez Ortega 2016, 237–238, atribuye al segundo auto del *Libro de la casa* un movimiento hacia el coro que se da en el primero, lo cual le hace pensar que se pondría en escena en la capilla. Sin embargo, en esta obra se nos indica que el *Auto de la Asunción* se representa en el refectorio, lo cual llama la atención por la puesta en escena que implican las instrucciones ("en el que hazen el día de la sancta Asumpción en el refitorio concedió el Señor grandes gracias, y dijo el mismo Señor en un sermón que hizo en el santo *Conorte* de la sancta Asumpción que gustaba se hiziesse y dio la industria para ello, y no tan solamente concedió el Señor gracias en el *Auto* sino también a quien dixere que se haga y ayudare a poner el tablado": *Libro de la casa*, fol. 40r).

que le adoren y obedezcan, pues es su Dios y criador, y ellos sus siervos y obra de sus manos.[47] Y después que los haya amonestado por tres veces y algunos de ellos hayan dicho y porfiado que no le quieren obedecer ni adorar, hecha la pelea de los malos y de los otros buenos –que también han de responder y decir que quieren adorar y obedecer a su Dios y criador y humillarse debajo de su mano poderosa–, y después que haya salido el que estuviere en lugar del arcángel San Miguel, con una lanza muy pintada y larga y al cabo de ella tres hierros muy lúcidos –los cuales tres hierros en una lanza signifiquen la Santísima Trinidad que son tres personas y un solo Dios verdadero, en cuyo poderío y virtud venció el arcángel San Miguel aquel gran dragón Lucifer y a toda su compaña que con él consintieron en el pecado–, porque, en aquel día que el glorioso príncipe Miguel peleó con Lucifer y con toda su hueste, tenía una lanza en su mano con tres hierros, linda y pintada grande y resplandeciente y preciosa sin comparación.[48] Y han de hacer la pelea muy grande estruendo, como que los ángeles buenos derriban en la pelea a los malos.

Y de que hayan acabado de pelear, escóndanse los que desobedecieron y son figurados a los demonios, porque parezca que los han derribado. Y luego aparezcan los ángeles, que quedaron muy hermosos y gozosos y alegres, y el Padre celestial que les está dando muy grandes galardones y bendición, y ellos todos estén cantando y tañendo y adorando y dando gracias y loando y bendiciendo muy humildosamente a su Dios y Criador porque les dio victoria en la batalla y nos los derribó con los otros malos. Y como haya acabado el que está en lugar de Dios Padre de decir cómo santifica a todos aquellos ángeles buenos, muestren las sillas cómo quedaron vacías, diciéndolo todo cantando a coplas, según que el Espíritu Santo alumbrare y enseñare a los que lo hubieron de hacer y mandaren ordenar.

Y luego tomen todos los ángeles, dijo el Señor, a Nuestra Señora. Y ensálcenla y súbanla, con muchos cánticos y honra e instrumentos, y asiéntenla en la silla que estuviere junta y más cercana al que está asentado en la silla grande, en lugar de Dios Padre […]. Y diciendo también y cantando, en las coplas y canciones, cómo manda y posee Nuestra Señora, por su humildad, lo que Lucifer y todos los demonios perdieron por su gran soberbia y maldad. Y cómo, por ser ella Madre de Dios, Virgen pura y humilde, y santa

[47] En estas instrucciones no se menciona el anuncio de la ascensión de Jesús a los Cielos, de adoración obligada, que es el motivo final para la rebelión de Lucifer en el sermón 56, en la *Vida y fin* y en el *Auto*.

[48] La simbología del número tres es clara en Juana. Por otro lado, la amonestación del Padre repetida tres veces también está en el *Auto* (véase la acotación reproducida sobre la caída de los ángeles), pero aquí aparece desarrollada la negación de los ángeles rebeldes a obedecer.

y perfecta y acabada y cumplida de todas las virtudes, fue causa que se llenen de hombres todas las sillas del Cielo que, por la soberbia y desobediencia y maldad de Lucifer y de sus ángeles, fueron vacías.

Y allende de esto, hagan, en este santo día de Nuestra Señora, lo que más el Espíritu Santo les alumbrare.[49] Porque todo cuanto gastaren en hacer esta remembranza y otra, u otras, que en ese santo libro están mandadas, y todo el trabajo y diligencia que en ellos pusieren, será muy bien galardonado de Dios. Y los que lo hicieren y mandaren hacer habrán grandes indulgencias de Dios, dijo Él mismo, y le harán en ello mayor servicio y placer que criatura humana podría decir ni creer ni pensar. Y que el gasto y el trabajo en ser el tiempo templado no puede ser mucho, ni el peligro. Y el galardón y devoción y provecho de los fieles será grande delante el acatamiento divino.

[49] Esta frase, que se repite un par de párrafos antes, parece mostrar que Juana deja una cierta libertad de improvisación a sus actores y que considera dúctil la historia sagrada. Por otro lado, vemos aquí las referencias económicas que he mencionado antes. Agradezco a Sofie Kluge el haberme invitado a participar en este monográfico.

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HISTORY DIRECTED:

Cultural Memory and Messianism in Lope de Vega's *El último godo*[*]

By Sacramento Roselló-Martínez

Lope de Vega's El último godo stages the legend of the 8th century invasion of Gothic Spain by Muslim armies. The play follows a messianic structure where the lascivious gothic king, Don Rodrigo, is a condition of possibility for the coming of the chaste initiator of the re-conquest, Pelayo. This binarism present in other versions of the legend, situates the play within a chain of texts creating a cultural memory of the Reconquista. This article problematizes both messianism and cultural memory as recognizable structures in the staging of historical plays. In doing so, it also defines spectatorship as a political collective proposing a critique of Spanish historian Antonio Maravall's theory of Spanish Golden Age as a directed culture.

El último godo is a play by Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega (1562–1635) in which he retells the story of the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula by Muslim invaders during the reign of Visigoth king Don Rodrigo (ca. 711). The play also recreates the formation of an organized resistance led by Pelayo, a Visigoth lord from the northern region of Asturias. Although the full process of conquest and re-conquest lasted roughly eight hundred years and became entangled in all forms of religious, political, and cultural discourses, the play focuses on Rodrigo as responsible for the invasion and Pelayo as responsible for the resistance that materialized in the *Reconquista*[1], making those two moments correlative. Indeed, as it will be explained, in Lope's play Rodrigo's behavior is responsible for what came to be known as the Fall of Spain, while Pelayo is not only the heart and soul behind the *Reconquista* but the condition of possibility for the restoration of a Christian monarchy.

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[1] The Spanish term *Reconquista* refers to a period of over 800 years which ended with the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. By the time Lope de Vega was writing his play, the term had already been established as an event, rather than as the long process involving military campaigns, negotiations and diplomatic partnerships that it really was. I will therefore use the Spanish term in italics here.

Invasion and resistance were naturally inscribed in the historiographical canon of medieval Castile. They were also subsequently transmitted into new contexts and through new means of expression, including popular ballads and, as in the occasion for this article, the theater of Spanish Golden Age. As any process of adaptation, the story negotiated variation but it preserved as a defining feature the simplification of a complex process in the history of Spain into two interdependent moments, namely, the loss of Spain in the invasion and its rebuilding through the materialization of a resistance and the logic of military expulsion. *El último godo*, benefiting from this binary structure already at work in the legendary plot, exemplifies two very important features of Spanish Golden Age playwriting. Firstly, it organizes protagonists, locations and even secondary characters in paired dichotomies, a structure mastered in Lope de Vega's dramatic plots. It also exemplifies how representation and performance engaged dynamically with this kind of structure. This methodology has been recognized as Lope's major contribution to Spanish early modern theater and was described by the dramatist in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*[2]. Secondly, the engagement with canonical literary and historiographical sources that feed the plot of *El último godo* show Lope's understanding of the complicity of theater in presenting defining moments of national history to an audience. In this sense, the play proposes a vision of the history of Spain in moral absolutes and ultimately invites a critical inquiry into the role of the performance of historical plays in the construction of a cultural memory, in this case, of the *Reconquista*.

The story of the Fall of Spain during Rodrigo's reign and the resistance to Muslim rule led by Pelayo pervades the copious corpus of medieval Castilian chronicles. It also appears in popular narratives, where it is repeatedly adapted to fit subsequent moments of crisis through history. The reason for this adaptability is its function as a foundational myth. In his study about the foundational status of the story of Don Rodrigo, Alan Deyermond (1986) argues that the legend's ability to adapt is due to its messianic structure of fall and redemption, which made possible its continuous renewal – for there is always the hope for a new messiah – during different moments of crisis. The legend provides a unifying discourse rooted in the notion of a return to the primal greatness of Visigoth Spain. This narrative is elaborated throughout the literary and historiographical canon of medieval Spain, making its way into adaptations from page to stage in the context of the Golden Age

[2] In *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias* – or new art of playwriting – Lope explains the need for adapting to a new style that includes changes such as the unity of time, space and theme in each act or *jornada*, the reduction from 5 to 3 *jornadas* and the balance between tragic and comic. For the impact of this text see Pedraza Jiménez 2010.

dramatization of *El último godo*. On the stage, however, three conventions charged with symbolic value prepare the story for popular consumption. First, the protagonists – Rodrigo and Pelayo – are presented as models: the former of narcissistic tyranny, the latter of virtuous leadership. Second, the space: the aristocratic courts of Toledo and Córdoba, which concentrate all sorts of temptations, versus the *locus amoenus* preserved in Asturias, the isolated, inaccessible and northernmost region where the resistance started, which appears as a representation of the Garden of Eden. Third, the feminine characters: Florinda, the seductress, and Solmira, the chaste noble woman. While Florinda is the reason for Rodrigo's fall, Solmira, Pelayo's sister, makes possible, through her marriage to a Visigoth nobleman, the birth of a lineage defined first and foremost by the purity of her bloodline. Solmira's role in this structure is to aid in the characterization of Pelayo as a worthy king. The play develops a narrative in which virtue is understood almost exclusively as chastity of the body and as such, Pelayo's celibacy is paramount to achieving legitimacy. Continuity then is at stake, and so it falls on Solmira to take on the task of perpetuating a virtuous lineage defined in opposition to Rodrigo. Rodrigo, after giving into lust amongst other sins, can neither perform as a worthy king nor as the founder of a dynasty.

Asturias versus Toledo, Pelayo versus Rodrigo, and Solmira versus Florinda are the three pillars of a legendary sequence retold with much repetition and very specific variations. Moreover, the combination of these binaries, typical of Lope's dramas, with the messianic structure of the plot transforms the *mise-en-scène* of the historic-legendary play into an important step in the formation of a cultural memory of the *Reconquista*. Cultural memory is then fueled with the dramatic presentation of Rodrigo's sins, which bring about the invasion, his penance, which precedes Pelayo's success in driving the Muslim invaders out of the Peninsula, and the proclamation of Pelayo as the precursor of a restored (redeemed) monarchy.

In the context of the transmission of this legend, and in particular its presence on the stage, the term cultural memory refers to the archive of texts, conceived as a repository of both oral transmission and selected documents, preserved in any form of cultural manifestations (popular, literary and also historiographic) that bring about a sentiment of collective cohesion and a shared identity. I contend that *El último godo* contributes to this process of memory formation and that the critical double binding of theater as a textual and performative product is both essential to the legend's transmission and instrumental for a broader inquiry into the debate over Spanish so-called directed culture during the 1600s. The notion of *cultura dirigida* (directed culture), as proposed by José Antonio Maravall (1975), sees theater as an affair orchestrated by agents of the state and shaped by manipulative

strategies of what we would call today opinion making. Recent reconsiderations of this concept[3], however, make possible to see the interaction between culture and politics as a more dynamic process, organically shaped in the moment in which *mise-en-scène* meets a historical and legendary horizon of expectation on the part of the audience. This article proposes that the concept of *cultura dirigida* and, in particular, its problematization of spectatorship as a political collective, allows for a reading of *El último godo* that engages with the transmission of the legend as well as with the symbolic power of a cultural memory of the *Reconquista*.

1. Rodrigo and Pelayo in the cultural archive

When thinking about the legend of Don Rodrigo, there should be an awareness of the two stories implied in its narrative: on the one hand, the tale of the reign of the last Visigoth king and the many internal conflicts that were at the core of his fall; on the other hand, the tale of the resistance, the Christian opposition to a Muslim rule, and the coming of a new monarchy through the character and actions of Pelayo. In reality, these are not two events but two processes. They were separated in historical time by at least a generation and, since the real protagonist was the threat of the Muslim invasion and conquest, establishing a cause-effect relation in the historical narrative became an ideological necessity.

Early chronicles, in particular the *Crónica mozárabe de 754* and the *Crónica de Alfonso III*, recount the decadence and loss of Christian Spain by assigning the responsibility to the lack of a monarchical project that could overcome dissent and treason and prevented the weakening of the Visigoths' ability to effectively respond to an invasion that had been always on the horizon[4]. The narrative organized along the two characters starts taking shape in the accounts of both the *Chronicon Mundi* (ca. 1236) by Lucas de Tuy and the *De Rebus Hispaniae* (ca. 1243) by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, in both of which anxieties related to the continuity of Visigoth lineage are evident. The need to connect the pre-invasion monarchy with the one responsible for the resistance is fulfilled through the construction of Rodrigo and Pelayo as complementary rather than antagonistic characters. Thus, the two chronicles present Rodrigo as a heroic rebel who has restored order after internal dissension. These historical texts, it is important to notice, avoid referring to

[3] *Bulletin of the Comediantes* dedicated in 2013 an edited number to a reconsideration of the concept of directed culture and its impact in the study of Spanish Early Modern culture beyond theater.

[4] For more on the history of Visigoth Spain and the conquest, see Roger Collins 1991 and also Hilgarth 1976. With regards to the sequence of death and rebirth and the status of this legend as a foundational myth, see Deyermond 1986 and Juan Menéndez 1926.

the lascivious behavior of the king, which becomes a constant in later versions; they do, however, present his reign as a necessary evil, a condition of possibility for the coming of Pelayo. As a second step, once the Muslim conquest has been successful, the chronicles develop the complexity of Pelayo, whose claim to kingship is presented as legitimate because he belongs to the same bloodline as Rodrigo (Ward 2011, 104). Alongside the essential role of consanguinity, the structure of the narrative incorporates the moral and religious elements that typically invest medieval historiography with a political theological logic. Thus, chastity and Christian devotion become the traits that define the character of Pelayo, which evolves in total opposition to a libertine Rodrigo in further versions. It is in the context of the historiography of the 13th century – through the historiographical project of Alfonso X the Wise – where we find a narrative that elaborates this process thoroughly and, consequently, creates a new link between its two crucial moments – fall and redemption – in relation to the moral conduct of these characters.

The legend continues a steady process of transformation that develops in the last years of the 16th century and survives well into the 17th. It combines a variety of alternative versions that navigate freely from fact to fiction and from institutionally-sanctioned historiography to popular versions in the ballad tradition and sentimental romances. These materials, which have been identified as sources for *El último godo*, include Pedro del Corral's 1499 novel *Crónica Sarracina*, the Orientalist take of Morisco author Miguel de Luna in *Historia verdadera del Rey Don Rodrigo* (1592), and the development of a heroic Pelayo in the works of royal chronicler Ambrosio de Morales between 1563 and 1586, in which the new king appears as "el primer rey de una nueva era" (Grieve 2009, 143)[5].

According to Ramón Menéndez Pidal, proponent of an essential realism in Castilian literature, Lope's selection of influential works is unfortunate. He complains of a taste for exoticism in Luna's novel, which he makes responsible for the "inferiority" of Lope's play. Menéndez Pidal considers the effect of *La historia verdadera* on *El último* godo the "influencia absorbente de una ficción rastrera" (possessive influence of a despicable fiction), explaining that,

> …si Lope se hubiera impresionado en la vieja obra de Corral, hubiera hecho muy otra cosa, pero el morisco Miguel de Luna le apartó demasiado de la tradición castellana y ni siquiera le dejó acordarse bien

[5] "the first king of a new era". About Corral and Crónica Sarracina see the edition of James Donald Fogelquist for Castalia. The works of Henri Berlin 2009 and Marina Brownlee 2006 argue for the status of Corral's work between history and literature. About Miguel de Luna and the morisco context see García Arenal and Rodriguez Medrano 2013.

> del Romancero, que en tantas otras comedias sugirió al poeta escenas felices. (Menéndez Pidal 1926, 67)
>
> … if Lope had been inspired by the old work of Corral, he would have done something very different, but the Morisco Miguel de Luna kept him away from the Castilian tradition and did not even let him properly remember the ballad tradition, which in so many other plays suggested felicitous scenes to the poet.

In a recent study of Lope's plays of historic and legendary theme, Geraldine Coates takes issue with this characterization of Lope's influences, noting that the ballad tradition cannot be separated so categorically from other textual manifestations in which, perhaps blurring the lines between history and fiction, the legends of the Reconquista survived. Contrary to Menéndez Pidal, Coates sees in Luna's influence on *El último godo* an essential connection for the historical theater of the Spanish Golden Age. In her opinion, "Spain's chronicles are not, by and large, dry historical artifacts, but literary works which often novelize history or represent it with a particular spin for the edification and unification of the people" (Coates 2010, 132). This "novelizing" through the manipulation of narrative structures and characters in order to move along a specific plot, while at the same time reenacting a version of history from a particular point of view, is no doubt at the core of the theatrical production of the Golden Age. Moreover, it signals the core of Lope de Vega's dramaturgy which, informed by a diverse pool of texts illuminates the process of production and consumption of historical legends, for it brings a mythical past to the present, and, as such, activates the formation of a collective identity. This notion of the importance of the text or of an archive of texts is never too far from a definition of cultural memory, as defined by Jan Assmann:

> a form of memory that constitutes the present and makes the future possible through the medium of symbols that are linguistic and extra-linguistic, discursive and non-discursive, and that are permeated by the political structures of power and domination. (Assmann 2006, 27)

The chain of transmission of the legend of Don Rodrigo that I have described corresponds with the idea that the archive – the raw material in the formation of a cultural memory – is determined by political, economic and intellectual movements. This archival potentiality also becomes evident when considering cultural memory and its effects on the spectator, a relation that is never static because it is a "complex, pluralistic and labyrinthine" process (Assmann 2006, 29), a process that brings together time and space and all the tensions and contradictions in which collectivities are formed. The ideal here would be to create what Assmann calls a horizon of knowledge of the past, which is articulated at once and creates a memory of unity based on, as it is

our case, shared legends. It is in this sense that the Baroque comedy allows for the transmission of an ideology and, concurrently, that the Baroque spectatorship makes that transmission dynamic and even possible. An alternative way of thinking about this process is Linda Hutcheson's (2014) definition of adaptation, which considers inter-medial transmission as a creative process and gives it the same weight that is generally assigned to the final product. In this way, some interpretative limitations are lifted when treating the adapted text – *El último godo* versus the versions of the legend in the Romancero, for instance – as an original superior to the final product. The tension of a hierarchy between original and derivative works informs the work of Menéndez Pidal, whose criticism of Lope's sources, as I have noted, is that they are subjected to ideological winds and that they are works that fictionalize, therefore contaminating a historical truth (Menéndez Pidal 1926, 67).

Despite Pidal's aesthetic critiques of *El último godo*, the play demands to be studied in the context of its continuous adaptation, unearthing the different layers of a creative process of becoming. First, we have the process of converting textual sources that are dominated by a partial, if omniscient, vision of historical narrative. The adaptation of sources such as Corral's novel or Luna's morisco version of the story, transforms ink into not only spoken word but a combination of body and language that, in Badiou's terms, affirms the process that makes representation didactic (During 22). Lope himself is aware of this didacticism and its implications when he reflects upon the importance of making history engage with the rules that theater imposes:

> La fuerza de la historia representada es tanto mayor que leída, cuanta diferencia se advierte en la verdad á la pintura y del original al retrato; porque en un cuadro están las figuras mudas y en una sola acción las personas; y en la comedia hablando y discurriendo, y en diversos afectos por instantes, cuales son los sucesos, guerras, paces, consejos, diferentes estados de fortuna, mudanzas, prosperidades, declinaciones de reinos y periodos de imperios y monarquías grandes … nadie podrá negar que las famosas hazañas ó sentencias, referidas al vivo con sus personas no sean de grande efeto para renovar la fama desde los teatros a las memorias de las gentes. (Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, 835)
>
> The strength of history represented is higher that when it is read, as much as the difference one perceives between truth and painting, and between original and portrait; because in a painting figures are silent and characters are frozen in action; and in the comedy they speak and deliberate, with different feeling in each instance, according to the events, wars, peaces, counsels, different states of fortune, changes, prosperities, depositions of kingdoms and imperial periods and great

> monarchies… nobody can deny that famous deeds or sayings, retold live through their characters, are not greatly effective for renewing their fame from the stages into people's memory.

The process of adaptation allows for the renovation of fame in the memory of people. In this process of renovation, the relation between original and final product is based on the formation of a palimpsest composed of texts that we can still recognize and with which we are in constant dialogue (Hutcheson, 2014, 8). This becomes evident in Lope's process of combining and working through the similarities and differences of both historical and fictional sources. Likewise, Lope's dramaturgy engages in what can be defined as a process of adaptation assuming a negotiation over what aspects of history get to be modified, amplified, eliminated, reorganized, etc. It is necessary then to note how playwriting forces a series of decisions partly related to the story itself, the plot as it were, and partly related to the medium by which that work is going to be presented to an audience. The medium, in our case informed by performance, scenography, etc, will determine the nuances of the story (Hutcheson 10). This is the main purpose of the reading of *El último godo* that this article proposes: to think through the effects of an adaptation from page to stage because "being shown a story is not the same that being told it – and neither is the same as participating in it or interacting with it, that is experiencing the story directly and kinesthetically" (Hutcheson, 2014, 12). The decisions taken at the time of showing a story, in particular if speaking of the theater of the Golden Age, make it necessary to consider that there is not a direct identification between the dramaturg – in our case Lope de Vega – and what in effect is a collective authorship of the final product. There are several degrees of separation between the written word and the represented work, involving a series of agents who necessarily influenced different aspects of the play. After providing an overview of the editions of Lope's play and considering the impact of a creative collectivity in its staging, I will reflect on how the notion of messianism follows the structure of fall and redemption described above. This is, I contend, the chief reason behind the formation of a cultural memory of the *Reconquista*, and ultimately of the survival of the legend.

2. *El último godo* or the story of an eventful staging

The play, *El último godo*, survives under two different titles: *El postrer godo* as it appears in references to the initial production and as *El último godo* in posthumous editions. Morley and Buerton (1968) suggest a date between 1599 and 1603 for its composition. The newest edition by *Proyecto Prolope* supports the former and provides as context the festivities of Denia, an occasion in which the recently proclaimed Felipe III was entertained by the

Sandoval family, a clan directly mentioned in the play (Garcia López 2008, 728). Lope mentions *El postrer godo* in the second list of his works that he provides in *El Peregrino en su patria*, after 1604, and, finally, it appears as *El último godo* in the Parte XXV (1647) of his collected plays[6]. The 1647 edition seems to have been corrected and given to the printer from a copy used in rehearsals. It includes some minor changes in the versification throughout the play and, of interest for this article, a series of changes in the *mise-en-scène* that culminate in the allegorical apotheosis of the last act.

In this version's ending, Pelayo, once victorious at the Battle of Covadonga and with a strategy to initiate the *Reconquista*, recites a sonnet as an apostrophe invoking Spain. An allegorical female figure of Spain appears in response to this invocation, bringing with her the portraits of the successive monarchs who reigned over the realm, all descendants from the lineage of Pelayo. If, as it is suspected, the play was performed in the presence of the king, this performance of genealogy unifies the king-spectator and the Visigoth lineage that has been preserved by Pelayo. This "nationalistic turn" as García López defines it (2008, 729), might have been echoing or perhaps even containing the effects of the Habsburgs monarchy and the crisis created by the loss of Portugal, the uprising in Catalonia and the unstable balance in which the unity of Spain had been built.

The legend, as it was adapted to the stage, is divided in three *jornadas* or acts, with each featuring its part in the plot structured around a sequence of sin-penance-redemption. The first act starts at the moment when Rodrigo is proclaimed king and almost immediately bad omens shake the legitimacy of this proclamation by unleashing a series of transgressions designed to show the weakness of his moral character. Rodrigo appears as a man consumed by his passions – greed and lust – and unable to assert his kingship through the exercise of prudence. He opens the House of Hercules – a house that is said to contain all kinds of riches and that each king before him has pledged not to open. In there, he finds no treasure but a parchment showing the figures of the Muslim invaders entering the peninsula. He rapes Florinda and misleads her father, Don Julián, to leave the peninsula so as to avoid a confrontation and ultimately to avoid being held responsible. Incidentally, this act of cowardice has the effect of weakening his strategic position in the event of an attack from the North African army, because Don Julián takes his own army with him. The second act shows the consequences of this characterization

[6] The edition of García López in the context of Proyecto Prolope is dedicated to the comedias included in Parte VIII and logically does not include the changes made to the edition made in Zaragoza in 1647. For this article I followed the latter, in digital version of the Biblioteca Virtual Cervantes available in artelope.uv.es/biblioteca/textesAL/Al0818_El-PostrerGodoDeEspaña.

when Florinda, dishonored by Rodrigo, kills herself, and her father, after ensuring that the Muslim army has taken over the land with his help, recognizes the extent of the damage and goes mad because of grief over his daughter and over Spain, both dishonored. The third act is entirely dedicated to the figure of Pelayo, who appeared perfunctorily in the first act. While the first two acts are mainly set in Córdoba and Toledo, the last one takes place in Asturias, where the Visigoth noble families refusing to live under Muslim rule took refuge.

Agreeing in the basic interpretation of the play, scholarship on *El último godo* has followed complementary lines of research. On the one hand, *El último godo* is a paradigmatic example of Lope's vast corpus of historical and legendary plays (Coates 2010). At the same time, and considering the importance of the popular production as shaped in the Romancero for the formation of a national identity, *El último godo* is a key text to understand the formation of a collective identity and the role that theater and politics played in early modern Spain (Ryjick 2011). Together with the question of national identity, the literature about the play comes back to the issue of genre formation that authors such as Elisabeth Drayson and Patricia Grieve also describe for the legend itself. Such is the view expressed by Teresa Kirschner and Dolores Clavero, who see in the transferring from page to stage "un uso simbólico del cuerpo humano como locus en el que se inscriben las representaciones de los sistemas sociales y sus estructuras de poder" (a symbolic use of the human body as locus in which representations of social systems and power structures are inscribed) (Kirschner and Clavero 1997, 44).

The analysis of the link between theater, absolutism and national identity is at the core of a debate that has been fragmented between the theories of Maravall that I explained at the beginning of this article, and those of his critics. One of these critics is Malveena McKendrick, who also refers to the Rodrigo of *El último godo* as an example of the implicit subversion in presenting a king that lets himself be governed by his passions instead of the virtues invested in the institution he embodies, particularly prudence (McKendrick 2000, 49). Even if the contribution of McKendrick insists in presenting Lope's play as a pendular movement from conformism to non-conformism, between connivance with the monarchical absolutist power and subversive tendencies, the author does not notice the influence that Rodrigo imposes in the characterization by opposition of Pelayo. She does suggest, in line with what I am proposing in relation to the messianism in the play, that Pelayo emerges as the starting point of a historical moment whose finality is still not on the horizon of the theatrical production itself. "The invasion", McKendric concludes, "is at once an ending and a new beginning as Pelayo emerges to lead Spain on the road to reconquest and greatness" (McKendrick 2000, 51).

Let us follow closely these two characters, then, and unveil exactly how Lope's play transforms legend and history into a shared cultural memory of the *Reconquista*. The first act tells how Rodrigo, after he rebels against the tyrant Witiza and unifies the Visigoths of Spain, rules from Toledo and is regarded as the initiator of a new era and, having been elected as a *primus inter pares*, he is to also initiate a new lineage. This clearly shows the preoccupation with the consolidation of a legitimate Goth lineage, that is, the preservation of an agnatic paternal line that, incidentally, also supports the rebellion that Rodrigo lead against Witiza. In his initial words, Rodrigo explains the necessity of his uprising because King Ervigio "aplica / a su hija el reino, que la habia casado / con el valiente Egica" (applies / to her daughter the kingdom, and marries her / with the brave Egica) (l. 30–32). The reference to a consort king (made king by marrying the female heir) clearly establishes the gender ideology of the text and it plays in the dramatic context when Rodrigo forces courtiers to pledge their loyalty. In preparation for this demand, Rodrigo reminds them:

Rodrigo: Viéndome yo legítimo heredero
Nieto de Resisundo valeroso
Hijo de Todofredo, que primero reinar
Debiera que Betisa odioso,
Con ayuda de Roma, a quien espero
Mostrarme agradecido, no reposo,
Hasta que del tirano, por despojos,
Ofrezca a mi buen padre los dos ojos (ll. 45–52)

Rodrigo: I was the legitimate heir / grandson of the brave Resisundo / Son of Todofredo, / who should have become king / before the hateful Betisa /With the help of Rome, to whom I hope / to show my gratitude, I will not rest / until I can offer the tyrant's two eyes / as booty to my father.

We see here how Rodrigo provides the audience with a political and social context to the historical events that he is leading. But, while relating the tale of his father's torture – Todofredo was deposed, tortured and left blind – Rodrigo is also starting to blur the lines between the personal and the political, hinting at the development of his failure. The question of agnatic legitimacy also appears in other passages of the first act, all marked by questions of continuity, whether literal or symbolic. The importance of continuity is clear if we consider its political consequences and yet, it is an anxiety that will be put to rest by Pelayo in the last scene. There, as it will become clear, the emphasis is not on the legitimacy of predecessors but on a projection towards the future, and, incidentally, it does not seem to share a preoccupation with the line of descent, as if kinship emanated from belonging to a community

rather than to a particular clan, in this case the political community of the Goths.

To fully appreciate the characterization of Rodrigo as unreliable and ultimately unworthy king, we turn to the scenes of his coronation, which is framed by symbols of adversity. First, he loses his grip and lets both crown and scepter fall in the presence of both courtiers and, let us not forget, audience. The symbolism of the scene and of Rodrigo's reaction could not have gone unnoticed to the latter. The king, aware of the impression that his clumsiness has created and still coming to terms with what exactly provoked him to let go of the symbols of his kingship, offers an alternative explanation in the form of a convoluted prophecy, which is received as illogic and improbable. Rather than putting their concerns to rest, the courtiers grow suspicious of the king and are therefore predisposed to read subsequent events in fearful anxiety, demanding through the advice of Leosindo, Rodrigo's chamberlain, that the king acts with prudence.

In a second event, Rodrigo breaks the prohibition of entering the mythical House of Hercules and breaks the locks that king after king had secured, ensuring that its secrets and the implicit threat for the Visigoths remained sealed. This transgression not only makes evident the tension between the legitimist speech Rodrigo offers at the beginning and his behavior, so contrary to tradition and custom, but also makes explicit the prediction – contained in the House of Hercules – that during his reign the Peninsula will be invaded by the Muslims of Northern Africa. Nevertheless, it is not until a third scene that Rodrigo commits a double moral transgression: in open defiance of Visigoth tradition, he decides to marry the daughter of the King of Argel (modern day Argelia) instead of choosing a wife among the daughters of local noble families. Leosindo signals the predictable consequences:

Rodrigo: Resolución dichosa para todos.
¿No te agrada, Leosindo?

Leosindo: Su hermosura
En extremo me agrada, pero advierte
Que, aunque los reyes godos sean casados
A su modo, no es justo que tu seas
Tan arrojado en esto, porque puedes
De tus vasallos, escoger señora (ll. 458–465)

Rodrigo: Happy resolution for everyone. / Are you not pleased, Leosindo? / Leosindo: Her beauty /pleases me in the extreme / but, you must realize / that, even if goth kings marry /as they see fit, it is not fair that you are / so impetuous in this, because you could have / chosen a spouse amongst your vassals.

To the sound advice of Leosindo, Rodrigo responds that he does not want his offspring to be "hijos de vasallos (ll. 467)" (the sons of vassals) and that Zara is the best possible election because she is the daughter of a king. There is here again a tension between legitimacy – in doubt because the mother's lineage is Muslim – and Rodrigo's behavior, for, in his courtship of Zara, he displays all the characteristics of the narcissist womanizer that has become an archetype in Lope's theater. After his defiance of tradition, the fight against elders and the imposition of his own will, and even the conversion of Zara to Christianity, cutting ties with her own lineage, Rodrigo crosses paths with Florinda, the daughter of Count Don Julián, setting the stage for his final fall. Rodrigo grows infatuated with Florinda and, confronted with her appeals for him to respect her and, by doing so, respecting her father, he reacts by taking her forcefully at the end of the first act and repudiating her at the beginning of the second act. The immorality of a character that follows so faithfully the archetype of the seducer is here threefold: first, he loses the symbols of kingship; second, he disrespects Visigoth traditions and instead of setting his lock upon previous locks, he transgresses the prohibition and unleashes the prophecy of the invasion; and finally, he breaks the conventions of honor that define gender relations. It is in this last instance that Rodrigo shows himself to be willfully oblivious to the consequences that his actions bring on Florinda, while she insistently brings back the core of her disgrace, that the violation of her body brings dishonor to her father and calls for revenge and restoration.

If the first act was structured around the figure of Rodrigo, the second act evolves around the figure of Count Don Julian. He starts by reading a letter from her daughter Florinda, in which she tells about the signs of adversity we had discussed; unlike Rodrigo, Don Julian is able to interpret these events correctly. Florinda shares with her father her sadness over a piece of jewelry belonging to her family that has been broken. It was broken, the letter clarifies, by the "sword of the king" (l. 1125). This cryptic section of the letter is also interpreted correctly by Don Julian, who not only understands the extent of his dishonor but also explains it to Muza, captain of the Muslim army. He sees the threat and rather confirms in his mind than suspects that Rodrigo has dishonored his daughter.

Julian: No lo entiendes, que más fiero
Dolor me viene aqui guardado
Esta piedra que desmedra
Mi honor con violencia estraña
Ha de costar que en España
No haya piedra sobre piedra. (ll. 1140–1145)

> Julian: Do you not understand, stronger /is the pain hidden here. / This broken stone that weakens /my honor with strange violence /will be the reason for Spain / becoming a ruin with no stone left in place.

The Muslim army invades Spain in this second act, which shows the battle in which all Visigoth noble families are lost and those who survive lose their confidence in Rodrigo. But the laying out of the political contingencies does not stray far from the symbology of Florinda's rape and here, showing the influence of Miguel de Luna over Lope, we learn that Florinda has known since childhood that she would be the cause of the fall of Spain and, in an attempt to hasten the restoration, she commits suicide.

The suicide scene has attracted the attention of several critics, who see it as a paradigmatic example of the complexity of the *mise-en-scène* in Lope's theater. The annotations of the original text explain how and where and to what side the actress interpreting Florinda should fall, advising even to take measures to prevent injuries. Menéndez Pidal (1926) suggests that this kind of commentary indicates the lack of seriousness in the production of the drama. However, as García López (2008) shows, this annotation gives us a glimpse of the production process and the many resources available to the company to create the desired effects. This artifice in the scenography, increasingly complex and sophisticated, enhances the presentation of Pelayo and of Asturias.

At the beginning of the second act, Pelayo appears for the first time and the only in which there is an allusion to issues of consanguinity before the last scene. The scene between Julian and Muza, quoted above, and the dialogue between Rodrigo and Pelayo that we describe here, are to be understood by the audience as happening simultaneously. Rodrigo grows suspicious of count Don Julian, as he knows that he holds high his sense of honor and expects revenge. He also recognizes that the only thing that Julian can take from him, given his disdain for traditions and female characters, is Spain itself. He summons Pelayo to court as his best strategist, a natural leader of the army who is manifestly unconcerned with courtly politics. In his entrance, Pelayo greets Rodrigo by referring to their kinship and their support of each other using the term "Hechura" ("Aquí esta tu hechura" (here is your making) (l. 1370)). According to Covarrubias's *Tesoro*, "hechura" refers to somebody who has been supported or mentored by another person[7], and therefore to loyalty, gratitude and closeness between mentor and mentee; but here Rodrigo again entangles it with the purity of a shared lineage and responds: "Oh Pelayo gallardo, gloria y honra de la Española sangre! Oh primo mio!"

[7] "a entender que un señor ha valido a cualquier persona, y le ha puesto en estado y honor, decimos ser esta tal hechura suya" (Covarrubias, s.v. "hechura").

(O dashing Pelayo, glory and honor of the Spanish blood! O cousin of mine!) (ll. 1371–1372). This commitment to kinship performed by Rodrigo and loyally accepted by Pelayo is followed by a description of Asturias as the l*ocus amoenus* in contrast to the court. It is evident for both characters and also the audience that there exists a purity in the relation between Pelayo and Asturias that is somehow lacking in his relation to the king.

As stated before, *El último godo* has been mostly seen both by critics and editors as a dynamic unity that depends on binaries and dichotomies which are the norm in Lope de Vega's theater. Menéndez Pidal (1926), for instance, describes the play as a "Cinerama" in which some scenes come upon others to simplify and solidify relations between Spaniards/Christianity/austerity and foreigners/Islam/exuberance. The audience navigates constantly between two worlds, arriving at a moment in which the one with which they identify, the Toledan court of Rodrigo, starts crumbling as a consequence of a behavior that does not correspond with Christian morals. The aspect of kinship at this point ceases to be relevant. The notion of stability and the need for recovering a clear moral compass seems to be the priority, accomplished through a double mechanism: on the one hand, the demonization of otherness – the Muslim army is now an invader and they kill, rape, and destroy; on the other hand, there is a search for a locus of purity where a renewal might be possible. While projecting this structure, in his first intervention Pelayo sets some limits and marks a distance:

Pelayo: …
A llamarme enviaste a mis Asturias,
Donde, después que del traidor Betisa
Huyendo fui, con mis hermanos vivo
Tan lejos de las cortes de los principes,
Que solo para verte me he vestido;
Que hasta Toledo vine con otro habito
Harto de cortesano diferente. (ll. 1374–1380)

Pelayo: You called me back from my Asturias / where, after I fled the traitor Betisa / I live in peace with my brothers / as far away from the courts of the princes / that I only got dressed to see you / since I came to Toledo dressed in a habit / quite different from a courtier's.

In his speech, Pelayo clarifies different things. First, Asturias is, already and since the times of Betisa, a refuge, far away and safe from the tyranny against which Rodrigo rebelled. Second, the community in which Christians – old Christians "cristianos viejos" (l. 2109) we are reminded later in the play – from Asturias live in fraternity and secluded from the structures and networks that direct courtly life. Ultimately, the purpose of Pelayo's speech is to declare the exceptionality of Asturias by presenting it as a place where "habito" –

here playing with both meanings of the word as dress and custom – is "harto de cortesano differente" (significantly different from that of the court/a courtier's). The dichotomy in here calls on the question of which alternative visions of Spain, ultimately visions in conflict, will be made to define the nation.

Up to now the binary opposition has been between lust and chastity, between passions and prudence, in part as a commonplace of the Spanish Golden Age drama when it comes to the representation of the monarch. Rodrigo's character is undoubtedly ruled by passions, while we witness the process by which Pelayo embraces prudence as the virtue leading to his becoming king, in spite of his disdain for the court. Pelayo is presented as a king who will lead a nation in resistance and who will build that resistance on a moral superiority. It is again Leosindo who assists the audience in that transition from one king to the next by identifying Rodrigo's shortcomings:

Leosindo: Dicen que va como un rayo
Pelayo a Valladolid.
Rodrigo: ¿Pues por qué se va Pelayo?
Leosindo: Anoche dormió en Madrid
Y ha despedido la gente.
Como mandaste se ausente
De que pienso que le injurias.
Rodrigo: ¿Mas que se va a las Asturias?
Leosindo: No hay Corte que le contente:
Allí vive entre peñascos.
Que las sedas y damascos
Le ofenden. (ll. 1725–1736)

Leosindo: They say that Pelayo is leaving at the speed of lighting/ towards Valladolid / Rodrigo: Pray, why is Pelayo leaving? / Leosindo: Last night he slept in Madrid / and he dismissed his people / since you asked him to go away / but I think you mistreated him / Rodrigo: so is he returning to Asturias? / Leosindo: There is no court that would make him happy / he lives there in the mountains / because silk and damask / offend him.

Once again, we see the connection between the wilderness of the region – "allí vive entre peñascos" – and the sobriety of the character – "no hay corte que le contente". In a now-classic study regarding world view and scenography in the Golden Age theater, John Varey discusses the representation of rural spaces. He suggests that there is a tendency to have these complex spaces represented through the text and not necessarily through stage mechanics and rigging systems. Varey reflects upon the references to rural spaces as landscapes filled with symbols "cuyos elementos se unen para componer una forma decorativa que al mismo tiempo tiene intención

transcendental" (whose elements come together to compose a decorative form that has, at the same time, a transcendental intention) (Varey 1987, 39). This phenomenon is at work in *El último godo* in relation to the representation of Asturias and in striking contrast with the representation of Toledo – locus of the court and where all of Rodrigo's transgressions take place – or Denia or Algiers, places where the exoticism of the Muslim other is also presented as exuberant and problematic. The effect is achieved through the association of costumes and props in relation to a semantic field that refers incessantly to a space in state of nature. Actions are located in "peñas" (crags), "cuevas" (caves), the men are referred to as "montañeses" (hill people), dresses are "pellejos" (animal skin) and "pieles" (fur) and their weapons are "dardos" (darts) and "palos" (sticks). It is also important for these words to fulfill their function to be part of the speech of particular characters. For instance, when used by the Muslim invaders, the references to Asturias are made in arrogant and disdainful speeches in which rusticity is identified as uncivilized primitivism, which makes the Christian resistance evidence of their lack of pragmatism, first, and an unpleasant nuisance, second:

Tarife: Esto me escribió Abraido desde Asturias
Y que deste Pelayo apenas puede
Resistir con mil hombres las injurias,
Porque con ciento a mil vence y accede.
Dice que de la Cueva como furias
Sin que en el centro alguna furia quede
Salen hombres descalzos y desnudos
Rotos, sin armas, barbaros y rudos
Mas que pelean como mil leones;
Muza me escribe que tome a Granada. (ll. 2308–2317)

Tarife: This wrote Abraido from Asturias: / that he can barely resist Pelayo's attacks /with one thousand men / because [Pelayo] with a hundred man pushes our thousand. / He says that they come out of the caves like animals / and no animals remain inside / they come out barefooted and naked / broken, without weapons, savage and rough / but they fight like a thousand lions; / Muza writes me to take Granada.

In contrast, when the Christians refer the news of Pelayo's resistance, in particular those participating in it, the tone is of telluric pride, a pride that increases in relevance as it creates a metonymic relation between Asturias and Spain. A clear example of this appears in the last scene, when Pelayo is crowned with laurel and made king by those he before called his brothers:

(*Toda la compañía con ramos, ILDERIGO con el laurel, y corónele, y digan luego los MÚSICOS.*)
[MÚSICOS] par bien amanezca el sol,

bendígale España
y guarde Dios
el sol de Pelayo,
gran restaurador
de Asturias y Galicia,
Castilla y León,
el que mata moros
con sola su voz,
mas que ellos cristianos
con tanto escuadrón;
el que de Toledo
a San Salvador
trujo las reliquias
de nuestro Señor,
coronado llega
con gran devoción
donde ya le espera
la iglesia mayor. (ll. 2723–2742)

(*The company comes out with palms, Ilderigo with the laurel, and they crown him and then the musicians sing this*.)
[Musicians] As the sun is rising / may Spain bless him / and may God keep / Pelayo's sun / great restorer/ of Asturias and Galicia / Castile and Leon / He who slays Moors / with only his voice / more than they do Christians / with all their military force; /the one who brought / the relics from Toledo / to San Salvador, / here he comes, crowned / with great devotion / to where the main church / is waiting for him.

I have included the stage directions because here the text hints at how the play could have been manipulated and adapted to the stage. The musicians also appear earlier in the play, in several scenes in which actors perform as exotic Muslims, dancing and singing. It is important to remember that in the editorial process of this drama there are two moments in which it is printed: one in 1617, with the text included in Part VIII of Lope's collected plays, and the other in 1647, with the text included in Part XXV. This second edition presents a series of peculiarities, one of which is a series of scenes and dialogues that either are absent or appear in a different tone in previous edition, in addition to the allegorical ending described above. The collating of these texts suggests that we have material used by a theater troupe and that they have been amended in accordance with stage directions (García López 2008, 738). As textual evidence of the possible representation we can point, for instance, to the verbal variations in the annotations that take the point of view of the actor representing the part or the changes in versification, rime or even syntax that have a correspondence with mnemonic strategies. The most

striking evidence of changes, alterations and modifications from page to stage in *El último godo* is Pelayo´s apostrophic speech at the end:

(Váyase y quede Pelayo solo.)

Pelayo
España bella que de Hispan te llamas
y del lucero con que nace el día
el tronco de los godos fenecía,
si no quedaran estas pobres ramas
ves aquí el fénix de sus muertas llamas,
que nuevas alas de su indicio cría
para que ocupes con la historia mía
versos y rosas, lenguas y plumas, famas.
Yo soy Pelayo, España, yo la piedra
que te ha quedado, sola en esta vuelve
a hacer tus torres que no ofenda el rayo,
las que de sangre vestiré de yedra,
que puesto que Rodrigo se resuelve
de sus cenizas nacerá Pelayo.

(España entre, y córrese una cortina en que se vea un lienzo con muchos retratos de reyes pequeños.) (ll. 2703–2720)

(Goes and enters Pelayo alone)

Pelayo: Beautiful Spain, bearing your name from Hispan / and from the morning star with which the day starts, /from the trunk of the Goths that was dying / if we did not have these poor few branches / you would see the phoenix dead in the ashes / that now gives way to new wings / for you to occupy with my story / verses and roses, tongues and pens, fame./ I am Pelayo, Spain, I am the stone / that was left, on this one build / once again your towers that lightning will not touch / which I will dress nit in blood by in ivy / since Rodrigo is gone, / from his ashes Pelayo will be born.
(Spain comes in and it appears a courtain with small canvases showing the portraits of kings)

(Goes and enters Pelayo alone)

In the first quatrain of this sonnet, Pelayo laments the destiny that could have come over Spain had not it been for the "pobres ramas" (few branches), alluding to a new image of Asturias that has been patiently weaved along the play. The second quatrain defines Pelayo as a phoenix. The metaphor is powerful because it brings about the notion of rebirth through purification. It also makes reference to the importance of memory, given that his story will remain in the verses, tongues and pens of fame. These, according to the closing tercet, will tell his story along with that of Rodrigo. The evocation of a past that evolved in a particular sequence is made clear through the reference

to himself as the only standing stone ("la piedra que ha quedado") alluding to Don Julian's speech in the second act, when he threats with leaving no stone unturned in the pursue of his revenge. Lastly, the poetic voice refers to a hypothetical Pelayo whose coming precedes the appearance on the stage of Spain and the images of a Christian monarchical dynasty. It is also here that the character of Solmira, the sister of Pelayo who has been presented as a courageous woman, is given to Ilderigo as his spouse. Pelayo takes here the last turn of a romantic hero whose performance of the apostrophe, together with his virtuous chastity, pairs him to Spain itself, while the duty of preserving the lineage falls to Solmira.

The editorial process, as these changes show, does not completely clarify, however, how was the final staging of the play or what sort of negotiation took place in the moment of the performance. Alain Badiou defines theater as a material disposition (text, bodies, props, music…) that is not immutable and that, by virtue of this capacity of change, is able to transform in reality in the very presence of the materiality (During 22). That is to say, if there were attempts to stage *El último godo*, the performed reality would have more to do with contemporary audiences in the 21st century and our understanding of the past than with the moment in which it was represented for the first time. This should inspire critics to consider carefully the changes of the 1647 edition, because it is an intervention which is at the same time an interpretation of the text, its sources, and its possible reception. In this sense, it is important to notice that the changes in this edition are implemented by a collective – the theater troupe – that opts to portray the violation of Florinda, for instance, together with the effects of destiny and treason on some characters. It is also the version that, in the third act, offers the key to understanding what the reception of the play means for the creation of a new Spain.

3. Don Pelayo, messianic hero?

The story of Rodrigo and Pelayo follows a clear cause-effect structure. The weaknesses in Rodrigo's moral character become evident in his treatment of Florinda, daughter of count Don Julian. His relationship with her appears represented across different degrees of responsibility, from consented seduction to rape, contributing to a representation of Florinda as a sexual object, with agency only in the process of seducing the king into committing a mortal sin. Conversely, Pelayo is presented as an ideal hero whose chastity, bravery and wisdom provide him with a moral superiority that guarantees his success against the invader. The binary structure is quite clear and in certain versions, including *El último godo*, it is supported by a secondary plotline in which Pelayo risks his life in order to save the honor and chastity of his sister.

This sister appears as Solmira in the play by Lope de Vega. As we have seen, the narrative sequence in the historiographical prose is part of a discursive strategy to establish a Visigoth genealogy that unifies the Spanish monarchy with a mythical past prior to the conquest.

In order to have Pelayo become the hero of a nation renewed in its purity, the messianic sequence of sin, penance, and redemption must be formulated by transforming Rodrigo into a necessary evil. It is in this sense that we are able to speak of the "specter of Don Rodrigo" that haunts constantly and through history the figure of Pelayo, given that without his ghostly presence there would be no place for a new Visigoth hero. This cause-effect relation that creates a messianic tale is ubiquitous in the versions of the legend in which penance is an actual part of the plot. Such is the case of the *Cronica Sarracina* and the Romancero, for instance, where the relation between Rodrigo and Pelayo is direct and immediate in time, bringing Pelayo to act successfully against the invasion only after the penance and death of Rodrigo has been described – in all its gruesome details – and a site of burial identified. None of these circumstances is present in *El último godo* and this, in my opinion, conditions the characterization of Pelayo as a messianic hero.

It is therefore necessary to think through the articulation of the messianism responsible for reproducing the biblical structure of the fall form the Garden of Eden: original sin – penance – salvation and second coming of the Messiah. If the legend, as I have explained, is transmitted and reappears in different contexts throughout history, what is the purpose of having at each specific moment a representation of Pelayo as a messianic hero? What interpretation of Pelayo serves the structures of power and authority and therefore conditions the cultural production of the time? Why are there innumerable versions of the story of Rodrigo while Pelayo remains stable throughout the legendary tradition?

In my opinion, the steadiness of Pelayo responds to the convenience of having a messianic structure in the context of universalist historiography, ensuring that there is always a link between the figure that represents the fall and the figure that represents the restoration. The legend, in all its variations and always featuring a Pelayo who incarnates the virtues of the messiah, appears in moments of crisis, in order to restore legitimacy. This manipulation of the narrative functions from the perspective of a political theology that sees Visigoth Spain as a prelapsarian entity whose national history is structured in a sequence of fall, penance and redemption. It is this process, together with the preservation of a Gothic lineage, that ultimately legitimizes the monarchy. In the 16th century, Lope de Vega composes *El último godo* in a moment of political unrest in which the monarchy attempts to show the unity and the purity of the realm as the essence of national character. It can be inferred from

the relation between past and present that the legend presents a Pelayo who does not appear to bring a redemption, a restoration of a previous order, but to announce its coming. It is not Pelayo who comes as the second messiah, but the one that comes to announce that the one to save the motherland is coming. The one who will make possible the atonement of sins and the final redemption is, indeed, the monarch who incarnates sovereignty within the historical reality in which the spectatorship lives.

This explanation of the messianic structure in Spanish conceptualization of national history forces us to reconsider Pelayo's story as the moment of redemption. In other words, the resistance to the Muslim invasion is not the moment of redemption, but its success will be. The question remains, where exactly shall we locate that moment of success? Lope's version of the legend in *El último godo* seems to wrestle to this notion while being utterly clear about the role of Pelayo in announcing rather than producing the victory. In his book *The time that remains*, Giorgio Agamben proposes a recovery of the messianic through the reading of the Letters of Paul to the Romans. Agamben makes a distinction between the alternative functions of the figures involved in the message, in particular that of the prophet and that of the apostle. This distinction is clarified through an etymological definition of the word apostle as emissary, as the one that communicates the arrival of the messiah, the one that announces the beginning of the end of times, and it is always present in the moment of enunciation.

> This is what makes the difference between the prophet and the apostle. The apostle speaks forth from the arrival of the messiah. At this point prophecy must keep silent, for now prophecy is truly fulfilled…The work passes on to the apostle, to the emissary of the messiah, whose time is no longer the future but the present (Agamben 2005, 61).

In Agamben's reading, understanding the meaning of apostle as emissary clarifies the message; what is announced is not the end of times but the time of the end. It is the moment when new possibilities open to define and articulate an end that, in reality, will never materialize because there will always be a moment of crisis in which the announcement – that is the announcement of a Messiah – will be more relevant than the coming itself. This is where Pelayo becomes essential for the "propagandistic function" in Maravall (1975). As it has been discussed above, Rodrigo and Pelayo fulfill a didactic function in the work of Lope de Vega, a mechanism that acquires signification in the context of a cultural memory of the *Reconquista*.

Each enunciation of the legend of Rodrigo, whether read or performed, it is fair to assume that there is a negotiation in which the past is recognized as a failure. In this negotiation, there is a moment of sin and penance, and a moment of renewal that is never accomplished in the time and space of the

legend itself but in its extradiegetic context. The Pelayo imagined by Lope, following this logic, takes shape in the theatrical event as an apostle that announces a future arranged around the purity of blood of a Visigoth lineage. This is the message that we are to witness in the last scene of *El último godo*, in which, after the victory of Covadonga against the Muslim invader, an event that marks the beginning of the *Reconquista*, there is an allegorical tableau with a female character representing Spain, who unveils one by one the effigies of Castilian kings. These are the kings of a dynasty that lay in the future of Pelayo in the context of the play, but for the audience they might indeed represent the makers of a glorious past that culminates with the monarch ruling at the moment, perhaps even present and sharing in the theatrical experience. From this eternal present provided by the staging of the legend, Pelayo personifies a notion of time that unifies past and present in a shared destiny.

4. *Cultura dirigida* and Cultural Memory in Golden Age Theater

Amidst the criticism over the lack of archival material made available to the reader in *La cultura del Barroco* (MacKay 2013, 49), Maravall's anlysis of Golden Age theater as an integral part of a cultural project directed by the political elites – a *cultura dirigida* – has been the basis for groundbreaking and challenging research on the period. David Castillo, for instance, rightly praises Maravall's take on the definition of "honor" as "a mandate to act in accordance with the principles that sustain the established systems of authority" (Castillo 1998, 179), arguing that taking honor out of individual particularities and explaining it within a system of authority opens the discussion over reception and subjectivity. In this sense, however, the individual subject immersed within a system of authority, out of the possible responses – to obey, to rebel or to ignore –, exercises a degree of agency that this notion of directedness does not seem to properly acknowledge. And yet, a notion of agency is not completely absent, since Maravall understands the audience as participant in a process that he defines as propagandistic and at the service of the power structures. It stands to reason that the same process takes shape in the formation of a cultural memory, which as a normative drive rather that an instrument of propagandistic deceit acts as the building block of a national identity. Maravall explains how authority and theatrical production operate over the will of the spectator:

> Hay que aceptar la presencia de las fuerzas irracionales de los hombres, sus movimientos afectivos, conocerlos, dominar sus resortes y aplicarlos convenientemente, canalizando su energía hacia los fines que se pretenden. Hay que operar con los hombres como con los elementos

> de la naturaleza, solo gobernable sirviéndose de sus propias fuerzas. (Maravall 1975, 169–170)
>
> There is a need to accept the presence of irrational forces in men, their affective movements, know them, dominate their mechanisms and apply them conveniently, channeling their energy towards the intended end. There is a need to operate with men as with the elements of nature, which can only be governed by using their own forces.

It can be argued that Maravall allows a level of agency to the audience – which in turn becomes a political collective – through the strengths, movements and reactions that get ignited by the persuasive power of art. Nevertheless, he reduces agency to a non-human category, a pure reaction without reflection and consequently apolitical, in which ideology and political action, that is, the elements that ultimately make a multitude become a political collective, are somehow absent from his definition. In other words, Maravall's audience is a sum of individualities without the necessary cohesiveness to become aware of their own power and, consequently, prone to act as directed. Maravall goes even further in this separation between emotion and intellect by asserting that the efficacy of the visual arts, amongst which he includes painting and theater, rests in the combination of sensorial exposure (sight, hearing), the physical experience marked by the body occupying a physical space in the *corral de comedias* (staging quarters) where the representation takes place, and how these two inward and outward levels of experience appeal to psychological-emotional structures (Maravall 1975, 500). Rescuing, as it were, Maravall's *cultura dirigida* as a threefold experience – of the senses, of the body and of the psyche – that represents a form of political and social control demands that we think through how theater opens an ideological dimension that springs out of the audience's experience and not exclusively out of the drama itself. With all the caveats of speculating on individual or collective experiences of the past, we can still agree with Alain Badiou that

> El teatro es independiente del Estado, es una mediación pública entre el Estado y su exterior: la multitud reunida. Y como la circulación se establece en dos sentidos (del poder a la multitud y de la multitud al poder), el teatro es absolutamente ambiguo. (During 22)
>
> Theater is independent from the State, it is a public mediation between State and what is out of it: the multitude brought together. And since the circulation is established in two directions (from power to multitude and from multitude to power), theater is absolutely ambiguous.

The spectatorship, seen as multitude, comes together and transforms itself into an audience through the dynamic relations that are laid out by the social

and economic structures that make a particular theatrical production possible (producers, stage owners, etc.). The agency of the audience, only implicit in Maravall and central in Badiou as a "resource to think intellectually of the collective" (During 22), is, in the end, the agency of the client in a marketplace. Theater is defined as a thing produced and taken to the market but also, for us, as the platform to think through, methodologically, the spectator's response to the study of the comedy of the Spanish Golden Age.

García Reidy (2012) shows how the relation between text, representation and theater as praxis in the marketplace determines the influence that urban institutions and interest groups have in what gets produced, how it gets produced and how it is staged and performed. Theatrical praxis, according to this view, is a dynamic process, collaborative and inclusive of a wide diversity of social actors; as such, these social actors turn audience engagement into an experience charged with political and ideological dimensions (Carreño Rodríguez 2004, 3). Therefore, when defining early modern audiences as receptors, one must take into account theatrical production as a praxis that creates several meanings because of the variety of different acts of participation present (Connor 2000, 8). It is also true that there exists a shared reality defined by a feeling of belonging to a particular context, in this case a context defined by a shared national history.

The question regarding the effects of representing emotions related to national identity, from the point of view of a spectatorship, in a historical play like *El último godo* are particularly relevant because we are speaking about a play that recreates a story which, deep in the 17th century, is already a national myth and, as such, it is part of the audience's horizon of expectation. The question I pose, then, is, how can the study of this work, considering the two versions available and the changes accounted for, contribute to the understanding of the formation or rather the transformation of a cultural memory of the *Reconquest*? In particular, when working on *El último godo*, I am interested in how the emphasis on Asturias and in Pelayo subverts the expectation created by a legend that, in its most popular versions, shows certain disdain towards these two aspects[8]. The importance of this legend in the formation of a cultural memory and its role in the creative work of Lope's dramaturgy, justifies the study, developed here, concerning the transmission chain of the story throughout the Middle Ages and how its reception formed the textual memory that became the primary source for the stage.

[8] It is interesting, for instance, the absence of a corpus dedicated to Pelayo, as it is the case of the Romancero Viejo, equivalent to that of Don Rodrigo. Menéndez Pelayo already discussed this discrepancy when he admitted that "los reyes de Asturias y León, aún los más gloriosos, han dejado muy poca huella", and also "las tradiciones locales sobre el restaurador D. Pelayo no han sido cantadas" (Menéndez y Pelayo 1906, 476).

5. Conclusions

In *El último godo*, Asturias is seen through the speeches in different *actos* but also through the annotations that refer to it as a primordial space, that is, without sin. This characterization extends to the Asturian characters, centralized in Pelayo and defined in opposition to the court and to the manoeuvers of courtly politics. These are, in turn, seen as the source of the corruption of Don Rodrigo. In this telluric context, the play lays out the moral bases for a nation that is reborn with Pelayo: the *translatio* of the relics transforms the cave of Covadonga into a sacred space. The defense of Solmira's honor (by Pelayo and by herself in contrast to Florinda) guarantees the purity of the bloodline. And finally, the victory itself, is seen by the enemy as nothing short of a miracle which, Pelayo uses to invoke a new Spain. Pelayo's performance then re-signifies the character not as a messianic figure but as an emissary that announces a future Visigoth lineage.

The relationship between Asturias, Solmira and Pelayo acts as a constellation of forces that counteracts the emphasis that the different sources for the legend set on the fall of Don Rodrigo. As I explained, the story of Don Rodrigo in the chronicles and its later assimilation in the context of popular narratives legitimizes a lineage that, being as Gothic as that of Rodrigo, offers a renewal, a glorious second coming. The inherent messianism in the structure of the legend is clear, the dichotomies of its organization along the sequence of sin-penance-redemption justify the definition of Rodrigo as a spectral figure in relation to Pelayo. In the same way that Asturias is defined by opposition to the court and Solmira in opposition to Florinda, the character of Pelayo is defined in opposition to Rodrigo; where the latter initiates the fall in a chain of different forms of treason, the former initiates a renewal through the creation of a lineage – and this is the ultimate message of the play – that will bring the unity of Spain with the Conquest of Granada and the purity of blood through the expulsions of Jews (1492) and the Moriscos (1609).

The adaptability of the legend to a variety of contexts owes much to the politico-theological structure around sin and redemption. This gives to each moment of historical crisis a refuge, the possibility of a messianic redemption that will restore order. Spain, in total symbiosis with the medieval notion of pre-lapsarian state, reproduces the salvation structure as a foundational myth. At the same time that the transmission roots the myth, this messianic sequence fulfills a function in the formation of a cultural memory of the *Reconquista*. In sum, the Reconquista becomes a recurrent discourse that forms a national identity always focused on a unity of destiny that is territorial, political, ethnic and religious. This is the reason why it is important to think through how the performance of *El último godo* informs our understanding of the effect that the legend has on the spectatorship, transforming them into an agent in the

formation of cultural memory. It is through their presence that the people participate actively in the transmission of the legend and also contribute to give legitimacy to the national identity it proposes. The reading and study of this play shows the primal importance of Asturias and Pelayo in the survival and continuous relevance of the myth. The story of national regeneration is part of the cultural memory and as such of the collective identity that, as proposed by Lope de Vega, is forever linked to the Asturian mountains.

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