



POLITICS AND
AESTHETICS IN
EUROPEAN BAROQUE
AND CLASSICIST
TRAGEDY

BRILL

Edited by
Jan Bloemendal
and Nigel Smith

Politics and Aesthetics in European Baroque and Classicist Tragedy

Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe

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Contents

List of Illustrations VII

About the Authors VIII

Introduction 1

Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith

PART 1

Sovereignty

- 1 What Roman Paradigm for the Dutch Republic? Baroque Tragedies and Ambiguities Concerning *Dominium* and Torture 43

Frans-Willem Korsten

- 2 Grotius among the Dagonists: Joost van den Vondel's *Samson, of Heilige Wraeck*, Revenge and the *Ius Gentium* 75

Russ Leo

- 3 Performing the Medieval Past: Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1637) 103

Freya Sierhuis

PART 2

Religion

- 4 Political Martyrdom at the English College in Rome 135

Howard B. Norland

- 5 Historical Tragedy and the End of Christian Humanism: Nicolaus Vernulaeus (1583–1649) 152

James A. Parente, Jr.

- 6 The Baroque Tragedy of the Roman Jesuits: *Flavia* and Beyond 182

Blair Hoxby

PART 3

Ethics

- 7 **Mortal Knowledge: *Akrasia* in English Renaissance Tragedy** 221
Emily Vasiliauskas
- 8 ***A fabulis ad veritatem*: Latin Tragedy, Truth and Education in Early Modern England** 239
Sarah Knight
- 9 **The Political Theater and Theatrical Politics of Andrea Giacinto Cicognini: *Il Don Gastone di Moncada* (1641)** 260
Tatiana Korneeva
- 10 **French Tragedy during the Seventeenth Century: From Cruelty on a Scaffold to Poetic Distance on Stage** 294
Christian Biet

PART 4

Mobility

- 11 **German *Trauerspiel* and Its International Nexus: On the Migration of Poetic Forms** 319
Joel B. Lande
- 12 **The Politics of Mobility: Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Jan Vos's *Aran en Titus* and the Poetics of Empire** 344
Helmer Helmers
- 13 **French Classicism in Jesuit Theater Poetics of the Eighteenth Century** 373
Nienke Tjoelker
- 14 **Scenario of Terror: Royal Violence and the Origins of Russian Tragic Drama** 398
Kirill Ospovat
- Index** 429

List of Illustrations

- 1.1 Nicolaus Knüpfer, 'Brothelscene' or 'Theatrical Scene from Messalina and Gaius Silius Representing the Marriage', ca. 1645–ca. 1655 63
- 1.2 Illustration VII from Jan Vos, *Aran en Titus* (ed. 1648) 70
- 12.1 Jan Vos, *Aran en Titus*, title page (1641) 346
- 12.2 Artus Quellinus, *Portrait of the Amsterdam Burgomaster Andries de Graeff as Roman Consul* (1661) 360
- 12.3 Joachim Wtewael, *The Dutch Virgin Trampled* (ca. 1612) 369
- 12.4 Hans Collaert, *Beclaginghe der Nederlantscher verwoestinghe = Belgicae delaceratae lamentatio = Complaintes des desoles paijs bas* (ca. 1577) 370

About the Authors

Christian Biet

Ph.D. (1980) is a Professor of the history and aesthetics of theater at the Université de Paris Ouest-Nanterre and the Institut Universitaire de France (IUF), specialized in seventeenth-century literature, history of ideas and the theater of the *Ancien Régime*. Among his publications are *Le Miroir du Soleil* (1989 and 2000), *Ceïpe en monarchie: Tragédie et théorie juridique à l'Âge classique* (1994), *Racine ou le Passion des larmes* (1996), *La tragédie* (1997), *Droit et littérature sous l'Ancien Régime, le jeu de la valeur et de la loi* (2002), editions of Corneille's *Cid* (2001) and *Cinna* (2003), and, with Christophe Triau, *Qu'est-ce que le théâtre?* (2006).

Jan Bloemendal

Ph.D. (1997) in Neo-Latin literature, Utrecht University, is a senior researcher at the Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. From 2006–2012 he was a Professor by special appointment of Neo-Latin Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He was editor or co-editor of *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (2012), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (2013); *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* (2014) and *Bilingual Europe* (2015). He also edited G.J. Vossius, *Poeticae institutiones* (2010). Furthermore, he wrote a history of the use of Latin through the ages (2016).

Helmer Helmers

Ph.D. (2011) at the University of Leiden (*cum laude*) is lecturer in Early Modern Dutch Literature and NWO Research Fellow at the University of Amsterdam. He has published widely on Anglo-Dutch cultural and literary exchange in the seventeenth century. His monograph *The Royalist Republic* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) analyses Dutch debates on the English Civil Wars and regicide. His current research project focuses on transnational publicity during the Thirty Years' War.

Blair Hoxby

Ph.D. (1998) in English literature, Yale University, is Associate Professor of English at Stanford University. Among his publications are *Mammon's Music: Literature and Economics in the Age of Milton* (2002), *What was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (2015) and, as co-editor, *Milton in the Longe Restoration* (2016). His research interest include Milton, the English Civil Wars, the

Restoration, Renaissance and Enlightenment theater, tragedy and tragic theory, early opera, and performance theory.

Sarah Knight

Ph.D. (2002) in Renaissance Studies, Yale University, is Professor of Renaissance Literature at the University of Leicester. Her main interests are in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature, particularly works written in or about institutions of learning (schools, universities, Inns of Court). She has translated and co-edited Leon Battista Alberti's *Momus* for the I Tatti Renaissance Library (2003). With Stefan Tilg, she recently edited *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin Literature* (2015).

Tatiana Korneeva

Ph.D. (2008) in Classics, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, is Research Fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin and a member of the ERC-funded project Early Modern Drama and the Cultural Net ('DramaNet'), 2010–2016. She is the author of *'Alter et ipse': Identità e duplicità nel sistema dei personaggi della Tebaide di Stazio* (2011). Her research interests include early modern political thought, the reception of the classical tradition, the history of theater in comparative perspective (1400–1800), and opera studies. She is currently working on a book about the interaction between political discourse, spectatorship, and the emergent public sphere in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian theater.

Frans-Willem Korsten

Ph.D. (1998) in Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam, is Professor by special appointment of Literature and Society at the Erasmus School for History, Culture and Communication, and Senior lecturer at the Leiden University Institute for Cultural Disciplines. Among his publications are *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (2009) and *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679)* (2012).

Joel B. Lande

Ph.D. (2010) in Germanic studies, University of Chicago, on a dissertation entitled 'Nomadic Stages: On the Emergency of Literary Drama in the Age of Enlightenment'. After completing his Ph.D. he was awarded a position in the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts at Princeton University, where is now Assistant Professor in the Department of German. His research focuses on German literature and culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the broader European context.

Russell J. Leo III

Ph.D. (2009) in Literature, Duke University, is Assistant Professor of English at Princeton University. His interests include early modern literature and philosophy in English, Dutch, and Neo-Latin; tragedy and performance; Reformation and Counter-Reformation; and theory, specifically Spinozism and its afterlives in Marxism, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology. He is currently completing a comprehensive book project, titled *Fatall Necessity: Tragedy and Philosophy in the Reformation World* as well as co-editing a volume of essays on Fulke Greville, *The Measure of the Mind: Fulke Greville and the Literary Culture of the English Renaissance*. He is also at work on a book attending to Milton, Spinoza and their shared resources—a study of Anglo-Dutch art and thought under the influence of finance and confession.

Howard B. Norland

Ph.D. (1962) in English literature, University of Wisconsin, is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. His research interests include critical theory and performance in early modern drama and the classical tradition. Among his publication are *Drama in Early Tudor Britain 1485–1558* (1995) and *Neoclassical Tragedy in Elizabethan England* (2009). He is co-editor of *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (2013).

Kirill Ospovat

Ph.D. (2005) in Russian Literature, Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, held postdoctoral appointments in Munich, London, Chicago, Berlin, and Princeton. He is currently a research associate at the Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg. His forthcoming book *Terror and Pity: Aleksandr Sumarokov and the Theater of Power in Elizabethan Russia* is a comparative study of the origins of Russian tragedy in the mid-eighteenth century as a mode of political imagination.

James A. Parente, Jr.

Ph.D. (1979), Germanic Languages and Literatures, Yale University, is a Professor of German, Scandinavian and Dutch literature at the University of Minnesota. He is a specialist in early modern (1400–1750) German, Dutch, and Nordic literatures and cultures, and early modern Neo-Latin literature. He is the author of *Religious Drama and the Humanist Tradition: Christian Theater in Germany and the Netherlands, 1500–1680* (1987). He has co-edited two anthologies of critical work on the early modern Holy Roman Empire, and has published numerous articles on early modern German, Dutch and Neo-Latin literature, especially drama; Renaissance humanism; gender and sexual-

ity in the German Empire; the Dutch Golden Age; and early modern Nordic literatures.

Freya Sierhuis

Ph.D. (2009) in History, European University Institute, Florence, is Lecturer at the Department of English and Related literature of the University of York. Among her publications is *The Literature of The Arminian Controversy: Religion, Politics and the Stage* (2015). She is co-editor of *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture* (2013). Together with Brian Cummings she is the editor of the philosophical treatises of Fulke Greville for the Oxford Clarendon Edition of the Complete Work of Fulke Greville.

Nigel Smith

D.Phil. (1985), in English literature, University of Oxford, is William and Annie S. Paton Foundation Professor of Ancient and Modern Literature at Princeton University. Among his publications are *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640–1660* (1989); *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (1997); *Is Milton better than Shakespeare?* (2008) and *Andrew Marvell: The Chameleon* (2010). He is also co-editor of *Oxford Handbook of Milton* (2009) and *Mysticism and Reform, 1400–1750* (2015). His new work, *The State and Literary Production in Early Modern Europe*, involves the comparison of English with literature in other European vernaculars (especially Dutch, German, French, and Spanish) in the context of political and scientific transformation between 1500 and 1800.

Nienke Tjoelker

Ph.D. (2010) in Classics, University College Cork, is Postdoctoral Researcher at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Neo-Latin Studies in Innsbruck. Among her publications on neo-Latin literature is an edition of Andreas Fritz's *Letter on tragedies* (2014).

Emily Vasiliauskas

Ph.D. (2015) in English literature, Princeton University, is assistant professor in English at Williams College. The title of her dissertation is *Dead Letters: The Afterlife before Religion*. Her interests include British literature, early modern literature, literary theory and poetry, poetics and aesthetics. Her article on 'The Outmodedness of Shakespeare's Sonnets' appeared in *English Literary History* (2015).

Introduction

Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith

Tragedy and Politics from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period

How does it feel to have a good talk to the audience after your dismemberment? Or at least your decollation? In John Adams's controversial opera *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), the eponymous tragic protagonist rises from his wheelchair having been shot dead by terrorists and sings a most beautiful aria.¹ Here, as in many cases, violence inspired art. It will surely not be long before somebody makes tragic capital (that is, by writing a play) from the beheadings by Islamic State of their captives in Syria and Iraq, broadcast to the world through gory videos, themselves a kind of Islamic fundamentalist 'terror art', and part of a 'theatrical' act of revenge. Abandoned to their fate, what else can these pitiful, abandoned victims do but attempt, as they do when we hear them speak, to see beyond their own approaching mortality with a Stoic sense of calm, when 'Justice against Fate complain', to use Andrew Marvell's phrase, as is also the case with the condemned rulers in the German *Trauerspiel* tradition.

We fear violent destruction, the ultimate crisis of our singular and communal identities, and for that very reason we are fascinated and sometimes invigorated by the art that represents it in drama. The Greeks were thinking about these matters before anyone else, in a way that could be shared in community theater. The progressive recovery of the Greek tragedians, notably the plays of Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus (fifth century BC), in the early modern period is one of the great stories of widespread cultural influence through the retrieval of ancient Greek texts, through their translation into Latin and modern vernaculars, and as recovered ancient precepts and examples exerted an expectation of ever more pure practice (especially with regard to the unities of time and action, and—as added by the literary critics—place) in the early modern world.²

Greek tragedy is a very refined acknowledgement that humans are not good at dealing with one another and at looking after themselves, that they

1 In real life, Leon Klinghoffer was fatally shot when members of the Palestinian Liberation Front hijacked the *Achille Lauro* (1985); John Adams's opera is based on a libretto by Alice Goodman.

2 See Timothy J. Reiss, 'Renaissance Theatre and the Theory of Tragedy', in Glyn P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume 3, The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 229–248.

are severely compromised by circumstances beyond human control. Tragedy documents the hate that people can have for each other, especially within families, between the generations, or between the sexes, when love turns to hate, and jealousy rules. An act of violence is perpetrated; revenge follows, then civil strife and turmoil. States will fail, dynasties will fall, and what shall redeem them? The topic has occasioned much distinguished reflection both within narrow dramatic considerations and more generally, as tragic form exerts more general sway over literary culture.³ Other tragedy shows people torn between loyalties, such as Antigone, who has a loyalty to the gods and the need to bury her brother Polyneices on the one hand, and a command from her uncle to leave this traitor unburied on the other. In this way people's relationships, their behavior and motives, and the relationship between man and supernatural powers beyond his control, both gods and fate, are the subject of Greek tragedy. In these respects, Greek tragedy is the first dramatic specimen in European history of the meeting of politics and aesthetics, since all these aspects also affect rulers and their community, the ruling class from which the characters of tragedy are taken, and who are members of the audience. They might learn about their own relationships and emotions from the tragedy, and—according to the Socratic ideal—adjust their behavior to their improved understanding.

Ancient tragedy was a form of civic redemption. If epic told of how a society came into being, tragedy exposed before the Greek city community the risk or the certainty of disruption, the social and personal unrest that plagued princes, and how their shortcomings would be overcome in the future. It was a form of civic religion, since it involved a communal acknowledgment of human failure or limitation (often in the face of the whims of the gods), including violation of moral prohibitions (i.e., sins), and a collective expiation of those shortcomings. Life can go on—until the next time.

Roman tragedy—the most famous ones written by or attributed to the philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC–AD 65)—incorporated much more violence as it explored the literal and symbolic dimensions of the tearing apart of bodies, either individuals or communities, acted on the stage. The perpetuation of culture through time, even if people were being imagined as mythic heroes, was only possible by confronting and acknowledging this evisceration. It was a way of having sacrifice, not as part of a religious ceremony, but as

3 See e.g., F.L. Lucas, *Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's 'Poetics'* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928); Timothy J. Reiss, *Tragedy and Truth: Studies in the Development of a Renaissance and Neoclassical Discourse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Paul Hammond, *The Strangeness of Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

part of a dramatically enacted narrative. Senecan tragedy was also an exploration of emotions (referring to civil unrest, mental agitation or strong feelings) or ‘affects’ (mental states or dispositions; appetites; passions). The traditional view that these emotions are shown in high-pitched states as examples of misbehavior, as instances of lack of Stoic calm, has been challenged, but even if that is not the case, the emotions in it run high, and so do acts of terror.

With the coming of Christianity tragedy had to be accommodated within theology. Conceptually speaking tragicomedies begin their life with the idea of *felix culpa*, the Fall of man, that is fortunate because mankind will ultimately be saved by Jesus. However, theater in general had to be defended against the criticism of the Church fathers and other theologians, who considered acting and pretending as a kind of lying, and loathed the licentiousness they saw attached to theater.⁴

Tragedy’s eclipse during the Middle Ages seems to have been ended by thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italian imitations of ancient tragedy, especially the Senecan model, in the work of the Paduans Lovato de’ Lovati (1240/41–1309), who discovered the *Codex Etruscus*, the earliest complete manuscript of Seneca’s nine tragedies, and his pupil Albertino Mussato (1261–1329), who wrote in Latin the first tragedy after this discovery, addressing secular issues of threatening tyrants.⁵ Tragedy in Italian would follow by 1515 (Gian Giorgio Trissino’s (1478–1550) *Sophonisba*), and this began an eventually Europe-wide period of increasingly strict imitations of Roman and, later on, Greek tragedies. We should be aware of the complaints made by humanist purists in the sixteenth century that tragedy was often hopelessly mixed up with farce and comedy, and where holy lives, not least that of Jesus, were articulated as tragic dramas and understood as such, although we would call them morality plays, where many had happy endings.

For a long period, Greek tragedy was not well-known, or was known predominantly in Latin translations, especially those by Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) and George Buchanan (1506–1582). In this early period, very few playwrights—the neo-Latin Scottish poet Buchanan being, again, the most promi-

4 See Donnalee Dox, *The Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought: Augustine to the Fourteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

5 See Henry A. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Gary R. Grund, ‘Introduction’, in id. (ed.), *Humanist Tragedies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. vii–xliii, esp. pp. xv, xx–xxiv; Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, ‘Neo-Latin Drama in Italy’, in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 25–101, esp. pp. 26, 28–32 and 48.

nent—were actually inspired by Greek drama. A Greek Sophocles was published in 1502, Euripides (without *Electra*) in 1503, and Aeschylus (without *Choephoroe*) in 1518. Yet tragedy was understood in the Middle Ages, and ‘was known throughout the Middle Ages from Horace’s *Ars poetica*, Seneca’s plays, the Terentian commentaries of the fourth-century grammarians Aelius Donatus and Diomedes, and, from the thirteenth century, Hermann the German’s 1256 Latin translation of Averroes’ Arabic gloss on Aristotle.’⁶ Mussato knew the little used 1278 Latin translation of Aristotle by William of Moerbeke, but it appears to have had no impact on his tragedy. In this even earlier phase, tragedy was not always associated with a high literary style but instead may have been thought to embody a kind of literary roughness. Moreover it was regarded as a kind of logical argument as opposed to an art of performance. The arrival of Aristotle as the predominant theorist of tragedy comes much later, following a printed full Latin translation in 1498 and the first full Greek text in 1508, although it was only in 1548 that Francesco Robortello’s commentary began to place Aristotle’s treatise on tragedy in a critical mainstream. In an important new study Blair Hoxby argues that post-Aristotelian early modern tragedy, from which much early opera quite naturally developed, has been largely overlooked or fundamentally misunderstood by a post-Kantian understanding of tragedy understood as a conflict between the forces of necessity and the ultimately futile maintenance of freedom by tragic heroes.⁷

All of this recovery and hence restructuring of the understanding of tragedy would result in a rich period of experimentation with the genre as it was passed from Greek to Latin and then into several vernaculars. At the same time, and as part and parcel of the same process, scholar-critics disputed the nature of tragedy and its purported impact upon the audience members. There is no more important a contribution to this debate than the understanding that tragic action expelled negative passions in the audience by presenting to them a mirror of the operation of those passions in the excessive action of the tragedy, the Aristotelian ‘catharsis’. By the early seventeenth century a major reconstruction of attitudes had taken place. While not complete, this reconstruction—formed in the frames of Renaissance and humanist drama with their focus on the re-invention, reconstruction and imitation of the classical tradition—did present a platform upon which the often inherently political nature of baroque tragedy could form.

6 Reiss, ‘Renaissance Theatre and the Theory of Tragedy’, p. 232.

7 Blair Hoxby, *What was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Neo-Latin tragedy found a ready audience in universities and, after 1553, in the Jesuit gymnasia and academies. At the very least, and in different parts of Europe, ancient drama redirected by humanist enterprise became a foundation on which tragedy might be explored and in which contemporary questions might be reflected and debated. No less than in any other redeemed ancient genre, and more so than in many other cases, the educated community, and that is to say, the ruling elite, were not merely educated, but were given a potent tool with which to think about the relationship between morality, authority and power. That tragedy might have no right to represent the issue of martyrdom would certainly be debated within the Roman Catholic Church, but there were plenty of supporters for the view that it most certainly did. It was the Jesuits who explored the possibilities of acting out martyrdom to the full, including martyrdoms of princes and kings.⁸

The relationship of politics and aesthetics is a proper subject of much reflection in modern literary theory, but before the late seventeenth century there would have been no other awareness but that of a continuity between the two spheres, just as politics and religion were conjoined. Mussato was a poet, historian and statesman, as well as playwright, a member of his native Padua's council, and an ambassador for Padua in its negotiations with the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VIII; the literary and political career of Sir Thomas More, a major author and statesman of his time in early sixteenth-century England, is more well-known.⁹ Literature was one of the civil arts; men of letters were there to advise princes, and under humanist auspices, princes were encouraged ever more boldly to be learned and skilled in the arts themselves. Moreover, upholding a court culture contributed to a ruler's prestige, as exemplified in the Emperor Augustus's adviser and patron of the arts Gaius Maecenas (70–8 BC). As one of the key literary inheritances of antiquity and one of the ways in which Greek and Latin was learned, tragedy was an 'aesthetic' way of thinking about many things, and it was particularly suited to rumination upon public affairs.¹⁰

8 On the relationship between politics and aesthetics in neo-Latin literature in general, see Karl A.E. Enenkel, Marc Laureys and Christoph Pieper (eds.), *Discourses of Power: Ideology and Politics in Neo-Latin Literature* (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 2012).

9 Featuring recently in Hilary Mantel's famous novel *Wolf Hall* (2009); see also among many studies Greg Walker, *Writing under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

10 See on the role of drama in public debate, for instance, Jan Bloemendal, Peter G.F. Eversmann and Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Drama, Performance and Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); for the role of literature in the forming of public opinion, see Jan Bloemendal, Arjan C. van Dixhoorn and Elsa Strietman (eds.),

It is now a rather tired cliché from Sir Philip Sidney in English Renaissance studies, but still worth quoting again: tragedy makes ‘Kings fear to be Tyrants.’ Before Sidney however, it was also a commonplace.¹¹ As early as 1526 Swiss plays in the German language had defended republican values, instanced in Heinrich Bullinger’s *Lucretia*.¹² Before then, the *Codex Etruscus* itself contained excerpts from Isidore of Seville claiming that ‘tragedians sang of the crimes of wicked kings before an audience.’¹³

Rationale behind This Volume

The essays in this volume show manifold interconnections. They discuss the direct dealing within the drama of complicated and difficult political situations, as well as where the composition—and written, printed or performed dissemination—of the play might spell danger for playwright, printer or actors. This is the case with the contributions from such scholars as Korsten and Ospovat. Or the essays explore the crucial presence of religion within the political drama of the early modern period, such as the contributions from Knight, Norland, Parente, Hoxby and Sierhuis. Other essays relate the political to other branches of thought or another literary genre, for instance ethical philosophy, historical writing, legal thought and the idea of toleration, as found in the chapters by Vasiliauskas, Helmers and Leo. Many essays address the matter of dramatic form, and the significance of the migration of a dramatic form or play topic from one language and culture to another, and how in so doing plays transform their terms of engagement, from emotions to reason, and from exuberance to constraint. Among these are the essays by Biet, Lande, Korneeva, Helmers and Tjoelker. And some discuss the political use of the past in tragedy, such as the essays by Sierhuis and Parente.

This volume is divided into four sections. In the first, the issue of sovereignty is the primary focus, as related in some way or another to the Dutch playwright

Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), esp. Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn, ‘Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries’, *ibid.*, pp. 1–35.

11 Sir Philip Sidney, *Apology for Poetry* (1595), p. 23.

12 See Andries Raath and Shaun de Freitas, ‘Rebellion, Resistance, and a Swiss Brutus’, *The Historical Journal*, 48 (2005), 1–26; Horst Hartmann (ed.), *Heinrich Bullinger, Hans Sachs, Lucretia-Dramen* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1973).

13 Grund, ‘Introduction’, p. xv; see also the documentation compiled by Reiss, ‘Renaissance Theatre and the Theory of Tragedy’, pp. 234–236.

Joost van den Vondel. This section features the essays by Korsten, Leo and Sierhuis. Korsten deals with the relationship between (imperial) rule and torture; Leo treats the relationship between tragedy and law—and revenge in particular, which ultimately may call into question God's sovereignty; whereas Sierhuis explores the role of religion within drama and the political use of the medieval past in an attempt to restore the sovereignty of the Church.

The latter essay constitutes a transition to the second section, which explores the issue of religion, politics and drama. Norland's chapter discusses political martyr dramas written by English Jesuits in Rome, whereas Parente's essay analyses the use of history in neo-Latin drama to thematise the relationship between Church and state. Hoxby's article discusses several aspects of Bernardino Stefonio's *Flavia*, including the concept of Baroque in this play and its representing the tragic encounter of the human and the divine in the blood and body of Christ, regarding the play as a tragedy of tyranny and martyrdom.

The third section deals with tragedy and ethics in relation to politics. Vasiliuskas discusses the act of conscientiously doing wrong, called *akrasia*, which has political and ethical implications. Knight explores truth in drama and its value for educating the young. Korneeva's essay deals with the versatile Italian playwright Cicognini, his role in introducing Spanish drama in his own country, and the dramatic efficacy and moral resonance of his drama. Biet investigates the spectator's roles in drama, the tension between passions and reason and the ways this tension is handled.

The fourth section explores aspects of the mobility of drama. The section opens with the essay in which Lande analyses the ways in which Vondel's tragedies were received in the German lands and adapted for the German stage, and the political implications of this reception. Helmers's essay deals with the subject of Titus Andronicus, the different representations of his story in England and the Dutch Republic and the political issues involved. In her essay, Tjoelker explores other aspects of mobility: the poetical discussion of French plays by a German Jesuit who wrote in Latin. Ospovat shows how royal violence can be used as evidence that Russian tragedy originated in French drama, analysing Russia's first Russian-language classicist tragedy, written by the 'Russian Racine', Aleksandr Sumarokov.

Dramatic Aesthetics, Politics and Theology

As one of the most distinctive ancient genres, tragedy found its way inside many other kinds of discourse where it played an important role in generating a great variety of insights. In no sense was this an entirely secular matter. It was a

way in theology for certain biblical texts to be given shape: the amorphousness of prophecy was trained by its redefinition as tragedy: this actually happened to the Book of Revelation during the post-Reformation period.¹⁴ The rise of rationalist philosophy in the period has been seen as a large-scale attempt to overcome our inherited tragic perspective.¹⁵ The recent vogue for ‘political theology’, and the sourcing of one of its starting points to the rise of the early modern absolutist monarchy, suggests that in the early modern mindset authoritarian politics, religion and aesthetics came together in and around tragedy.¹⁶ This is in fact misleading: we have already seen the association of tragedy with anti-tyrannical politics in an earlier period in Italy. Moreover nearly all European rulers, even those who self-defined as ‘absolute’, were operating with local assemblies and acting according to, or trying (not always successfully) to circumvent, customs or written bodies of law that limited monarchical or imperial status.¹⁷ The drama itself might be seen as a kind of ‘legal fiction’, placing and empowering the audience or reader in complex judging positions, or indeed borrowing from the body of constitutional and in England, common law, in the elaboration of conceptions of dramatic causation.¹⁸ It has been recently argued that tragedy marks the transformation from the time of ‘political theology’ to that of a governmental rationality with the autonomous subject at its center.¹⁹ Political theology was by no means wholly matter for absolutists, and

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- 14 See, e.g., David Pareus, *A commentary upon the divine revelation of the apostle and evangelist John*, transl. Elias Arnold (Amsterdam: Printed by C.P., 1644).
- 15 Myriam Morvan, *Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza et la question de l'effacement du tragique* (Paris: Harmattan, 2013).
- 16 Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, transl. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985). For a different approach relating Schmittian political theology in his various writings to the idea of the *corpus mysticum*, and considering among other texts Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, see Jennifer R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), especially ch. 3.
- 17 See Cesare Cuttica and Glenn Burgess (eds.), *Monarchism and Absolutism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), pp. 4–5.
- 18 Romain Jobez, *Le théâtre baroque allemand et français: Le droit dans la littérature* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010); Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- 19 Romain Jobez, ‘État d'exception: Karel Stuart/Carolus Stuardus’, in Paul Vanden Berghe, Christian Biet et Karel Vanhaesebrouck (eds.), *Œdipe contemporain: Tragédie, tragique, politique* (Vic la Gardiole, France: Entretemps, 2007), pp. 155–187; cf. Dirk Wiemann, ‘Spectacles of Astonishment: Tragedy and the Regicide in England and Germany, 1649–1663’, in Gaby Mahlberg and Dirk Wiemann (eds.), *European Contexts for English Republicanism*

tragedy was not the only genre that related to ‘political theology.’²⁰ But there is no escaping the fact that rulers often feature as the leading protagonists in early tragic drama. There might be a survival from the mirror and fall of princes genres of the Middle Ages, the *Fürstenspiegel*, concerned to present ‘good’ or ‘bad’ rulers, but tragedy’s emphasis upon the difficult choices faced by the protagonists offered a more complicated texture. In an oblique way, where such indirectness was in fact helpful and even necessary, tragedy re-enacted events in recent history and enabled an audience to engage with something that might be defined as a social trauma. It could not be addressed in a psychologically satisfying way with reason: tragedy gave it other, meaningful dimensions. The attractiveness of tragedy in this respect might be measured by the degree to which it was cited or quoted in works of political theory.²¹ Arguments have been made—as Biet’s essay shows—that tragedy rehearsed, relived and perhaps expiated the violent events of the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598) and the Dutch Revolt (1568–1648), and was a crucial way in which the unresolved consequences of those momentous events lived on in later times. Korsten’s essay demonstrates how apt tragedy was at picking up the continued and modulating resonances of that violence, how subtle it could be at redirecting a broad range of associations in controversial discourse, music and visual art; it was a spectacularly successful tool for providing reflection upon painful wounds that live inside a society and that can be perpetuated in it, for instance through the use of torture as well as execution.

Renaissance tragedy is often considered as the cause of, or is strongly inflected by, shifts in political theory (e.g., Machiavelli), religious life (the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation), new philosophical currents (such as Stoicism, skepticism, melancholy, Spinozism), and law,²² but it is also the case that

(Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 33–48; Nigel Smith, ‘*Theatrum Mundi* and the Politics of Rebellion in Seventeenth Century Drama’, in Björn Quiring (ed.), *If/Then the World a Theatre Present ...: Revisions of the Theatrum Mundi Metaphor in Early Modern England* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 1–22.

20 See further, Graham Hammill and Julia Reinhard Lupton (eds.), *Political Theology and Early Modernity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); Victoria Kahn, *The Future of Illusion: Political Theology and Early Modern Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

21 Obvious examples would be Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651) and Milton’s *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), *Eikonoklastes* (1649) and *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651); for a less celebrated example, see Sir Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis librarie* (1542), p. 43.

22 For drama and law in respect of Grotius, see Russ Leo’s essay. See also Henk Duits,

drama regulated its own territory in which contemporaries could assess through the mirror of theatrical fiction contemporary political predicaments.²³ Thus Peter Lake is able to view *Hamlet* as a drama about the crisis of confession in the late Elizabethan period, and before him David Norbrook was able to show Shakespeare's manipulation of Scottish history sources in order to suit the monarchical and dynastic vision of Kings James VI and I.²⁴ In the early sixteenth century tragedy was strongly associated with *conversos* authors, whose families had converted from Judaism or Islam, a decidedly difficult cultural, religious and political position in early modern Spain and Portugal.

As James A. Parente's essay reminds us, the plays of senior academics and administrators in the Spanish Netherlands, like Nicolaus Vernulaeus (1583–1649), were used as a direct means of instruction. Tragedy afforded a way of presenting ideal rulership, in both secular and sacred respects. In this regard, plays that might be seen at a Roman Catholic university seem a direct continuation from the kinds of instructive tragic drama with religious themes, not the least of them martyrdom, that were performed in the English Catholic academies on the continent, notably at Douai and Valladolid.²⁵ Tragedy was understood

Van Bartholomeusnacht tot Bataafse Opstand: Studies over de relatie tussen politiek en toneel in het midden van de zeventiende eeuw (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), Doctoral thesis Amsterdam, on theater and politics in four history plays: Lambert van den Bosch, *Carel de negende*, anders *Parysche bruiloft* (1645) and *Wilhem of gequetste vryhey* (1662), Reyer Anslø, *Parysche bruiloft* (1646–1647, published 1649) and Joost van den Vondel, *Batavische gebroeders* (1663); and Bettina Noak, *Politische Auffassungen im niederländischen Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Waxmann, 2002), Doctoral thesis Berlin, who discusses ten history plays, including Joachim Oudaen's controversial *Haagsche Broeder-moort of dolle blydschap* (written 1672–1673, published 1712) and demonstrates the close relationship between topical politics and politically oriented drama.

- 23 For one very recent advocate of this view, see Christopher Pye, *The Storm at Sea: Political Aesthetics in the Time of Shakespeare* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).
- 24 David Norbrook, 'Macbeth and the Politics of Historiography', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (eds.), *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 78–116; Peter Lake, forthcoming; older views, more interested in political ideas than specific contexts include Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010 [1984]).
- 25 See Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 173–174, and ch. 5 and 6 in general, Norland's essay in this volume and Howard B. Norland, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Britain', in Bloemendal and Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre*, pp. 471–544, esp. pp. 523–533.

as an especially valuable tool in the elaboration of a Roman Catholic, Habsburg political vision, synthesizing providential vision and historical contingency, and bridging ‘the relationship between idealized political behavior informed by Christian moral-philosophical principles, and expedient political action attuned to the acquisition and maintenance of power and authority during the religious wars of the seventeenth century.’²⁶ If we accept this intention, it helps us redeem this drama from the inferior position it has held in relation to the vernacular dramas that lie around it. Moreover, Vernulaeus was doing nothing more than extending and elaborating on the tradition begun by the earlier revival in Italy of tragedy, where the intention was to ‘to publicize the practical advice their works contained on morality, government, and the maintenance of civil harmony.’²⁷ Here, Vernulaeus’s didactic emphasis upon the lessons of history as refracted through tragedy is notable: ‘His historical tragedies do not simply commemorate an unjustly slain hero, or transmit moral lessons through the punishment of morally deviant rulers, but provide political instruction for future statesmen weighing practical and expedient choices in a morally complex world.’²⁸ His intentions were pointedly anti-Protestant, engaging in counter-histories, and aimed through Latinity at a pan-European, supra-national Catholic audience or readership.

To this degree tragedy must be understood as totally continuous with political theory, which it sometimes incorporated and indeed attempted to exceed, as Russ Leo argues in his analysis of Joost van den Vondel’s adoption and adaptation of Grotian concepts.²⁹ The drama afforded a utility that was missing in fully annotated political treatises aimed at or dedicated to elite rulers. Vernulaeus was concerned to resurrect the ideal of the orator prince as Roman Catholic ideal over and against the opportunist of Machiavellian tradition. Prudence might be seen as his virtue, contra *occasione*. The role of the courtly adviser, realized in the figure of the *senex*, and so stressed by Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia* (1516), was crucial. In a confirmation of that role, Polonius was the adviser to a prince mocked by Shakespeare in *Hamlet* (ca. 1600). Whatever the generic evolution and interweaving that typifies baroque tragedy, that sense of tragedy existing in order to respond to the horrific consequences of

26 Parente in this volume, p. 157.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 161.

29 Russ Leo’s contribution. On political theory and philosophy, especially in neo-Latin, see Erik de Bom, ‘Political Philosophy’ in Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal and Charles Fantazzi (eds.), *Brill’s Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 631–648.

immoral, unbounded political action is prevalent. The German baroque playwright Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664) liked princely authority but he abhorred tyrants, and against the backdrop of the Thirty Years' War, it is not hard to see why. Christophorus Kormart's equivocal view in his *Trauerspiel* of 1673 of the role of Queen Elizabeth in the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, offered by way of searching for the truth of history, is an unusual exception in the German tradition. This example suggests interesting questions with regard to a distinct language of political theory that could be contained within or articulated through tragedy. In groundbreaking new work that analyzes handwritten annotations of a political nature in English play books, including Shakespeare's tragedies, András Kiséry begins to explore this world in detail.³⁰

The Jesuits' ideals of apology and proselytization give their own huge corpus of tragedies a more forceful martyrological stance, and where early church history is used as source material to portray the ongoing struggle of the true church with heresy, and that of the Protestants in particular. To make tragedy work in this way, the theory of tragedy had to be altered, since originally it was thought that tragedy had no place for Christian martyrdom which was regarded as inconsistent with the universe of tragic drama. Of course in the classical tradition there are martyrs of sorts: in Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*, Hercules is, so to speak, martyred on the pyre on Mt. Oeta and deified, and Sophocles' *Antigone* may also be considered to be like a martyr. But as Blair Hoxby shows, Jesuit dramatists in Rome were impressive in their resourceful rearrangement of resources, and they developed a tradition of martyr tragedy that would carry considerable influence.³¹

Religion and religious difference is at the heart of much of the drama in this period. This should be no surprise after the Reformation. Older church history functioned alongside ancient mythology as a way of representing contemporary events. Thus Nicolas Caussin (1583–1651) in his Jesuit dramas *Theodoricus* and *Hermenigildus* (1620) used the early conflict between Trinitarians and Arians to reflect Catholic/Protestant difference.³² In the early modern world, of course, religion and politics go hand in hand. It may be hard for us to grasp this aspect as effective drama today but the representation of what was understood to be the working of providence or the manifestation of divine virtue in a person were common attributes. Jesuit drama justified itself against charges of

30 András Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment: Drama and Political Knowledge in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

31 Hoxby's essay, pp. 182–217.

32 Parente's essay, pp. 164–165.

the immorality of the stage by insisting that all plays should have a sacred subject matter and purpose. By contrast, it is a major purpose of Jan Vos's Senecan drama in the public theater of Amsterdam to expose the willful egotism as he saw it of Calvinism; a public church driven by dangerous extremism. In this respect he was placing the views of political actors and commentators like P.C. Hooft (1581–1647) and Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) on the public stage to show how 'religious excitability ... undermines the stability of the state.'³³

We should not think of tragedy as merely instructional or belonging to and circulating within governing elites. As Tatiana Korneeva shows us, a seventeenth-century Italian dramatist like Giacinto Andrea Cicognini (1606–1651) was always at the center of some source of high power. Equipped with his law degree, he served the Medici court and then the Venetians, operating from an academy that exercised governmental power. Yet these competences were put to use in an original theater that was popular and exploited the modish switch to musical drama. It is in this context that we see the staging of courtly relations and where monarchical power is successively renegotiated, over and against the negative example of the tyrant. We understand here that 'the swapping of roles between the king and his courtiers in Cicognini's play and the latter becoming genuine political actors has to be linked to a decisive event, the emergence of a radically new kind of public.'³⁴ In that respect the audience is named as a political agent in the work of the tragedy. We know little of the early audience responses to performed tragedies in the London theaters, but Dutch audiences did weep in the performances of Vondel plays, which brought home contemporary concerns even if the subject matter was remotely historical.³⁵ In other words, the performance of tragedy in this period witnesses not merely courtly politics but also the rise of 'middling sort' consciousness: that such an audience might not just have a public opinion but might also have a kind of agency.

Roman Catholic and Protestant Latin tragedy was educational in intent: if it was performed and not merely read, its place was the academy, with strictly controlled circumstances of performance. Puritans like Lawrence Humphrey (1527?–1590) would always argue that drama has but the shadow of an insight

33 Helmers's chapter in this volume, p. 361.

34 Korneeva's contribution, p. 290.

35 See also William Aglionby, *The Present State of the United Provinces of the Low-Countries* (1669), p. 257: 'The other Fair is that which us'd to be held in memory of the deliverance of *Leyden*, and was wont to last ten dayes; but it is now put down, and the Story only represented in a Tragedie, to which there is great flocking.'

into real truth.³⁶ In this view, not even the seriousness of tragedy deserves respect, a view that might seem extreme after earlier Protestant attempts to exploit theater, notably in the morality drama of John Foxe (1516/17–1587) and John Bale (1496–1563).³⁷ In the universities play performance was abhorred as an occasion of undergraduate disorderliness but not universally. Alongside this the Puritans had a certain suspicion that drama led to Roman Catholic preferences: it opened the door to the Jesuits. It is a surprise, as Sarah Knight remarks, that such outlooks existed, even in the context of a religious anti-tyrant play, in which some members of the Tudor dynasty appear in a positive light, and where instructive parallels with Greek as well as Latin drama were known to the proponents of the anti-theatrical debate. Conversely, it was precisely the power of drama to move, and to address political issues in the populace, and hence to create turbulence, that led to bans on drama performance in the Netherlands and in England. It is of signal significance that the historian, jurist and political theoretician Alberico Gentili, defended play performance in late sixteenth-century Oxford.³⁸

A tragedy might point to supernatural agency in this world (Ezzelino in Mussato's play was the spawn of the devil, according to his mother; Dr. Faustus made a contract with the devil) but the subject-matter of tragic drama most often is historical, whenever it takes place, and especially contemporary or very recent history, even though the drama itself maintains its generic integrity by not functioning like a work of history. Aristotle distinguished between poetry (i.e., tragedy) and history as genres, the former compassing what may happen, the latter what has happened; the former being 'more philosophical and a higher thing than history: since poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.'³⁹ If Aristotle was thinking of mythic or legendary subjects, he did not discount historical events as appropriate subject-matter: 'even if he chances to take a historical subject, he is none the less a poet; for there is no reason why some events that have actually happened should not conform to the law of the probable and possible, and in virtue of that quality in them he

36 See Knight's essay, pp. 239–259.

37 See John Bale, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, ed. by Peter Happé, 2 vols. (Woodbridge and Dover, NH: Boydell & Brewer, 1985–1986); John Foxe, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe the Martyrologist*, ed. by John Hazel Smith (Ithaca, Cornell University Press for the Renaissance Society of America, 1973); Daniel Blank, 'Performing Exile: John Foxe's *Christus Triumphans* at Magdalen College, Oxford,' *Renaissance Studies*, Special Issue: Latin Drama in Renaissance Europe (forthcoming September 2016).

38 The subject of further forthcoming work by Daniel Blank.

39 Aristotle, *Poetics*, IX, 1451b.

is their poet or maker.⁴⁰ The murder of heroes or anti-heroes is ripe subject-matter, even that of very recent figures like William the Silent.⁴¹ Vernulaeus was a strong supporter of Habsburg power, and so his plays detailing Bohemian revolts against the Holy Roman Emperor were scarcely veiled castigations of the Protestant princes, both Bohemian and Dutch, in their struggles with the Emperor at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). At this point in time, 1626, the defeated Frederick of Bohemia and of the Palatinate lived in exile in The Hague at the invitation of the Stadholder. As Helmer Helmers shows us, ten years later Jan Vos (ca. 1610–1667) was very pointedly readjusting Shakespeare's account of Roman history, or indeed making it more like the received historical account, in order to play up (in Dutch terms at least) republican as opposed to monarchical accounts of authority. The latter led only to the terror perpetrated by tyranny. It was here that the instance and imagery of rape became so crucial, long associated with Spanish tyranny, but also linking personhood, property, citizenship, diplomacy and war: 'because it allowed for the obfuscation or even elimination of the boundaries between the symbolic, the abstract, and the real.'⁴² Imagery of violated virgins is at the heart of Vos's and of Vondel's most famous plays (in *Gysbreght van Aemstel* the Abbess Klaeris, who tries to protect Bishop Gozewijn, is raped on top of his dead body), and replicated as visual imagery on Van Campen's Amsterdam City Hall.⁴³

Tragedy might rise to offer causal explanation of disasters, but also and famously exposed personal responses to tragic predicaments: how to deal with unpleasant circumstances of finality. Mussato's *Ecerinis* (1314) is little more than a witness to a diabolical tyrant, his murderous wrongdoing, his defeat and, as the play sees it, his justifiably violent end. The speeches are announcements of historical events, with a dusting of Senecan familial horror. Much more would come by way of explanation and circumstantial detail as the genre developed, involving the elaboration of cause through the deployment of forensic rhetoric, and the acceptance of responsibility by tragic protagonists, or an understanding of the temporary commitment to immoral action, as Emily Vasiliauskas shows.⁴⁴

40 Aristotle, *Poetics*, IX, 1451b.

41 The subject of tragedies by Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655), *Auriacus, sive Libertas saucia* (1602), Jacob Duyym (1547–1612/16), *Het moordadich stuck van Balthasar Gerards, begaen aen den Doorluchtighen Prince van Oraigen*, 1584 (1606), and Gijsbrecht van Hogendorp, *Truer-spel van de moordt, begaen aen Wilhem (...)* (1616).

42 Helmers in this volume, p. 370.

43 See below, pp. 124–127, 361, 370.

44 Vasiliauskas's essay, pp. 221–238.

In this respect, did French neoclassical drama triumph in offering a 'purging' of barbaric tragic contents, and an eradication of violence from the stage, as well as the generic confusion of earlier tragedy, comedy and morality play? Apparently not so on the international stage as the genre began to be adopted in places it had not been hitherto, such as Russia. Here, under strict expectations to provide a drama that would celebrate the sovereignty of the Tsars, French neoclassical form was used as a vehicle to propagate the veracity of the regime. The violent history of Russian origins is retold in tragic terms and in German. As Kirill Ospovat writes:

Sumarokov's dramatic experiments were informed by an aesthetic which mapped visions of sovereignty onto the national historical lore, producing a dramatic idiom which could easily oscillate between historicist distance and topical allusion, narratives of progress and reenactments of the monarchy's primeval violence.⁴⁵

To use the native material was to be consistent with the Greeks and Romans, but to offer a drama involved a paradoxical risk that the absolutist ruler expected seditious dissent and had a secret police who regarded even political treatises justifying strong princely authority, such as by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), as potentially dangerous. Tragedy was demanded but it was potentially incriminating for its author. The fact is that in Russia the theater of state violence itself was just as gory as that which the tragic stage could present, as instanced in the infamous burning in Moscow in 1689 of the messianic Silesian poet Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651–1689).⁴⁶ No one could blame the Russians for seeing a complete continuity between drama and life in this respect. However, and in a quite contrary way, French drama did become the civilizing new genre for eighteenth-century German playwrights, even the Jesuits. Germany endured entirely different political circumstances to Russia after the Treaty of Westphalia. Before then the adoption of French models in the Amsterdam theater was connected with a rationalist pacifying of a more violent theater. Here Spinoza's philosophy was also apparently deployed in an attempt to produce plays that avoided the violent excesses of Senecan tragedy.⁴⁷ This was a piece of cultural reform led by the

45 This volume, pp. 401–402.

46 Walter Dietze, *Quirinus Kuhlmann, Ketzer und Poet: Versuch einer Monographischen Darstellung von Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1963).

47 See Roberto Bordoli, *Etica arte scienza tra Descartes e Spinoza: Lodewijk Meyer (1629–1681) e l'associazione Nil Volentibus Arduum* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2001).

merchant poet Andries Pels (1631–1681) who became director of the Amsterdam Schouwburg in 1680. Pels thought that the stage as it had been allowed to develop was a subversive force, damaging to the polity: he agreed that it should have been closed, as it was between 1672 and 1677.

The Low Countries as a Literary Staple Market⁴⁸

Among the topics that this volume contributes to is the knowledge of cultural migration of literature throughout Europe in the early modern period.⁴⁹ This was related to other forms of mobility: traders, diplomats, representatives of the church, scholars and students and other travelers crossed borders and advanced cultural mobility.⁵⁰ The Low Countries played an important role in this phenomenon. Their importance for the spread of literature is evident in this volume, too.⁵¹ Cultural interrelations were intense in the seventeenth

48 For this title, see Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt: Themes and Ideas* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991) *Utrecht Publications in General Comparative Literature*, 28 [transl. of *Nederlandse literatuur in de tijd van Rembrandt* (Utrecht: Bijleveld, 1994)], ch. vii ‘Holland as a Literary and Cultural Staple Market’, pp. 137–152.

49 On this topic, see Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (eds.) *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theatre* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2014), and id. (eds.), *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2008), *Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama* (cited by Kim Jautze, Leonor Álveres Francés and Frans R.E. Blom, ‘Spaans theater in de Amsterdamse Schouwburg (1638–1672): Kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve analyse van de creatieve industrie van het vertalen’, *De zeventiende eeuw* (forthcoming)). See also Anston Bosman, ‘Mobility’, in Henry S. Turner (ed.), *Early Modern Theatricality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 493–515.

50 See Henke’s and Nicholson’s introduction to their *Transnational Exchange*, pp. 6–8. For the cultural exchange between Holland and Poland, see Andrzej Borowski, *Iter Polono-Belgo-Ollandicum. Cultural and Literary Relationships between the Commonwealth of Poland and the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2007). On concepts for understanding cultural transfer in early modern drama, see Jan Bloemendal, ‘Transfer and Integration of Latin and Vernacular Drama in the Early Modern Period: The Case of Everyman, Elckerlijc, Homulus and Hecastus’, *Arcadia* 44 (2009), 274–288.

51 See in particular the contribution by Lande. See also among other publications, Henry W. Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries: His Reception and Influence, 1654–1980* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1983 [2009²]) and Henry W. Sullivan, Raúl A. Galoppe and Mahlon L. Stoutz (eds.), *La comedia española y el teatro europeo del siglo XVII* (London: Tamesis, 1999); we owe the latter reference to Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, ‘Spaans theater’.

century, especially between the Low Countries, German lands and the Baltic countries.⁵² In Germany, Dutch was considered a dialect of German and Dutch literature played a part in the German one, partly because Dutch culture was ahead of the German one.⁵³ One of the other reasons for the prominent position of the Netherlands was the presence of many outstanding publishers who produced and sold Spanish books in Europe.⁵⁴ A third reason was the high degree of literacy among the citizens of urbanized Holland and the 'considerable command of foreign languages' of the Dutch, although not everybody will have known as many languages as the courtier and diplomat Sir Constantine Huygens (1596–1687), who could read, speak and write Dutch, German, French, English, Italian, Latin and Greek, and could read Spanish.⁵⁵ Only few Dutchmen had knowledge of and competence in Spanish and English.⁵⁶

Drama was a particularly mobile genre. One relevant phenomenon here was the physical traveling of players.⁵⁷ English drama was spread in the Netherlands through English itinerant troupes—strolling players—who traveled through the Low Countries, Germany, Scandinavia and the Czech regions, and thus disseminated English drama. Italian *commedia dell'arte* troupes visited other European countries and thus spread Italian theater.⁵⁸ It is known that a

52 See Ferdinand van Ingen, *Do ut des: Holländisch-deutsche Wechselbeziehungen in der Literatur des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn: Presse- und Kulturabteilung der Kgl. Niederländische Botschaft, 1981). Also on dbnl.org.

53 See Ulrich Bornemann, *Anlehnung und Abgrenzung: Untersuchungen zur Rezeption der niederländischen Literatur in der deutschen Dichterreform des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976); Leonard Forster, *Die Niederlande und die Anfänge der Barocklyrik in Deutschland* (Groningen: Wolters, 1967) Voordrachten gehouden voor de Gelderse Leergangen te Arnhem, 20; Arie-Jan Gelderblom: '22 februari 1667: Inwijding van de Hollandse Schouwburg in Stockholm: De Nederlandse literatuur buiten de Lage Landen', in M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen (ed.), *Nederlandse literatuur: Een geschiedenis* pp. 270–275.

54 Guillaume van Gemert, 'Die Niederlande als Umschlagplatz spanischer Literatur des *Siglo de oro* für den Deutschen Sprachraum: Ein Aufriß', in *Tussen twee culturen: De Nederlanden en de Iberische wereld, 1550–1800* (Nijmegen: Instituut voor Nieuwe Geschiedenis 1988) Nijmeegse Publicaties over de Nieuwe Geschiedenis, 2, pp. 11–38.

55 Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature*, pp. 137–140.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

57 See, e.g., A.J. Hoenselaars, '23 april 1586: Engelse toneelspelers voeren in Utrecht *De werken van Hercules* op: Beroepsacteurs en rederijkers', in Rob L. Erenstein (ed.), *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden: Tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), pp. 142–147.

58 See, for instance, the introduction of Henke and Nicholson to their *Transnational Mobili-*

theater company under the direction of Jan Baptist van Fornenbergh (1624–1697) traveled through north-Germany, and in Sweden, with a Dutch-spoken repertoire.⁵⁹ After the 1740s German ‘Wanderbühnen’ seem to have taken over the place of Dutch itinerant companies.⁶⁰

Literature could also be transferred by the spread of texts. In particular sixteenth-century Latin literature from the Low Countries was known all over Europe. Latin plays such as Gulielmus Gnapheus’s *Acolastus* (1529) and Petrus Papaeus’s *Samarites* (1539) were staged in many cities in Europe, from Prague to London. Copies were sold on numerous places, in the original edition or in pirate editions.⁶¹ The popularity is confirmed by the commentaries which the French schoolmaster and theologian Gabriel Dupreau (1511–1588) and the Spanish Jesuit Alejo Venegas (1497/98–1562) wrote on *Acolastus* and *Samarites* respectively and which were published in 1554 and 1542.⁶² Dutch plays could be read in the German lands and eastward, as far as Riga. In this mobility drama was anything but fixed.⁶³ Texts could be adapted to their new contexts by producers and players, or by translators, since texts also were translated, particularly those in the vernaculars. The Low Countries’ main cities Amsterdam, Antwerp and Brussels had a kind of ‘theater network’,⁶⁴ in which Spanish drama took a prominent place. For instance, the translation by Willem Ogier (1618–1689) of *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a dream*) written by Pedro Calderón de la Barca

ties, pp. 1–19. For *commedia dell’arte* players in the Netherlands, see Rob L. Erenstein, ‘1576: Eerste commedia dell’arte voorstellingen in Antwerpen en Gent: Invloed en doorwerking van de *commedia dell’arte* tot 1800’, in Erenstein, *Een theatergeschiedenis*, pp. 126–133.

59 Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature*, p. 149; Gelderblom, ‘De opening van de Hollandse Schouwburg in Stockholm’; Herbert Junkers, *Niederländische Schauspieler und niederländisches Schauspiel im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert in Deutschland* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1936).

60 Gelderblom, ‘De opening van de Hollandse Schouwburg in Stockholm’, p. 275.

61 *Acolastus* was printed almost 50 times from its first publication to 1630; *Samarites* was staged five times, in Antwerp and in ‘s-Hertogenbosch in 1539, in Cologne in 1540 and in Basel where it was printed in the collection of biblical plays by Brylinger: *Comoediae ac tragoediae aliquot ex Novo et Vetere Testamento desumptae* (1541). The fifth edition is the one with a commentary by Vanegas (see the next note).

62 See Jan Bloemendal, ‘Un commentaire néolatin de la France sur une comédie biblique des Pays Bas: de l’édition par Gabriel Prateolus ou Dupreau en 1554 de l’*Acolastus* de Gulielmus Gnapheus ou De Volder de 1529’ (forthcoming) and Petrus Papaeus, *Samarites*, ed. by Daniel Nodes (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

63 See Bosman, ‘Mobility’, p. 504.

64 See Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen: Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1560–1700* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), pp. 553–556.

(1600–1681) was a success on stage and in print, both in Brussels and Amsterdam.⁶⁵ Joannes Serwouters's (1623–1677) adaptation of a play by Luis Velez de Guevara (1579–1644), *Den grooten Tamerlan* (*The Great Tamerlan*, 1657) was a 'blockbuster' as well.⁶⁶ Another Spanish play, Guillen de Castro's (1569–1631) *El perfecto caballero* (*The Perfect Knight*, between 1610 and 1625) was translated by Antoon Frans (or Antonio-Francisco) Wouters (1641–before 1676) as *Den volmaeckten ridder*.⁶⁷ Wouters also translated Calderón's *La devoción de la cruz* (*The Devotion of the Cross*, 1640) as *De devotie van Eusebius tot het H. kruys* (*Eusebius's Devotion to the Holy Cross*, 1665). In 1653 the Brussels printer, playwright and translator Claude de Griek (1625–ca. 1670) staged an adaptation of Lope Félix de Vega Carpio's (1562–1635) *Amar sin saber à quien* (*Loving Without Knowing Whom*, 1635) as *Liefde sonder sien verweckt* (*Love Aroused Without Seeing*, 1653). Also Spanish drama could reach the Dutch stage through a French translation, as is the case with Calderón's *La dama duende* (*The Elf Lady*, 1629), printed in Amsterdam in the version by the Antwerp minor playwright Adriaen Peys (ca. 1650–ca. 1700) as *De nachtspookende joffer* (*The Nightly Haunting Miss*, 1670).⁶⁸

French theater was prominent too on the Low Countries' stage. Three years after its publication De Griek adapted Pierre Corneille's *Héraclius* (1647) in Dutch as *Heraklius* (1650), which was staged four times in the Amsterdam Schouwburg in autumn 1652.⁶⁹ Three of twelve tragedies by Corneille saw their first publication in Amsterdam.⁷⁰ Jean de Rotrou's *La Bélisaire* (1647) was trans-

65 See Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 525 on the very successful staging of Schouwenbergh's adaptation of the play *Sigismundus, prince van Poolen* (*Sigismund, Prince of Poland*) in the Amsterdam Schouwburg; *ibid.*, pp. 452–453 on the company 'Vrije lief-hebbers der rijmerkonste' who before 1647 staged a faithful Dutch adaptation of the *La vida es sueño* in Brussels, printed by Joan Mommaert, which was staged in Hamburg in 1648 by a Dutch traveling theater company. On the Schouwenbergh adaptation, see also Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries*, pp. 31–67.

66 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 525; repr. of the play in *Den grooten Tamerlan* (1657) & *Mahomet en Irena* (1657): *Timoeridische en Turkse tragedies van Serwouters en Lubæus*, ed. by C.G. Brouwer (Amsterdam: D'Fluyte Rarob, 1992).

67 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 525.

68 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 554.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 553. See on the repertoire of the Schouwburg E. Oey-de Vita en M. Geesink, *Academie en Schouwburg. Amsterdams toneelrepertoire 1617–1665* (Amsterdam: Huis aan de drie grachten, 1983), and Anna S. de Haas, *Het repertoire van de Amsterdamse Schouwburg 1700–1772* (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2001).

70 *Ibid.*

lated into Dutch as *Den grooten Bellizarius* (1654). French comedies were also translated and staged. Thus, De Grieck's *Don Japhet van Armenien*, translated from Paul Scarron's *Don Japhet d'Arménie* (1653), was staged in Amsterdam in 1657.⁷¹

Dutch drama or drama translated into Dutch was known in several countries, but most of all in the German lands. Vondel's drama experienced a vast reception in those regions, as Lande shows.⁷² The dynamics between the Low Countries and Germany could be carried out through the Dutch and German languages, but in some cases Latin played an intermediary role.⁷³

Dramatic literature, comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy, was dispersed throughout Europe through the Netherlands.⁷⁴ Thus, the theater of Calderón, Lope de Vega and other Spanish dramatists was made known in other European

71 Ibid.

72 See also Guillaume van Gemert, 'Between disregard and Political Mobilization—Vondel as a Playwright in Contemporary European Context: England, France and the German Lands', in Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 171–198. On pp. 171–172 he observes that Vondel was well known in German Lands, but '[a]s regards the French- and English-speaking countries a similar acquaintance with Vondel cannot be perceived for the same time period.'

73 See Ümmü Yüksel, 'Daniel Heinsius als Leitfigur auf dem Wege zur deutschen Kulturnation im Spannungsfeld von Latein und Landessprachen', in Tom Deneire (ed.), *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014) Medieval and Renaissance Authors and Texts, 13, pp. 108–131 and Guillaume van Gemert, 'Zum dynamischen Wechselverhältnis von Latein und Landessprachen im deutschen Umgang mit niederländischen neulateinischen Autoren im Umfeld der Opitzschen Reform, am Beispiel von Hugo Grotius' *De veritate religionis Christianae*', in Deneire (ed.), *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular*, pp. 202–229.

74 See Johannes Bolte, 'Von Wanderkomödianten und Handwerkerspielen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts', *Sitzungsberichte der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 19 (1934), 445–487; H. Junkers, *Niederländische Schauspieler und niederländisches Schauspiel im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert in Deutschland* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1936); Jonas A. van Praag, *La comédie espagnole aux Pays-Bas au XVII^e et XVIII^e siècle* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1922); Julius Schwering, *Zur Geschichte des niederländische und spanischen Dramas in Deutschland: Neue Forschungen* (Münster: Cöppenrath, 1895), cited by Van Gemert, 'Die Niederlande als Umschlagplatz', p. 33, n. 58, as well as Jan te Winkel, 'De invloed der Spaansche letterkunde op de Nederlandsche in de zeventiende eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 1 (1881), pp. 60–114; see Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, 'Spaans theater'. George W. Brandt and Wiebe Hoogendoorn, *German and Dutch Theatre, 1600–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), in spite of their title, treat both theater traditions separately.

countries.⁷⁵ The mediation of cultural transfer was facilitated by the printing of Spanish drama, by translating it or in staging it, or a combination of all three.⁷⁶ Particularly the Amsterdam Nederduytsche Akademie and the Amsterdam Schouwburg played a very important role in this process. The Amsterdam theater public was fond of the love stories, and stories of honor and revenge, and of impressive staging, scenery and costumes of Spanish theater.⁷⁷ Thus, the Low Countries, and in particular Brussels, Antwerp and Amsterdam, played an important role in this process of theatrical migration.

Politics and Aesthetics: The Philosophy of Jacques Rancière

The previous pages deal with politics and aesthetics in a more 'material', literary-historical, historical and juridical way. One may however also deal with politics and theater, or more broadly, politics and aesthetics, in a more philosophical manner. It is Jacques Rancière, who has most thoroughly discussed the relation between the two.⁷⁸ The main concept of his thoughts about the rela-

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- 75 See, for instance, Martin Franzbach, *Untersuchungen zum Theater Calderóns in der europäischen Literatur vor der Romantik* (Munich: Fink, 1974).
- 76 See Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, 'Spaans theater', *De zeventiende eeuw*. They cite Kim Jautze, 'K sal u tot hutspot kerven. De culturele industrie van het vertalen van Spaans en Engels toneel voor de Amsterdamse Schouwburg (1617–1672)', Master's thesis 2012, available at <http://dare.uva.nl/cgi/arno/show.cgi?fid=454864> and Leonor Álvarez Francés, *The Phoenix Glides on Dutch Wings. Lope de Vega's El amigo por fuerza in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, Master's Thesis 2013, see <http://dare.uva.nl/es/scriptie/452381>.
- 77 Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Het Nederlandse renaissance-toneel* (Utrecht: HES, 1991), p. 108. See now also Leonor Álvarez Francés, 'Fascination for the "Madriische Apoll": Lope de Vega in Golden Age Amsterdam', in *Arte Nuevo* 1 (2014), pp. 1–15, available at http://doc.rero.ch/record/233043/files/Arte_nuevo_1_2014.pdf. Reference given by Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, 'Spaans theater'.
- 78 See, among other publications, Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, transl. by Gabriel Rockhill (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004) [= *Le partage du sensible: Esthétique et Politique* (Paris: La Fabrique Editions, 2000)]; id., *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and transl. by Steven Corcoran (London and New York: Continuum, 2010); id., *Aesthetics and its discontents*, transl. by Steven Corcoran (Cambridge-Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009) [= *Malaise dans l'esthétique* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 2004)], Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (eds.), *Critical Dissensus: Reading Rancière* (A&C Black, 2011); Mark Robson (ed.), *Jacques Rancière: Aesthetics, Politics, Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005); Joseph J. Tanke, *Jacques Rancière: An Introduction* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011); Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts (eds.), *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009); Sean

tionship between politics and aesthetics is 'le partage du sensible', translated into English as 'the distribution of the sensible'. *Partage*, however, has both the meaning of 'distributing' or 'dividing' (of 'what can be perceived by the senses', le *sensible*), and of 'taking part' (in it). Through this concept the French philosopher gives an alternative explanation to Marxist ideas on culture (where culture embodies ideology that will mask the real social relations in society), as well as to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of culture as a means of *distinction*.⁷⁹

Rancière distinguishes between 'politique' as 'police' and 'politique' as 'political'. The '*politique* as police' order constitutes 'a set of implicit rules and conventions which determine the distribution of roles in a community and the forms of exclusion which operate within it.'⁸⁰ The order is based on the issue of who is included, i.e., taking part in culture, the aesthetic, and who is excluded. This social order intrinsically aims at maintaining the status quo, and is, therefore, anti-democratic. Opposing it, in the '*politique* as politics' order the excluded, 'the part which has no part', challenge this status quo.⁸¹ Since politics deals with the distribution of what can be apprehended by the senses, and aesthetics is distributing that 'sensible', aesthetics and politics are closely related.⁸² Rancière labels the struggle between 'politics' and 'police' with the term *dissensus* (disagreement about the *sensible* (what is perceivable)). The attractiveness of this scheme to French circumstances, where the *Académie Française* was formed in 1635 to regulate artistic production with the backing of the chief royal administrator, Cardinal Richelieu, is clear.⁸³

Sayers, Review of Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, in *Culture Machine* (2005) (<http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/rt/printerFriendly/190/171>).

79 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, transl. by Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984) [= *Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979)].

80 Sayers, review of Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*.

81 This, of course, differs from Jürgen Habermas's liberal perception of politics as 'a rational debate between diverse interests' (Sayers, review of Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*) in a public sphere. On other points of criticism of Habermas, see Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn, 'Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries'.

82 See, for instance, Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 25: 'More precisely, then, the relationship between aesthetics and politics consists in the relationship between this aesthetics of politics and the 'politics of aesthetics'—in other words in the way in which the practices and forms of visibility of art themselves intervene in the distribution of the sensible and its reconfiguration.'

83 Among many works addressing this phenomenon, see Christian Jouhaud, *Les pouvoirs de la littérature: histoire d'un paradoxe* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), and now id., *Richelieu et l'écriture du pouvoir: autour de la journée des dupes* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015).

He assumes three regimes of art. First the ethical regime, that ‘came into being in ancient Greece and is exemplified by Plato’s writings on the distribution of images that would best serve the ethics of the community’ and that was ‘preoccupied with distinguishing true art—meaning art that is both true to its origin and to its telos of moral education—from artistic *simulacra* that distance the community from truth and the good life.’

Second comes the representative regime, that ‘has its roots in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, but only came into full fruition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’ and that:

freed the arts from the moral imperatives of the ethical regime by identifying a unique domain of fiction with its own set of guiding principles: the hierarchical distribution of subject matter and genres, the principle of appropriateness by which action and modes of expression are adapted to the subject matter represented and the genre employed, and the elevation of speech-act over action and visual imagery.

Finally there is the aesthetic regime of art ‘that has left its mark on the last two centuries of artistic production’ and which ‘by abolishing the hierarchical rules of representation ... has promoted the equality of subjects, the dissolution of genres, the indifference of style in relationship to content, and the power of writing and other “mute” things over the presence of speech’ and in which art has become individual.⁸⁴

Rancière thus sees the new distribution of the sensible in Modernism, and his main example from literature is Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, whereas his main theoretical treatise is Friedrich Schiller’s *On the Aesthetic Education of Man (Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen (1795))*.⁸⁵ Those who ‘have not’ have to be taught in order to be able ‘to have’, that is, to have access to the sensible. His view on politics and aesthetics is in this sense egalitarian.

The French philosopher developed his theory mainly for the modern and postmodern periods. He himself considers it applicable to the early modern period (‘pre-1800’).⁸⁶ Then, according to him, ethical and representative regimes prevailed. However, the illiteracy of most part of the inhabitants of

84 The lucid descriptions of these regimes are taken from Rockhill and Watts, *Jacques Rancière*, p. 9.

85 Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 23–24.

86 See Solange Guénoun and James H. Kavanagh, ‘Jacques Rancière: Literature, Politics Aesthetics: Approaches to Democratic Disagreement’, in *SubStance* 29-2 (2000), pp. 3–24, esp. p. 10.

Europe—and beyond—makes it unlikely that ‘those who have no part’ in ‘high’ culture would easily recognize, let alone grasp the opportunity to take part in that culture. Latin drama was written and staged for a relatively small group, although the Jesuits contributed to a kind of democratization of culture by offering free education, also for the poor. They also helped the understanding of spectators by compiling and selling ‘periochae’, program leaflets in the vernacular, which we now know were also distributed in Shakespeare’s theater.⁸⁷ A sophisticated baroque or classicist drama, be it in Latin or in the vernacular would, however, not have been accessible to a large audience of people ‘not taking part’. Moreover, the ‘ethical imperative’ which he saw in the earlier ‘ethical’ regime of culture, and from which the arts would have been ‘freed’ in the ‘representative’ regime, still applied to the arts, including drama.

That being said, a baroque and classicist drama undoubtedly will have had a political impact by the mere fact that it made a division between what was said and what was not said, and a division between who or what kind of persons were presented or not. It had more political impact by its presenting of lofty persons facing moral dilemmas or behaving badly or well as being a mirror for princes. In that sense, Sophocles’ *Antigone* is a political drama, as are Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Vernulaeus’s *Theodoricus*, Vondel’s *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, Cigognini’s *Don Gastone* and Sumarokov’s *Khorev*. Such tragedies are also political in Rancière’s sense in that they communicate these dilemmas and ideas to the non-ruling—even though they do not address the illiterate—and thus influence the status quo.⁸⁸

The *dissensus* or ‘dis-agreement’ Rancière sees between the opposing forces of ‘police’ and ‘politics’ can be seen in full at moments when the production of a drama is forbidden, as was the case in Vondel’s *Gysbreght*: the ministers of the Protestant Church opposed to it because a Catholic mass was brought on the stage, and notably on Christmas Eve 1637. The city magistrates first followed this opposition, but in January 1638 they allowed a performance. One could analyze this event in terms of ‘police’ (i.e. the ministers) protecting the status quo, whereas ‘aesthetics’ as ‘politics’ tried to change it, that is, make a case for toleration towards Roman Catholics. In such instances—but not only then—the publication in print or the performance on stage of a tragedy are ‘political’ acts by making choices, dividing the audience into who can

87 See Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch. 1.

88 On the relative openness of the English theater, see the reference to Lake’s work above, n. 24, and András Kiséry, “‘I lack advancement’”: public rhetoric, private prudence, and the political agent in *Hamlet*, 1561–1609, *English Literary History* 81 (2014), 29–60.

and cannot understand, and sharing information, opinions and emotions with regard to religion—closely related to politics in the early modern period—and right and wrong ways of ruling. We are back with the ‘popularity’ exploited by Queen Elizabeth in her dealings with her subjects, and reflected on the Elizabethan stage.

Baroque drama is also political in the Deleuzian sense that the ‘essence of the Baroque entails [...] realizing something in illusion itself, or of tying it to a spiritual *presence* that endows its spaces and fragments with a collective unity’ as quoted by Hoxby in his chapter.⁸⁹ Baroque drama—in particular tragedy—presents and represents kings, queens and rulers and realizes their rulership in an illusion, a fictional *présence*. Thus, one could say, by this illusion it can also prevent or advance in its representation Rancièrian ‘consensus’ or solve or widen ‘dissensus’ or even produce either of them within the grand system of the arts.⁹⁰ In this ‘grand illusion’ the concept of *akrasia* (‘the state of tending to act against one’s better judgment’), explored by Vasiliauskas in her chapter has its place, since *akrasia* can also influence *consensus* or *dissensus* by showing that people, including leaders, may act counter-intuitively. Elias’s concept of the civilizing process and the role of courtly culture therein⁹¹—a concept introduced by Korneeva in her essay—fits within this idea of politics and police tending to cause *dissensus*, a tension between the courtly culture of politics which has a civilizing tendency and the controlling power of police which strives to maintain the *status quo*. Korneeva associates this with the Habermasian concept of the ‘public sphere’. In a Habermasian ‘representative public sphere’, this courtly culture is acted out not ‘for’ but ‘before’ the people, freed of any moral implications, as Rancière sees it, also in a sense describing and analyzing ‘dissensus’.⁹²

89 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, transl. Tom Conley (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), p. 33. See Hoxby’s chapter, p. 200.

90 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 123, see Hoxby’s chapter.

91 Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols. (Basel: Haus zum Falken, 1939). English translation: *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, ed. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Mennel, transl. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

92 See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Mit einem Vorwort zur Neuauflage* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990). English translation: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, transl. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (repr. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). For a fundamental critique of

Baroque and Classicism

In this volume we discuss ‘baroque’ tragedy, even though we are aware of the discussions surrounding the term, some of which undermine its uncomplicated use.⁹³ We use it both as a stylistic concept, denoting a certain style of writing tragedy, and as a term for a period, indicating the period after the Renaissance. In time and in some aspects it coincides with classicism.⁹⁴

As for the history of the word ‘Baroque’: it is believed that its origin are in the term ‘barocco’ in a sixteenth-century Portuguese text, the Sephardic Jewish physician Garcia da Orta’s *Colloquios dos Simples e drogas da India* (1563), where it was used to describe a rough pearl or stone that has an irregular form.⁹⁵ It is also possible that it originated in Montaigne’s *Essais* I, 26, where the humanist used the word ‘barroco’ as one of two terms for the ancient scholastic logic ‘that render their disciples so dirty and ill-favored’ (‘qui rendent leurs supposts ainsicrotez et enfumés’).⁹⁶ The word, as well as the French and English ‘baroque’, also kept its technical meaning as ‘precious stone’ or ‘pearl’, until at the end

Habermas’s interpretation of the public sphere, see Bloemendal and van Dixhoorn, ‘Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries’, esp. pp. 11–31.

- 93 For this part of the introduction, we used Michel Conan’s excellent survey in his ‘The New Horizons of Baroque Garden Cultures’, in Michel Conan (ed.), *Baroque Garden Cultures: Emulation, Sublimation, Subversion* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), pp. 1–36, esp. pp. 3–15, René Wellek, ‘The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship’, in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5 (1946), 77–109, and Frans-Willem Korsten’s very useful chapter 6, ‘Barok en classicisme— affect en vorm’, in, id., *Lessen in literatuur* (Nijmegen: Van Tilt, 2002), pp. 135–157. See also Ingrid D. Rowland, ‘Baroque’, in Craig W. Kallendorf (ed.), *A Companion to the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 44–56. For recent discussions of the term and concept, see Christian Jouhaud, ‘The Notion of “Baroque”: Polemical Debate and Political Issues in France’, www.enbach.eu/en/essays/revisiting-baroque/jouhaud.aspx; Jobez, *Le théâtre baroque allemand et français*, pp. 7–29.
- 94 It is for this reason that Korsten, *l.c.*, discusses both terms together.
- 95 See Victor Lucien Tapié, *Baroque et classicisme* (Paris: Hachette; Pluriel, 1996), p. 55; Conan, ‘The New Horizons’, p. 5.
- 96 Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, *Les Essais* I, 26, ed. by Pierre Villey and rev. by Verdun-Louis Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), p. 161; see also Wellek, ‘The Concept of Baroque’, p. 77, who also mentions Luis Vives mocking the Sorbonne professors as ‘sophists in *baroco* and *baralipton*’ and explains *baroco* as ‘the name for the fourth mode of the second figure in the scholastic nomenclature of syllogim. It is a syllogim of the type: “Every P is M; some S are not M, hence some S are not P”’.

of the seventeenth century the term received a metaphorical sense of 'strange mind' or 'bizarre manner of speech'.

In the eighteenth century 'baroque' came into use in the visual arts, especially architecture, to denote a bizarre or even ridiculous style. The most famous representatives of this style were Francesco Borromini (1599–1667) and Guarino Guarini (1624–1683). It also became a term in the history of music, in which 'baroque music' was used for a kind of ingenious style, and which counted among its representatives the composers Claudio Monteverdi (1537–1643) and, above all, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750).

The first major study of baroque was written by Heinrich Wölfflin in 1888: *Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien*, 'showing in analytical fashion how this style distinguished itself from Renaissance style.'⁹⁷ As Conan writes: 'He proposed that while Renaissance artists had shown an interest in line, surface, closed form, hierarchical unity of composition, and an ideal clarity of expression, baroque artists had privileged color, volume, open form, dynamic integration of composition, and suggestion or a relative clarity of expression.'⁹⁸ Wölfflin was one of the first to apply the term not only to the visual arts, but also to literature and music.⁹⁹ It was Werner Weisbach who in 1921, in his study *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation*, interpreted the baroque as the artistic expression of the Counter-Reformation, and three years later in *Die Kunst des Barocks in Italien, Deutschland, Frankreich und Spanien* as the artistic style of parts of seventeenth-century Europe.¹⁰⁰ 'Baroque' became a concept for the style of an era that was either the achievement of the new religious susceptibility related to a Roman Catholic Reform movement, or an artistic degeneration from the Renaissance classicizing ideals.

A landmark in the study of baroque drama is Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1928), translated as *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*.¹⁰¹ In this *Habilitationsschrift* Benjamin discusses tragedies of German

97 Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien* (Munich: Theodor Ackermann, 1888). The characterization is from Conan, 'The New Horizons', p. 5.

98 Conan, 'The New Horizons', p. 5.

99 Wellek, 'The Concept of Baroque', p. 78.

100 Werner Weisbach, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1921) and id., *Die Kunst des Barocks in Italien, Deutschland, Frankreich und Spanien* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1924).

101 Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1963); id., *The Origin of German*

authors of the so-called ‘Second Silesian School’ such as Andreas Gryphius (or Greif, 1616–1664) and Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683). He distinguishes a typical ‘German Baroque’, which, however, he also discerns (in more figurative ways) in the playwrights Calderón and Shakespeare who are part of the afterlife of this ‘German mourning-play’. He also distinguishes *Trauerspiel* with its origins in history, its earth-bound stress on this world from the more transcendental *Tragödie*, which originates in myth, acts out a rite of sacrifice and centers on *hamartia*, a human mistake. Whereas *Tragödie* features a tragic hero and is characterized by reticence, the protagonists of *Trauerspiel* are tyrants and martyrs, often embodied by one and the same character, and its signature is ostentation. This *Trauerspiel* was rooted in Lutheranism and the Counter-Reformation.¹⁰² Behind all ‘mourning-play’ protagonists is Christ, the ultimate king and martyr.

Recently Jane O. Newman has drawn new attention to this study, in her *Benjamin's Library* (2011).¹⁰³ She discusses Benjamin's work within the framework of the ‘Interbellum’ studies of the Baroque with their interest in the formation of the German ‘nation’ and of Benjamin's interest in philology. Helen Hills in her *Rethinking the Baroque* offers a reappraisal for the use of the concept of baroque in architecture and art history.¹⁰⁴ In his contribution to this volume, Joel B. Lande challenges the ‘typical German’ character of *Trauerspiel* by pointing at the fact that many of the *Trauerspiele* by Gryphius, Christophorus Kormart and Lohenstein were adaptations of other plays, especially from a Dutch context; Vondel's tragedies were used as ‘templates’, as Lande shows, for making *Trauerspiele*.¹⁰⁵ *Treurspel* was turned into *Trauerspiel*.

In 1935, Eugenio D'Ors in his *Del Barocco* used the term ‘baroque’ not as an indication of a period, but as an aspect that recurs in the entire history of art,

Tragic Drama, transl. by John Osborne (London and New York: Verso, 1998). See also George Steiner, ‘Introduction’ to the Osborne translation, pp. 7–24.

102 One need not wonder about the Lutheran characteristic, since Lutheranism was in its ritual forms and its attention for the emotional aspects of faith akin to Roman Catholicism.

103 Jane O. Newman, *Benjamin's Library: Modernity, Nation, and the Baroque* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). Helen Hills's *Rethinking the Baroque* (2011) also contains a chapter on Walter Benjamin's concept of the baroque: Helen Hills (ed.), *Rethinking the Baroque* (London: Ashgate, 2011), especially Andrew Benjamin: ‘Benjamin and the Baroque: Posing the Question of Historical Time’, *o.c.*, pp. 161–179.

104 Helen Hills (ed.), *Rethinking the Baroque* (London: Ashgate, 2011), especially the chapter by Andrew Benjamin: ‘Benjamin and the Baroque: Posing the Question of Historical Time’, *o.c.*, pp. 161–179.

105 See this volume, pp. 319–343.

with its main characteristics motion and passions.¹⁰⁶ It was a kind of tragic view of man in the vein of Friedrich Nietzsche's identification (in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1879)) of baroque style as a 'timeless phenomenon that periodically recurs.'¹⁰⁷ This was challenged many times, not least in a philosophical vein, by Gilles Deleuze, who stated: 'The baroque does not correspond to an essence, but rather to an operative function, to a feature. It keeps making folds ... [I]t bends again and again the folds, going to infinity, fold over fold, folding according to fold. The defining feature of the baroque is the passage to infinity of folding.'¹⁰⁸ These discussions are ongoing.

The term 'baroque', which has been out of fashion since the 1960s and 1970s, is once again of much interest. Witness, for instance, the study by Newman and the volume compiled by Hills, both already mentioned. This raises the question of what ideas or developments in our time have caused this revival. Is it that we live in a discarded world in search for a meaning of life, which can only be found in paradox and the extreme, as we see in the cruel beheadings by members of Islamic State? Is it that our world seems so dreadful that the atrocities of Baroque drama resemble them? Or is our reaction more like Calderón's: 'Life is merely a dream'? These are questions to be answered in another book, but they resonate in the essays in this collection.

We use the term 'baroque' for a rather indistinct period after the Renaissance, which began in Italy at the end of the sixteenth century and ended there in the eighteenth, whereas in France it was a stylistic period that flourished in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁹ English literature specialists tend to treat the term baroque with considerable suspicion: the label only sticks to seventeenth-century figures with strong Counter-Reformation connections, like the (finally but not initially) Roman Catholic poet Richard Crashaw (ca. 1613–1649).¹¹⁰ However, a counter-argument has been made, appealing to the art in several media of Roman Catholic figures such as Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665), long

106 Eugenio D'Ors, *Del Barocco* (Madrid 1935), translated into French as *Du Baroque* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935). It was criticized by Wellek in his 'The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship'.

107 Quoted after Jane O. Newman, *Benjamin's Library*, p. 25.

108 Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli, Leibnitz et le baroque* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1988), p. 5, quoted from Conan, 'The New Horizons', pp. 8–9.

109 On the several 'baroque' periods in Europe, see Jean-Pierre Cavaillé and Cécile Soudan (eds.), *Les dossiers du GRIHL, La notion de baroque, approche historiographique, 2–2012*, <http://dossiersgrihl.revues.org/5057>.

110 See e.g., Warren Austen, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957²).

active in Catholic Europe and the Mediterranean, and by taking account of the Catholic literature of the entire British Isles, notably in Ireland and Scotland.¹¹¹ In Russia, however, there was hardly any 'baroque' literature, although baroque plays were staged there. So as a period the Baroque is not cleanly or clearly defined. To complicate things even more, it often flourished at the same time as when classicist art and literature were fashionable, and in some cases the same author can be considered from renaissance, classicist and baroque viewpoints.

The main characteristics of baroque style are 'form' and 'affect'. The latter term is, as we have seen, no synonym for 'emotion' but indicates a relationship between the object of art, music or literature and its observer, listener or reader, and where that object 'affects' the recipient, and alters her or his state of mind. In that sense it is more than an 'effect'.¹¹² The 'theory of affects', a translation of the German 'Affektenlehre' is an aesthetic theory, especially relating to music, but easily applicable to other arts. The underlying idea is that passions and affects can be represented by their outward signs, in sound or image. One could say that the modern idea of 'emotions' points at inner feelings, and the baroque 'affects' the outward signs. The most elaborate work describing this phenomenon in music is Johann Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister* (1739).¹¹³ This 'Affektenlehre' is in part an elaboration of the theory of tem-

111 See Peter Davidson, *The Universal Baroque* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), ch. 1, 'British Baroque'; Joe Moshenska, *A Stain in the Blood: The Remarkable Voyage of Sir Kenelm Digby* (London: William Heinemann, 2016), pp. 47 and 53. See also Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination*, ch. 2, 'Catholic Poetics and the Protestant Canon'.

112 On the affects and their theory, see Brewster Rogerson, 'The Art of Painting the Passions', in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953), 68–94; Rainer Bayreuther, 2005. 'Theorie der musikalischen Affektivität in der Frühen Neuzeit', in Dörte Schmidt (ed.), *Musiktheoretisches Denken und kultureller Kontext* (Schliengen: Edition Argus, 2005) Forum Musikwissenschaft 1, pp. 69–92; Andrew Clark, 'Making Music Speak', in Keith M. Chapin and Andrew Clark (eds.), *Speaking of Music: Addressing the Sonorous* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 70–85; Burkhard Meyer-Sickendiek, *Affektpoetik: Eine Kulturgeschichte literarischer Emotionen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005). We thank Arie Eikelboom for help with this theory. See also Russ Leo, 'Affective Physics: Affectus in Spinoza's Ethica', in Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds.), *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture* (Farnham, England; Ashgate, 2013), pp. 33–49.

113 Johann Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister, Das ist Gründliche Anzeige aller derjenigen Sachen, die einer wissen, können, und vollkommen inne haben muß, der einer Capelle mit Ehren und Nutzen vorstehen will* (Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1739), facsimile reprint, edited by Margarete Reimann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954) Documenta musicologica 1. Rei-

peraments or *humores*. According to this theory, man's character and affects are defined by the combination and ratio of the four 'humors': yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm, making people choleric, melancholic, sanguine or phlegmatic. The 'theory of affects' is also closely connected to rhetoric that had as its goals 'docere, delectare, movere': arousing affects with the audience by showing these affects and thus making people receptive for teaching. It is because of this connection of affects and emotions that Seneca's dramas had such an appeal to many early modern playwrights: in his tragedies, the outward signs of affects are clearly indicated and often elaborated in the tradition of the Stoic theory of passions. In sum: the form of an artistic object aims to rouse affects, in order to bring about fascination, which binds the viewers, listeners or readers and entralls them. It does so by overwhelming forms and paradoxes (logically contradictory or absurd items that can be interpreted in a way that makes sense), as well as anachronisms (elements 'clashing' in time), antitheses and oxymora, and *chiaroscuro*.¹¹⁴ Seemingly incongruous elements operating simultaneously both intrigue and fascinate. The fantastic form is, then, an essential part of the meaning of an object of art.

This fascination is also evident in the use of dreams.¹¹⁵ In Calderón's moral and philosophical play *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a Dream*, 1636) also a pessimistic world-view is expressed:

¿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!

La vida es sueño, ll. 2182–2187¹¹⁶

(What is life? A frenzy.
 What is life? An illusion,
 a shadow, a fiction,

he, Druckschriften-Faksimiles 5; id., *Der vollkommene Capellmeister: A Revised Translation with Critical Commentary*, ed. by Ernest Charles Harriss (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981).

114 For anachronism, see also the contribution by Helmer Helmers in this volume.

115 See, for instance, Korsten, 'Barok en classicisme', pp. 141–142.

116 Quoted from the edition by Enrique Rodríguez Cepeda (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1999), p. 182.

and the greatest good is small.
 For all of life is a dream,
 and dreams, are merely dreams.)

The concept of the dream was catching, and many adaptations and translations of the play are known from this period, such as the Dutch adaptation of Calderón's play *Het Leven is maer Droom*, which was staged and its text printed by Jan Mommaert in Brussels in 1647. The paradoxical subtitle ran 'Bly-eindigh treur-spel' ('tragedy with a happy ending').¹¹⁷ The Italian playwright Giacinto Andrea Cicognini (1606–1649) adapted the play into a 'dramma per musica' (i.e., an opera), *La vita è un sogno* (1664).¹¹⁸ In this concept of the dream, melancholy, paradox and fascination found their zenith.

As has already been said, the subjects of baroque tragedy are taken from Biblical, classical, medieval and recent history, rather than from myth.¹¹⁹ A good example of medieval subject matter is Joost van den Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1638), in which medieval history—modeled after classical myth and poetry—is employed for a contemporaneous confessional agenda.¹²⁰ Many Jesuit Latin tragedies were also 'baroque' in their themes and the elaboration of those themes. They often take as their subject saints' lives. The saints suffer, often in cruel torments that arouse fascination, but are saved by their good deeds and their faith. The protagonists of baroque tragedy are lofty persons—kings, rulers, patriarchs or saints—and they can be martyrs, in particular the saints that died for their faith, but also kings and queens, as the tragedies representing the execution of Mary Stuart in 1587 or those covering the execution of King Charles I in 1649 show.¹²¹

117 *Het leven is maer droom: Bly-eyndigh trevr-spel, vertoont in de v wonderlycke Op-voedinghe van Sigismvndvs, prince van Polen, Door de Vrye Lief-hebbers ende der Rymer-Konste binnen Brussel. Met een bevallige Kluchte van de Gilde-broeders van Kockelbergh, daer op passende* (Brussels: Jan Mommaert, 1647). See also Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries*, esp. pp. 427–428 and 440–441 on the translations and adaptations of *La vida es sueño*.

118 *La vita è un sogno: Comedia* (Bologna: A. Custode, 1663); repr. as: *La vita è un sogno: Opera scenica* (Venice: Niccolò Pezzana, 1663). Mentioned in Tatiana Korneeva's contribution in this volume.

119 See above, p. 29.

120 See the contribution by Freya Sierhuis. There are striking parallels between the *Gysbreght van Aemstel* tragedy showing the destruction of Amsterdam and Virgil's *Aeneid*, book II, where Aeneas relates the destruction of Troy.

121 See Helmer J. Helmers, "'The Cry of the Royal Blood': Revenge Tragedy and the Stuart Cause in the Dutch Republic, 1649–1660", in Bloemendal, Van Dixhoorn and Strietman

The concept of baroque was readily employed in the Counter-Reformation movement.¹²² Whereas in Reformation movements reason and restraint lead the believers to God, the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation tried to win the souls of the faithful by means of affects that were aroused by art, both in religious paintings and in works of literature. The Jesuits were the champions of this Counter-Reformation strategy, and it is telling that their dramas were multi-media spectacles with such 'special effects' as fireworks, music and dance.¹²³ Thus, the baroque tragedies of the Jesuits aimed at influencing the senses with an engagement through profound emotional impact. However, Nienke Tjoelker makes us aware that eighteenth-century Jesuit theater also engaged with 'classicist' drama and shows that some Jesuit poetics pleaded for a combination of 'baroque' elements and 'classicist' rules, in order to further the audience's judgment, without leaving aside their taste for spectacle.

Elements that are related to baroque, such as (in the manner of Caravaggio and Rembrandt) *chiaroscuro* and a kind of indulgence in violence, were also at play in English neo-Latin drama. Sarah Knight discusses, for instance, the English Roman Catholic poet-playwright William Alabaster's *Roxana* in these terms. It is by exploiting these effects and affects that baroque drama exerts its 'police' influence in Rancièrian terms and tries to maintain the status quo, thus including or excluding people, or its 'political' influence to bring about a change of attitude and feeling in the audience and thus causes other inclusions and exclusions.

Classicism (to be distinguished from eighteenth-century 'neo-classicism') also pays special attention to form. This term too can be applied to a certain way of dealing with art, as well as to a period. However, just like baroque, not every European country experienced classicism at the same time, nor with the same intensity. For instance, in France classicism flourished during the

(eds.), *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries*, pp. 219–250, also in id., *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), ch. 6, pp. 172–197.

122 On the relationship between baroque and Counter-Reformation see also the contribution of Blair Hoxby in this volume.

123 Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer, 'Multimediales Theater: Ansätze zu einer Poetik der Synästhesie bei den Jesuiten', in Heinrich F. Plett (ed.), *Poetik der Renaissance* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1994), pp. 197–238; see also the chapters by Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, 'Neo-Latin Theatre in Italy' and 'Jesuit Neo-Latin Tragedy in France', Fidel Rädle, 'Jesuit Theatre in Germany, Austria and Switzerland' and Joaquín Pascual Barea, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Spain, Portugal and Latin America', in Bloemendal and Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 25–101; 415–469; 185–292; and 545–631 respectively.

seventeenth century, especially in the years between 1660 and 1680 whereas in the Low Countries it lasted from the 1660s to the 1770s. Classicism was the more readily adopted in Christian Europe because of the awareness that early Christianity was rooted in classical antiquity. In classicism, just as in baroque art and literature, the aim of the application of the form was to establish a relationship between the object of art and the beholder. Yet the form aims at a maximum of engagement and involvement in order to provide the audience members stimulating conditions for the exercise of judgment.

Key concepts of classicism—which derives its name from the renaissance of classical, especially Greek, literary theory—are *decorum*: ‘what is appropriate’; *vraisemblance*: ‘what is probable’; and *bienséance*: ‘what is decent and respectable’. In French classicist literary theory, Aristotle’s *Poetics* was important, seen through the lenses of Daniel Heinsius’s *De tragoediae constitutione* (1611 and 1642) and Gerardus Johannes Vossius’s *Poeticae institutiones* (1647).¹²⁴ However, Aristotle’s descriptive poetics with their unities of time and action were conceived as prescriptive poetics with unities of time, action and place, in a desire to optimize *decorum* and *vraisemblance*. In this way classicist authors used and expanded the classical ideals of order, clarity, proportion and good taste, in a balanced form with ‘noble’ characters, also in order to focus the spectators’ emotional concentration and thus influence them or the readers to be of sounder judgment. Whereas baroque art could bring the beholders to fascination, classicist art brought about discussion.¹²⁵ The subjects of classicist tragedies were usually taken from mythology and history, but far less so from the Bible, medieval, recent or oriental history. Classicism thereby pursued ideals of human form and behavior, unlike the ‘realism’ reflected alike in the painting of Rembrandt and the poetry and plays of Jan Vos.

In this volume Christian Biet shows that the borders between ‘baroque’ and ‘classicist’ tragedy are thin and permeable. One tends to identify baroque drama with the Roman ‘horror-playwright’ Seneca and classicist tragedy with the Greek ‘noble’ tragic poets Sophocles and Euripides, but cruelty or bloodshed that were on the early baroque stage were not absolutely forbidden in classicist theater. Biet also points to the classicist theater’s function of concentrating ‘affects.’ Frans-Willem Korsten also shows that formal ‘classicist’

124 See, for instance, Jean Rohou, *Le classicisme: 1660–1700* (Paris, Hachette, 1996); Harriet A. Stone, *The Classical Model: Literature and Knowledge in Seventeenth-century France* (Ithaca, etc.: Cornell University Press, 1996); Edith Kern, *The Influence of Heinsius and Vossius upon French Dramatic Theory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press: 1949) Johns Hopkins Studies in Romance Literatures and Languages, extra vol. 26.

125 Korsten, ‘Barok en classicisme’, p. 144.

requirements (unities of time and action, division in acts, alexandrine lines) could combine effectively with 'baroque' elements such as an excessive display of violence and the expression of extravagant feelings. Moreover, all kinds of plays were staged at the same time, plays and players traveled through Europe (for instance, the English 'strolling players' in northern Europe), and adaptations and translations of plays were produced in other regions and countries.¹²⁶ Both baroque and classicist tragedies could present rulers' tensions between, for example, ethical behavior and the interest of the state. Both types of drama could be immersed in court culture—commissioned by rulers or staged at courts—and at the same time affirm and criticize current regimes.

Classicist theater was also engaged in politics. The audience should experience from it the ambiguities of sovereignty—noble characters encountering murder and the force of passions—and thus form a sound judgment of the sources and causes of power, authority and legitimacy, either by admiration (Corneille) or compassion (Racine). Ambiguities can also be traced in tragedies by the Dutch playwrights Joost van den Vondel and Jan Vos, as Frans-Willem Korsten shows. Such 'baroque' ambiguities can be caused by a certain 'anachronism' in the conflation of, for instance, Roman antiquity and the Roman Catholic Church, or the comparison of the Dutch princess Amalia van Solms with the Roman princess Messalina, which could lead to a kind of productive dissonance. Nina Geerdink writes of this effect with regard to Vondel's representation of the execution of the Pensionary Van Oldenbarnevelt in 1618 through the ancient story of Palamedes: 'Allegory functions within the renaissance culture of coding and decoding on both a political and an aesthetical level, and *Palamedes* is a good case in point.'¹²⁷ This might be seen as a creative piece of anachronistic art.¹²⁸ As Russ Leo convincingly argues, Vondel's 'baroque' tragedies may also be linked to Hugo Grotius's legal philosophy. In that case, this baroque tragedy can be discussed in classicist terms too, because it also aims at a better understanding of the role of law and philosophy in art, not only at rousing fascination by showing high-pitched emotions.

126 See Korsten, 'Barok en classicisme', pp. 143–146 and the contribution by Joel Lande in this volume.

127 Nina Geerdink, 'Politics and Aesthetics—Decoding Allegory in *Palamedes* (1625)', in Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 225–248, esp. p. 225.

128 See Margreta de Grazia, 'Anachronism', in Brian Cummings and James Simpson (eds.), *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 13–32; Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

In another way Emily Vasiliauskas also challenges the distinction between baroque and classicist tragedy. She shows that in some plays *akrasia* ('acting against one's better judgment') may be at work, as it is in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1592). Strong affects would fit baroque tragedy, whereas the concept of *akrasia*, in which judgment plays an important role, would be more in line with classical tragedy.

Classicist drama can also be considered in Rancièrian terms. It will be more engaged with 'politics' than with 'police', in the sense that it opposes views, opinions and arguments in a more rational debate. As such, it would fit better in a Habermasian, social discourse than in a Rancièrian, philosophical discourse. However, it is also 'politic' in its choices, divisions, inclusions and exclusions, and the debates within it: all of these are a form of 'dis-agreement' (*dissensus*).

Politics and Aesthetics in Early Modern Drama

What the essays in this volume teach us is that we might regard tragedy as belonging to two phases. By the late sixteenth century European tragedy had found a formal consistency thanks to the ongoing work of the retrieval of classical models, and the refining of the understanding of tragic categories and attributes. Perhaps by 1600 or thereabouts English authors and the English stage stood out in offering the widest range of tragic drama that reflected antiquity and an independent and complementary vernacular development. While this drama was concerned with the traditional theme of exposing the evils of political tyranny, it was the following century that saw a broadening of this central message, so that tragic drama articulated much more sophisticated political themes, exploring sovereignty, and expressing on the one hand the need for obedience, and on the other the righteousness of rebellion and resistance. To embody these themes, it had at its disposal a much more evolved, various and no less contradictory repertoire of forms and devices, where tragedy was evidently more receptive to the incorporation of other discourses, political and religious, and the energies of other media at this time, such as music, architecture, painting and sculpture. It should be no surprise that the French administrators in the seventeenth century sought to shape tragedy as part of a more general cultural policy, or that the Amsterdam Schouwburg should have been part of such a lively republican literary scene of resistance to the Stadholder. You can admire a *Trauerspiel* for its representation of princely martyrdom, but there is every reason to be patient and listen to the other voices within its domain. The business of these plays was not merely prince-pleasing.

As such, tragedy was part of the public sphere in which political power and authority were discussed, supported or challenged, in which other issues that had a political character such as religion were thematized in often intricate ways, which can be considered from literary-historical or more philosophical angles (for instance, with Jacques Rancière, in terms of the democratization of art). This collection of essays aims at contributing to our understanding of these ways and of how they are exploited in tragedy, written in Latin or in one of the vernacular languages. Finally, although more by implication, we hope that the essays in this volume will contribute to considerations of the use of the concepts of baroque and classicism in literary history, in particular the history of drama and theater. Indeed, the detailed findings of each essay, where a number of longstanding assumptions are overturned, suggests that they can contribute fruitfully to the further investigation not only of formal categories such as baroque art including the intrinsic matter of plays and theater but also philosophical and social ones such as ‘political theology.’

Further Reading

- Benjamin, Walter, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1963); id., *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, transl. by John Osborne (London and New York: Verso, 1998).
- Bloemendal, Jan, Peter G.F. Eversmann and Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Drama, Performance and Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
- Bloemendal, Jan, and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013).
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- Geerdink, Nina, ‘Politics and Aesthetics—Decoding Allegory in *Palamedes* (1625)’, in Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 225–248.
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PART 1

Sovereignty



What Roman Paradigm for the Dutch Republic? Baroque Tragedies and Ambiguities Concerning *Dominium* and Torture

Frans-Willem Korsten

In 1641 Jan Vos (ca. 1610–1667) wrote and produced his successful play *Aran en Titus of Wraak en weerwraak: treurspel* (*Aran and Titus: Revenge and Revenge in Response: Tragedy*). It was a play that has been read and received by many in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a serious tragedy, although most scholars, at some point, will admit that the play is spectacular and at times strangely farcical. In the light of the play's being serious, even as a spectacle, the regular scholarly approach to it is that it is didactic in nature.¹ Still, it was a play that, were it produced in our times, could have been a mixture of slasher movie and screwball comedy, with more than a touch of camp.² It is surely possible that those who had seen *Aran en Titus* turned home seriously pondered how dangerous it is not to restrain your passions. Probably much more members of the audience returned home having fully enjoyed the spectacle and the horror, with a couple of good thrills, many good laughs and some moments of the sublime. Or, if they were pondering, they may have been considering the play's reflection on the extreme violence in classical *imperial* Rome.

The text of the play is dedicated to Caspar Barlaeus (1584–1648), the distinguished scholar of the Amsterdam *Athenaeum Illustre*, who was so kind to present Vos with a praise poem that ends as follows:

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- 1 A paradigmatic case is a passage from the national site on Dutch literary history (www.literatuurgeschiedenis.nl): 'Passion and violence were the regular ingredients with Vos, not because he enjoyed them so much but to show that it is dangerous to lose your self-restraint' ('Emotie en geweld waren vaste ingrediënten bij Vos, niet omdat hij daar zo van genoot maar om aan te tonen dat het gevaarlijk was om je zelfbeheersing te verliezen.' <<http://www.literatuurgeschiedenis.nl/goudeneeuw/literatuurgeschiedenis/lgge016.html>>).
 - 2 Were it to be performed it could be much like Zoé Ford's *Titus Andronicus* in 2013, with an audience that resembled the jeering audience of Shakespeare's time; for a response to this 'fringe production' of a play that is described as a 'gore-fest' see for instance <http://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/theatre/titus-andronicus-arcola-theatre-review-8878513.html>.

Hier strijt de Kaizers kroon met d'ongetoomde min.
 Hier kijft de oorlooghsmond met 't geestlijk hofgezin.
 Ik stae gelijk bedwelmt en overstolpt van geest.
 De schoenburg wort verzet, en schoeyt op hooger leest.
 Rijst *Sophocles* weêr op? stampst *Aeschylus* weêr hier?
 Of maekt *Euripides* dit ongewoon getier?
 Neen. 't is een Ambachtsman, een ongelettert gast,
 Die nu de gantsche rey van *Helicon* verrast.
 Die noyt gezeten heeft aen Grieks of Roomsche disch,
 Wijst nu de weerelt aen, wat dat een Treurspel is.
Athenen las het Spel, en sprak: ik schrijf niet meer;
 Die ons door glas verlicht, verduystert al ons eer.

(Here the imperial crown battles with unrestrained love
 Here, the mouth of war barks at the spirited court family.
 I remain as if mesmerized, my spirit overtaken;
 The theater is being altered, its shoe put on a higher last
 Is Sophocles re-rising? Aeschylus walking amongst us?
 Or is Euripides making this unusual thunder?
 No. It is a craftsman, an illiterate guest
 Who now surprises the entire set of Muses
 Who never sat at a Greek or Roman dish
 And now points out to the world what a tragedy is.
Athens read the Play and spoke; I'll write no more,
 Who enlightens us by glass, puts all our honor in the shade.)³

The last line is a pun on Vos's business as a glass-maker (also the theme for a praise poem by Constantijn Huygens), that emphasizes the man's status as a craftsman. This is already hinted at earlier by the pun on the proverb of the shoemaker and his last. It is made explicit a few lines later when Vos is first and foremost sketched as a 'craftsman' ('Ambachtsman'). This shoemaker did not stick to his last, though, he aimed higher. He might even be equal to the greatest classical Greek authors. A reader/author whose distinction is evidenced by his name, 'Of Athens' ('Athenen'), has given up hope to ever write something better than what the glass-maker has produced here. The humble and at the same time almost hyperbolic status of the author is indicated the more, finally, by the fact that someone who has never had knowledge of either Greek or Roman

3 Jan Vos, *Alle de gedichten van den Poëet Jan Vos*. Jacob Lescaijle, Amsterdam 1662, p. 8.

'dishes', who is an illiterate with no knowledge of the three great Greek tragedy writers, is not only 'altering' the theater but also showing us what tragedy really is.

My point is not so much whether Barlaeus's praise is to be taken seriously, although such an assessment would have consequences for the serious or not so serious nature of Vos's 'tragedy'. In what follows I will focus especially on the relation between civil, and in that sense, humble Amsterdam and imperial Rome in taking my cue especially from the play's abundant display of extreme violence, and torture. The latter was at the heart of a pivotal and principal reflection in the Dutch Republic; a reflection in which an intrinsic relation was brought forward between imperial rule and torture. In this context my question is not if we can consider Vos's play as farcical per se but as a civil reflection on the perversity of power. To answer the question I will need a rather long detour.

Torture and *Dominium*—Johannes Grevius

The intrinsic relation between torture and imperial rule was brought forward by Johannes Grevius (1584–1622) who had escaped the Amsterdam 'tuchthuis', the house of correction, punishment or discipline, in October 1621, after a failed attempt to escape in August of the same year.⁴ Grevius, like his rescuer Dominicus Sapma, had been imprisoned in Amsterdam for his Remonstrant or Arminian preaching in the Republic, in the dire years after the Synod of Dordt from 1618. Counter-Remonstrant parties, strongly supported by Stadholder Maurits, attempted to clear the Republic of what they considered to be the religiously impure, and their zeal knew few restraints. Many people were intimidated, harassed, arrested, blackmailed, or banned, and a considerable number were threatened with the rack. Some were tortured severely; others were executed or at least imprisoned and threatened with circumstances that came close to torture. In this particular case, Grevius especially

4 The story of this escape reads like a novel, also because its featuring cast consists of a visiting wife, Grietje Ulbes, who helped to free her husband, the convicted Remonstrant minister, Dominicus Sapma, together with Samuel de Prince and Grevius. More on Sapma and his process can be found in J.G. van Dillen, 'Documenten betreffende de politieke en kerkelijke twisten te Amsterdam (1614–1630)', *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap*, 59 (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1938), pp. 200–203. For an at times hilarious and detailed report of the respective escapes, see Jan Wagenaar, *Amsterdam, in zijne opkomst, aanwas, geschiedenissen, voorregten, koophandel*, [etc.] (Amsterdam: Isaac Tirion, 1760), pp. 478–480.

had been dealt with harshly. The result, however, was one of Europe's first elaborate treatises against the use of torture, Grevius's *Tribunal reformatum* from 1624.⁵

Grevius had been denied access to all sorts of literature in prison. He was allowed, however, to study law, especially Roman law, and this had brought him to the heart of a matter that was both personally and politically vexing; personally because he had been tortured, and politically because torture to him was the inevitable outcome of a distinct way of organizing the political domain, namely on the basis of some sort of household, or *dominium*. In his treatise Grevius stated that the relation between torture and slavery had been intrinsic in classical Rome, precisely in relation to the model of the *dominium*, or household.⁶ The two combined should be rejected in principle since Christians, being free, could not tolerate torture any more than slavery, so Grevius argued. This brought in an ambiguity, however, which will be central to my argument. Studying Roman law had brought Grevius to respect it, but at the same time the coincidence of *dominium*, slavery and torture formed part and parcel of the Roman heritage, also in terms of Roman law. Such an ambiguity with regard to the Roman paradigm was not idiosyncratic. It defined attitudes towards the Roman paradigm more in general in the Dutch Republic, just as it did, in different ways, in England.

In its political and legal focus on torture, Grevius's argument was partly unique. In the previous century protests against torture had focused mainly on the fact that it was used for the wrong purposes, in relation to witchcraft.⁷ Grevius now related the item of torture to a distinct political model. In relation to this problem the theme of slavery was not unique at all however. It was part of a broader Western-European reconsideration of the Roman heritage with regard to the issue of *political* freedom and slavery or servitude. In this context Grevius's argument corresponded with Jean Bodin's argument on the issue in

5 Johannes Grevius, *Tribunal reformatum in quo sanioris et tutioris iustitiae via iudici christiano in processu criminali commonstratur, reiecta et fugata tortura*. Typis & impensis Henr. Carstens, 1624. I will be quoting from the 1737 edition with the same title, published at: Gvelpherbiti, sumptibus I.C. Meisneri, 1737. Early studies on Grevius are Johannes Janssen, *History of the German People After the Close of the Middle Ages*, transl. A.M. Christie, Vol. 16 (London: Kegan Paul, 1910); and Alec Mellor, *Un chef d'oeuvre méconnu: Le 'Tribunal reformatum' de Grevius (1624)* (Paris: Sirey, 1949).

6 Grevius, *Tribunal*, Lib. 1, caput II, par. VI, VII, VIII, pp. 23–29.

7 On this, see Helen Parish (ed.), *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), especially Brian P. Levack's chapter 'The Decline and End of Witchcraft Prosecutions', pp. 336–372.

the first book (chapter v) of his six volume study on the state and sovereignty from 1576: *Les six livres de la République (Six Books of the Commonwealth)*.⁸ Here Bodin had argued, much like Grevius fifty years later, that slavery had led to cruelties that were, politically and juridically speaking, unacceptable. However, whereas Bodin diligently wanted to keep despotic rule apart from paternal rule in order to be able to propagate the patriarchal rule of the sovereign, Grevius criticized the 'original' conflation of torture and slavery as the intrinsic effect of the conflation of the Roman *dominium* with political rule. The far reaching consequences for the conceptualization of politics in relation to a *dominium*, or a 'house' with a master or, more specifically, a *father*, was one of the hottest points of debate in the seventeenth century. The history of slavery *per se*, this is to say, had a connection from the start with *political* slavery, as when the free subjects of some sort of political entity were not really free at all but subjected to the rule of a master who could rule at will.⁹ Mary Nyquist considered this 'Greco-Roman polarity between free and enslaved' to be at the basis of massive discussions in Europe in the sixteenth and especially seventeenth century, especially because, by then, the issue had become even more complicated with the arrival of trans-Atlantic slave trade (to which, for reasons of brevity, I will not be paying attention here).¹⁰

The responses to the polarities in play in the Dutch Republic were both similar to and different from the ones in England, where, as Quentin Skinner has shown, the slavery issue was mainly dealt within the context of authors propagating the republican freedom of citizens. At the same time, however, especially in the case of Thomas Hobbes, the notions of slave and slavery would be softened into those of servant and servitude, and then be a paradigm for political obedience, or subjection, which was the price to be paid for a sovereign who was the safeguard against radical disorder.¹¹ In this context Skinner argued that

8 Jean Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, transl. Richard Knolles, ed. Kenneth Douglas McRae (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

9 On this see, for instance, Quentin Skinner, 'John Milton and the politics of slavery', in id., *Visions of Politics: Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 286–307, or 'Rethinking Political Liberty', *History Workshop Journal* 61 (2006), 156–170. Interestingly, in both cases, or throughout the work of Skinner, the issue of torture and its connection to the logic of the household as a paradigmatic political model, is not dealt with.

10 Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013), p. 72.

11 On the two different ways of dealing with the issues of slavery and freedom on the one hand and servitude and subjection on the other, see Quentin Skinner, 'On the Liberty of

'one of the deepest divisions in modern European thought' was the division between 'the neo-Roman theory of freedom and self-government, [...] and the modern theory of the state as the bearer of uncontrollable sovereignty'.¹² Yet he could only state this while silently accepting the fact that the Roman propagators of republican freedom were masters of a *dominium* themselves, with slaves. Moreover, he could only state this by ignoring the fact that Thomas Hobbes was an equally avid reader of Roman texts that allowed him to postulate the 'sameness of dominion and subjection'.¹³ The conceptual conflation of political power with *dominium* points directly to a Roman origin. It was as 'neo-Roman' as the republican renaissance.

All in all, it must be clear that, in terms of its political and ethical configuration, the Roman heritage was ambiguous *per se*, since it mixed the tradition of the republican freedom of citizens with the tradition of both slavery and imperial mastery by caesarian rulers, which was translated to the rule of popes who considered themselves in the context of law as the inheritors of imperial rule. This ambiguity specifically bothered the Dutch Republic. Much like those opposing the so-called tyrannical rule of the sovereign in England, the Republic and Amsterdam considered themselves to be the inheritor of Rome's republican liberties and virtues. To the Republic, however, the glory of Rome that had been built up from scratch also provided the paradigm for its own unexpectedly glorious and quasi-imperial status. Yet in this context, Rome's paradigm of imperial rule—one that was perhaps impressive but also turned subjects into politically speaking un-free subjects, or 'slaves'—proved more difficult to swallow, or had to be downright rejected. And again, the political issue easily shifted into a religious one, since Rome had also become shorthand for the Roman Catholic Church, which was regarded by many in the Dutch Republic as a tyrannical power in itself, while it was considered by others, such as Vondel and Grotius, as the only paradigm that could save Europe from sectarian strife and ruin.

In what follows I will trace the ambiguities in play in some baroque authors and tragedies that dealt with the paradigm of Rome in a specifically Dutch way. The question to be answered, in this respect, is how Dutch baroque art dealt with the more difficult or controversial parts of the Roman heritage. Did it consider torture, for instance, to be functional or acceptable, was it fascinated by it, did it indulge in it, or did it principally reject it? And if there were parties,

the Ancients and the Moderns: A Reply to My Critics', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 73 (2012), 127–146.

12 Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, p. 9.

13 Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, p. 324.

either political or religious, that wanted to define politics in the Dutch Republic as a matter of *dominium*, what would be the adequate response?

Foundations of Law: Public Affairs Versus the Master-Father of a House

A song about the escape of Grevius and De Prince appears on one of the earliest albums in the impressive list of CD's produced under the guidance of Louis Grijp by the Utrecht based company *Camerata Trajectina*. The album is called *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen* (1995), an explicit reference to the most famous study, from 1974, on the violent conflict in daily life between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants by A.Th. van Deursen. Counter-Remonstrants were mocked as 'slijkgeuzen' ('mudbeggars') since 1612, when their meetings had been prohibited in Rotterdam and they were forced to move them outside of town, to places that could be reached through muddy pathways. A little later 'bavianen' or 'baboons' became a popular nickname for Arminians because the two words in Dutch sound similar, and monkeys had been considered devilish since the Middle Ages.¹⁴ The song performed on the album is called: 'On the salvation of Samuel de Prince and Johannes Grevius' ('Op de verlossing van Samuel de Prince, ende Johannes Grevius') and it rejoices in the escape of both men from the Amsterdam prison. It considers it an intervention from God, who, from now on, will teach the Counter-Remonstrants to no longer 'tyrannize' the country. In the original: 'het tiranniseeren sal Hy u verleeren ...'¹⁵

The very word 'tyranny' has a considerable background in medieval and classical history and in contemporary debate, but in the Dutch Republic the most direct connotation was the rule of King Philip II. In 1581, the Dutch States General had formulated it as follows, in their so-called 'Plakkaat van Verlatinge,' or Act of Abjuration:

De Staten Generael van de geunieerde Nederlanden. Allen dengenen die dese tegenwoordighe sullen sien ofte hooren lesen, saluyt.

Alsoo een yegelick kennelick is, dat een Prince van den lande van Godt gestelt is hooft over zijne ondersaten, om deselve te bewaren ende be-

14 A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen: Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1998), pp. 320–321.

15 Camerata Trajectina, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen: Liederen van Remonstranten en Contra-Remonstranten uit het begin van de 17de eeuw* (Globe 6031, 1995).

schermen van alle ongelijk, overlust ende ghewelt gelijk een herder tot bewaernisse van zijne schapen: En dat d'ondersaten niet en sijn van Godt geschapen tot behoef van den Prince om hem in alles wat hy beveelt, weder het goddelick of ongoddelick, recht of onrecht is, onderdanig te wesen en als slaven te dienen: maer den Prince om d'ondersaten wille, sonder dewelcke hy geen Prince en is, om deselve met recht ende redene te regeeren ende voor te staen ende lief te hebben als een vader zijne kinderen ende een herder zijne schapen, die zijn lijf ende leven set om deselve te bewaren. En so wanneer hy sulx niet en doet, maer in stede van zijne ondersaten te beschermen, deselve soeckt te verdrucken, t'overlasten, heure oude vryheyt, privilegien ende oude herkomen te benemen, ende heur te gebieden ende gebruycken als slaven, moet ghehouden worden niet als Prince, maer als een tyran ende voor sulx nae recht ende redene magh ten minsten van zijne ondersaten ...

(The States General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, to all whom it may concern, do by these Presents send greeting:

As it is apparent to all that a prince is constituted by God to be ruler of a people, to defend them from oppression and violence as the shepherd his sheep; and whereas God did not create the people slaves to their prince, to obey his commands, whether right or wrong, but rather the prince for the sake of the subjects (without which he could be no prince), to govern them according to equity, to love and support them as a father his children or a shepherd his flock, and even at the hazard of life to defend and preserve them. And when he does not behave thus, but, on the contrary, oppresses them, seeking opportunities to infringe their ancient customs and privileges, exacting from them slavish compliance, then he is no longer a prince, but a tyrant, and the subjects are to consider him in no other view.)¹⁶

The word 'tyrant' is explicit ('tyran') in the text. This term is intrinsically connected to the behavior of a tyrannical ruler, someone who considers his subjects to be slaves. In contrast and originally, so the Act argues, this is not how

16 I use the translation of the original as it can be found on the Groningen website established by George M. Welling, 'American History: From Revolution to Reconstruction and Beyond': <<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/before-1600/plakkaat-van-verlatinghe-1581-july-26.php>> [accessed 15 August 2014].

God conceived of 'people'. Yet although the English translation uses the term 'people,' the original says 'ondersaten' throughout. This term can only be correctly translated as 'subjects'. And even though the translator's choice of 'people' is adequate, it is only in its most general sense because, obviously, God did not create political subjects. He made 'man'. The original text of the 'Plakkaat' is playing with a choice between two distinct options, then. Either God made man, who would later become a political subject but not a slave. Or God made political subjects who were not slaves but clearly child-like and in need of a father-like figure or a shepherd.

If the latter option is seriously considered, man was either not made free, but rather like, indeed, a child in need of princely and fatherly guidance, or if created free, people would choose to become like sheep in order to form a polity. The beginning of the 'Plakkaat' paradoxically mixes two familiar versions of sovereignty, then, that Quentin Skinner saw as 'one of the deepest divisions in modern European political thought': the sovereignty of man and by implication the people, and that of the prince. These two versions had been at the basis of the different conceptualizations of sovereignty by, amongst others, Jean Bodin and Johannes Althusius in the previous century.¹⁷ In the seventeenth they were followed by figures such as Robert Filmer and Thomas Hobbes on the one hand and John Locke, John Milton and the movement of the Levellers on the other. Whereas Bodin, Filmer and Hobbes argued, in different ways, that the state could be the only and supreme political power, embodied in the prince or the sovereign, Althusius, Locke, Milton and the Levellers would argue that a man's individual right to liberty can never be given away, nor usurped. Basically, and despite Skinner's thesis that this was a *modern* split, the opposition had troubled the history of European politics from the very beginning. This is at least what Hannah Arendt argued in her analysis of classical Greek political thought with its admiration for despots (and in relation to what follows it is of relevance that the Greek word *δεσπότης* meant 'lord of the house' or 'ruler').¹⁸

17 On Bodin and Althusius, see Jean de Benoist, 'What is Sovereignty', *Telos* 116 (Summer 1999), pp. 99–118; <http://www.alaindebenoist.com/pdf/what_is_sovereignty.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2014], translated by Julia Kostova from 'Qu'est-ce que la souveraineté?', *Éléments* 96 (November 1999), pp. 24–35.

18 Hannah Arendt developed these ideas, for instance, in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 195, 222–223 but also in *The Promise of Politics*, ed. and introd. by J. Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005) and especially in an article entitled 'The Great Tradition II: Ruling and Being Ruled', *Social Research* 74:4 (2007), pp. 941–954. See also Keith Breen, 'Law beyond Command?: An Evaluation of Arendt's

Arendt's analysis finds a strong analogy in the early fourteenth century, when Marsilius of Padua in his *Defensor pacis* (1324) criticized what he considered to be a wrong turn in European politics under the Roman Catholic Church, a wrong turn that was a result of the fact that the father of an *οἶκος* (a household, in this case: the Church) tried to rule public affairs.¹⁹

In relation to these debates it is important to see that Grevius stated that torture and slavery were connected *in origin* because both were defined by the concept of *dominium* and the master that ruled it:

Ab absoluta illa Dominorum in mancipia sua potestate, primam exstissime, truculentiae huius originem nemini dubium esse poterit, qui ad illud attenderit, totum illum de Quaestionibus in *Digestis* titulum, nil pene nisi servos crepare, atque non initio statim, hunc, cum torquendi morem aliunde asciscerent Romani, in libera corpora usitatum fuisse.²⁰

(No one can doubt that this violence took its first origin from that absolute power of masters towards their slaves, which pertains to the fact that that entire concept of 'Interrogations' [i.e. tortures, FWK] in the *Digests*, restricts itself to slaves only, and states that it was not immediately from the beginning used against free men, when the Romans took over the habit of torturing from elsewhere.)²¹

Grevius is much ahead of his time here, since his astute assumption conformed to later, nineteenth-century ideas. For instance the great historian and legal scholar Theodor Mommsen argued that 'Roman domestic discipline was the basis of later Roman penal procedure in civil and criminal law'.²² The torture

Understanding of Law', in Marco Goldoni and Christopher McCorkindale (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and the Law* (Oxford and Portland: Hart publishing, 2012), pp. 15–34.

19 Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of the Peace*, ed. and transl. Annabel Brett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. On the history of Western political thought on the issue, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

20 Grevius, *Tribunal*, Lib. 1, cap. II, par. VII.

21 Grevius is referring here to the Justinian *Digest* in which *quaestio* is the common name for torture. On free men and slaves, see also, book I, cap. v, 'Human Status'; *The Justinian Digest*, vol. 1, transl. and ed. Alan Watson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); I thank Jan Bloemendal and Antje Wessels for the translation of this passage.

22 Edward Peters, *Torture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 19.

that was codified in Roman law had its origin in forms of criminal law relating to *dominium*, that is, to early forms of law relating to the master of a house and the ones belonging to that house. Within the confines of his own *dominium* the master of the house was legally entitled to deal with his property as he saw fit, including his slaves, who were not legal subjects and who could be tortured legitimately to either preserve order, to punish them, or to extract information from them regarding crimes. This right to torture was at first not only preserved for, but also strictly limited to slaves. Torturing free citizens was principally forbidden.

As for slaves, one of the worst crimes was killing the master of the house. In the context of Roman jurisprudence, this became a case analogous to *parricide*, to killing the *father*. The slippage from master to father in effect radicalized the nature of the laws in question, and turned the preservation of order into a more symbolically charged issue. When the law regarding juridical matters in a house or household was transplanted to the public domain, as was the case after the Roman Republic had changed into an empire led by an Augustus or Caesar, the consequences were considerable. As R.C. van Caenegem puts it, the key characteristic of the late Roman Empire was that:

[...] its millions of multiracial inhabitants were subjected to one common domination [...]: all public authority had been vested in the emperor or descended from him. This emperor—called *dominus* since Diocletian (*d.* 316)—was absolute, i.e. not bound by the law, as he himself was its supreme source.²³

Legally speaking, public affairs became encapsulated more and more by the framework of the *dominium* or household. The ruler of public affairs was seen as the master of the house, or, symbolically, its father. As Floyd Lear saw it, in his study *Treason in Roman and Germanic Law*, the Roman doctrine of treason:

... the *crimen laesae maiestatis*, the injuring or diminishing of majesty, grew out of early Roman religious sanctions against the killing of a father, *parricidium*, and the actions of a Roman who becomes an enemy of his own community and aids its enemies, *perduellio*.²⁴

23 R.C. van Caenegem, *An Historical Introduction to Western Constitutional Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 34.

24 Floyd Seyward Lear, *Treason in Roman and Germanic Law* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965 [2011]). The quote is from Peters, p. 25.

From the end of the Roman Republic to its imperial reconfiguration it was a relatively short route towards the conflation of people, state and ruler. One who injured *maiestas*, simultaneously injured the communion, the state and its 'father': the ruler or, in early modern terms, the prince. Consequently, the right to torture someone was extended far beyond the realms of slavery. Anybody could now be tortured, including free citizens, who found themselves dealing with the logic of a Roman household as soon as matters became tense politically, because the Roman State had become a *familia* with the emperor (like before that the consuls) as the *pater familias*.²⁵

It is not hard to see how this almost seamlessly applies to the situation in the seventeenth century, partly due to the fact that Roman law had become the major impulse in the codification of law in the nascent European states. The two odd cases here would be England and the Republic, though for different reasons. What Skinner saw as the resurgence in England of 'the neo-Roman theory of freedom and self-government' was developed in a situation where common law prevailed. In the context of the Republic, however, it is of importance to note that Philip II had given the Low Countries its first codified law in 1570 by means of his *Criminal ordinance* (one that preceded the French *Grand ordonnance criminelle* from 1670 by a century). Yet its implementation had never been successful.²⁶ With the Republic, moreover, the legal system had lost, temporarily, its codifying political centre. Especially in the situation after the Synod of Dordt, in a juridical system that spread out over about a hundred different courts, religious parties infiltrated the judicial system. In this context, it may be repeated that the Roman law against parricide originated in *religious* sanctions and that in the course of Roman history a conflation took place that was to play an important role in the Counter-Reformation policy of the purification of the state. The purification that took place was founded on the idea that the state was a household ruled by a father, in this case either the prince sanctioned by God, or God himself, whose majesty was beyond all other majesties.

The Dutch case stood in contrast, here, with what would happen in England when the Parliamentarians in 1649 would proceed to realize what Van Caenegem called a 'radical clean up' (although veritable legal reform was in the end

25 On this transition and the legal practice at stake, see Jane Pölonen, 'Plebeians and Repression of Crime in the Roman Empire: From Torture of Convicts to Torture of Suspects', in *Revue internationale des droits de l'Antiquité* 51 (2004), 217–257.

26 See Ludwig von Bar, *A History of Continental Criminal Law* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1916), pp. 304–306. <<https://archive.org/details/historyofcontineoobarl>> [accessed 15 September 2014].

not successful). In England the Parliamentarians acted against the king's desire for centralization. In the Dutch Republic the opposite was the case. The States were sovereign and there was no high court on the level of the States-General. Cities had rights that could not be infringed by higher courts and had their own courts. In response, especially under Maurits, or his grandson, William II, the impetus was to get to a one-state-one-religion system.²⁷

Culturally speaking the similarities and differences between England and the Republic, but also internal contradictions in both countries, could be traced throughout the century, according to Charles-Edouard Levillain, in similar but also different readings of Tacitus—readings that Levillain considered in terms of 'the use and misuse of Roman history for propaganda purposes'.²⁸ Next to Machiavellianism, according to Levillain, one could even speak of Tacitism in the context of the Dutch-English debates on republicanism and sovereignty. He notes, for instance, that Grotius had interpreted Tacitus as describing how liberty and monarchy were nigh irreconcilable, which is why Grotius could glorify the Batavians who only accepted kings in name. To the lesser well known scholar Marcus Zuerius Boxhornius, however, Tacitus had described the opposite: how a country or a state that did not want to end up in ruin needed to be ruled by a monarchical power.²⁹ Yet such a power in the Netherlands should be wise not to call himself monarch, which is precisely what William III decided to do, although in the English context, of course, William III would become king. Accordingly Tacitus was read in yet another way, here, concerning the way in which monarchical rule as opposed to republican self-government depended on the nature and use of military men, and by consequence, the army.

The 'use and misuse' of a Roman paradigm was characteristic of an entire century, then. In this context, in the attempt to fuse state and religion, the battle between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants about the (relatively) free or principally not free status of man coincided historically and by analogy with the shift from torture being reserved for slaves to torture being applicable principally to all subjects. According to the logic of predestination all subjects were in the hands of the Father to whose house they all belonged, and who could punish as He saw fit. In the years following the Synod of Dordt, there were enough actors who were willing to act as God's instrument in this punishment. Their ideas were not so different, by the way, from those who would argue that

27 Van Caenegem, *An Historical Introduction to Western Constitutional Law*, p. 118.

28 Charles-Edouard Levillain, 'William III's Military and Political Career in Neo-Roman Context 1672–1702', *The Historical Journal* 48 (2005), 321–350; especially p. 322.

29 Levillain, 'William III's Military and Political Career', p. 331.

the prince or king was the master-father of the political household, such as Robert Filmer in his treatise with the telling title *Patriarcha or the Natural Powers of Kings*, a treatise published in 1680 but written in the twenties and thirties of the seventeenth century (a treatise that gained fame especially because of John Locke's extensive response to it). Filmer's treatise held that the basis of the political organization of the state was the obedience a family owed their father, as was confirmed in the Book of Genesis 1:26–28.³⁰ Filmer was just being part here of a broader movement that was defined by Gordon J. Schochet as 'patriarchalism', with which he indicated the conflation of paternal and monarchical power. Although one of its major sources was the Bible, it was also, as may now have become clear, neo-Roman; as neo-Roman, one could argue, as Skinner's 'republicanism'.³¹

Grevius's battle against torture, therefore, was not just a moral battle. When he held that there is not *one* argument that is tenable in the defense of torture, his attack on torture extended beyond the strictly moral. In fact, the principle rhetorical audience of his treatise was the prince, as the head of state. Having come to the end of his treatise, he proposed that every sentence involving torture should be signed personally by the Christian magistrate.³² This came down to saying that torture, in the end, was a legal and political issue and as such connected to a specific form of rule. And indeed it was, legally speaking and in the light of the European political trajectory to redefine affairs of politics as *public* affairs, as opposed to private ones, based on the (despotic or tyrannical) logic of a household. In the Dutch Republic this long-term European political battle got one of its telling historical moments. It was one that was related highly ambiguously to the Roman paradigm, which was itself, as already indicated, deeply ambiguous because of its mixture of republic and empire, of politics as a public affair and as a matter of *dominium*.

30 Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, repr. 2000) Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. The text can be found online; <<http://www.constitution.org/eng/patriarcha.htm>> [accessed 15 August 2014].

31 Gordon J. Schochet, *Patriarchalism and Political Thought: The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes Especially in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

32 Grevius, *Tribunal*, pp. 492–498.

Ambiguous Allegories: Roman Paradigm, Republican Amsterdam and the Republic's Batavianism

The new theater that was being built in Amsterdam in the thirties was welcomed by Joost van den Vondel who praised its architect Jacob van Campen as follows: 'We imitate majestic Rome on a smaller scale | now that Kampen is busy building it' ('Wij bootsen 't groote Rome na in 't klein | Nu Kampen bezig is met bouwen').³³ Indeed, at one point, a few years earlier, an important group of humanists had started thinking of a public 'gathering place' built 'according to the way of the old Roman theaters' ('verzamelplaats' [...] 'te bouwen naar de wijze der oude Roomse schouwplaatsen'). In this context, as Ben Albach correctly noted, their ideas were radically different from the ideas about the theaters that were being construed in semblance of the Royal courts.³⁴ Yet this Amsterdam theater was not the only building referring back explicitly to republican Rome. The new Amsterdam City Hall, opened seventeen years later, was an even more iconic example.

The Amsterdam City Hall was defined as the eighth miracle of the world by Constantijn Huygens, who addressed the burgomasters of the city as 'Enlightened founders of the world's eighth wonder | of so many stones up high, and so many wood down under' ('Doorluchte stichteren van 's wereld achtste wonder, | van soo veel steens omhoogh, op soo veel Houts van onder').³⁵ It is a building that appears from the outside and in its structure to be distinctly classical, only to reveal its baroque inside.³⁶ Of this City Hall Joost van den Vondel sang the praises and he literally helped fill it in by suggesting topics for its many

33 Joost van den Vondel, 'Op den nieuwen Schouwburgh. Aen den Raedsheer Nikolaes van Kampen', 1637. Joost van den Vondel, *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, met inleidingen en aantekeningen door Mieke B. Smits-Veldt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), p. 34; <http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/vondoo1gysbo1_01/vondoo1gysbo1_01_0016.php> [accessed 15 August 2014].

34 Ben Albach, 'De schouwburg van Jacob van Campen', *Oud Holland*, 85 (1970), 85–109. The quote has its source in O. Dapper, *Historische beschrijving der Stadt Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1663).

35 Constantijn Huygens, *Gedichten, deel 6: 1656–1661*, ed. J.A. Worp, (Groningen: Wolters, 1896), p. 108; http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/huyg001jawo14_01/huyg001jawo14_01_0004.php.

36 For the simultaneous manifestation of classicism and baroque in Dutch works of art, see Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis, 'Mannerist, Baroque, and Classicist: Narrative Tapestries and Related Paintings in Late Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Holland', in Thomas P. Campbell and Elizabeth A.H. Cleland (eds.), *Tapestry in the Baroque: New Aspects of Production and Patronage* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), pp. 134–

wall decorations and paintings, and by providing it with several epigrams. To be sure, the City Hall functioned in a deeply religious environment. Yet as the political centre of a new world power, it was highly worldly at the same time, and consequently it was looking not just for historical comparisons but also for historical paradigms that could help define its role in history. The plan for this 'Palace of the Republic' drew from the biblical origin of architecture, but in the seventeenth century eye this was allegorically translated via Rome. On an allegorical level, that is, Rome provided the paradigm. As already indicated, this legacy remained ambiguous.³⁷

In a praise poem that was made for the opening of the new City Hall, but also in order to defend the costly building against its many critics, Vondel was explicit about the paradigmatic relation between Rome and Amsterdam, as, for instance, in a passage such as this one:

De Koning van de Stadt, wiens kruin 't geweld zou tergen
 Verkoos Tarpeius bergh alleen, uit zeven bergen,
 Omtrent den Tiberstroom, en zijne waterkolck,
 Om daer den adelaer en stoel van 't strijtbre volck,
 Als op den vryburgh van 't Gemeene best, te planten,
 Dat tegens al de maght der weerelt zich zou kanten.
 Dus rees het Kapitoel, op dezen steenen bult,
 Van Romulus met riet gedeckt, en na vergult
 Gelijck een gouden bergh, om, in het onderdaelen
 En opstaen van de zon, de zon ten trots te praelen
 Een eer, waer voor de bergh den vader Numa danckt,
 Zoo lang 't Romainisch gebiet, dat nimmer zackt, noch schranckt,
 Maer op zijn wyze duurt, de weerelt zal verduuren.

'Inwydinge' vss. 145–157

153. For a transparent oversight of the uses of the term baroque, see Michel Conan, 'Introduction: The New Horizons of Baroque Garden Cultures', in id. (ed.), *Baroque Garden Cultures: Emulation, Sublimation, Subversion* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) *Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture* 25, pp. 1–36, esp. pp. 3–15.

37. On the biblical origins of architecture and the allegorical translation of the City Hall via Rome, see Pieter Vlaardingebroek, *De geschiedenis van het stadhuis van Amsterdam* (Zwolle: WBooks, 2011). On the City Hall as a baroque building, see Katherine Fremantle, *The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam* (Utrecht: Haentjes, Dekker en Gumbert, 1959).

(The king of the city, the crown of whom would tempt violence,
 Chose the Tarpeius mountain alone, out of seven,
 Nearby the stream of the Tiber, and its whirling,
 Where the eagle and chair of the battle ready people
 Could be planted as on the free citadel of the commonwealth
 That would turn against all the powers of the world.
 Thus the Capitol arose, on this stony rock,
 Covered by Romulus with a thatched roof, later in gold
 Like a golden mountain, that, with the setting
 And rising of the sun, would outshine the sun in pride,
 An honor for which the mountain thanks Numa
 As long as the Roman domain, that will never perish nor collapse
 Will in his own way last, and will stay in this world forever.)

translation mine, FWK

Just as Rome was built near the Tiber, Amsterdam was built near the waters of the whirling IJ, and just as Rome had started out with ‘thatched roof’, so Amsterdam had its humble beginnings. Yet both now had roofs of gold that would shine forever, the one’s radiance facilitating that of the other, insinuating that the empire of Rome had now been allegorically transferred to that of Amsterdam. It all followed the logic of the medieval concept of the *translatio imperii*, according to which history followed the lineage of successive empires.

That said, the legacy of Rome that Vondel used in his poem allowed diverging interpretations. Classical Rome and the Roman Catholic Church could, ambiguously, be mentioned in one breath, as happens in the last line of the cited passage: the political legacy of Rome translates a historically anchored power to a spiritual power that will last eternally in the shape of the Roman Catholic Church—at least in the eyes of Vondel. A less obvious ambiguity, but one that is in play nevertheless, consists of Rome’s republican origins, which allows the parallel to unfold more appropriately for a commonwealth of free citizens, and decidedly not an imperial power. At the same time, however, it is the imperial power to rule the world that makes Rome comparable with Amsterdam. The ambiguities in play and the specific form of allegory that they produce by means of which two historical periods are anachronistically conflated while time, simultaneously, is expanding towards eternity, is all distinctly Baroque, but with a twist.

When the City Hall was completed in 1655 the Republic was in its first so-called stadholderless period (lasting from 1650 to 1672). Only a decade earlier, with Frederick Henry as the major political ruler, the Dutch politico-aesthetic dynamic had been comparable to other European, royally inspired forms of

Baroque (although this had been complicated by the fact that Frederick Henry was not a real king, of course). In the seventeen fifties and sixties, in a non-royal context, the Dutch Republic found itself to be a world power without a real political centre. It was not a straightforward republic, but edged closer to a commonwealth or a confederation, consisting of free and independent states with free people in free cities, and with Amsterdam as city-state that formed both the hub of world trade and of the network of cities. In this context, the Rome-allegory was useful in underpinning the authority of republican forms of statehood because these forms resembled Rome's republicanism and linked Amsterdam's position to that of a former world power. Yet it was a troubling allegory nonetheless, especially in its connection to the Roman Catholic Church, which for many Protestants was equated with tyranny. As for tyranny, yet another historical allegory depicted Rome as the very enemy of the Dutch. This involved the so-called Batavian myth, activated by, amongst others, Hugo Grotius, P.C. Hooft and Vondel, according to whom the free Dutch Republic had its origins sixteen hundred years earlier in a revolt of the Batavian people against Rome's imperial and perverted powers.³⁸

The complexities revolving around the Rome-Amsterdam parallel are captured nicely, albeit paradoxically, in a deliberately destroyed manuscript of a tragic play. In a letter to Hugo Grotius dated September 9th, 1639 Joost van den Vondel wrote his friend about the situation he was in and mentioned some of the manuscripts he was sending along or was intending to send:

Ick ben aen de treurspelen vervallen en heb noch één ongedrukt leggen van Silius en Messaline, en één ten halven voldaan van Sauls zeven zonen, die bij die van Gabaon opgehangen werden.

(I have been falling back on tragedies and have an unprinted one about Silius and Messalina, and one half finished about Saul's seven sons, who were hanged near Gabaon [...].)³⁹

38 Primary texts, but certainly not the only ones, were Grotius's *De antiquitate reipublicae Batavae* from 1610, the play *Baeto* by P.C. Hooft from 1617 and, much later, Vondel's *Batavische gebroeders* (*Batavian Brethren*) from 1662. See Hugo Grotius, *The Antiquity of the Batavian Republic, with the notes by Petrus Scriverius*, ed. and transl. Jan Waszink et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000) *Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae*; P.C. Hooft, *Baeto*, ed. Fokke Veenstra (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980); Joost van den Vondel, *Batavische gebroeders ofte onderdruckte vryheit*, in J.F.M. Sterck, et al. (eds), *De werken van Vondel. Negende deel 1660–1663* (Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1936), pp. 898–971.

39 Grotius, *Briefwisseling*, vol. 10, ed. B.L. Meulenbroek. (Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag, 1976),

The 'half finished play about Saul's seven sons' was *Gebroeders (Brethren)*, which was published in 1640, and which became one of Vondel's more successful biblical plays. The other one dealt with Roman material: *Silius and Messalina*. Sometime after writing this letter, this play apparently had attracted enough funding, for it was being prepared for production. Vondel arranged a first reading of the text together with the actors. During the session, however, one of the actors asked for a clarification of the play's theme and plot: Messalina, member of the vast Julio-Claudian 'family', who had already played a lively role in the entourage of emperor Caligula, now has become the beautiful, powerful, sexually active wife of emperor Claudius, who is physically handicapped and relatively old. She has an affair with the handsome and powerful young Roman senator Silius. When Claudius is away for business she holds a party at which her marriage to Silius, either seriously or mockingly, is arranged. The emperor returns just in time and has her killed, along with Silius and all those present at the party, condemning Messalina to be entirely forgotten, the so-called *damnatio memoriae*.

Sixteen hundred years later Messalina had not been forgotten, clearly, and Vondel thought her story to be of interest. The actors asked: 'But how should we understand this?' Vondel's biographer Geeraerd Brandt describes, in a mixture of indirect and free indirect speech, how Vondel responded:

't is eveneens als of zoodaanig een Prins,—dien hy noemde, een nar was, en de Prinses, terwyl hy ergens naar toe was geëist, ondertusschen met een' Raadtsheer wilde trouwen.⁴⁰

(It was just as if a Prince, whom he named, was a fool, and the Princess, while he had travelled someplace else, wanted to marry a counselor in the meantime.)

Obviously, the Prince that Vondel alluded to was Frederick Henry, and the Princess therefore had to be the powerful Amalia van Solms. Although the comparison was met with laughter at first, the actors went to the pub afterwards

p. 582. See <www.grotius.huygens.knaw.nl>. See also: Geeraerd Brandt, 'Het leven van Joost van den Vondel', in *J.V. Vondels Poëzy of Verscheide Gedichten. Op een nieu by een vergadert, en met veele ook voorheen nooit gedrukte dichten vermeerdert: Mitsgaders een aanleidinge ter Nederduitsche Dichtkunste, en het Leven des Dichters* (Franeker: Leonard Strik, 1682), pp. 37–38.

40 Geeraerd Brandt, 'Het leven van Joost van den Vondel', pp. 42–43; translation mine, FWK.

and started to wonder whether the play was actually an allegory after all. Frederick was indeed frequently away and suffered from severe bouts of gout, and Amalia, well ...⁴¹ Rumor spread. The regents of the orphanage who had paid for the play were alarmed and Vondel had to act quickly. He went back to the main actors and asked for the manuscripts, with the excuse that he wanted to change a few small things, and thereby preventing illegal prints. He then destroyed the manuscripts, although some parts would be recycled in other work.

Still, there may be much more than a trace of the play left. According to art historian Kees Schoemaker, one painting in the Rijksmuseum made by Nicolaus Knüpfer depicts a scene from the play. Formerly entitled 'Brothelscene', Schoemaker suggests, as a more fitting title, 'Theatrical Scene from Messalina and Gaius Silius Representing the Marriage'.

Schoemaker dates the painting between 1645 and 1655. As Schoemaker reads it, this is the scene where the party is at its climax, with the half-naked Messalina and Silius toasting, while some of the party guests are already looking outside because someone appears to be rapidly approaching: Claudius.⁴²

Whereas a brothel scene could have been read iconographically as a moral warning, the painting would work radically differently if it depicted a scene from Vondel's *Messalina and Silius*, for then it could possibly be allegorically referring to the stadholder (who died in 1647) and his wife, bringing up the delicate idea of bigamy. The way in which either the play or the painting worked allegorically would depend entirely, obviously, on how one thinks about allegory. For Benjamin, in his dealing with the German *Trauerspiel*, allegory was a matter of fragmentation, or of allegory artificially referring to itself. By contrast, in the Republic, in relation to this tragedy and in the context of the ambiguities concerning the Roman paradigm, allegory came to act dramatically, as if the cloth of history had been tied into a knot, allowing for Messalina to morph into

41 Ibid., p. 43: 'Om deeze onderrechting en gelykenis werdt in 't eerst gelacchen: maar daarna begosten eenige domme en losse Tooneelspeelers in hunne drinkgelaagen tegens elkanderen te zeggen, zou dit spel wel op dien Prins slaan? Misschien is Claudius die Prins, Messallina zyn Prinses en Silius zulk een Heer, dien zy, (onder andre Grooten, die de gemelde Prinses op de reize naar zeeke stad verzelden) dwaasselyk uitkipten. Deeze praat liep eerst onder de speelers en werdt, zoo ongerymt als ze was, door zommigen, die den Poëet niet gunstig waaren, verder uitgestrooit, tot dat ze den Regenten van 't Weeshuis ter ooren quam.'

42 Kees Schoemaker, 'Het huwelijk van Messalina en Gaius Silius, ofwel bigamie in het oude Rome, geschilderd door Nicolaus Knüpfer', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, 52 (2004), 173–176.



FIGURE 1.1 Nicolaus Knüpfer, 'Brothelscene' or 'Theatrical Scene from Messalina and Gaius Silius Representing the Marriage' (ca. 1645–ca. 1655)
RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

Amalia, and the physically ill-disposed Claudius to morph into the physically equally ill-disposed Frederick Henry.⁴³ As a result, the theatrical scene became dramatic in a double sense. It was part of a dramatic performance (whether in reality or in a manuscript), and it used two histories that were not so much to be looked at theatrically from a historical distance, but that were *operative* simultaneously, in the present, fusing into one another.

The force of drama is not so much related to choice, here, but to a double meaning that, because it is folded into one image, produces a confusion that intensifies its political potential. Affectively and aesthetically this is not the intertextual play as it has been defined for the renaissance by Daniel Arasse in *Anachroniques* and even more so by Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood

43 On Frederick Henry in the last phase of his life, see J.J. Poelhekke, *Frederik-Hendrik, Prins van Oranje. Een biografisch drieluik* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1978), pp. 541–564. Poelhekke suggests that his last chapter should have been entitled 'Aftakeling', that is: 'Subsiding', p. 541.

in *Anachronic Renaissance*.⁴⁴ To them an anachronistic intertextual concatenation threatened the linearity of history, or the historicity of the work of art, which dissolved in the simultaneous or ‘momentous’ presence of two historically different times in one painting. In the baroque case, however, the danger does not lie in historically *comparing* Amalia to Messalina, or in letting the two coincide anachronistically. In the seventeenth century context, this could simply be a matter of laughter and farce bordering on the obscene in a way that would have been familiar to many members of the Dutch elite. On the contrary, the danger lay in the dramatic potential of *confusing* Amalia with Messalina, and one should note how similar the names sound. The confusing conflation of the two distinct characters, Amalia and Messalina, worked politically as a dramatic interruption that provoked the question in what sense the Dutch Republic resembled a perverted imperial power, in which the commonweal of free people would come to be ruled by something like a Julio-Claudian dynasty, in the manner of ancient Rome, one that would rule the state, by implication, as its ‘house’, with all sorts of perversity as a consequence.

Yet, again, in the case of Vondel, the confusing complexity is also that the Roman paradigm not only works allegorically in relation to the political organization of the Republic, but also in relation to its religious constituency, with Rome indicating the Roman Catholic Church that, as the former universal house of the father, was now opposed by other religious powers. Indeed, in the context of the Dutch Republic the question was what kind of political household the *Protestant* church had become after the Reformation. Aside from that question, there was also, as we just saw, another political house involved: the house of Nassau.

The Quasi-Royal and Counter-Remonstrant Household of the State—and a Baroque Response

Interviewed in 2009 on the occasion of the republication of three of his studies on the Golden Age, historian A.Th. van Deursen stated that the Netherlands even today remains ‘rooted in seventeenth-century religion’. With respect to this, he expressed his concern about the fact that so few people could understand nowadays that to the seventeenth-century mind, belief was ‘a public

44 Daniel Arasse, *Anachroniques* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006); Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

affair'.⁴⁵ In the introduction to his study *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen* Van Deursen had already stated that seventeenth-century Protestants did not much speak of the Protestant *church*. Instead they would speak:

[...] often about the Christian reformed religion. Not a coincidence, for sure; people did not want to see the existing domestic church organization as an enclosed national institute [...] but as the local materialization of a much bigger unity.⁴⁶

Although there is much with which one can agree here, the danger is that Van Deursen mistakes the conceptual pair 'private' and 'public' for the political spaces of *dominium* and the *res publica*. As I suggested in the previous section, the basic political and juridical problem that plagued European politics was the superimposition of *dominium* over public affairs, an issue addressed by consecutive political thinkers such as Marsilius of Padua and Machiavelli, or much later Hannah Arendt. As I have already mentioned, as early as the fourteenth century Marsilius of Padua had argued, in his *Defensor Pacis*, that the Roman Catholic Church was an *oikos*, a house, which as such should not be allowed to lay claim to the public space of politics. Of course laying such a claim was exactly what the Church did. For this very reason, Marsilius argued, it acted illegitimately. Likewise the issue of debate in the seventeenth century was not whether belief was a *public* matter or not, it was whether any church could lay claim to public affairs from the position of an *oikos* or *dominium*, as was clearly the case with the Counter-Remonstrants.

In the same interview Van Deursen repeats the argument that he developed in his study on stadholder Maurits: *Maurits van Nassau: De winnaar die faalde* (*Maurits of Nassau: The Winner who Failed*, 2001). The book's thesis is that, despite Maurits's position as one of Europe's great military leaders, his ultimate failure consisted in how he dealt with Van Oldenbarnevelt. Maurits got him beheaded for political reasons—reasons that Van Deursen finds indefensi-

45 Geertje Dekkers, 'A.Th. van Deursen over "De Gouden Eeuw compleet"', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* 10 (2009).

46 A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen*, p. 1: 'Wie vertrouwd is met de vroege zeventiende-eeuwen, weet dat ze weinig spreken van de hervormde of de gereformeerde kerk, maar veel van de christelijke gereformeerde religie. Geen toeval zeker; men wilde de binnenslands bestaande kerkelijke organisatie niet zien als een besloten nationaal instituut, als een op zich zelf staande grootheid, maar als de lokale verschijningsvorm van een veel groter geheel.'

ble. The basis of the political conflict had not been, according to Van Deursen, that Maurits had sided with the Counter-Remonstrant and Oldenbarnevelt with the Arminians. Rather, both had a fundamental difference of opinion about the nature of the relation between state and religion. Oldenbarnevelt considered the state a political power that could guarantee different forms of religion existing peacefully next to one another; Maurits, on the other hand, considered orthodox Calvinism the one church that could guarantee the safety and coherence of the state. It is remarkable, here, that Van Deursen only mentions one 'house', as when he considers how Maurits's political maneuvering can be explained on the basis of his concern for the *house* of Nassau. This house is symbolically and metonymically the embodiment of a state with *one* religion, one that for Maurits and Calvinists was the 'essential characteristic of that state' as Van Deursen defined it. As we already saw, Van Deursen did not consider this religion in terms of a 'household'. Perhaps, spiritually speaking, it was not. Ideologically, however, and in the judicial and daily praxis of the Dutch Republic, it definitely was. After the Synod of Dordt, the Counter-Remonstrant strategy was to get the household of church and state, considered to be one, unified in good order. To that aim torture was used, as is understandable, considering the intrinsic historical link between *dominium* and torture.

All things considered it might seem strange, or slightly paradoxical, that Grevius contends, in his treatise, that torture should be principally impossible for *Christians*. To be able to appeal to Christianity as the stronghold against torture, he refrained from basing his argument on the history of positive law which had influenced the development of European law since the revival of Roman law in the Middle Ages. Grevius first addressed some of the arguments that people might bring in to defend torture as being understandable and somehow reasonable, and then argued that a law that contradicted reason could be no law at all. Such reasonability could not be based on custom or posited law. Grevius used either divine law or natural law (like Grotius would) as the source of reason, much like Thomas Aquinas had contended. The point was expressed succinctly by an 'or': 'naturae lege *aut* divino iure'. By bringing in divine law or natural law, Grevius held that there is no law above these. Considered on its own, the appeal to natural law, moreover, implied the Althusian notion that each man is sovereign, that is *free*, by nature.⁴⁷ The very notion of man as sovereign was a horror, however, to Counter-Remonstrants, or to most royalists for that matter, such as Filmer for instance.

47 Grevius, *Tribunal*, Lib. 1, cap. 2, par. IV and V, pp. 19–21, the quotation is from p. 20.

The 'tuchthuis' where Grevius was imprisoned had been installed in 1596. In general, the prisons that would be built throughout Europe in the centuries to come would contribute considerably to the disappearance of juridically backed up forms of torture.⁴⁸ Yet while the establishment of the Amsterdam 'tuchthuis' indeed offered an alternative way of punishment in the long run, in the hectic years after 1618 torture was used regularly. If it is the case, as Elisabeth Lissenberg suggested, in her preface to a study on the early modern prison system in Europe by Pieter Spierenburg, that the way in which states dealt with criminals in the Republic was 'part of a larger social process in which justice from above grew stronger in connection with the increased power and confidence of the state authorities', one would have to be very clear what sort of a political 'above' this might be, and what kind of state authorities were so confident about their powers.⁴⁹ The severity of the judicial processes and punishments after 1618 was distinctly religio-political, especially with Reinier Pauw as the dominant political player in Amsterdam (acting as burgomaster in 1605, 1609, 1611, 1614, 1616, 1617, 1619 en 1620). Due to his being a staunch proponent of the Counter-Remonstrant party, he was appointed to sit in the council that judged Oldenbarnevelt, and condemned him to death. Moreover, in the context of the 'wetsverzetting' of 1618 he had helped cleanse the Amsterdam city council from its major Remonstrant figures. However, from 1621 onwards—the year of Sapma's, Prince's and Grevius's escape from prison—the moderate forces regained most of their strength, which led to the resurfacing of the political ideas of Oldenbarnevelt, Grotius and their likes. Consequently, policies were defined much less in terms of *dominium*, in the sense of a fusion of a house based political rule with a religious one, as Maurits and the Counter-Remonstrants desired. Instead the cities, the states, and the States-General were considered more and more in terms of as a public affair, in the sense of a *res publica*.

In the context of a prosperous Republic that was indeed concerned with the *res publica*, torture did not disappear from one moment to the other. It did become less and less acceptable, however, losing its aura of legitimacy. The Dutch Republic was, and was not, a particular case in Europe. As Clive Emsley has argued, it was only after 1750 that princes and sovereigns throughout Europe started reforming the juridical system which was founded on the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* from 1530, a document which had led to many witch

48 On the Amsterdam 'tuchthuis' in its European context see Pieter Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience; Disciplining Institutions and their Inmates in Early Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

49 Elisabeth Lissenberg, 'Preface' to Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience*, p. 1.

trials and torture practices in the two centuries to follow.⁵⁰ In the light of this information the Dutch Republic was distinctly ahead of its time. Yet according to John Langbein torture was on the way out generally in Europe from the early seventeenth century onwards, not so much due to passionate humanist pleas such as Grevius's but due to 'the development of new criminal sanctions and the revolution in the law of proof'.⁵¹ Accordingly, Lisa Silverman in her study of torture in Early Modern France can state:

My evidence, like that of other historians, demonstrates a dramatic decline in the employment of torture from the beginning of the seventeenth century. But my evidence also shows a continued employment of torture [...].⁵²

As Silverman continues to explain, and in line with Langbein's analysis, it was not so much because of legal requirements that torture was still employed but 'because it had a powerful cultural significance'.⁵³

As for this cultural significance, it is telling that torture was made fun of in the Dutch Republic. A text that may prove this point is Jan Vos's play *Aran en Titus of Wraak en weerwraak: treurspel* (*Aran and Titus: Revenge and Revenge in Retaliation: A Tragedy*; 1641). In general it might seem a tragic play but it might equally well be distinctly comical, as a result of which the theme of torture is dealt with irreverently. This becomes most explicit at the end of the play. Notably, this happens again in relation to the theme of Rome and its perverse power games. It is not sure whether Vondel really liked Vos's dealing with the issue, or the latter's form of tragedy *per se*. In a letter from Barlaeus to Huygens, the former describes his own response, and the reaction of Hooft, Van der Burg and Vondel. The latter's response to the play is described as follows:

50 Clive Emsley, *Crime, Police and Penal Policy: European Experiences 1750–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially the chapter 'Laws and Punishments'.

51 John Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof: Europe and England in the Ancien régime*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977); or 'Torture and Plea Bargaining', *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 46 (1978), 3–22. See also Edward Peters, *Torture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

52 Lisa Silverman, *Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth and the Body in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 24. Silverman's findings are in line with Peter Paalvast, *Martelen en martelwerktuigen in cultuurhistorisch perspectief* (Zoetermeer: Free Musketeers, 2011).

53 Silverman, *Tortured Subjects*, p. 24.

Audit Vondelius, et portentosi ingenij virum dixit.⁵⁴

The editors translated this as ‘Vondel heeft het gehoord, en zeide, ’t is een man van wonderbaer verstandt’ (‘Vondel has heard it and said it was a man of miraculous wit’). Yet the choice of words, especially ‘portentosi’ may be more delicate since the same word may indicate ‘unnatural’, ‘miscreant’ or ‘fantastic’.

Whether or not Vos had read Shakespeare, his play is a clear intertextual allusion to or reworking of Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*.⁵⁵ It is, moreover, an almost bizarre mixture of formal classicist requirements (like the unity of time, the division in acts, the use of alexandrines) and baroque (like the excessive show of violence, the many unexpected turns in the plot, the extravagance of emotions).⁵⁶ The actors on stage at the end of the play—we have lost more than a few—are Saturninus, the emperor, and his wife Thamera, who has been queen of the Goths and lover of Aran but who, in order to save the latter’s life, has agreed to marry the emperor. Then there is Titus Andronicus, a general, with his brother Markus and son Lucius. And finally there is Aran, the black leader of the Goths who has succeeded in getting his revenge on the Romans, by killing the emperor’s brother. Thamera has just learned that Titus, who organized a dinner, has given her her own children to eat. In rage she has cried out for Aran, who was captured earlier but now suddenly bursts on stage through a ‘loose Soldering’: a trapdoor.⁵⁷

The illustration of the scene in the 1648 edition is a marvelous example of epic condensation since we simultaneously see Aran hanging above the fire and the sharpened spikes, while Titus is stabbing Thamera and Lucius slaying Saturninus. All this does not happen simultaneously, however, for this is how the play ends:

54 Constantijn Huygens, *Briefwisseling*, vol. 3: 1640–1644, ed. J.A. Worp (Martinus Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1914); <http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/huyg001jawoo5_01/huyg001jawoo5_01_0630.php>.

55 On this see Jan Vos, *Toneelwerken*, ed. W.J.C. Buitendijk (Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975), p. 53 and 64, but more extensively Willy L. Braekman, ‘The relationship of Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* to the German play of 1620 and to Jan Vos’s play *Aran en Titus*’, in *Studia Germanica Gandensia* 10 (Gent 1968), 7–77. See also the contribution by Helmer Helmers in this volume.

56 On this see Buitendijk in his introduction to Jan Vos, *Toneelwerken*, p. 59 and pp. 68–72.

57 Jan Vos, *Toneelwerken*, p. 208.



FIGURE 1.2 *Illustration VII* from Jan Vos, *Aran en Titus* (ed. 1648)

SATURNINUS Hoe zal ik Broeders doot, hoe zal ik 't schelmstuk
 wreeken?

Wie zal my bystandt doen?

TITUS Ik zal u hulpzaam zijn.

ARAN O ysselijke val! o doodelijke pijn!

Help Titus! Titus help! ik zal uw gramschap kussen.

TITUS De wraak keert u de nek.

ARAN Wie zal deez' vlammen blussen?

TITUS De traanen van uw' hoer.

ARAN Genâ! genâ! genâ!

- TITUS Als 't quaaddoen wordt gestraft, dan komt 't berouw te
spâ.
- ARAN O Titus! geef genâ.
- TITUS De wraaklust heeft geen ooren.
- ARAN Bepaal de woede wraak van uw' getergde tooren.
- TITUS Hadt gy u wreede handt, in al uw' doen, bepaalt.
De weerwraak was zoo fel niet op uw' hoofd gedaalt.
Hier leit hy in zijn graf die ons in 't graf wou wikkelen.
- ARAN O overheete vlam! o al te scherpe prikkelen!
Kom Titus, Titus kom, en kerf mijn levens draân.
- TITUS Eerst moet het rauwe vleesch tot op het been toe braân.
- ARAN Help spookten! spookten help! ik ben om hulp verlegen.
Stort doller donderaar, stort nu een dichte regen,
Met uw' vergramde vuist, van blixems op my neêr;
Op dat ik, in der yl, tot assche toe, verteer.
O wee! o wee! o wee!
- TITUS De schelm is al gezonken;
Hy leit, als in de gloedt van Ætnas bergspelonken.
- SATURNINUS Nu is mijn wraak vernoegt: mijn broeders geest gepait;
Ik zwem in ene zee van alle dartelheit
Het hart springt me van vreugdt.
- TITUS Ik zal de vreugdt betoomen.
Daar moorehoer, hou daar; gy zult uw' pol bekoomen
In 't onderaardsche Rijk.
- SATURNINUS: Hou daar vervloekte guit,
En volg de bloedge schreên van Saturninus bruidt.
- LUCIUS Is vader doodt? o doodt! door Saturninus handen?
Tyran daar is uw' loon.
- MARKUS Uw' Kaizerlijke banden
Zijn nu voor Lucius, en wat aan 't Rijk behoort.
Nu zal het noodig zijn, dat gy des Tybers poort,
En 't ruime marriktveldt, omheint met uw' troepen,
Dan zalmen 's Vorsten doodt, en u voor Vorst, uitroepen;
En wie'er teegens streeft, alwaar 't de Ridderschap,
Zal voort naar Pontus Meir, in eeuwge ballingschap.

Aran en Titus, ll. 2092–2126

- (SATURNINUS How shall I avenge my brother's death, this villainous
act?
And who will assist me?

TITUS I will help a hand. (Opens trapdoor that drops Aran into a fire, hanging above a set of sharpened spikes.)

ARAN Oh chilling fall, oh deadly pain!
Help Titus, Titus help! I will kiss your wrath.

TITUS Revenge shows you its neck.

ARAN Who will extinguish these flames?

TITUS The tears of your whore.

ARAN Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!

TITUS If evil acts are punished, then remorse comes too late.

ARAN Oh Titus, show mercy!

TITUS Revenge does not have ears.

ARAN Restrict the raving revenge of your incited anger.

TITUS If you had restricted your cruel hand in every act
Revenge in response had not come down on your head
so fiercely.
Here lies in his grave who would have liked to wrap us
in ours.

ARAN Oh overheated flames! Oh all too sharpened skewers.
Come Titus, Titus come, en splice my life on them.

TITUS First the raw flesh must be baked to the bone.

ARAN Help, ghosts! Ghosts help! I am in dire need of assistance.
Pour down, mad thunderer, pour down a vast rain
Or with your wrathful fist, lightnings, down on me,
So that I, in a split second, will perish to ashes.
Vie! Vie! Vie!

TITUS The villain has gone down already.
He lies as in the glowing embers of Etna's mountain
caverns.

SATURNINUS Now my revenge has been fulfilled; my brother's spirit
satisfied.
I am swimming in a sea full of exhilaration.
My heart bursts out from joy.

TITUS I will restrain the joy. (Slays Thamera.)
There, black man's whore, have it, you will get your butt
friend
In the empire of hell.

SATURNINUS (seeing his wife slain, slays Titus) There you have it,
damned scoundrel,
And now follow the bloody steps of Saturninus's bride.

LUCIUS Is father dead? Oh dead! By Saturninus's hands?
 Tyrant, here is what you deserve! (Slays Saturninus.)

MARKUS Your imperial headscarves
 Are for Lucius now and what belongs to the empire.
 Now it will be required that the Tyber's gate
 And the spacious market field will be surrounded by
 your armies.
 They will proclaim the monarch dead and you monarch
 And all those who will oppose it, be they aristocrats,
 Will be off to the Black Sea, in eternal exile.)⁵⁸

There is much that is farcical in this passage, or bordering on the obscene. It starts with a hilarious 'ijsselijke' or 'chilling' fall in a fire; proceeds with the one who is tortured in the fire asking who will extinguish it; which is then followed by the response that it can only be extinguished by the tears of the 'whore' of the one tortured. Then there is the threefold lyrical repetition by the one who is being roasted: 'Help Titus! Titus help!', 'Come Titus, Titus come', 'Help ghosts! Ghosts help!'; or the dry funeral epitaph of 'Here lies [...]'. Those who have pictured the Etna, with its lethal glowing lava, will have pictured the sea as well on which it borders, hence Saturninus's *sea* of joy. There is a double pun on 'pol', which can either mean slut or faggot. Finally, after the rapid and gory death of four characters, the play ends in a business-like tone, in a concluding line that expresses the amoral or brutish nature of Rome's imperial power politics.

Funny, thrilling, horrific or sublime as it is, the play fits in the context of a multifaceted resonance between Rome and the Dutch Republic that in several cases, and in different media, allowed for a consideration of torture as a sign of the perversity of Roman power. A decade after the first performance of *Aran en Titus*, for instance, the Dutch translation of Grevius's treatise was published in Rotterdam, written by the physician and writer Daniel Jonctys, entitled *De pyn-bank wedersproken en bematigt* (*Argument Against the Rack in Favor of its Moderate Usage*). With the Dutch Republic's turning away from or tempering the powers that had preferred *dominium* based politics, torture was on the way out as well, as the reprints of the text suggest (in 1651, 1736 and 1740) and a Latin version based on the earlier Dutch one in 1653 (*De torturae abusu et necessaria moderatione*, Dordrecht), or again a pamphlet-like summary in 1690 (Rotterdam). To be sure, as may be clear also from the dates of the reprints,

58 Jan Vos, *Toneelwerken*, ed. Buitendijk, pp. 208–210.

this did not happen overnight. In fact it would take until 1798 until torture was officially abolished, and a century earlier, during the second stadholderless period that Johan de Witt would call the period of ‘The True Freedom,’ torture was still used. The point is that although it would take time, torture became less and less accepted and consequently a *dominium* based kind of law had to be reconfigured.

During this process, baroque art in the Dutch Republic was not so much fascinated by torture *per se* but by the perverse power structures that facilitated it. Or, the issue of torture was embedded in and framed by a distinctly Roman heritage—in terms of jurisdiction, politics and aesthetics—that got a specific reception in the Dutch Republic. This is what connects Vondel’s destroyed tragedy on Messalina and Silius with Vos’s surviving one on Aran and Titus. The political perversion that is central to both plays concerns the fusion between *dominium* and *imperium*, and this perversion was something that almost unexpectedly confronted those who were culturally reworking the Roman material in the Dutch Republic with, in the end, incompatible or paradoxical material. It is this incompatibility, the fragmented or paradoxical nature of the relation between the Republic and Rome, that makes it baroque.⁵⁹

Further Reading

Frankenberg, Gunter, ‘Torture and Taboo: An Essay Comparing Paradigms of Organized Cruelty’, *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 56 (2008), pp. 403–422.

Nyquist, Mary, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013).

Weststeijn, Thijs, *Art and Antiquity in the Netherlands and Britain: The Vernacular Arcadia of Franciscus Junius (1591–1677)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

59 I would like to thank the editors, as well as Marijn van Dijk, Helmer Helmers, and Marrigje Paijmans for their valuable comments.

Grotius among the Dagonists: Joost van den Vondel's *Samson, of Heilige Wraeck*, Revenge and the *Ius Gentium*

Russ Leo

In his depiction of the Samson *fabula* 'drawn from the Book of Judges and from Josephus's fifth book of Jewish history', Joost van den Vondel is the first dramatist in early modernity to give voice to Dagon.¹ Dagon does not appear as a character in any of the other early modern Samson plays: not in the humanist Hieronymus Ziegler's *Samson* (1547); the prominent Lutheran Hans Sachs's *Tragedia der Richter Simson* (1556); the Jesuit Andreas Fabricius's *Samson* (1568); the Rheinpfalz minister Marcus Andreas Wunstius's *Samson* (1600), written for performance in Strasbourg; the Lutheran Theodorus Rhodius's *Simson* (1600); *Simsons Treur-spel* (1618) by Vondel's fellow Wit Lavendel rhetorician Abraham de Koningh; or John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1671).² But Vondel gives primary place to Dagon, the first character to speak in *Samson, of*

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- 1 In fact, few supernatural figures appear in the Samson plays, save for the angel of Judges 13 who appears as 'Acme' in Rhodius's *Simson*, and de Koningh's *Treurspel* features a Senecan apparition, the ghost of a Timnite ('Thimnitters Gheest') who materializes before the drowsy Philistine princes in 11.3. Joost van den Vondel, *Samson, of Heilige Wraeck*, in *De werken: Volledige en geïllustreerde tekstuutgave*, ed. J.F.M. Sterck et al. (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1927–1937) (WB), IX: 1660–1663, p. 178. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Dutch and Latin are my own. I cite Vondel's *Samson* by line number in the text. Many thanks to Jan Bloemendal, Freya Sierhuis, and Nigel Smith for their invaluable comments on this essay.
 - 2 See Hieronymus Ziegler, '*Samson, Tragoedia*', in *Dramata sacra: Comoediae atque tragoediae aliquot e Veteri Testamento desumptae*, ed. Johannes Oporinus (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1547), pp. 394–451; Hans Sachs, 'Tragedia, mit 17 personen, der richter Simson, hat fünff actus', in *Hans Sachs*, ed. Adelbert von Keller (Tübingen: Litterarischen Vereins and H. Laupp, 1876), pp. 186–215; Andreas Fabricius, *Samson: Tragoedia nova, ex sacra iudicum historia desumpta, prēmmissis ad eius illustrationem insignibus orthodoxorum patrum sententijs* (Cologne: Maternum Cholinum, 1569); Marcus Andreas Wunstius, *Simson, tragoedia sacra: qua totum fere Simsonis Hebraeorum iudicium curriculum continetur* (Strasbourg: Antonij Bertrami, 1604); Theodorus Rhodius, '*Simson, tragoedia*', in *Dramata sacra* (Frankfurt: Balth. Hofman, 1615), pp. (?).10^r–C3^r [with separate pagination]; Abraham de Koningh, *Simsons Treur-spel* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Lodewijcksz. vander Plasse, 1618), p. E4^v.

Heilige Wraeck (1660)—Dagon, ‘the prince of the abyss and chief idol of the Philistines’ (‘De vorst des afgronts, en allergrootste afgodt der Filistijnen’).³ The language is vivid, and Dagon’s baroque description of the occasion communicates a macabre restlessness and excitement, as the captive Samson finally lays at the disposal of the Philistines:

Ick, die den ysren staf, van roest half opgegeten
 Beneden zwaie, en, in den helschen raet gezeten,
 Voorstelle, en sluite wat ten dienst van ’t zwarte rijck
 Wort goet gekent, koom hier te Gaza, d’oude wijck
 Der geesten, wien het luste in ope lucht te zwieren
 Met vleermuisvleuglen en dit feest te helpen vieren,
 Den grooten ommegangk te volgen met mijn’ stoet,
 Die naer den zwavel stinckt, en morssigh, vuil van roet,
 Met kromme krauwels kemt mijn pruick, en ruige locken,
 Al giftige adders, boos en afgerecht op wrocken,
 Gelijkke ’t gloeiend nest, den diepen zwavelpoel,
 Ontruckt zijn, my tot pracht ...

ll. 1–12

(I, who wield the iron staff, half devoured by rust, below and am a member of the infernal court, proposing and deciding what is considered good in the service of the black empire, come here to Gaza, the old quarter of spirits, who delight to whirl about the open sky on bats’ wings, to help celebrate this feast—to follow in the great procession with my own throng, which reeks of sulfur and filthy and foul from grime stroke my hair and hoary locks with crooked claws, venomous vipers all, mean and crafty in malice, still the same as when they were snatched suddenly from their fiery nest, that deep sulfurous morass, to adorn me.)

They always are among him, he says, whether he speaks from his ‘throne below’ or is present in his ‘idol’ (‘kerckbeelt’) on the altar where his ‘priesthood reverently approaches the altar to slaughter bulls and consecrate sacrifices in honor of [his] divinity, to welcome the grand prince of the night with triumph and celebration, with songs and shows of offering (‘offerspelen’) (ll. 12–18). Vondel employs the spectacular resources of the theater from the outset, perhaps to appeal to a Schouwburg audience that ‘wanted to be enthralled by visual

3 This is how Dagon is described in the list of ‘De treurspeelders’. Vondel, *Samson*, p. 179.

effects', particularly salient during this late period in his career when playgoers showed little interest in his dramatic work.⁴ Spectacle is also integral to the declamatory style of the poetry. Dagon directs readers and spectators alike, ekphrastically, to the visual elements of the scene, to his dreadful appearance and to the 'kerckbeelt', the hellish idol or image on the altar ('helheiligh outerbeelt', l. 96) into which Dagon retreats at the close of the scene—a device that adorned the stage across the three performances of *Samson* at the Schouwburg in 1660.⁵ As 'the play begins before sunrise' Dagon emerges from the darkness to great effect, establishing his infernal provenance and his influence over the Philistines before reveling in anticipation of Samson's punishment: 'What a joy it will be', he announces, 'to have the Archenemy Samson ('d'Aertsvyant Samson') led around in triumph before our majesty' (ll. 19–20).⁶ To this point Dagon behaves like an ostentatious stage devil, reminiscent of Senecan ghosts looming from the netherworld, setting a lively scene without altering or adding anything substantial to the *fabula* as audiences knew it.

But it would be a serious mistake to dismiss Vondel's Dagon as a mere embellishment or, following W.A.P. Smit, to identify Dagon and his Philistine subjects as obviously and unambiguously evil, as if 'the only essential function of the prologue' is to demonstrate that 'the Philistines serve the devil himself and their celebration of victory is a sneering provocation to God.'⁷ Vondel incorporates Dagon into *Samson* to a counterintuitive purpose: this unlikely source recounts, in convincing detail, Samson's offenses against the Philistines. Samson is the imprisoned 'Aertsvyant', and Dagon presides over 'the infernal

4 Mieke B. Smits-Veldt and Marijke Spies, 'Vondel's Life', in Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012) *Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, 1, pp. 51–83, esp. p. 78.

5 According to the nineteenth-century editors Van Lennep and Unger, 'Dagon wordt hier geschilderd al seen echt-leelijke, vuile en vieze duivel of heintje-pik, hoedanige men zich dien in Vondels dagen voorstelde.' See Joost van den Vondel, "Samson, of Heilige Wraeck," *De werken van J. van den Vondel*, vol. 1: 1660–1662, ed. J. van Lennep and J.H.W. Unger (Leiden and Antwerp: A.W. Sijthoff and De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1889–1894), pp. 11, 14; and E. Oey-de Vita and M. Geesink (met medewerking van B. Albach en R. Beuse), *Academie en Schouwburg: Amsterdams toneelrepertoire 1617–1665* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Huis aan de Drie Grachten, 1983), pp. 138–139.

6 In the *Inhoudt*, Vondel notes that the play or "spel begint voor den opgang, en endigt met den ondergang der zonne." Vondel, *Samson*, 177.

7 W.A.P. Smit, *Van Pascha tot Noah: Een verkenning van Vondels drama's naar continuïteit en ontwikkeling in hun grondmotief en structuur*, vol. III: *Koning David-Spelen—Noah* (Zwolle: W.E.J. Tjeenk Willink, 1962), p. 152.

court' ('den helschen raet') with jurisdiction in Gaza; he introduces and closes ('voorstelle, en sluite') cases there, deciding 'that which is considered good in the service of the black empire.' In other words, Dagon serves as a judge, a great irony considering Samson stands as Judge ('Richter') over the Israelites in a *fabula* depicted in the Scriptural book of Judges ('Richteren'). And despite his spectacular introduction Dagon moves promptly to an inventory of Samson's offenses against the Philistines, in a markedly different idiom. Samson, according to Dagon, is the 'plague of our land,' 'the circumcised Jew, the curse of my community' (ll. 27–28).⁸ These are not unsubstantiated claims, as he reminds us:

Wat heeftze twintigh jaer, en langer al geleden
 Van dezen rechter, daer alom de Joodsche steden
 Om vierden, toen hy haer verlichte van ons juck,
 Een juck wel veertigh jaer bezuurt met smerte en druck

...

Wat plaeghe hy ons vroegh,
 Die stout voor Askalon wel dertigh mannen sloegh,
 Hun kleeders stroopte, en ging met al dien vrybuit strijcken.
 Noch slimmer ging 't toen hy, tot afbreuk van vijf rijcken,
 Dryhondert vossen ving, hen knoopte staert aen staert,
 Met vierwerck, hars, en vlas, en zwavel. Hier op vaert
 De vlam in 't koren, waer zy voor zijn gessel streven.
 De hongerige vlam, in 't voortslaen noch gedreven
 Van eenen stercken wint, zet al het korenlant,
 Veel mijlen wijt en breed, in eene zee van brant,
 Zoo veele duizenden van Dagon's onderdaenen,
 Vijf hoofsteên, langs de zee, en al 't gebiet in traenen.
 De wijnbergh mist zijn druif, d'olijfboom zijne vrucht,
 De korenbloem haer eer. De zeekust kermt, en zucht,
 Van Gaza tot aen Geth, daer onze tempelheeren
 Spijsoffers, inkomste, en kerckschattingen ontbeeren.
 Toen een Thamnijt dees plaegh verstack van zijn vrou,
 Bezuurde 't gansche lant dien smaet met zulck een' rou:

8 Although Smit hints at Dagon's indictment of Samson on behalf of the Philistines, he ultimately denies its relevance and emphasizes instead the extent to which Dagon's 'proloog', together with the angel Fadaël's 'epiloog', introduce an unmistakable duality of good and evil into the play. See Smit, *Van Pascha tot Noah*, III, pp. 150–160.

En schoon de Filisteen dit straffen, en den vader
 Met zijn dochter in een zelve vier te gader
 Verbrandden, noch sloegh hy uit wraeklust echter voort,
 En brackze hals en been. De Filistijns, gestoort
 Met reden, quamen fel de Joôn beoorlogen,
 Die zich onschuldighden, en zelfs, tot recht bewogen,
 Den rechter leverden in zijn dootvyants maght:
 Toen brack hy koorde en bant, als vlas, door sijne kracht,
 Sloegh duizent helden met een ezels kinnebacken

ll. 29–32, 39–65

(What they—my people—have all suffered, for twenty years and longer, from this Judge, celebrated throughout the Jewish cities when he relieved them from our yoke, a forty-year yoke suffered with pain and grief ... How he plagued us in the past, he who boldly slew thirty men at Askalon, stripped them of their clothes, and went off carrying all his spoil. Still worse it was when he, to the detriment of five states, caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail-to-tail, with fiery braziers full of resin, flax and sulfur. Then the flame ascends in the corn, as the foxes fly from the whip. Driven fast over the field by a strong wind, the hungry flame turned all of the cornfields, many miles wide and broad, into a sea of fire and left many thousands of Dagon's subjects, five capital cities and the entire region along the coast, in tears. The vineyard lost its grapes, the olive tree its fruit, the cornflower its prize. The seacoast moaned and sighed, from Gaza to Gath, where the lords of our temples went without offerings, revenue, and tithes. When a Timnan robbed this plague of his wife, the whole land paid for his indignation, with an enormous grief. And although the Philistines punished this Timnan's act, and burned the father and daughter together in the same fire, Samson slew Philistines from that day forward out of a lust for vengeance, and broke them, neck and bone. The Philistines, justifiably angered, came to wage war fiercely against the Jews who apologized and were even moved by justice to deliver their Judge into his mortal enemy's power. But he broke both rope and bond as flax, and through his strength slew a thousand heroes with an ass' jawbone.)

However dreadful his appearance (whether audiences found him frightening, unnerving or deliberately theatrical), however unreliable he may be under other circumstances, Dagon's forensic account of Samson's adventures among the Philistines is easily confirmed by Scripture. Dagon delivers an accurate description of the events in Judges, an account that even reflects the language

of the 1637 *Statenvertaling*.⁹ If this alone is unexceptional—after all, students of early modern drama are apt to recognize how often ‘The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose’, and Dagon’s purpose at the outset is to sway the audience against Samson—Dagon’s appeal to an abiding *ius gentium* is remarkable.¹⁰ Preoccupied with the unwarranted and excessive destruction wrought upon his people by the rival magistrate Samson, Dagon frames the *fabula* in a nascent language of international law.

Vondel’s strategy here is singular. He evinces an abiding interest in the constitution and execution of a *ius gentium*, one that might realize unity and effect justice even in the age when ‘there was no King in Israel, but everie man did that which was good in his eyes’ (‘wasser geen Koninck in Israël: een yegelick dede wat recht was in sijne oogen’, Judges 21:25). But he expresses this interest in the voice of Dagon, an otherwise depraved stage devil. Moreover, Vondel introduces a Philistine Prince who upholds justice and *imperium* in the region, who protects the Israelites even as he condemns Samson. Samson is often cast as a rogue, a force of chaos, a man who has lost his way, erred, and done wrong.¹¹ Vondel’s genius in *Samson, of Heilige Wraeck* is to let Dagon and the Prince of the Philistines bear witness to this, to establish and execute *ius gentium* and *imperium* in a language pioneered in Dutch republican contexts by Vondel’s friend and correspondent Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), an architect of modern international law, an able historian and theologian as well as one of the most important and influential proponents of irenicism in the seventeenth century.¹²

9 See, for instance, the version of the corn fires in Judges 15:5, where Samson ‘stak in brand zowel de korenhopen als het staande koren, zelfs tot de wijngaarden en olijfbomen toe’—or, in the English of the 1560 Geneva Bible: he ‘had set the brands on fier, he sent them out into the standing corne of the Philistims, and burnt up both the riekcs & the standing corne with the vineyardes & olives.’

10 William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Jay L. Halio, *The Oxford Shakespeare* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 123 [I.iii.95].

11 See, for instance, Joseph Wittreich, *Interpreting Samson Agonistes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); Smit, *Van Pascha tot Noah*, III, pp. 140–150; and more recently, Feisal G. Mohamed, *Milton and the Post-Secular Present: Ethics, Politics, Terrorism* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011), esp. pp. 87–126.

12 Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 78–79. I admire Wilhelm G. Grewe’s caveat, that authors which ‘still refer to Hugo Grotius as the “Father of International Law”’ subscribe to a ‘narrow view’ of the *ius gentium* in which they can ‘only conceive of modern sovereign States as subjects of this law.’ See Wilhelm G. Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, transl. and rev. Michael Byers (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), pp. 7, 191–195.

In this essay I will illustrate, first, how Grotius treated revenge, particularly with reference to Samson, in his monumental *De iure belli ac pacis libri tres* (*Three Books Concerning the Right of War and Peace*, 1625), as well as how he defined *imperium* in *De imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra* (*The Authority of the Supreme Powers in Matters of Religion*, 1647).¹³ I propose to illustrate how Dagon and, later, the Philistine Prince follow Grotius in their articulations of *imperium* and *ius gentium*, such that the chief antagonists of Vondel's *treurspel* speak rationally and at times equitably about life and law in the chaotic world of the Book of Judges. In the end, however, I will demonstrate that Vondel does not endorse Dagon—Vondel is not of the Devil's party without knowing it—nor are his engagements with Grotius or contemporary political events uncritical. In fact, *Samson* probes the limits of the Grotian *ius gentium* as well as of international law and polity in the post-Westphalian world. Vondel gives voice to Dagon to great effect, offering audiences and readers a more complex and persuasive vision of compromise and peace, not without its attendant evils and sacrifices. In short, I argue that Vondel employs jurisprudential languages of *imperium* and *vindicatio* culled from Grotius's treatment of Samson to test the limits of the Grotian *ius gentium*. His strategy is innovative as he uses a sympathetic Dagon to frame these Grotian conceits; Dagon speaks like Grotius and argues keenly and convincingly for the rights of the Philistines and the obligations of the Jews. Nevertheless, Vondel is not as willing as Grotius is to bracket God. Vondel is at once faithful to Grotius, in his preoccupation with peace and unity, but critical of Grotius's willingness to reframe matters of faith in political terms, to dispense with Scriptural precedent and true religion. *Samson, of Heilige Wraeck* is a tragedy insofar as it illustrates the irreconcilable difference between the peace assured by Grotius's *ius gentium* and God's providential design for an irrational and chaotic Samson.

Vondel and Grotius

Among his comrades in the Dutch Republic, Grotius counted such luminaries as humanist Latin authors Caspar Barlaeus (1584–1648), Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), Gerardus Johannes Vossius (1577–1649), and the Dutch historian, poet

13 While *De imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra* was printed posthumously, modern editor Harm-Jan van Dam establishes that it was conceived as early as 1614. Hugo Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis libri tres*, editio nova (Amsterdam: Johann Blauw, 1646); and Hugo Grotius, *De imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra*, ed. and transl. Harm-Jan van Dam, 2 vols (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2001), p. 1.

and playwright P.C. Hooft (1581–1647), but his work bore greatest influence on Vondel, with whom he corresponded about ancient poetry and poetics. Grotius's poems and plays as well as his scholarship on faith, law, politics, and Batavian antiquity shaped Vondel's commitments from an early age.¹⁴ Vondel adapted and translated several of Grotius's Latin works into Dutch—for instance, his *Adamus exul* (1601, Vondel's adaptation 1664), *Sophompaneas* (1635, Vondel's translation also 1635), and his translations of Euripides—and dedicated his own *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1637) to Grotius, driven (like the eponymous character of the tragedy) from Amsterdam (and the Dutch Republic at large) after the rout of the Oldenbarnevelt government in 1618 and his subsequent escape from imprisonment in 1621.¹⁵ Vondel's approach to religion was forged in the crucible of the 1610s and 20s, in the controversies over Arminianism and political authority that precipitated the Synod of Dordt and its aftermath.¹⁶ Like Grotius, Vondel fiercely opposed Contra-Remonstrant attempts to limit toleration; moreover, he shared Grotius's irenic vision of a broad, encompassing church based on minimal criteria for orthodoxy.¹⁷ Vondel maintained this Grotian comportment to religion across his career, from his early Mennonite period to and through his storied conversion to Roman Catholicism in the late 1630s.¹⁸

Grotius's writing on *imperium* and *ius gentium* guides Vondel's late work, from his *Samson* to his 1667 tragedies *Zungchin, of Ondergang der Sineesche Heerschappije* and *Noah, of Ondergang der eerste weerelt. Jephtha, of Offerbelofte*

14 Arthur Eyffinger, 'Hugo Grotius, poet and man of letters', in id., *The World of Hugo Grotius (1583–1645): Proceedings of the International Colloquium Organized by the Grotius Committee of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Rotterdam 6–9 April 1983* (Amsterdam and Maarssen: APA-Holland University Press, 1984), p. 93. Grotius's influence on Vondel is well established: see, for instance, Jeanne Gaakeer, 'Law and Literature: *Batavische Gebroeders* (1663)', in Bloemendal and Korsten, *Joost van den Vondel*, pp. 459–487; Freya Sierhuis, 'Controversy and Reconciliation: Vondel, Grotius, and the Debate on Religious Peace in the Dutch Republic', in Isabel Karremann, Cornel Zwielerlein, and Inga Mai Groot (eds.), *Forgetting Faith?: Negotiating Confessional Conflict in Early Modern Europe* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 139–162.

15 Joost van den Vondel, *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, WB III, pp. 520–522.

16 On Vondel's development in this period see Nina Geerdink, 'Politics and Aesthetics—Decoding Allegory in *Palamedes* (1625)', in Bloemendal and Korsten, *Joost van den Vondel*, pp. 225–248. For a rich account of politics and literary culture during this crucial period see Freya Sierhuis, *The Literature of the Arminian Controversy: Religion, Politics and the Stage in the Dutch Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

17 Sierhuis, 'Controversy and Reconciliation', pp. 143, 147–148, 152–158.

18 Smits-Veldt and Spies, 'Vondel's Life', pp. 70–71. Judith Pollmann, 'Vondels Religion', in Bloemendal and Korsten, *Joost van den Vondel*, pp. 85–100.

(1659) marks Vondel's definitive turn to Aristotelian poetics, under the influence of Daniel Heinsius, Grotius, and Vossius. *Samson* marks a similar definitive turn to politics across nations and confessions. Vondel adapted several classical tragedies—*Koning Edipus* (1660), *Ifigenie in Tauren* (1666), *Fenciaensche* (1668), and *Herkules in Trachin* (1668)—and composed myriad tragedies on matters of state: *Koning David herstelt* (1660), *Koning David in ballingschap* (1660), *Adonias, of Rampzalige Kroonzucht* (1661), *Batavische gebroeders, of Onderdruckte Vryheit* (1663), *Faëton, of Reuckeloze Stoutheit* (1663), *Adam in Ballingschap, of Aller treurspelen treurspel* (1664), all of which revisit the political themes of his earlier work with an eye to the foundations and vicissitudes of the *ius gentium*. In *Maria Stuart, of Gemartelde Majesteit* (1646), for instance, Vondel depicted the tragic encounter between two legitimate sovereigns—Mary Stuart and Elizabeth I—the former, a pious martyr queen subject to the depraved political machinations of the latter's counselors. James A. Parente, Jan Bloemendal, and Kristine Steenbergh adroitly locate *Maria Stuart* in a humanist tradition as well as in relation to morality plays where Mary is consistently identified with Christ and his mother (her namesake).¹⁹ Her sovereignty and righteousness alike are inviolable. Legitimacy, piety, and *imperium* are not nearly as uncomplicated in the 1660 plays as Vondel re-imagines fundamental Scriptural expressions of conflict and sovereignty as well as their early modern afterlives across communities and confessions. The 1646 *Maria Stuart* belongs to a tradition of humanist *dramata sacra*, whereas in the 1660 King David plays and *Samson* Vondel emphasizes the competing (often incommensurable) visions of *Realpolitik* and providence.

During this late period Grotius's influence is patent. As Jeanne Gaakeer makes clear, the *Batavische Gebroeders* is a Grotian play, Vondel's chief reference being Grotius's *Liber de antiquitate reipublicae Batavae* (*Book on the Antiquity of the Batavian Republic*, 1610).²⁰ Moreover, as Frans-Willem Korsten explores, the Grotian vision of a global *societas gentium* is at stake in the *Jeptha*, even as Vondel points to its limits and challenges.²¹ Vondel read Grotius with

19 James A. Parente, Jr. and Jan Bloemendal, 'The Humanist Tradition—*Maria Stuart* (1646),' in Bloemendal and Korsten, *Joost van den Vondel*, pp. 341–358; and Kristine Steenbergh, 'Compassion and the Creation of an Affective Community in the Theatre: Vondel's *Mary Stuart, or Martyred Majesty* (1646)', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen voor de Geschiedenis van Nederland / Low Countries Historical Review* 129 (2014), 90–112.

20 P.C. Hooft's tragedy *Baeto* (1617) is also an important source of inspiration. See Gaakeer, 'Law and Literature', pp. 462–471.

21 Frans-Willem Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), Ch. 3, esp. pp. 76–77.

great interest and admiration, but without adhering slavishly to his claims; indeed, even when Vondel translated sections of Grotius's *Rivetiani Apologetici discussio* (1645), which he published anonymously in Dutch as *Grotius' Testament of hoofdpunten getrokken uit zijn jongste antwoord aan D. Rivet* (1645), he redacted the work and repurposed its irenicism explicitly for Roman Catholicism.²² And his engagements with the works that would prove most influential during this late period—Grotius's *De iure belli ac pacis* and *De imperio*—are dynamic and often critical. As I explain below, Vondel does not merely apply Grotius's ideas to poetic *fabulae*, he tests his claims, explores their limits, and seeks new poetic solutions to theoretical problems articulated by Grotius in a jurisprudential language.

Grotius's Samson and Revenge in the *Ius Gentium*

As Dagon enumerates Samson's offenses against the Philistines at the outset of the *treurspel*, Vondel frames *Samson* in Grotian terms drawn from *De iure belli ac pacis*. Indeed, Samson is integral to Grotius's rich account of revenge and punishment. It is 'by this natural right' to revenge that 'Samson, defending himself against the Philistines, publicly declares that he will be innocent, if he in turn causes harm to the Philistines who had caused harm to him.'²³ Grotius silently cites both Judges 15:3 and 15:11, giving readers leave to weigh Samson's justification: we learn that, 'after having executed vengeance upon them, [Samson] protects himself from further damage with the same reason, saying "as they themselves had initially done to me, the same is done to them."²⁴ Grotius

22 Joost van den Vondel, 'Grotius' Testament of Hoofdpunten Getrokken uit Zijn Jongste Antwoord aan D. Rivet,' *WB IV: 1640–1645*, p. 623.

23 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 320: 'Hoc naturali jure defendens se Samson adversis Palaestinos insontem se testatur fore si Palaestinos qui se malo affecerant malo vicissim afficeret.'

24 Samson's father-in-law has reclaimed his daughter from Samson, offering him another younger daughter in return, an act that offends the judge. Samson in turn declares 'Now I am more blameless than the Philistines: therefore will I do them displeasure' ('Ick ben ditmael onschuldich vande Philistijnen, wanneer ick aen hen quaet doe', Judges 15:3) before setting the Philistine crops ablaze. The 1560 Geneva gloss is instructive: 'For through his father in laws occasion, he was moved againe to take vengeance of [the] Philistims.' See p. 115^v. In Grotius's account Samson justifies his revenge with a Latin paraphrase of Judges 15:11: as the 1637 *Statenbijbel* reads 'Gelijck als sy my gedaen hebben, alsoo heb ick haerlieden gedaen'—in the 1560 Geneva translation, 'As they did unto me, so have I done unto them'—Grotius's Samson opts for the chiasmic 'se ipsis fecisse quod ipsi sibi fecissent

follows Scripture and is careful not to pass explicit judgment on Samson, either to condemn him or affirm his innocence. But it is important to note that he does not offer his own explanation of Samson's actions; rather, Grotius illustrates how Samson, 'defending himself against the Philistines' ('defendens se Samson adversus Palaestinos'), justified himself.²⁵ It is the reader's task to weigh Samson's testimony.

De iure belli ac pacis provides the reader with ample resources for this task, as Grotius establishes a law ('ius') that 'intercedes among many peoples or between the leaders of peoples, whether originating in nature, constituted by divine laws, or introduced by habit or tacit agreement', a *ius gentium* that Grotius proposes to treat 'universally and with certain method.'²⁶ In order to foster an enduring 'care for society, agreeable to the human intellect,' which is the very 'fountain of this law,' Grotius determines terms and procedures to mediate conflicts between nations, communities, and confessions—namely, he proposes 'abstinence from another's things; and, if we might have that which is another's, and profit thereby, we must make restitution; the obligation to fulfill promises; and the merit of punishment among men.'²⁷ These are terms and conditions that would hold even if 'there is no God' ('non esse Deum').²⁸ Grotius certainly does not argue that there is no God. In fact, he says the opposite, that 'reason, in part, and perpetual tradition, in part,' confirm God's existence.²⁹ His aim, rather, is to bracket God and faith, to develop laws and

priores.' Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 320: 'Et post peractam ultionem eadem se tuetur ratione, dicens se ipsiis fecisse quod ipsi sibi fecissent priores.'

25 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 320.

26 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. *4^r: 'inter populos plures aut populorum rectores intercedit, sive ab ipsa natura profectum, aut divinis constitutum legibus, sive moribus & pacto tacito introductum attigerunt pauci, universim ac certo ordine tractavit hactenus nemo.'

27 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. *4^v: 'societatis custodia, humano intellectui conveniens, fons est ejus juris, quod proprie tali nomine appellatur: quo pertinent alieni abstinentia, & si quid alieni habeamus, aut lucre inde fecerimus restitutio, promissorum implendorum obligatio, damni culpa dati reparatio, & poenae inter homines meritum.'

28 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. *5^r. Grotius follows Alberico Gentili here, in concept and method. See Noel Malcolm, 'Alberico Gentili and the Ottomans', in Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann (eds.), *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations: Alberico Gentili and the Justice of Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 127–145.

29 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. *5^r. On Grotius and natural law see Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law 150–1625* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 316–342; Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press,

conditions poised to unite diverse populations, regardless of belief, that do not depend on faith for their effects. The *ius gentium* that takes shape in *De iure belli ac pacis* is founded on principles that God communicated to humans in nature, that are evident to all; here ‘the Mother of natural law is human nature itself’ (‘naturalis juris mater est ipsa humana natura’).³⁰ Natural law, together with its derivative *ius gentium*, enables us to ‘consider the benefit not of discrete groups but of that great universal body’ (‘utilitatem respicerent non coetuum singulorum, sed magnae illius universitatis’), a global assembly of ‘all or most states (‘civitates’)’ governed by right ‘ius’ and justice (‘iustitia’), not benefit (‘utilitas’) alone.³¹ Grotius urges his readers to imagine a global jurisdiction founded on reason and nature with advantages that far exceed the benefits and interests of individual states. In this sense he undermines easy assumptions about Samson’s sanctity, particularly the idea that Samson’s vengeance is mandated and justified by God.

Indeed, Samson’s justification appears increasingly precarious as readers weigh his duties and obligations in Grotius’s *ius gentium*. Grotius foregrounds the authority of sovereign powers over the sacred and secular alike, establishing a functional public unity in matters of religion, effectively relegating otherwise divisive conflicts to the conscience. Grotius promotes ‘tolerance’ to the extent that faith or other matters of religion remain internal, a point that he shores up again in *De iure belli ac pacis* II.xx, where ‘purely internal acts cannot be punished by men, even if (for instance) they are revealed to others in the event of a later confession.’³² This ‘tolerance’ does *not* hold, however, for manifest, external actions that challenge the authority of the sovereign or magistrate—

1979), Ch. 3; and Ernst Bloch, *Natural Law and Human Dignity* [1961], transl. Dennis J. Schmidt (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 45–60.

30 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. *5^v.

31 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, pp. *5^v–*6^r. See G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, ‘Hugo Grotius as an Irenicist’, in *The World of Hugo Grotius*, pp. 43–63.

32 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 328: ‘actus mere interni, etiamsi casu aliquo, puta per confessionem subsecutam, ad notitiam aliorum perveniant, puniri ab hominibus non possunt.’ In *De imperio*, moreover, Grotius intended to institute legal parameters to prevent (Reformed) ministers in the United Provinces from ‘inciting the rabble’ to intolerance and unrest during the 1610s; if the States of Holland were recognized as sovereign in matters of religion, there could be no legal recourse for a minority party determined to disturb the peace by way of religious dissent. For a compelling account of the literary cultures and theological stakes of the Arminian Controversy see Freya Sierhuis, ‘The Rhetoric of Religious Dissent: Anti-Calvinism, Satire and the Arminian Controversy in the Dutch Republic’, *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, 12 (2010), 307–327.

the kinds of actions that Samson perpetrates against the Philistines in extreme measure. In *De imperio* Grotius categorically denies the ‘right’ or obligation to resist the sovereign power, emphasizing instead how ‘The supreme power is said by the Apostle Paul to be the “servant of God to execute his wrath (‘vindex ad iram’) on the wrongdoer”’—a direct reference to Romans 13:1–4, where the ‘higher powers’ (‘den Machten’) are ‘ordeined of God ... to take vengeance on him that doeth evil’ (‘van Godt geordineert ... tot straffe den genen die quaedt doet’).³³ Both the 1560 Geneva Bible and the 1637 *Statenvertaling* underscore God’s vengeance exercised by the appropriate secular authority, a ‘minister’ or (more explicit) ‘een wreeckster’. Grotius employs the Latin *vindex*, related to the verb *vindico* and the noun *vindicatio*, all of which imply protection, defense, and the assertion of legal claims as well as vengeance. The highest power in a given polity or territory maintains unity over religion, *despite* religious differences between and among citizens, serving as the *vindex* which claims a monopoly over legitimate violence. Put simply, Grotius cites Paul’s treatment of sovereignty and resistance in order to establish God’s vengeance as a civil function, executed by a sovereign or magistrate, rather than a sacred task.

Grotius extends this discussion in *De iure belli ac pacis*, where he defines revenge in relation to punishment. Samson figures prominently here as well, in Grotius’s account of punishment (‘De Poenis’), as he investigates the circumstances under which ‘revenge is permitted by the law of nations’ (‘de ultione licita jure Gentium’).³⁴ First he names three punitive measures by which a wronged party might avoid further injury: (first) by putting the injurer to death, (second) by removing the means by which the injurer can do further damage, or (third) by carrying out a severe ‘public and visible’ (‘aperta atque conspicua’) punishment to deter the injurer from further action, thereby setting an example. Revenge (in Latin, Grotius uses both *ultio* and *vindicatio*) is only licit if it is directed to these ends. Even then, however, Grotius adds additional conditions, asserting that revenge must be ‘confined within the bounds of equity’ and only holds in cases pertaining to private individuals (‘privata’), not nations or corporate entities; in this sense revenge belongs to ‘the bare law of nature—that is, abstracted from divine and human laws and those circumstances that are not

33 Grotius, *De imperio*, pp. 156–159.

34 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, pp. 309, 313. Samson also figures prominently in Grotius’s treatment of the right of burial (‘De jure sepulturae’), as many authorities aver that Samson deserved burial despite his suicide as he only killed himself once ‘he saw the true religion to be derided in his own body’ (‘in suo corpore veram religionem videbat esse derisui’).

essential to the affair.’³⁵ Only then is revenge ‘not unlawful.’³⁶ In other words, revenge is allowed by the law of nations only in cases where there is no operative law of nations—that is, in the absence of an abiding *ius gentium*, as is the case (ca. 1646) at sea or among bands of nomads in remote deserts.³⁷ When there is no effective jurisdiction, no divine or human laws, revenge is the only option, and it matters less

whether [revenge] is taken by the injured person himself or by another, as it is natural for one man to assist another man. And to this point Cicero’s judgment may be admitted, when he declared that innate sense, not opinion, conveys the law of nature to us—our innate sense, among the examples of which Cicero locates revenge, which he sets against gratitude. And, so no one might hesitate about what he intended to have been understood by this term, Cicero defines ‘revenge’ as that ‘by which we ward off violence and abuse from ourselves and from ours, who should be beloved to us, whether by means of defending or avenging, and by which we punish offences.’³⁸

Punishment and revenge are only synonymous in private cases, where there can be no appeal to any higher law or community. It is only in this sense that revenge, that ‘ancient natural freedom’ (‘*vetus naturalis libertas*’) common to all men, is licit.³⁹

But revenge is a freedom that we forfeit once we enter any jurisdiction. It belongs only to ‘the bare law of nature’ and not to any community or society

35 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 320: ‘Ad hos ergo fines, intra aequi terminos si dirigatur vindicatio, etiam privata, si jus nudum naturae, id est abductum a legibus divinis humanisque & ab his quae non necessario rei accidunt, respicimus, non est illicita.’ See also Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, ed. Richard Tuck and Jean Barbeyrac, 3 vols (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty Fund, 2005), pp. 966–967. I alter the translation significantly.

36 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 320.

37 Ibid., p. 321.

38 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 320: ‘sive fiat ab ipso qui laesus est, sive ab alio, quando hominem ab homine adjuvari naturae est consentaneum. Atque hoc sensu admitti potest quod Cicero cum jus naturae esse dixisset id quod nobis non opinio sed innata vis affert, inter ejus exempla collocat vindicationem quam gratiae opponit: ac ne quis ambigeret quantum eo nomine vellet intelligi, vindicationem definit, per quam vim ac contumeliam defendendo aut ulcensendo propulsamus a nobis ac nostris qui nobis cari esse debent, & per quam peccata punimus.’ He quotes Cicero’s definition from *De inventione* 11. See also Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, pp. 966–967. I alter the translation significantly.

39 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 321.

governed by divine or human laws. Even in nature, however, Grotius emphasizes that the passions at work in revenge are irrational and overwhelming. At the very least, revenge and its attendant passions are difficult to moderate, placing the injured party at further risk. Moreover, it is 'against nature for a man to be satisfied in afflicting another man with sorrow'; to find another's pain fulfilling or pleasurable is comparable to enjoying one's own pain, a possibility that Grotius is unwilling to entertain.⁴⁰ Punishment is natural and rational, restitution is natural and rational, but the desire to inflict harm on others (or oneself) is irrational, even unnatural. Reason's dictates are 'themselves of a reasonable and social nature,' he claims, and

reason dictates to man nothing which is to be done that might cause harm to another man, unless it might have some good purpose. But nothing good abides in the suffering of enemies alone, beheld in such a stark manner, only things fraudulent and imaginary, as in excessive wealth and many other things of that sort. And in this sense not only the Christian doctors but also the philosophers condemned revenge among men.⁴¹

Because revenge is irrational, Grotius is eager to demonstrate how mankind attempted to mitigate the bare laws of nature and to protect humans from our own overwhelming passions. 'Because we are corrupted in our affairs and by our emotions,' Grotius claims, 'as soon as many families convened in one place, judges were appointed, and having surrendered the power of avenging injuries to these judges alone, the liberty which nature had granted to all others was taken away.'⁴² Once private people are able to take recourse to judges, appealing to a higher authority for punishment and retribution, revenge ceases to be

40 Ibid., p. 318: 'Pugnat ergo cum natura hominis in hominem agentis alieno dolore qua dolor est satiari.'

41 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 318: 'dictatum naturae rationalis ac socialis qua talis est. dictat autem ratio homini nihil agendum quo noceatur homini alteri, nisi id bonum aliquod habeat propositum. In solo autem inimici dolore, ita nude spectato, nullum est bonum nisi falsum & imaginarium: ut in divitiis supervacuis multisque aliis rebus ejusmodi. Atque hoc sensu ultionem improbant in hominibus non Christiani modo doctores, sed & Philosophi.'

42 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 321: 'Sed quia in rebus nostris & nostrorum affectu corrumpimur, ideo simul multae familiae in unum locum convenerunt, iudices constituti, & his solis data potestas vindicandi laesos, adempta caeteris quam natura indulserat libertate.'

a viable or licit enterprise. Private people are relieved of an ‘ancient natural freedom’ that we experience, on both a practical and an affective level, as a burden.

Grotius adds another ethical dimension to his account of revenge when he turns his attention to the evangelical law (*‘lex Evangelica’*). Revenge is contrary to the reconciliatory spirit of the Gospel as well as to natural law ‘to the extent that it merely satisfies a victim’s desire’ (*‘quatenus duntaxat animum dolentis exsatiat’*) without any benefit to a larger community.⁴³ But Grotius does not cast Judaism as a religion of revenge against a gracious Christianity, demonstrating instead that the Scriptural *lex talionis* was rarely in use among the Hebrews, only appropriate in exceptional circumstances; in general, even the Hebrew Law indicates that injured parties were obliged to turn to a judge, as ‘moderation is undoubtedly more difficult where one’s own pain is added.’⁴⁴ Among Greeks and Hebrews alike, the ‘custom of privately avenging murder’ (*‘morem privatim vindicandae caedis’*) was practiced only ‘among those who do not have common judges.’⁴⁵ As Grotius introduces further arguments against revenge culled from the Gospel and the Church Fathers, he emphasizes penitence and the fact that would-be revengers deny their injurers opportunities for repentance when they execute them. Magistrates are endowed with the ‘use of the sword’ (*‘usum gladii’*) in the ‘exercise of divine vengeance’ (*‘exercitium divinae ultionis’*).⁴⁶ But Christian doctrine suggests that magistrates should also seek to realize charity and grace, to maintain opportunities for repentance, to (after the example of the pious Egyptian Sabacon) ‘change capital punishments to the obligation to work’ (*‘capitales poenas in damnationem ad opus mutatas’*).⁴⁷ Private people are able to justify revenge only in rare circumstances. For Christians, revenge is prohibited—even punishment is a precarious matter for private Christians, even when it is for the public good, even when it is permitted by the *ius gentium*.⁴⁸

Can Samson justify his revenge, then, under the conditions Grotius establishes in *De iure belli ac pacis*? Grotius does not condemn Samson explicitly, but he also presents his case in stark terms, without deliberately pious or typological interpretations of Judges that condone or even celebrate Sam-

43 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 323.

44 Ibid., pp. 325, 321: ‘pro se, ut puta in vulnere, non nisi per iudicem, quia scilicet difficilior est moderatio ubi proprius dolor accedit.’

45 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, pp. 321–322.

46 Ibid., pp. 326–327.

47 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, p. 327.

48 Ibid.

son's vengeance. Significantly, Samson is not named as a judge in the work (as he is in Scripture), and Grotius ultimately eschews a discussion of *imperium* in Judges—that is, the degree to which the Jews or the Philistines can claim authority over their neighbors. Samson's revenge is licit if one assumes there is no law (divine or human) in effect among the Philistines and Jews, in which case Samson exercises a natural right to punish his enemies. Samson's revenge is also licit if one assumes that he is exceptional, that he expresses the will of God in a manner that exceeds the *ius gentium* and the order of nature. But Grotius derives the *ius gentium* from nature, including human nature, in the interest of peace and unity, an international law appropriate to all humanity regardless of religion. In this sense, Grotius subtly suggests that Samson is an irrational 'revenger' who visits unimaginable suffering upon a nation, against the guiding light of natural law.

Samson's *Imperium*: Vondel's Challenge to Grotius

Vondel seems to proceed in Grotian fashion in *Samson, of Heilige Wraeck*, as Dagon presents a compelling case against Samson, citing the vast extent of the injuries wrought upon an entire region. Dagon quickly dispenses with attempts to calculate the damages or to find parity. While the Jews might have endured forty years of slavery they are now free, and the Philistines (and the region at large) have in turn 'suffered' in the twenty years since their emancipation. The damages wrought upon both Philistine and Jew are too substantial to itemize, and Dagon's grammar reflects this: the very subject of the verb *bezuurt* in line 32 is deliberately ambiguous, as Vondel himself blurs the line separating the suffering Jews from the suffering Philistines. It is difficult to determine who, exactly, has paid for or suffered for Jewish slavery in Dagon's account, just as it is increasingly difficult to recognize the difference between revenge and restitution. This is after all an account of 'holy vengeance', *Heilige Wraeck*, not justice, and Dagon (like Grotius) dispenses with geometrical proportion, with expletive or attributive justice.⁴⁹ Moreover, Samson's deeds, whether or not he acts as Judge on behalf of Israel, recall the excessive logic of revenge tragedy more than any Scriptural principle of retribution (for instance, the *lex talionis* outlined in Leviticus 24:20: 'Breache for breache, eie for eie, tothe for tothe:

49 Grotius discusses attributive ('iustitia attributrice') and expletive justice ('iustitia expletrice') in *De iure belli ac pacis libri tres* I.i.8 and II.ii.1, neither of which are necessarily relevant to punishment. See Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, pp. 11, 315.

suche a blemish as he hathe made in anie, suche shalbe repaied to him').⁵⁰ It is as if Dagon is presenting a case to the audience in these opening lines, drawing upon forensic rhetorical resources to detail Samson's impulsive and dangerous behavior.

Dagon's narrative of the fires is particularly moving, delivered in an affective idiom at odds with audience expectations for stage devils and Senecan phantoms. The extent of the damage Samson caused is incalculable, as Dagon describes a 'sea of fire' engulfing the whole region, leaving 'many thousands of Dagon's subjects ... in tears,' presumably starving, without sustenance, an entire regional economy devastated at multiple levels. A student of Quintilian, Dagon eschews the attempt to give voice to his suffering subjects, opting instead for a more effective *prosopopoeia*: it is the *vineyard* that lost its grapes, the *olive tree* its fruit, the *cornflower* its prize, the *seacoast* that 'moaned and sighed, from Gaza to Gath.'⁵¹ Samson is a bandit, seizing *vrybuit* under shameful circumstances, with no respect for law or order. When the Philistines attempt to rectify the wrong done to Samson according to their custom, he is overcome by *wraeklust*, an irrational lust for vengeance, and wages a brutal campaign against them. Dagon emphasizes here that Samson's own Jewish subjects who 'testified to their innocence' ('zich onschuldighden') are so 'moved to do justice' ('tot recht bewogen') that they apprehend their Judge and deliver him directly to their *dootvyants*—their mortal enemies. Dagon establishes reasonable grounds for the Philistines' fear of Samson, driven as he is by 'the spirit of our ancient enemies' (ll. 79–80). Indeed, he implies that Philistines and Israelites alike are '*gestoort* | *Met reden*' (ll. 60–61), 'reasonably and justifiably angry.'

As Dagon speaks at the outset of the play, Samson is 'imprisoned in Gaza,' kept in captivity 'to mock Jerusalem' as Dagon's own 'power waxes and grows exponentially' (ll. 75–77). Dagon suggests further action as well, beyond Samson's humiliation:

Wy gaen de Joden stooren,
Brantschatten, om de scha te boeten van ons koren.
Het hof van Dagon is met reden voor den geest
Van onze erfvyanden, het Jodendom, bevreesst,
Dat met de Godtsdraght en zijn kistspel, heet op wreecken,

50 See also Deuteronomy 19:20–21: 'And the rest shal heare this, and feare, and shal henceforth commit no more any such wickednes among you. Therefore thine eie shal have no compassion, but life for life, eie for eie, tothe for tothe, hand for hand, fote for fote.'

51 See Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, ed. and transl. Donald A. Russell, 5 vols (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4, pp. 50–55 [1x.ii].

Ons godtheit noch eens dreight met kracht den hals te breecken,
 Te bonzen van 't altaer, waerom ick, schalck en stil,
 Als in slaghorde, my hier tegens kanten wil.
 Gy allen zult van daegh, vermomt, vernist met glimpen,
 En schijn van heiligheit, het Jodendom beschimpen
 In Samson, die zoo lang mijn heirkraft onder hiel,
 Het voorhuitloos gebroet, dat in ons erfdeel viel,
 Zoo veel geweldenaers, die goôn en menschen plaegen,
 En onder schijn van recht en godtsdienst, moorden, jaegen,
 Beeltstormen, branden, en schoffeeren, zullen zien
 Dat Dagon's maght, en kracht den stercksten kan gebiën

ll. 77–92

(We will go to assail the Jews, to extract a levy under threat of fire, so that they pay a penalty for our corn. The court of Dagon is justifiably afraid of the spirit of our hereditary enemies, the Jews, who carry along God and his Ark, yearning for vengeance, and threaten to break the neck of our godhead once more, to batter him from the altar—which is why I, slyly and silently, as in a battle formation, will resist this plan. Thou all, in disguise, varnished with appearances will sanctimoniously taunt the Jews through Samson, who held down the strength of my army for so long—the Jews, that foreskinless rabble that fell upon our inheritance, a multitude of oppressors who plague both gods and men and, under the appearance of right and piety, murder, badger, desecrate our idols, set fires, and show contempt, shall see that Dagon's might and power can rule over even the strongest.)

Again, Dagon's Philistine subjects are 'met reden ... bevrees't'—justifiably afraid—of Samson as well as the spirit ('geest') of their 'hereditary enemies' ('erfvyanden'). This caveat 'with reason' ('met reden') is crucial, not only to Dagon's depiction at the beginning of the *treurspel* but in later scenes as well. Vondel introduces a Philistine Prince who meets the chorus of Jewish Women late in Act II. Upon seeing them in distress he asks,

Hebreeische joffers, wat is d'oirzaeck dat gy schreit?
 Verkorte u iemant? Hier is 't hof, dat elck verdaedight,
 En hanthaeft by zijn recht, weldoenders begenadight,
 De boozen straft. Dit hof ziet geen personen aen

ll. 468–471

(Hebrew ladies, what is the cause for which you weep? Did anyone harm you? Here is the court that defends and preserves every person by its justice, that blesses those that do good and punishes the depraved. This court sees no persons.)

The Prince, the authority who holds *imperium* within the region, does not appear in Vondel's play as a tyrant. In fact, his 'Dit hof ziet geen personen aen' directly echoes Romans 2:11, where Paul reveals that 'there is no respect of persones with God,' or 'daer en is geen aenneminghe des persoons by Godt.' The Prince establishes an impartial justice that holds for Jew and Philistine alike, one that the chorus of Hebrew women promptly endorses: 'Most merciful Prince, that is just' ('Genadightste, dat's recht', l. 472). They do not challenge or deny the Prince's jurisdiction over Samson but, rather, ask for mercy on behalf of their Judge—a man 'fallen too sorrowfully in your hate, alas, from high and low, and *by no means without reason*' ('te droef vervallen in dien haet, | Helaes, by hoogh en laegh, en geensins zonder reden', ll. 480–481, my emphasis). The women concede that the Philistines are 'with reason' offended. Echoing Dagon, they recognize that the 'damage, suffered everywhere within the Philistine cities, is irreparable' ('De schade, alom geleên by Filistijnsche steden, | Is onvergoebaer') after Samson 'wounded five capital cities to their core' ('quetst vijf hooftsteên in haer ziel'); they beseech the Prince, in turn, to 'mix (although it is late, we beg you) but a drop of mercy with thy justice' ('Meng ten minste (al is het spe | Nu wy u smeecken,) noch een' drupel van gena | met uw rechtvaardigheid'), to 'Let thy vengeance abate, and earn the reputation that you can yet spare your enemy' ('Laet uwe wraeck bedaeren | Zoo volght u d'eer dat gy uw' vyant noch kunt spaeren', ll. 482–483, 491–494). But the Prince, in the interest of justice, cannot commute Samson's sentence: 'Samson himself cannot reasonably complain, as he who plagues others deserves to be plagued' ('Zoo kan dan Samson met geen reden zich belaecken. | Wie andren plaegen wil, verdient de zelve plaegen,' ll. 509–510).⁵² He has been made an example: 'He serves time as a warning to the wicked' ('Hy slijte dus den tijt, den bozen tot een baeck'), 'condemned to prison forever' ('eeuwigh ter gevangenis veroordeelt,' ll. 518–519).

52 Technically, the Women do not even ask the Prince to commute Samson's sentence, but rather to 'give him the opportunity to escape' ('geef hem lucht om uit te breecken')—that is, they ask the Prince to flout justice, as 'One can, by dissembling, turn a blind eye' ('Men kan ontveinzende, wel door de vingers zien', ll. 522, 524). I translate the idiom to preserve its sense, foregoing the literal 'look through the fingers' ('door de vingers zien') for 'turn a blind eye'.

The Prince underscores all of Dagon's most salient points with an eye to punishment in Grotian terms. Samson is made a perpetual prisoner, carrying out a severe 'public and visible' ('aperta atque conspicua') punishment, one that is meant to prevent him from further violence and to discourage others from similar acts. The Prince notes this intended effect upon the Chorus, who appear 'confounded and afraid' ('versuft, en bloo'); their heads hang low, defeated, 'sunk' ('ontzoncken'), as 'Courage has forsaken them' ('De moedt is haer vergaen' ll. 460–461). Samson is rendered exemplary both in his punishment and in his scheduled performance at the Philistine celebration, where he will represent himself as Strength ('Sterckheit') in an allegorical play ('een spel van zinnen') based on his life and defeat by Pleasure ('Wellust', ll. 824–825). Both Dagon and the Dagonists seem to respect the evangelical imperative outlined in *De iure belli ac pacis*, to give the offender the opportunity to repent—in other words, Samson is allowed to live. The Prince also guarantees the Chorus that Samson will receive a proper burial, befitting his office. The punishment, moreover, appears equitable insofar as both the Prince and Dagon only capture Samson; his Jewish subjects are left free to roam the city. And although Dagon ultimately seeks restitution, he does not threaten to visit symmetrical devastation on the Hebrew people. The Prince reiterates Dagon's plan, to collect due compensation and back payments:

Gy zult den nadruk eerst gevoelen van ons kusten.
 Wy laeten 't by de straf van Samson niet berusten.
 Het is besloten dat men 't gansche Jodenlant
 Zal overtrecken, en tot aen den waterkant
 Der stroomende Jordaen brantschatten alle stammen,
 Of zetten voor de vuist al 't lant in bloet en vlammen.
 Wy willen boven dat hereischen achterstel
 Van schattingen, ons hof door Samsons trots bevel
 En sterckheit, twintigh jaer, te wreveligh onthouwen

ll. 529–537

(Thou shall soon feel the pressure of our coasts. We will not let it rest with Samson's punishment. It is determined that we will conquer the entire Jewish land, to the bank of the flowing Jordan, to exact a levy from all of the tribes or else to openly set the land to blood and fire. We desire above all to recover those overdue tax payments that were spitefully withheld from our court for twenty years by Samson's strength and proud command.)

It is only if the Jews refuse that the Prince proposes a much more severe course of action. The Prince is not *vengeful*, strictly speaking; there is nothing in his speech to suggest that he takes inordinate and irrational pleasure even in Samson's suffering, or that he seeks to exercise some 'ancient natural freedom' of revenge over the Judge or his Hebrew subjects. Vondel points here to contemporary political matters. The Philistine Prince balances retribution with mercy in a manner that looks enquiringly to the recent Restoration of the Stuart King in England, an event that made no little impact in Dutch political contexts.⁵³ Vondel seems to ask, in 1660: how will Charles II establish peace and prosperity after such a divisive Interregnum, and how will his enemies fare, who are now under his authority, subject to his power? Is the Restoration cause for celebration? Dagon and his fellow spirits do indeed revel in their triumph over Samson, and Dagon certainly asserts that 'Here our servants make merry while that plague of our land sighs and groans' ('Hier groeien | Ons dienaers by, terwijl die lantplaegh zucht, en steent', ll. 26–27). But Dagon's pleasure is tempered by his disarming forensic depiction of Samson's offenses, and the rather measured response against his people at large. Even the allegorical playing and the kinetic performances at the celebration of victory over Samson serve a deliberately pedagogical agenda, far from an irrational revelry in the defeat of an enemy.⁵⁴ Will England share the fortune of the Philistines, and their fate?

But here Vondel also makes a broad point about revenge. Dagon, the Prince, and the chorus of Hebrew women all seem to agree that Samson has acted impulsively without justification and that his punishment is just. The Gro-

53 See Herbert H. Rowen, *John de Witt: Statesman of the 'True Freedom'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 90–112. *Samson* follows Vondel's two King David plays—*Koning David in Ballingschap* (*King David in Exile*) and *Koning David Herstelt* (*King David Restored*)—both of which treat the circumstances of the English Interregnum and Restoration directly. Without explicitly exploring the political contours of the play, W.A.P. Smit suggested that *Samson* is best understood as the story of 'Prins Samson Herstelt'—of Samson's own triumphant Restoration. See Smit, *Van Pascha tot Noah*, 111, p. 140. Helmer J. Helmers adroitly presents Vondel's *Samson* as a Restoration play. See Helmer J. Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 233–258.

54 The Prince advocates for drama and revelry, asserting that 'Stage performance edifies a state, excuses no blasphemy or stain among the holy or unholy. Each person's deficiency is pointed out without injury to anyone's name. Stage performance is only disdained by the rude multitude who follow neither right nor reason' (ll. 685–689) ('Tooneelspel sticht een' staet, verschoont geen lastervleck, | En smet in heiligh, noch onheiligh. Elx gebreck | Wort, zonder iemants name te quetsen, aengewezen. | Tooneelspel wort alleen van dommekracht misprezen, | Die recht noch reden volghet').

tian import of the *treurspel* is apparent as Vondel establishes an effective *ius gentium* that governs life among discrete nations and religions in the region. No less a figure than Dagon testifies to this, and Vondel's innovative strategy, to use Dagon to frame the events of the *fabula*, unsettles easy assumptions about justice and revenge. Dagon seems to appeal to a *ius gentium* that tempers the Philistines' revenge over Samson and the Jews and ultimately transforms said vengeance into justice. The Prince is the Pauline *vindex* charged (unconsciously) with exercising God's wrath.

There is, however, an insoluble conflict at stake over the Jews' 'inheritance' ('erfdeel')—namely, over the degree to which the 'faithful' ('getrouwen', l. 538) are independent from the Philistine cities governed by the Prince. Samson, after all, is a Judge, even during this period of 'moste horrible oblivion of Gods graces,' where the Israelites 'so provoked his vengeance (as muche as in them stode) to their utter destruction.'⁵⁵ It is as if the events of the *fabula* are the effects of God's own sacred vengeance or *heilige wraak*. Immediately prior to the annunciation of Samson's birth we are told, in Judges 13:1, that 'the children of Israel continued to commit wickenes in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistims fortie yere' ('Ende de kinderen Israëls voeren voort te doen, dat quaet was in de ooghen des Heeren: so gafse de Heere in de hant der Philistijnen veertich jaer'). Dagon, the Prince, and the chorus all seem to testify to this fact that, in Grotian terms, would assure the Prince *imperium* over Jews. Samson's title, albeit granted by God and affirmed by the angel, is forfeit in the abiding *ius gentium*. Indeed, none of the speakers seem to recognize Samson's sovereignty. Even the chorus, when they ask about their 'inheritance,' are more interested in property and territory than in authority, their *erfdeel* being 'Canaan [which] has long been possessed by Abraham, for eight hundred years' ('Kanaän is lang van Abraham, | Achthondert jaer geleën, bezeten'), 'the tribe that, by God's blessing, increased in Egypt' ('de stam | Van Godt gezegent, in Egypten aengewassen', ll. 539–541). And the Prince echoes Dagon again in his response, calling the Jews

een heiloos moortgespan,
 Erfvyanden van Goôn, en kercken, en altaeren,
 Beeltstormers, die noch koor noch heilighdommen spaeren.
 Gy quaemt van buiten in, verhongert, en verwoet,
 En stiet gewettighden, erfvorsten uit hun goet,
 En overout bezit, en, van dien geest bezeten,

55 'The Argument' preceding Judges in the 1560 *Geneva Bible*, 108^r.

Voert nieuwe wetten in, en pijnicht het geweeten.
 Men loop' niet wijdt: uw prins, voor wien gy spreekt en pleit,
 Heeft gruwzaemer dan oit al 't lant in d'asch geleit.

ll. 552–560

(A sinful murderous herd; the hereditary enemies of gods and churches and altars; iconoclasts, who spare neither choirs nor sanctuaries! Thou came in from outside, starving and rabid, and forced legitimate hereditary princes from their estate and ancient property and, blown by that spirit, introduced new laws and torment conscience. One need not walk far to see this: your prince, for whom thou speak and plead, has laid the entire land in ashes, more dreadful than ever.)

This is the Prince's judgment of Samson and his people, a judgment that reiterates Dagon's prologue and which reflects the core principles of *De imperio*. If Samson is indeed representative of the Jews, his actions have brought immeasurable suffering to the region. Thus the Jews are, in the eyes of the Dagonist Philistine authorities, less a discrete religion than a force of chaos.⁵⁶ Samson defies the rational *ius gentium* on behalf of which both the Prince and Dagon seem to speak.

Here, however, Vondel defies Grotius, offering a challenge to the operative *ius gentium* that would relegate revenge to an irrational pre-political impulse. Vondel reminds readers and spectators that Samson is a Judge appointed by God, not by any natural law or by way of human institutions, national or international. In an odd moment (also peculiar to Vondel's *Samson*) Samson actually admits that he has always known the outcome of the *fabula*, declaring that God will appear 'miraculously and will topple the crown of that cursed temple with thunder' ('door een wonder, | En klonck 't gevloeckt gebou de kruin in met den donder') before conceding 'I will not say all that my birth angel and guardian foretold of this celebration' ('Ick zegh het nu niet al wat mijn geboortegeest | En wachter my te nacht voorspelde van dit feest', ll. 405–408). Samson is not a revenger himself but an instrument of God's vengeance,

56 For instance, when Dagon's High Priest reminds the Soothsayer that 'Men must associate daily with the Jews' ('Men moet wel dagelijx verkeerren met de Joden') she retorts, 'The holy writ forbids us their company ... They uproot churches. They hew away the church groves. They burn images and the gods who protect the land and, reveling, dare to warm themselves by the coals' ('In 't heilige wort hun gemeenschap ons verboden | ... | Zy roeien kercken uit. Zy houwen 't kerckwoudt af. | Zy branden beelden, en de Goôn, die 't lant beschermen, | En durven juichende by de koolen wermen', ll. 1315–1320).

as the Angel Fadaël affirms, at the end of the *treurspel*: ‘Now the hero has firmly executed God’s revenge out of zeal for God’s cause’ (‘Nu heeft de helt Godts wraeck | Stantvastigh uitgevoerd, uit yver voor Godts zaeck’, ll. 1666–1667). This is a revenge that is indeed abstracted, as Grotius says, from human and divine laws—so much so that Vondel traces it back to an ineffable God who frustrates any attempts to domesticate religion within the boundaries of reason or statecraft. Vondel will not cede, as Grotius seems to do, *imperium* to any human authority, however noble or well intentioned that authority. Neither the Prince nor Dagon can serve as a *vindex*, just as Samson, however violent and depraved, cannot surrender a sovereignty that is maintained by God.

Vondel makes a similar critical point in his earlier translation of Grotius’s *Rivetiani Apologetici discussio*, there by way of subtle redaction. In the *Discussio* Grotius presents an ecumenical Protestant alternative to his interlocutor André Rivet’s strict Calvinism.⁵⁷ Grotius, committed to irenicism and eager to exonerate himself of charges of Socinianism, nevertheless argued in the *Discussio* that double predestination was depraved and that Rivet’s Calvinism was simply ‘a new religion, self-created, and its spiritual leaders lacked sufficiently priestly ordination, but were marked by the schismatic tendency that typified all secessions from the mother Church,’ particularly ‘intolerance and political turbulence.’⁵⁸ Against Calvinism and other schismatic confessions and political forces, Grotius maintained, first, that charity and unity comprised the core of Christian doctrine and, second, that true Christians should strive for reconciliation and unity above any factious confessional interests. Grotius did not endorse Roman Catholicism or the papacy, necessarily, but he argued nonetheless that the papacy was poised to realize political and theological unity, not only in Europe but across the world. A skilled diplomat, humanist intellectual, and theologian, Grotius was well aware of—and admired—Roman Catholic intellectual and political achievements, particularly those of the Jesuits, who in his own lifetime could boast of an efficient global missionary network that spread from China and Japan to Mexico and Brazil.⁵⁹ Mining Protestant and Catholic sources alike, Grotius denied the persistent identification of the pope with Antichrist, showing instead that ‘the primacy of the pope was conducive

57 Henk Nellen, *Hugo Grotius: A Lifelong Struggle for Peace in Church and State, 1583–1645*, transl. J.C. Grayson (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 699–710.

58 See Nellen, *Hugo Grotius*, p. 707, also Chapters 15 and 16.

59 See Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 136–161.

to unity.⁶⁰ Without endorsing the papacy or converting to Catholicism Grotius affirmed the scope and resources of the Catholic Church.

In his anonymous translation of the *Discussio* (identified only in the preface of the second volume *Vondels Poesy* printed in 1647), Vondel seems to approve Grotius's points against Rivet, but repurposes Grotius's irenic defense of Roman Catholicism as an endorsement of the papacy. For Grotius, the issue is not the truth or error of Catholicism but rather its political resources, the degree to which it might function across regional and national boundaries as an authority. Its claims to *imperium* are more useful and practical than they are righteous or pious. Grotius sees a *Realpolitik* in Roman Catholicism, one that Protestants have too long and unfairly equated with tyranny and depravity. Vondel, however, reframes excerpts of the treatise to emphasize how 'God certainly allowed morals to become corrupted in Rome and elsewhere, but by God's providence doctrine has never been corrupted there, a doctrine which is itself contrary to these evils' ('God liet wel toe dat te Rome en elders de zeden bedorven wierden: maar door Godts bestiering werd daar nooit de lere bedorven, die tegen deze kwade zeden zelfs strijdig is'), and that 'The Protestants cannot bear to come together, unless they unite themselves together against those who adhere to the Roman Chair' ('De Protestanten kunnen onderling niet verdragen, tenzij ze zich tegelijk verenigen met hun die den Roomsden Stoel aanhangen').⁶¹ Indeed, Grotius is critical of the Protestant consensus against Rome, but Vondel truncates this critique (over 250 pages) to emphasize the Roman provenance of the true Church. Vondel hints at Grotius's conversion to Catholicism (which never happened) as he subtly appropriates Grotius's treatment of *imperium* for Rome—emphasizing, in a Grotian spirit, the historical and theoretical importance of peace and unity, realized by way of an effective *ius gentium*, but offering Catholicism as a solution sanctioned by God.

Vondel makes a similar corrective point in *Samson*, albeit from a different perspective. Roman Catholicism stands poised to realize a global unity. Samson, however, is powerless, captive, and debauched, held in contempt—with reason!—by the *vindex* and his deity Dagon. Vondel's are difficult theatrical and political questions as he investigates the hazards of accepting Dagon's account

60 Henk Nellen, 'A Flaming Row in the Republic of Letters: Claude Saumaise on Hugo Grotius's Crusade for Church Unity', in Jeanine de Landtsheer and Henk Nellen (eds.), *Between Scylla and Charybdis: Learned Letter Writers Navigating the Reefs of Religious and Political Controversy in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 192, p. 512.

61 Joost van den Vondel, 'Grotius' Testament of Hoofdpunten Getrokken uit Zijn Jongste Antwoord aan D. Rivet', WB IV, p. 628.

of the *fabula*, the risks of surrendering *imperium* to the Philistines. Precarious peace and unity are achieved, but only by the grace of God—an indispensable element of political theology and law, human and divine. Grotius, it seems, is willing to dispense with God, or at least to bracket truth and faith, to relegate these to the closet of conscience. Vondel, however, affirms God's terrible power, so much that 'All of Palestine will remember the Jewish Tragedy' ('Het Joodsche treurspel zal gansch Palestijne heugen', ll. 1276, 1292). Vondel's Samson bears witness as much as he acts; the Messenger's announcement is telling insofar as Samson 'Now he has brought his own revenge upon himself' ('Nu heeft hy in zijn wraeck zich zelve ingebroekt', l. 1503). Vondel uses the past participle 'ingebroekt' (from the verb 'inbrengen': 'to bring to') which sounds conspicuously like 'gebroken'—as if the Philistine Messenger suggests that Samson has brought revenge on the Philistines and himself, having broken himself at Dagon's Temple. The Messenger reports that 'I saw an act of vengeance of which the entire world will speak' ('Ick zaghe een wraeck, daer al de weerelt van gewaeght', l. 1507). The degree to which this is Samson's vengeance is questionable.

The radical point of Vondel's *treurspel* is the *peripeteia* effected by God without justification and against even the most natural, moral human institutions. One might even accurately say that *Samson, of Heilige Wraeck* is a Philistine tragedy—a *treurspel* in which a guilty Samson, with precious little to say in his captivity, already knows the outcome; a *treurspel* introduced by a sympathetic Dagon and punctuated by a cooperative Hebrew chorus; a *treurspel* composed of discrete arguments among the Philistines over the meaning and function of Philistine institutions, institutions that break down in the interest of equity and mercy (as Samson is granted burial and allowed to perform at the celebration in exchange for his freedom (l. 947) despite the Soothsayer's authoritative prophecy). In his drama Vondel locates Grotius among the Philistines, even recounting Grotian claims in Dagon's voice. This is not to demonize Grotius but rather to humanize Dagon, to give voice to the sympathetic Philistines and Jews alike, to express the legitimate claims of a people struggling to mitigate a divine force at odds with a rational *ius gentium*. God refuses to recognize Dagon's *imperium* or to surrender faith and doctrine to human institutions. The tragedy of *Samson* lies in the best intentions of these institutions, in the effective exercise of *ius gentium* by a Philistine Prince, proceeding as they do with no reference to God's providence, Scripture, or doctrine.

Further Reading

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Performing the Medieval Past: Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1637)*

Freya Sierhuis

On the afternoon of the 11th of January 1645, a raging fire destroyed most of the Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) on Amsterdam's Dam Square. In his 'Klaghte over het verongelucken der Kercke van Sinte Katharine, t'Amsterdam' ('Lamentation on the fall of the Church of St. Catherine in Amsterdam'), Joost van den Vondel gave voice to the shock and horror of the inhabitants at the sudden devastation of the city's principal church.¹ The poem performs an extensive meditation on the destruction of the Church that gives life and voice to the building, animating its sacred objects and artworks. The vivid descriptions of the roof collapsing, of tombstones cracking with heat so fierce it sears the remains of the deceased are framed within a larger conceit of the church as a despoiled virgin, a royal bride with torn robes and headdress. Yet something happens in the process of visualization: the building re-imagined appears in fact to be the pre-Reformation St. Catherine's church. There is mention of a statue of an Apostle, and of a crucifix.² Like an elaborate *mise en abîme*, one *prosopopoeia* nestles within another: the emperor Maximilian, kneeling before Mary and St. Catherine on a stained glass window, is heard imploring Virgin and patron saint to save their church (ll. 50–61).

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- 1 Joost van den Vondel, 'Klaghte over het verongelucken der Kercke van Sinte Katharine, t'Amsterdam', in J.F.M. Sterck a.o. (eds.), *De Werken van Joost van den Vondel: Volledige en geïllustreerde tekstuitgave*, 10 vols., (Amsterdam: Maatschappij voor goede en goedkope literatuur, 1927–1940) (henceforth: WB), IV, pp. 612–614.
- 2 The interpretation of ll. 44–45 is contested: while J.F.M. Sterck argues that the poem speaks of a real statue and crucifix (Sterck, *Oorkonden over Vondel en zijn kring* (Bussum: N.V. Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1918) pp. 108–109), Van Lennep maintains that the poem refers to images of Christ and the Apostles depicted on a stained glass window depicted in l. 46, a window which had survived the Reformation, WB, IV, p. 613. The ambiguity was quite possibly intended by Vondel.

While the confessional agenda of this poem may be controversial, it can hardly be denied that the dramatic staging of the pre-Reformation past is, in itself, striking and highly unusual. Vondel's 'Lamentation on the fall of the Church of St. Catherine', I will argue in this chapter, offers a way of approaching Vondel's tragedy *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, a play whose complex historicity and ambiguous confessional stance has long perplexed critics.³ In a similar manner as 'Lament on the fall of the Church of St. Catherine', *Gysbreght van Aemstel* performs the medieval, pre-Reformation past in as an absent presence, re-inscribing it into the present while at the same time registering its irrecoverable loss. The cultural 'work' the play performs, this chapter argues, can best be understood as *Trauerarbeit*, a form of commemoration and mourning which re-inscribes the past into the present and thereby actualizes, re-activates its traumas in every performance. This dramatic enactment of trauma as absent presence is highlighted in the play's evocation and elision of Catholic rituals and rites. Set on the eve and night before Christmas, the play shows the citizenry of Amsterdam preparing to attend Christmas mass, the solemn re-investiture of a bishop by a congregation of nuns, the performance of a hymn standing in for the 'Nunc Dimittis' as well as many acts of sacrilege and iconoclasm. The most horrific of these is an attack on the bishop and nuns, culminating in the rape and murder of Abbess Klaeris van Velsen that references the language of Eucharistic substitution, invoking and frustrating the tropes of martyr drama. In the *Gysbreght*, the numinous repeatedly intrudes upon the world of the play. A ghost, seemingly released from purgatory, appears to warn of an impending catastrophe, a mysterious light and voice guide Gijsbreght through the burning

3 The question of the play's Catholicism was first debated in the polemical exchange between Sterck and Maximilianus. See P. Maximilianus, 'Over den oorsprongkelijken Gysbreght', *Tijdschrift voor taal en letterkunde* 20 (1932), pp. 5–12, and 'Over de H. Mis in den Gysbreght', *Tijdschrift voor taal- en letterkunde* 21 (1933), 36–41, and J.F.M. Sterck, 'De "Verthooinge vande superstition vande paperye als misse en andere ceremonien" in Vondels *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*', and the section 'De oorspronkelijke Gijsbrecht', in id., *Oud en nieuw over Joost van den Vondel: Verspreide opstellen* (Amsterdam: De Spieghel; Mechelen: Het Kompas, 1932), pp. 23–37 and 31–37. More recently the debate was revisited by Johan Koppenol, 'Nodeloze onrust: Het "Roomsche" karakter van Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel*', *Nederlandse Letterkunde* 4 (1999), 313–329. Koppenol's analysis, however, is based on a questionable, psychologizing view of the role played by clerical figures such as abbot Willebrord, dean Peter and bishop Gozewijn. The fact that Gijsbreght's brother Willem dies while trying to save a relic of the True Cross is for example presented as proof that Catholicism is a religion based on external display (Koppenol, 'Nodeloze onrust', p. 316). Koppenol also takes no account of contextual evidence regarding Vondel's conversion, or of the Catholic sensibility pervading poems such as the 'Hymn of St. Agnes' and 'Kruisbergh'.

streets of Amsterdam. The resolution of the play revolves around a moment of efficacious prayer and angelic intercession. But the workings of these interventions remain opaque and inaccessible, a fact dramatized in the play's repeated staging of failed performatives. Performatives abound in *Gysbreght van Aemstel* and include speech acts such as warning, beseeching, praising, pardoning, prophesying and leave-taking. An overwhelming number of these take the form of apotropaic invocations, pleas for divine or saintly aid or intercession; supplications that, to terrifying effect, the play allows to go unanswered.

While it is known that the play's performance of scenes involving Catholic ritual aroused controversy (I will be returning to this issue in the following), these scenes also appeared to have exercised a powerful emotional and imaginative hold over audiences.⁴ Interestingly, several sketches by Rembrandt van Rijn produced during the rehearsals of the play, focus explicitly on the performance of sacred rites: Gijsbreght kneeling in front of Gozewijn; Klaeris and the nuns dressing the bishop in his Episcopal regalia. Early in the eighteenth century, a French visitor noted how the audience wept profusely while listening to the messenger's report of the murder and rape of Klaeris and the nuns.⁵ Such ambivalence shows, I argue, that the play raises uncomfortable questions about the relation between historic trauma, religion and national identity.

Written for the festive opening of Amsterdam's new city theater, *Gysbreght van Aemstel*'s complex nature as a civic-foundational play is indicated by its somewhat refractory subject matter: the sack of Amsterdam and the near-extermination of its ruling family, the lords of Amstel, in 1304.⁶ Set in Holland's

4 Ben Albach, *Langs kermissen en hoven: Ontstaan en kroniek van een Nederlands toneelgezelschap in de zeventiende eeuw* (Utrecht: Walburg Pers, 1977), pp. 11–12; id., *Drie eeuwen 'Gijsbreght van Aemstel': Kroniek van de jaarlijkse opvoeringen* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1937).

5 Albach, *Drie eeuwen "Gijsbreght van Aemstel"*.

6 Critical opinion on the *Gysbreght* is divided between those like Koppenol and Parente who view the tragedy as a *memento mori* to the inhabitants of Amsterdam and those, like Konst and Maljaars, who view the play as a providential tragedy. See Johan Koppenol, 'Nodeloze onrust'; James A. Parente, *The Theatricality of History in the Dutch Golden Age* (London: Centre for Low Countries Studies, 1993); Jan W.H. Konst, *Fortuna, Fatum en Providentia Dei* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2003); A. Maljaars, "'Niet min Godvruchtelijk als dapper": Gijsbrecht van Amstel verdedigd tegen zijn critici', *De zeventiende eeuw* 17 (2001), 138–161. Both interpretations have been challenged by Frans Willem Korsten, who has offered a political reading of the play focused on the idea of sovereignty and its alternatives (Frans-Willem Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), pp. 150–167) My analysis differs from previous accounts of the play in that it looks primarily at the cultural work the play performs through its staging of Catholic ritual.

medieval past, it continues where an earlier history play, P.C. Hooft's *Geeraerdt van Velsen* (1613) had left off. Hooft's *Geeraerdt van Velsen* told the history the murder of Count Floris v of Holland by a group of malcontent nobles in revenge for the rape of Machteld van Velsen; material well known from chronicles, histories and ballads.⁷ Vondel's play recounts the final act of this story of revenge and retribution, as the followers of the murdered count prepare to exact heavy vengeance on the last remaining conspirator, Gijsbreght van Aemstel, who, although not guilty of the murder, will have to pay for his role in the plot. A baroque *Treurspel* modelled closely on book 11 of Vergil's *Aeneid*, the destruction of Troy, the play focuses on the last day and night of the city. 'Ancient Troy is reborn', Vondel wrote in the dedicatory poem, 'and goes to ruin in smoldering Amsterdam' ('t Aeloude Troje word herboren, En gaet te gronde in 't gloeiende Amsterdam). As Marco Prandoni has shown, this Vergilian intertextuality shapes the dramatic plot to a considerable extent.⁸ Like the Trojans, the people of Amsterdam are lulled into false security by the enemy's seeming departure, and bring their doom over their own heads by taking into the city walls an enemy 'gift'; here not a wooden horse, but a ship laden with turf hiding soldiers in its hulk. There is a spy, Vosmeer, comparable to Vergil's Sinon, and a Haemstede for Pyrrhus, a Bishop named Gozewijn for old king Priamus. Significantly, however, the ghost which appears to warn of the town's impending doom, appears not to Gijsbreght (as to Aeneas), but to his wife, Badeloch. In a dream the ghost of Machteld van Velsen appears to her, like Creusa to Aeneas, foretelling the imminent destruction of the city. 'God's saints', Machteld warns, 'have long abandoned Church and altars' ('Gods heiligen hebben kerck en outers lang verlaeten', 111, l. 802). She implores Badeloch to save what remains of the family, and to rescue her daughter, Klaeris, abbess of the nunnery of the Poor Clares. Significantly, Gijsbreght refuses to believe the dream may be true.

Almost as if to underline the play's contrarian stance, Vondel dedicated the tragedy to his hero, the natural law theorist Hugo Grotius. Vondel had supported the Remonstrants during the Arminian controversy, and continued to champion the cause of Grotius, who was living in exile in Paris after his escape

7 On the murder of Floris v in the chronicles, see Jan Willem Verkaik, *De moord op graaf Floris v* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996), on the politics of the play, see Bettina Noak, *Politische Auffassungen im niederländischen Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich and Münster: Waxmann, 2002) ch. 3; cf. Freya Sierhuis, 'Revenge, Resistance and the Problem of Machiavellianism: P.C. Hooft's *Geeraerdt van Velsen* (1613)', *Dutch Crossing* 34 (2010), 115–137.

8 Marco Prandoni, *Een mozaïek van stemmen: Verbeeldend lezen in Vondel's *Gijsbreght van Aemstel** (Utrecht: Verloren, 2007).

from Loevestijn in 1621.⁹ In 1630, when Grotius secretly returned to the Republic, the two men struck up a lasting friendship. Grotius took a keen interest in Vondel's plans to write an epic on the life of Constantine, the emperor whose role in convening the Council of Nicea and ending schism in the Church made him a hero to all Erastian irenicists, and answered his friend's queries about matters relating to the history of the early Church. Reacting to the dedication of the *Gysbreght* Grotius admitted to their mutual friend, the humanist Gerardus Vossius, that he owed Vondel gratitude, 'for keeping my name alive among you'.¹⁰ Vondel's poetry in these years aligns with the development of Remonstrant political thought in moving away from a plea for limited toleration within the Dutch Reformed Church, to full religious toleration for all denominations, including Catholics. The city of Amsterdam had always been important to Vondel's reflections on religious toleration. A child of Mennonite refugees from the Southern Netherlands, he acknowledged the town's historic role in offering a safe-haven to those fleeing religious persecution.¹¹ This identification intensified during the late 1620s when Amsterdam, in defiance of the Counter-Remonstrant majority in the States of Holland, relaxed repressive measures against the Arminians, a process culminating in the opening of the

9 On Vondel's support for Grotius and the Remonstrants, see my *The Literature of the Arminian Controversy: Religion, Politics and the Stage in the Dutch Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

10 J.F.M. Sterck (ed.), *Vondelbrieven uit de zeventiende eeuw van en over de dichter* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1935) p. 89: 'Vondel heeft my vriendschap gedaan dat by een treurspel van treffelyken inhoudt, voeghelyke schikkinge, en overvloedige welsprekenheit aan my, als eenigen smaak hebbende in zulke dingen, heeft toege-eigent. Ook verheugh ik my dat myn naam, op wat wyze het ook zy, by U luiden wordt levendig gehouden.'

11 *Hierusalem verwoest*, in *WB*, II, pp. 74–215. In the dedication of the play to the Remonstrant C.P. Hooft, ex-burgomaster of the city and Oldenbarnvelt's main pillar of support within the city, Vondel explained: 'De weerdighste vrucht van deze arbeyd is dat vele duyzend verjaeghde menschen in den schoot en het gebied der doorluchtige Heeren Staten gastvry zijn geherberghet en lieflijck gekoestert, en die in veylige schaduwe gezeten niet meer hoeven te vreezen de grimmigheyd van die uyt het voorborgh der Hellen opgedonderde Spaensche Alecto, die drymael haer geslangde perruyck geschud hebbende, met haer fackel het vuyr stack inde mutsaerden en rijbsossen die de palen en staecken bekleeden waeraen dagelijcx vele vrome Christenen wierden vast gemaect, die midden inde vlammen Iesus Christus lof toezingende, hem lijf en ziele opofferden tot eenen zoeten en Godbehaegelijcken reuck. Indien wy ernsthaftigh overwegen de als in het hemde ontvolden wreedheyd, en wederom de genoten ruste en veyligheyd: gewisselijck wy moeten geperst zijnde van een danckbaer gemoed met de aen strand opgeworpen Æneas uytbarsten en roepen: (...); *ibid.*, p. 78, ll. 15–28.

first Remonstrant Church in 1630. Following the toleration treatises of Paschier de Fyne and Simon Episcopius, Vondel's poetry came to define toleration as civic right, and, in a move that appears to adumbrate the political thought of the brothers De la Court, as the foundation of the Republic's prosperity and stability. Amsterdam, again, embodied this vision of good governance:

Het Y en d'Aemstel voên de hoofstadt van Europe,
 Gekroont tot Keizerin; des nabuurs steun, en hope;
 Amstelredam, die 't hooft verheft aan 's hemels as,
 En schiet, op Plutoos borst, haar wortels door 't moerasch.
 Wat watren worden niet beschaduw't van haar zeilen?
 Op welke marckten gaat zy niet haar waren veilen?
 Wat volcken zietse niet beschijnen van de maan;
 Zy die zelf wetten stelt den ganschen Oceaan?
 Zy breit haar vleugels uit, door aanwas veler zielen,
 En sleept de weerelt in, met overlade kielen.
 De welvaart stut haar Staat, zoo lang d'aanzienlijkheit
 Des Raets gewetensdwanck zijn boezen wil ontzeit

(Y and Amstel feed the capital of Europe
 Crowned empress, her neighbors' hope and support;
 Amsterdam, who raises her head to Heaven's axis
 And plants her roots, on Pluto's breast, into the swamp
 Which waters are there, not shadowed from her sails?
 Which markets are there, where she does not trade her ware?
 Which peoples does she not see under the light of the moon?
 She, who herself gives laws to the ocean
 She spreads her wings, through the influx of so many souls
 Ad carries back the world, in heavy-loaded keels
 Prosperity supports her state, as long as the authority
 Of the magistrate bars conscience-constraint's evil design.)¹²

Vondel never abandoned this fundamental commitment to toleration, and yet the years before the publication of the *Gysbreght* witnessed a process of reorientation that put his previous allegiances under increasing strain, and alienated many of his former friends and supporters. In 1634 he abandoned work on the *Constantiniad* to return to tragedy. These are the years that his poetry

¹² Vondel, 'Op Amstelredam', WB, III, p. 354.

begins to show the signs of an attraction to Catholicism, to which he would convert in 1641.¹³ Hints of a Catholic sensibility can be detected long before: as early as 1622 he had written a hymn in praise of St. Agnes for the Catholic poet and priest Johannes Stalpaert van der Wiele.¹⁴ More polemical was the poem 'Kruisberg' ('Golgotha', 1637/38), latinized by Vondel's Catholic friend Plemp, and put to music by the composer Cornelis Thymansz. Padbrue, another Catholic, which describes the sacrament of the Eucharist in language suffused with imagery of *realis praesentia*.¹⁵ In the immediate aftermath of the *Gysbreght*, Vondel would write two explicitly confessional plays: *Maeghden* (*Virgins*, 1639) a martyr drama on St. Ursula and her virgins, and *Peter en Pauwels* (*Peter and Paul*, 1641), dedicated to Maria Tesselschade, who had preceded him on the way to the Catholic Church.

Vondel's attraction to the old faith seems to have stemmed at least in part from a growing desire for peace. Unease about Protestantism's fissiparous tendencies, experienced up close in his native Mennonite community, and witnessed, more traumatically, in the conflict that split the Dutch Reformed Church and lost Oldenbarnevelt his head, would certainly have added luster to the ideals of unity and universality advocated by the post-Tridentine Catholic Church. Looking on in horror as war engulfed his native Germany (Vondel had been born in Cologne, where the poet's family had lived several years before moving to Amsterdam) his attention came to lie with the question of reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics. On a personal level, Vondel remained deeply attached to his hero, Grotius. Yet in an important sense, his priorities had shifted. Vondel's later work never returns to the Erastian insistence on the subordination of the clergy to the civil magistrate which plays like *Palamedes* (1625) and satirical poems like the 'Roskam' ('Currycomb', 1630) had still presented as the only alternative to religious strife and division. In 1645, a few months after Grotius's death, Vondel translated his *Rivetiani Apologetici*

13 On Vondel's religion, see Gerard Brom, *Vondel's geloof* (Amsterdam: De Spiegel, 1935); for a concise introduction, see Judith Pollmann, 'Vondel's religion', in Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 85–100.

14 Sterck, *Oud en nieuw over Joost van den Vondel*, p. 87.

15 'De Krvisbergh. Aen Magdalene Baeck', WB III, pp. 601–604; Vondel and his daughter Anna maintained close ties with Plemp (1612–1697), a lawyer and doctor *utriusque iuris*. Anna's testament, dated 1675, named Plemp as her executor, charging him with the care for her elderly father and his grandchildren. For Plemp's life, see P.J. Blok and P.C. Molhuizen, *Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek*, 10 vols (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1911–1937), 6, pp. 1135–1136.

discussio (1645), published anonymously as *Grotius' Testament of hoofdpunten getrokken uit zijn jongste antwoord aan D. Rivet*, a work in which he, to the anger of his former allies among the Arminians, attempted to subsume, through selective additions and omissions, Grotius's Protestant irenicism within his own pro-Catholic apologetics.¹⁶

Yet even though Vondel had left the ideas of his former mentor behind, in one important aspect did his poetic praxis continue in many ways to bear the influence of Grotian irenicism. Grotius envisaged a role for tragedy in the irenicist endeavor of bringing about reconciliation by emphasizing consensus in the fundamentals of the faith and moderation in matters of doctrine. Thus, the dedication of *Christus patiens* (1608) to the French diplomat Pierre Jeanin argued for the importance of Christ's passion as a topic for tragedy, as it was one of the few fundamentals of the faith about which Christians of different denominations were still in agreement.¹⁷ Many years later, from his exile in Paris, Grotius wrote *Sophompaneas*, about the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers; or, as he put it in a letter: 'I have written a tragedy in which Joseph, the son of Jacob, is recognized by his brothers' ('scripsi ... tragoediam qua Josephus, Jacobi filius, a fratris recognoscitur').¹⁸ The verb 'recognoscitur' is particularly resonant here, identifying the moment of the brothers' recognition of Joseph, and their realization of their manifest guilt, with the Aristotelian *anagnorisis*. *Metanoia* and *catharsis* here converge on contrition and conversion. Vondel translated Grotius's play into Dutch and furnished it with two prequels, *Joseph in Egypt* (1640) and *Joseph in Dothan* (1640). In the preface to *Joseph in Dothan*, he seized the opportunity to drive home the topical and typological moral of Joseph's story:

Iosephs historie is t'allen tyden, zoo in 't kleen als in 't groot, herspeelt onder allerhande geslachten en volcken: gelijk noch hedensdaeghs on-

16 On this text, see the contribution of Russ Leo to this volume. For the text of Grotius's testament, see WB, IV, pp. 623–632. On Hooft's reaction see Mieke Smits-Veldt, 'Hooft en De Groot', in Jeroen Jansen (ed.), *Omnibus Idem: Opstellen over P.C. Hooft ter gelegenheid van zijn driehonderdvijftigste sterfdag* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997) pp. 51–68, pp. 67–68.

17 Henk Nellen, *Hugo de Groot: Een leven in strijd om de vrede 1583–1645* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2007), pp. 487–488 [= id., *Hugo Grotius: A Lifelong Struggle for Peace in Church and State 1583–1645* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 602–603]; Hugo Grotius, *Meletius sive de iis quae inter Christianos conveniunt Epistola*, ed. Guillaume H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Posthumus Meyjes, 'Introduction', p. 51.

18 Grotius to J. Slupecki de Konary, d.d. 2 August 1635, cited in Nellen, *Hugo de Groot*, p. 393; *Hugo Grotius*, p. 483.

der de Christenen, die, gebroeders en leden eens lichaems zijnde, en zich luttel aen Iosephs verdriet keerende, den onnoozelen dagelix van- gen verkoopen en leveren aen hunne allerbitterste en gezwore erfvyanden; wanneerze, d'een den anderen verradende envernielende, liever de poorten van Christenrijck voor den Ismaëlleren open zetten, dan malkanderen toegeven en ondergaen.

Dedication to Joachim de Wickevort, ll. 42–49

(Throughout history, Joseph's story has been re-enacted, both on a small and a great scale, among every race and every people; as even to this day among Christians who, being brothers and members of one body, caring little for Joseph's sorrow, every day again sell the innocent and deliver him to his most bitter, sworn enemies; when they, each betraying and destroying the other, prefer to open the gates of Christianity to the Ishmaelites, than to give in and tolerate each other.)

It is the hatred among Christians of different denominations which has brought war and destruction on Europe, and has laid her open to Turkish invasion. Indeed, 'if Joseph would be heard more loudly, what misery would not be prevented?' Assuredly, Vondel argues, those brothers who are now waging war against each other, would take up arms against the common enemy.¹⁹

Themes like the need for unity among Christians in the face of the Ottoman threat in the poetry and drama of the period provide some evidence that, even at the height of the confessional age, irenicist ideas had not become superseded, and enjoyed currency that stretched beyond the work of a handful Protestant scholars like Grotius and Drury. In England irenicism came to be associated with James's I (highly unpopular) policy of religious and political appeasement. A number of plays written against the background of the Spanish match, and the gradual ascendancy of Arminianism at court in the late 1620's, such as Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624), *The Roman Actor* (1626), *The Great*

19 Vondel, *Joseph in Dothan*, 'Dedication to Joachim de Wicfort', WB IV, p. 75, ll. 73–81: 'Liet Ioseph sich wat luider hooren, in stede dat men onverzoenelijck met styve kaecken de moortrompetten blaest, wat zoud'er menighmael al onheils verhoedt worden. Hoe haest zouden de broeders, die nu aen alle kanten, te water en te lande, in 't blancke harnas, tegens een gekant staen, dien vervloecten degen afleggen, en malkanderen omhelzende, liever, als Gots eere onze wapens vorderde, dien algemeenen erfvyant zijnen onrechtvaerdigen roof doen slaecken, dan hem, en hunne plaegen noch verder inroepende, Gots rechtvaerdige zaeck in 't uiterste gevaer stellen.'

Duke of Florence (1631), *The Emperor of the East* (1631) and *Believe as you List* (1631) argue the need for rulers to foster peace through the exercise of tolerance and moderation.

Closer to the actual theater of war, in Germany and the Dutch Republic, dramatists exploited the resources of the *Trauerspiel* to warn of the threat posed by the forces of the Islamic Antichrist. Vondel's martyr tragedy *Maeghden* (*Virgins*) centers around the confrontation between Ursula and her virgins and the Muslim army of Attila's Huns. It is not impossible that Gryphius who, as Joel Lande argues elsewhere in this volume, might have encountered Vondel's plays during his student days in Leiden (1638–1644), and who would later translate Vondel's *Gebroeders* (1640), took some elements from Vondel's Jesuit-inspired martyr drama.²⁰ Gryphius's play consciously elides the historical and confessional complexities of the story of a Greek orthodox princess being held prisoner by a Persian Shah, Abbas I, who, as a Shi'ite was in fact an ally of the European powers against the Sunni Ottomans, in favor of a narrative of an all-out clash between Islam and Christianity, rhetorically figured, just as in Vondel's Ursula play, on the chastity of the female protagonist.²¹

These tragedies do therefore not simply reflect upon, or engage with contemporary experiences of war and religious division, but rather integrate these into their dramatic poetics, making them central to the public work of tragedy. This observation challenges the assumptions underlying some recent discussions in early modern studies which view the stage as the space where the remnants of pre-Reformation religious culture are imaginatively reconfigured.²² There is a powerful attraction to the idea of a lingering spectral presence of pre-Reformation ideas in the plays of Shakespeare, or of those plays stepping into a void left by the demise of medieval sacramental theology. In *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness*, Sarah Beckwith argues:

20 Volker Meid, *Die Deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter des Barock: Vom Späthumanismus zur Frühaufklärung 1570–1740*, (München: C.H. Beck, 2009), p. 411.

21 On the play's refusal to treat the theme of confessional conflict within the Islamic and Christian worlds it describes, see Bethany Wiggen's 'Staging Shi'ites in Silesia: Andreas Gryphius' *Catharina von Georgien*', *The German Quarterly* 83, 3 (2010), 1–18.

22 Prominent examples of this approach are Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), and 'Remnants of the Sacred in Early Modern England', in Margareta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Sallibrass (eds.), *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 337–345, and Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011).

When authority is no longer assumed in the speech acts of a sacramental priesthood, it must be found, refound, in the claims, calls, judgements of every person who must single themselves and others out in these calls, and grant them the authority in each particular instance. So Shakespeare's theatre is a search for community, a community neither given nor possessed but in constant formation and deformation. This puts him in powerful continuity, of course, with a theatre he is often thought to have entirely superseded and overturned.²³

Yet the lure of the metaphors of revenants and remains is perhaps better resisted, as it presupposes a view of the relationship between the theater and Catholic religious past as a past perfect that is difficult to sustain. For the reason why *Gysbreght van Aemstel* so particularly offended Amsterdam's Calvinist church council was exactly because the play derived part of its emotional efficacy through ritual representation of community. The idea that the vestigial remains of Catholic practices became something of an altogether different order through their translation into fiction is equally problematic. This assumes an intellectual separation between the culture of the stage, and the turbulent and messy world of politico-religious controversy; a separation between the spheres of literature and religion, which, for many of the plays of the period, is impossible to sustain.

Rather than the literary being autonomous from religious, these plays show the complex ways in which the literary is involved in religion and vice versa. Situating Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel* against the background of the history of the Dutch Revolt, and, more recently, that of the Thirty Years' War, and viewing it as, on some level, as an imaginative reworking of the story of the Sack of Magdeburg, will allow us to understand the complexity of the play's meditation on the nature of history, the conflicting demands of peace, reconciliation and religious identity, and its critical examination of the ethics of self-sacrifice.

For most contemporaries, the Sack of Magdeburg on 20 May 1631 came as a culmination of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. When the imperial troops under the command of Tilly and Pappenheim had succeeded in breaching the city's walls, the soldiers ran havoc, plundering and murdering the inhabitants. When carnage had died down, Magdeburg's population of 30,000 had been reduced to a mere 5,000.²⁴ So complete, in fact, was the destruction

23 Beckwith, *Shakespeare*, p. 5.

24 In the words of the imperial field marshal, Count Pappenheim: 'I believe that over twenty thousand souls were lost. It is certain that no more terrible work and divine punishment

that 'to Magdeburgise' became a byword for to annihilate, to destroy. Vondel's response came in the form of a lament: 'Magdeburg's Funeral Sacrifice' ('Maeghdeburgh's Liickoffer'), dedicated to King Gustavus Adolphus after his victory over Tilly's forces at the Battle of Leipzig; an event viewed by Protestants all over Europe as revenge for 'Magdeburg'.²⁵ The poem begins as a meditation on the fickleness of Fortune—Tilly, who so long seemed invincible now defeated, while Gustavus Adolphus triumphs—before settling on an extensive meditation on the horrors of Magdeburg, in particular the mass rape of its female inhabitants. While the *topos* of conquest as rape is conventional, it was particularly resonant for a city whose heraldic sign carried a crowned virgin, and which prided itself on having defended the purity of Evangelical faith, withstanding an earlier siege by the troops of Charles v during the wars of the Schmalkaldic League. Because Magdeburg owed its virginal status to the fact that it had never been conquered, Catholic narratives transformed the sack into a *Bluthochzeit*, thus presenting the rape as a punishment for the virgin's pride and idolatry, symbolic retribution for the city's desecration of the cult of the Virgin.²⁶ Yet competing narratives existed which rejected providential accounts of the fall of the city as divine punishment, foregrounding questions of human agency and responsibility. In his diary, the Calvinist Prince Christian II of Anhalt compared the fall of the city to that of towns like Tyrus, Sidon and Babel. He saw the citizens of Magdeburg as at least in part responsible for their city's fate: they had stubbornly refused to surrender, and had in a desperate attempt to ward off the enemy soldiers lighted the fire that had reduced the city to rubble.²⁷

In *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, Vondel appears to have held these two explanatory models conjointly in his mind, appealing both to an inscrutable providence, while insisting on the role of individual agency that involved a critique of the heroics of self-sacrifice. In his poetic response to the sack of Magdeburg, Vondel employed the trope of the sack as a rape; indeed, there is a direct imagistic link between Vondel's representation of the sack of Magdeburg and the account of the rape and murder of Klaeris and the nuns in act v of the *Gysbreght*.²⁸

has been seen since the destruction of Jerusalem', quoted in Hans Medick and Pamela Selwyn, 'Historical Event and Contemporary Experience: The Capture and Destruction of Magdeburg in 1631', *History Workshop Journal* 52 (Autumn 2001), pp. 23–48, esp. p. 35.

25 'Maeghdeburgh's Liickoffer', WB, IV, pp. 357–366.

26 Medick and Selwyn, 'Historical Event and Contemporary Experience', p. 37.

27 Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: A Sourcebook* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) pp. 149–150.

28 'Maeghdeburgh's Liickoffer' ll. 85–92: 'Wat gruwel trapt, met Christen hoofds banieren,

The poem, in fact, predicts the creation of the tragedy, as Vondel explains how Magdeburg 'inspired my Muse to commemorate that fatal day with a tragedy'.²⁹ Like 'Magdeburgh's Funeral Sacrifice', *Gysbreght van Aemstel* employs rape as synecdoche for the suffering of the city. We get a first premonition of what is to follow at the close of Act I. The chorus of Amsterdam Virgins, believing the enemy to have departed, voice their relief that the city has escaped the wrath of its enemies. They sing:

Nu stelt het puick van zoete keelen,
 Om daar gezangen op te speelen,
 Tot lof van God, die op zijn' troon
 Gezeten is, zoo hoogh en heerlijk;
 Van waer hy zien kon, hoe begerlijck
 Het Sparen stack na Aemstels kroon.
 Hoe wraeck met zwaerden en met speeren
 De torenkroon van 't hoofd wou scheeren
 Der schoone en wijd vermaerde stad,
 En rucken door geweld van benden
 Der vesten gordel van haer lenden,
 En plondren haer kleenood en schat;
 En schenden d'edele en getrouwe,
 Gelijck de schender Velzens vrouwe.

i. ll. 415–428³⁰

(Now place the main of lovely voices
 To perform songs here
 In honor of God, who on his throne
 Is sat, so high and majestic;

| Op maeghdepalm, tot schennis van laurieren! | En schaeckt'er weeu en wees haer' roosekrans: | Op 't versche lyck van vaders en van mans! | Die tyranny past Turcken en Maraenen. | Ah hemel! strem, op 't aenschyn, dese traenen | En kuyschen dau, tot parlen altemaal: | Dit suyver bloed, dees' sprengklen tot korael.'

29 'Maeghdeburgh's Liickoffer' ll. 93–96: 'Ons' Sangheldin heeft lust, met die juweelen | Verciert, voor moordautae, op treurtoonneelen, | Te vieren dien beschreyelycken dagh: | Die God nocht heyligh kerckenrecht ontsagh.' Although the connection between *Gysbreght* and 'Magdeburg's Liickoffer' was noticed by Vondel's editor J.F.M. Sterck, later critics have not given the connections between the two works any further attention.

30 On the structural function of rape in the play, see Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability*, pp. 159–163.

From where he could see how eagerly
 Haarlem envied Amstel's crown.
 How, with swords and with spears, vengeance
 Would shear the tower-crown from the head
 Of the fine and widely renowned city,
 And by the violence of the troops
 Tear the citadel's girdle from her loins
 And plunder her beauties and treasure
 And violate the noble and faithful
 Like the rapist of Velsen's lady.)

This is a highly problematic moment in the play, where the idea of divine spectatorship appears to challenge any facile appeal to providential justice—a challenge which seems reinforced by the dramatic irony that makes the virgins unwittingly prophesize the city's fate.

The connection between the poem and the play extends moreover to the way in which both employ dramatic visualization, *prosopopoeia* and emblematic imagery otherwise associated with the devotional poetry of poems such as 'Kruisbergh'. The poem exploits language and imagery associated with martyrdom, adopting the floral symbolism of flowers traditionally linked to the cult of saints and martyrs, such as roses and creeping myrtle (a plant called *maagdenpalm*, or virgins' palm, in Dutch) but nevertheless appears to resist the emblematic readings of fall of Magdeburg as a rape that characterizes so much of the literature on the city's fate. There is no personified Virgin here, just mothers, widows and daughters. The poem evokes the tropes of martyrdom, but goes on to frustrate our expectations by insisting on the historicity of the event, and the unredeemed evil of the victims' suffering.

It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the play was bound to generate controversy. According to Brandt, Vondel's sympathetic depiction of Catholicism gave rise to rumours that the poet's faith was 'wavering'.³¹ Yet when Vondel's old enemies, the Calvinist ministers, raised the alarm about the planned performance of the *Gysbreght* on December 26, 1637, the accusation was in fact more specific. The notes of a meeting of the church council held on the 17th of

31 Geeraerd Brandt, *Het leven van Joost van den Vondel*, ed. P.J. Leendertz. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1932), p. 35: 'Maar hoe pryswaardig het treurspel der Maagden was ten opzicht van de kunst, men vondt 'er evenwel zaaken in die veelen bedroefden: des Dichters zucht tot de stellingen en gewoonten der Roomsche kerke, en zyne afwyking tot haare dwaalingen die hy wel haast in andere zyne dichtwerken ten wyle ten vollen openbaarde. Men hielt dat hy, Gysbrecht van Aamstels treurspel dichtende, toen alreede aan 't waggelen was.'

December under presidency of D. Petrus Wachtendorf mention a performance 'in the chamber of Rhetoric', containing a representation of 'the superstition of popery such as the mass and other ceremonies', and charging D. Laurentius and Claas Jansz. Visscher to remonstrate with the regents of the city orphanage (the administrators of the city theater) and the burgomasters.³² A week later, the notes record the efforts of Laurentius and Visscher, and the burgomasters' somewhat ambiguous reply, that care would be taken that neither church nor state would be traduced, and the play would more likely lead to 'the mockery of popery than to the dishonor of the Christian religion'.³³ The following week, matters took a new turn: according to the records of the meeting held on the 31st of December, the burgomasters, who had apparently been persuaded to ban the play, had been convinced by several people 'hostile to the Church' to allow the performance after all.³⁴ On the 7th of January, one reads how in the following week Wachtendorf and Visscher, apparently unaware of the fact that the *Gysbreght* had already been performed on the 3rd of January, renewed their efforts, urging the suppression of the play 'even though it is said that the most offensive matters have been removed from it'.³⁵ After yet another attempt the following week, to suppress 'the popish tragedy' the notes of the meeting of 28 January record the council's decision to let the matter rest 'until the time that there will be remonstrated with the burgomasters about popery and the insolences of the papists'.³⁶

Yet while the church council fretted and chafed, *Gysbreght* proved a resounding success with the audience. The first performance on January 3 1638 inaugurated a tradition of performing the play during the first days of the new year; a tradition that was in fact only broken as a result of the anti-traditionalist iconoclasm of the 1960s. Part of the play's fascination undoubtedly derived from its compelling evocation of the city's medieval setting. The play's extensive use of chorography draws out the contours of its medieval townscape, which still overlapped substantially with that of the seventeenth century city, and shared many of its iconic landmarks: the harbor of the IJ, the Dam, the Nieuwe Kerk, the Haarlemmerpoort and the Schreijerstoren. At the same time, this was a city radically different, foreign, almost; cut off from the present from something more divisive than the passing of time.

32 The texts of the notes are reproduced in Sterck, *Oud en nieuw over Joost van den Vondel*, pp. 35–37.

33 Sterck, *Oud en nieuw over Joost van den Vondel*, p. 36.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., p. 37.

36 Ibid.

In the year of *Gysbreght's* first performance, it is well remembered, the Dutch Republic had existed for little more than half a century. Its recent past was characterized by a double rupture: a Reformation, and a revolt against Habsburg rule. The remarkable military, economic and cultural achievements of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century did nothing to mask the new Republic's novelty, its conspicuous lack of origins, or its anomalous status as a republic in a Europe dominated by monarchies; if anything, they highlighted it. Andrew Escobedo's observation that nationalism in early modern England did not merely compensate for historical loss, but also helped to create it, as it depended on the gap between past and present as the condition for its success, likewise holds true for the seventeenth century Dutch Republic.³⁷ Vondel's play positions itself within this field of conflicting forces, as it foregrounds the originary violence that foundational narratives as the Batavian myth attempt to transform and transcend. The representation of the past in *Gysbreght van Aemstel* presents an interesting analogy to Catholic practices of cultural and religious resistance and commemoration. For the Catholic inhabitants of the Dutch Republic, the recent national past was loaded with a fundamental ambiguity. While many Catholics had supported the rebellion against Spanish authority, the course of the Revolt had left them politically increasingly marginalized. For Dutch Catholics, the Revolt meant a historical rupture which had torn up the fabric of its religious life, destroying its ecclesiastical hierarchy and organization, confiscating or destroying churches, monasteries and abbeys, effacing the markers of its hallowed geography of pilgrimage sites, chapels, shrines and holy wells.³⁸ Against Protestant tales of resistance, persecution and providential delivery, Catholics created their own counter-narratives and martyrologies, such as Petrus Opmeer's *Historia martyrum Batavicornum* (1595), commemorating stories such as that of the martyrs of Gorcum; nineteen clerics, tortured and executed by the Beggars, the troops of William de la Marck, the infamous Count of Lumey, or that of Cornelius Musius, prior of the St. Agatha monastery in Delft and another of Lumey's victims.³⁹

37 Andrew Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss in Renaissance England: Foxe, Dee, Spenser, Milton* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 20. See also Margaret Aston, 'English Ruins and English History: The Dissolution and the Sense of the Past', in id., *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: The Habledon Press, 1984), pp. 313–337.

38 For the position of Catholics in the Republic see most recently Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

39 Petrus Opmeer (1526–1595) was a polymath, historiographer and writer and translator of Catholic apologetics. He translated Vincentius Lirinensis, *Een seer schoon boecksken voor*

Against the background of the culture of commemoration that began to emerge around the turn of the century, as the danger of Spanish victory was beginning to ebb away, such narratives proved jarring fragments in a nascent tradition of the Revolt as a national war for liberty and religion; painful reminders of past scarred by civil war.⁴⁰ Yet there is another side to this story as well. As Judith Pollmann has argued, Dutch Catholics continued to challenge the status-quo, resisting the confiscation of their churches and the destruction of monasteries and holy places. There are numerous accounts of Catholics travelling to worship at the ruined remains of churches or pilgrimage sites, kneeling at the site where an altar, chapel or shrine had once stood.⁴¹ The chapel of Our Lady of Succor at Heiloo in Noord Holland which had been destroyed during the siege of Alkmaar in 1573, continued to draw pilgrims even when, in 1637, the States of Holland ordered the leveling of the ruins. Pilgrimage to Heiloo continued to flourish, increasing in popularity after the discovery of a miraculous well not far from the sanctuary, in 1713.⁴² Such phenomena are, as the work of Alexandra Walsham has shown, not to be viewed as the 'survival' of pre-Reformation practices, but a concerted effort to re-appropriate space and re-sacralise the landscape.⁴³

In one aspect did the situation of Catholics in the Republic differ markedly from their English co-religionists. As the Republic's public church, the Dutch Reformed Church it was obliged to baptize all children, irrespective of the confessional background of their parents, to perform marriages and to bury the dead. Although some Catholics refused to bury their dead in churches they regarded as polluted by Calvinist worship, preferring cemeteries on consecrated ground, where they did not have to follow Protestant strictures on funeral rites, many continued to use the churches where earlier generations had been laid to rest. In Dutch Protestant churches it was not an uncommon sight to see Catholics praying by the grave stones of family members.

die outheyt ende waerheyt des gemeene christen gheloofs teghens die godloose nieuwicheyden alder ketteryen (Haarlem 1561). His *Officium missae* was dedicated to the Duke of Alba.

40 Judith Pollmann, 'Burying the Dead, Reliving the Past: Ritual, Resentment and Sacred Space in the Dutch Republic', in Benjamin Kaplan, Henk van Nierop, Judith Pollmann (eds.), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c. 1570–1720* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 84–102, esp. pp. 86–88.

41 Pollmann, 'Ritual, Resentment and Sacred Space', pp. 85–86.

42 Ibid., pp. 87–88.

43 Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

'As long as they buried their dead [In Protestant Churches]' Pollmann argues, 'they retained an important physical and spiritual stake in the churches, which meant that resentment at their dispossession could not abate'.⁴⁴

Praying on the gravestones of family or forebears thus carries with it a strong symbolic performativity, as well as serving more strictly devotional ends; highlighting both the dispossession of Catholic churches and the continued Catholic presence in the Dutch Republic. Analogously, the staged performance of Catholic rites in the *Gysbreght*, like the evocation of sacred objects in the 'Lament on the Fall of the Church of St. Catherine', offers an ambiguous gesture, signifying both continuity and rupture, commemoration and loss. This view, which sees the play as *actively recollecting* rather than merely *reflecting upon* outlawed religious practices, rituals and rites presents an alternative to narratives about the 'spectral' presence of the Catholic past; narratives which reify the break between past and present, and effectively curtail the real power of these representations of the sacred on stage. Such a view ignores how in pre-modern society memory, both in terms individual faculty and as wider socio-cultural practice, always entails as a dynamic process, a making present of what has been neglected, repressed or forced from view, but not, thereby, lost.⁴⁵ The representation of history in *Gysbreght van Aemstel* offers a powerful example of the role of memory in creating, at least for the duration of the performance, an affective community of mourning that unites Catholics and Protestants, and that, in making visible a continued Catholic presence, challenges hegemonic Protestant accounts of the recent national past.

Upon closer scrutiny, the play's Vergilian intertext appears to operate within a wider web of historical references, borrowings, echoes and illusions.⁴⁶ The

44 Pollmann, 'Ritual, Resentment and Sacred Space', p. 96.

45 See Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. ch. 2, 'Bale's Books and Aske's Abbey's: Nostalgia and the Aesthetics of Nationhood', pp. 49–75, and Andrew Hiscock, *Reading Memory in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010); also Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

46 On the historical references in the *Gysbreght*, see Parente, *The Theatricality of History* and Marco Prandoni, 'Staging the History of Amsterdam in Vondel's "Gysbreght van Aemstel": A Non-Confessional Dramatic Contribution to the Narrative of the Dutch Revolt', in Jan Bloemendal, Peter Eversmann and Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Drama, Performance and Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 297–310. Although my analysis has many points in common with Prandoni's article, I disagree with him on the function of the performance of Catholic ritual in the play, and with his insistence on the play's confessional neutrality.

turf ship mirrors the Trojan horse, but alludes more directly to events in the recent past; to the year 1577, to be precise, when the States of Holland had tried to gain access to then still Catholic Amsterdam by a similar ruse—and failed. In 1590, an identical stratagem had enabled Maurits, the Prince of Orange to capture Breda, a moment that entered the collective memory of the Revolt as a great triumph. It is on this episode that the passage is most directly modelled, including all the well-known details: how the ship had suddenly begun to take in water, leaving the men over their knees in freezing water and how the soldiers, through their coughing had nearly betrayed themselves (ll. 625–632, 653–659).

The attacks on monasteries and churches similarly refer to events in the recent past. The confrontation between Abbot Willebrord and Diederik van Haarlem, and the seizure of the Carthusian monastery in act II alludes to the attacks by Beggar troops on the Carthusian monastery St. Andrew, Sint Andries ter zaliger haven, just outside the old city walls, plundered during the iconoclastic fury of 1566, set on fire by Lumey in 1572, and finally destroyed by the soldiers of the Beggar leader Diederik Sonoy in 1577.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the setting of the play, on Christmas eve, calls to mind the capture of the town of Mende in Southern France by the troops of the Huguenot captain Matthieu Merle, in 1579, when the assailants, just as the troops in the play, attacked the city during Christmas mass, ending a two-year long siege.⁴⁸ These are highly ambiguous moments in the play. Staged, the distant, medieval past casts a highly unfavourable light over the recent, heroic, national past. For there is no doubt that the audience, as well as having its emotional sympathy aligned with the people of Amsterdam, victims, after all, also sees these scenes depicted not just as acts of war, but as sacrilege. Listen how Gijsbreght's brother, Arend reports the sack of the city's main church:

... wy vliegen onversaeght

Door vier en zwaerden heen, om 't al voor God te waegen:
Maer vinden voor ons komst de kerckdeur opgeslaegen,
En hooren eenen galm, die uitbarst over straet,
En over al de stad, en God voor 't voorhoofd slaet,
In zijnen hoogen troon, als eer de kerck der Ioden.

47 <http://www.theopas.nl/index.php/amsterdam/7-kloosters-in-amsterdam?start=2>.

48 Ben Albach, "De Kersnacht lagh in stucken": *Gijsbreght van Aemstel*, vs. 1175; *Spektator* 21 (1992), 304–307; id., 'De vertoningen van de kloostermoorden in *Gijsbreght van Aemstel*, *Literatuur* 4 (1987), 328–335.

D'Autaaeren en het koor zijn opgehoopt met dooden
 Wat bleef' er ongeschent! wat kreegh'er niet een' krack!
 't Gevlughte volleck zit op trans, gewelf, en dack,
 En bied noch tegenweer, en quetst ons zelfs met steenen
 En hout, uit misverstand. men hoort de vrouwen weenen
 En kindren, die vol schrick krioelen hier en daer,
 De binnetranssen langs. De kaerssen op 't autaaer
 Zijn zommigen gebluscht, en zommigen die blaecken.
 De kerreckschenners woên, en passen wat te raecken,
 En vechten om den buit, en plondren 't al, oock zelf
 Het Marianum, dat te pronck hing van 't gewelf,
 Word afgeruckt: men zet in 't glibbrigh bloed zijn stappen.
 Men torst'er kelcken uit, kassuiffelen en kappen,
 Die stijf staen van gesteent, van parlen en rood goud,
 Om 't heerelijckst, als 't plagh, wanneermen hooghtijd houd,
 En koor en outerkleen.
 de Kersnacht lagh in stucken.

IV, ll. 1154–1175

(... Fearlessly we speed
 Through swords and fire to wager everything for God
 Yet find as we arrive the door battered open
 And hear an echo, resounding through the street
 and throughout the town, that strikes God in the face
 On his high throne, as when before the Jewish temple
 The choirs and altars are piled high with corpses.
 Is anything held sacred? What was not destroyed?
 The refugees crowd the rafters, the roofs, the vaults
 They still fight back; we too are pelted by mistake,
 With planks and bricks. You can hear women weeping;
 Children, frightened to death are swarming everywhere
 Around the galleries. Some candles on the altar
 Have been extinguished, while some others are burning brightly.
 The desecrators rage, and damage what they can,
 They fight for loot, steal even the Marianum,
 gloriously suspended from the vaulted roof.
 That, too, is ripped apart.
 They wade in slippery blood.
 They drag out every chalice, every cassock, copes—
 Embroidered stiff with stones and pearls and reddish gold

Most splendid all, and most fitting for holy days—
Choir and altar cloths. Christmas night became a hell.)

The English translation of the last line gives only one meaning of the Dutch original, 'De kerstnacht lach aan stukken', which literally translates as 'Christmas night fell to pieces', which can with some liberty be rendered as 'Christmas night became a hell', but which means, in a more literal sense, the falling to pieces of the actual *Kerstnacht*, one of the Nieuwe Kerk's most precious treasures, lost during the Reformation, its memory kept in the records of Catholic antiquarians such as Cornelis Gijsbertsz. Plemp, one of Vondel's closest friends.⁴⁹ In a more general way, this episode resonates with the rhetoric of ruins employed in Catholic narratives of Protestant iconoclasm, such as Richard Verstegan's *Theatrum crudelitatum hereticorum nostri temporis* (1587), where acts of real and symbolic violence, the destruction or degradation of buildings, paintings, grave monuments and statues merge seamlessly with acts of humiliation, torture and murder of Catholic clergy.⁵⁰

The destruction of the Nieuwe Kerk thus creates, as it were, an echo-chamber of destruction by fusing the Fall of Troy with the sack of Amsterdam in the early fourteenth century and the iconoclastic fury of the recent past, while drawing an explicit parallel to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. The idea of history we are presented with is one that is essentially theatrical as well as invariably repetitive. *Gysbreght van Aemstel* answers to Walter Benjamin's observations on the *Trauerspiel's* obsession with repetition and recurrence: the past is a stage on which the same bloody tragedies are enacted time after time and again: Jerusalem, Troy, Rome, Mende, Magdeburg, Amsterdam.⁵¹ Yet repetition also functions structurally in the dramatic denouement of the play. Every act of violence not only resonates with countless similar acts in the past, it also gestures towards new crimes, each one more brutal than the previous. Thus, the occupation of the Carthusian monastery

49 The Marianum was a large, double-sided statue of the Virgin surrounded by a nimbus, suspended from the vault of the choir. According to Sterck, Vondel based his description of the Marianum on Plemp's poem 'De patria', Sterck, *Oorkonden over Vondel en zijn kring*, p. 117. On the 'Kerstnacht', see Albach, "De Kersnacht lagh in stucken".

50 On Verstegan, see Paul Arblaster, *Antwerp and the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of the Catholic Reformation* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004); Anne Dillen, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

51 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (New York: Verso publishing, 2009), pp. 81–83.

signals towards the sack of the Nieuwe Kerk, just as the attack on Kristijn, Gijsbreght's sister, who is dragged out of the church by her hair and carried off by the soldiers, anticipates the rape and murder of Klaeris and the nuns. Thus, the third act ends with the chorus singing a hymn on the Slaughter of the Innocents. The fourth act opens with a debate between Bishop Gozewijn and Klaris in which Gozewijn tries to convince her to leave him behind and to save herself. Klaris refuses to abandon him; she regards Gozewijn as her father in spirit and flesh. The nuns are equally resolute. Gozewijn asks them to dress him with the episcopal regalia, miter, ring and staff. Together they sing Simeon's Canticle. At that moment, Gijsbreght storms in, appalled to see the women making no preparations to save themselves. He implores them to flee and pulls out all the stops trying to persuade them of the seriousness of the situation. Accurately, as it will turn out, he predicts how their enemies will slay Gozewijn and rape the nuns. He tells how Machteld appeared to Badeloch, and how a mysterious disembodied voice spurred him on 'save my uncle, save my child'. He challenges their martyr-stance, calling their behavior suicidal, implores them, on his knees, by the blood and the wounds of Christ (1v, ll. 1029–1055). Gozewijn nevertheless remains convinced to die a martyr. As the enemy draws near and Gijsbreght rushes off to try to defend the gate, the scene switches to the hall of Gijsbreght's castle, where Badeloch anxiously awaits news about her husband. Instead, Arend enters, bringing the news of the lost battle, the sack of the Nieuwe Kerk, the murder of Gijsbreght's brother Willem, slain before the altar while attempting to protect a relic of the True Cross, and the abduction of Kristijn. We no longer harbour any illusions about what fate holds in store for Klaeris and Gozewijn. The account of the massacre of the nuns is then brought with an element of delay, coming only in the fifth act, through the report of a messenger.⁵² The messenger describes how Witte van Haemstede, Floris's bastard son fought his way into the convent, finding the nuns and Gozewijn at prayer. He grabs the bishop by the beard with a hand which is said to be 'stained still with Kristijn's blood'. To his surprise the nuns rise to the defense of their bishop, surrounding his body like a human shield. Haemstede hesitates for a moment, astonished, but when he sees the face of Klaeris in the crowd, he thinks back on her father, Van Velsen, the murder, and revenge takes possession of him. He stabs the nuns one by one until he reaches his victims. Gozewijn lashes out at him for shedding women's blood. Haemstede replies like a Protestant church vandal:

52 Ben Albach, 'De vertoningen van de kloostermoorden'.

Ghy zult die eedle Reien
 Als basterdbisschop dan gaen volgen en geleien.
 Hardneckige, legh nu den valschen mijter neer.
 Zoo sprack de basterdzoon, en ruckte hem om veer
 Met stoel met al in 't bloed: de mijter viel 'er mede

v, ll. 1453–1457

(You shall guide and follow that noble chorus
 as a bastard bishop, stubborn fool
 And now off, with that bogus miter.
 Thus speaks the bastard son, pushes him, overturns
 His chair into the pool of blood; the miter falls.)

Haemstede runs him through with his sword. Klaeris, who falls with him places the miter back on her uncle's head, kisses him, catches his last breath and swoons. Haemstede throws her down on the body of Gozewijn, rapes her and kicks her to death. After that he destroys the treasures of the convent, and vandalizes the sepulcher of a martyr-saint. Undeterred by the sweet smell that arises from the remains, he breaks the tomb, scatters the ashes and bones, wrecks the altar, and sets the convent alight (v, ll. 1493–1506).

What exactly are we made to witness here, this communion of suffering? Is it martyrdom? The hymn on the slaughter of the Innocents sung by the chorus of Poor Clares at the end of act III, indeed, appears to prepare the audience for it. The Post-Tridentine Church promoted the cult of the Holy Innocents, regarded as the first martyrs, dying as it were, in the place of Christ, and hence connected to both the Passion and the Eucharist.⁵³ Even the stage time of the massacre of the nuns, midnight on Christmas Eve, orients our expectations towards it. The question, however, is complicated by the way in which the play here appears to call attention to the erasure of religious ritual from the staged performance. According to Sterck, who first reviewed the evidence, it is likely that this scene in the *Gysbreght* originally included a performance of a Christmas mass, which was censured following pressure from the Church council. In the week between the play's intended premiere and its eventual performance on the 3rd of January, Vondel probably rewrote parts of the fourth act, replacing the mass with the scene of Gozewijn's investiture.⁵⁴ Both the

53 Dillen, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, p. 137. According to Koppenol, however, the parallel serves to make the nuns a negative example; like Joseph and Mary, they ought to have fled. See Koppenol, 'Nodeloze onrust', pp. 319–320.

54 Sterck, 'De "Verthooninge vande superstition vande paperye"':

records of the Church council and the correspondence between Vossius and Grotius, it will be remembered, allude to play's the representation of the mass.⁵⁵ Sterck moreover noted how Vondel's play consistently removes any reference to the sacrament of the Eucharist, but that it does so with such vigour that, like the crossed-out passage in a censored book, it actually draws attention to the process of erasure. When Klaeris has made clear her decision to stay with him, Gozewijn praises her by comparing her courage to that of St. Clara, who, armed only with faith and prayers, forced the Saracen army to flee (IV, ll. 981–988).⁵⁶ Few people would have been unaware of the fact, however, that Clara did not meet the Saracen army unarmed, but carrying a monstrance with the consecrated host.⁵⁷ The comparison here serves to draw attention to what is absent, ironically foreshadowing the gulf between the miracle of St. Clare and the murder of Klaeris. Neither Gozewijn nor Klaeris and her nuns die for Christ or for their faith; they fall victim to a blood feud directed at their family, not at their beliefs, their clerical office or state. Gozewijn's motives for sacrifice even sound somewhat worldly. Ever since Gijsbreght's enemies deprived him of his Bishopric, he claims that he has been weary of life. Gijsbreght's accusation that Gozewijn and the nuns make themselves guilty of self-slaughter makes the possibility of false martyrdom explicit. While it is true that he messenger's report adopts the rhetoric of martyrdom in its account of the massacre, yet the imagery it employs on closer inspection turns out to be ambivalent. The nuns are compared to little stars, surrounding the sun and the moon, Gozewijn and Klaeris, to a wreath of red and white roses, to Love, Hope and Charity personified. Yet when Haemstede slays Gozewijn, the bishop is likened to a sacrificial bull; a symbol, perhaps, of pagan, not Christian, sacrifice (v, ll. 1974–

55 In the letter to Vossius, Grotius writes: 'Twaaren onverstandige menschen, die in een treurspel, handelende van een geschiedenis, al driehondert jaaren geleden, het vertoonen van de gewoontens dier tyden niet wilden toelaten: eveneens als die van Geneven, die in den Franschen druk van Cominaeus overal daar verhaalt wordt dat de Koning van Vrankryk ter misse ging, het woordt avondtmaal in de plaats van misse stelden. Ook hebben zich Aeschylus noch Euripides niet geschaamt den aanschouweren de Barbarische godtsdiensten te vertoonen: d'eerste in zyn treurspel van de Persen d'ander in zyn Iphigenia in Tauren. Doch daar uit kan men zien hoe weinig zy zyn, die van zulke dingen wel kunnen oordeelen.' Quoted from Sterck, *Vondel-brieven uit de XVIIde eeuw aan en over den dichter* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1935), p. 89.

56 'Doen 't Sarazijnsche heir vermeersterde al de stad, | Daer sinte Klaere was, wat deedze doch? zy trad | Grootmoedigh in de poort van 't klooster, daerze woonde, | En zagh den vyand wegh, zoo ras hy zich vertoonde: | Haer moed, haer sterck geloof, en yverigh gebed | Verstreckte haer een zwaerd, en harnas, en helmet.'

57 Compare Vondel's 'Lof-zank van Sinte Klara' (1654) WB, v, pp. 836–838.

1975).⁵⁸ When Haemstede turns his vengeance onto Klaeris, the play abandons emblematics for a naturalistic image that conveys swiftness and merciless force; a bird of prey crushing a dove in its claws (v, ll. 1480–1482)⁵⁹

The challenge of representing the massacre appears to arise from the dissonance of attempting to map a subtext of religious violence onto a historic narrative. Ultimately, the construction of a martyr-narrative collapses under the violence of what is being described. When Klaeris comes to and realizes what is happening to her she cries out:

Z'Ontwaect in 't ende, en word van 't schellemstuck bewust,
En roept: mijn bruidegom, zie neder hoe ick lije,
En hoemen my schoffeert. o zuivre maeghd Marije!
O Klaere, aenschouwtghe dit? vrouw Machtelt, zie uw kind.

v, ll. 1476–1479

(She awakes at last, and realizes the evil crime
And cries: My Spouse, look down, and see my suffering,
And how I'm being abused. Oh pure Virgin Mary!
Oh Clara, do you see? Machteld, behold your child!)

These lines form a rhetorical figure known as *anti-climax*, in which the downwards movement of Christ—Virgin—Saint—mother—marks a rejection of transcendence which focuses on the systematic degradation to which Haemstede's violence subjects Klaeris, which reduces the young woman to a helpless girl crying out in vain for a mother to protect her.⁶⁰ Historically overdetermined, these scenes of rape and sacrilege resist codification; the evocation of the language and tropes of martyrdom, sacrament and sacrifice only increases their jarring, discordant effect. Instead they re-inscribe the past into the present, commemorating, re-enacting its traumas, right at the centre of Amsterdam's civic culture.

58 Myra Scholz-Heersprink, 'Vondels Gijsbrecht van Aemstel as emblematic and figural drama', *Spektator* 4 (1974–1975), 570–581.

59 'De booswicht slaet heur klaght en woorden in den wind, | Gelijk een vogel grijp 't gepiep der simple duiven, | Wen hy 'er uit de vlucht een vast krijght in zijn kluiven.' Compare 'Maeghdeburgh's Liickoffer', ll. 38–42: 'En d'Arend kluyft soo d'opgegreepde tortel. | Haer' pluym verstuyft, haer teer gebeente kraeckt, | En 't sieltje steent, eer 't aen syn' dood geraeckt. | Des kreunt sich niet, die Godheyd aller vogels: | Die 't Roomsche ryck beschaduwet, met haer' vlogels.'

60 On this passage see Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability*, pp. 160–161.

And yet, there is a way in which Vondel's play breaks the *Trauerspiel's* vision of catastrophe, ruin and repetition. As the enemies are gaining control over more and more of the city and the defenders are beaten back to Gijsbreght's castle it becomes clear that surrender or death are the only options left open. Gijsbreght declines the offer of surrender by treaty with the possibility of a pardon and prepares to fight to the death. But Badeloch refuses his order to take the children and flee; preferring to die fighting at her husband's side. Badeloch's reasoning is perfectly coherent, yet this act of female noncompliance enrages Gijsbreght, and it is his fury, with the combined pressure of the other characters that finally bullies her into obedience. She asks the dean, brother Peter, to pray that an angel might appear to guide the refugees on their perilous path. As Peter leads the crowd in prayer, the archangel Raphael appears, urging Gijsbreght to listen to his wife. The town is lost and there is no use in further fighting; Gijsbreght now must put the lives of the survivors first. Raphael charges Gijsbreght to take to the sea, and lead the remnants of his people to safety. The archangel himself will cover the land with a thick shroud of mist, and appear as a light in the sky to guide the exiles on their way. Raphael offers a brief glimpse of a brighter future, when Holland will rise and Amsterdam will attain great glory. Yet this is not a Virgilian prophecy of imperial destiny, *imperium sine fine*. For from now on, the fates of the dynasty of Aemstel and that of the city of Amsterdam will take different, separate courses. Amsterdam, now defeated, will rise again, and will attain first prosperity, then power. In time to come, Holland will defeat the Spanish monarchy and reinstate its former liberties, and greatness will follow in freedom's trail. Then, the time will have come when, 'in the midst of the struggle', Amsterdam will 'lift its crown to heaven and through ice and fire will find another world'. Yet if this is a prophecy of future imperial greatness, it is a fraught one, indeed. For with the overthrow of Spanish tyranny will also come the overthrow of Catholicism, and, following that, 'wars without end' (v, ll. 1830–1842).⁶¹ Indeed, it is worth noting how the image of the intrepid merchant vessel, which occurred in 'On Amsterdam' as metaphor for the nexus of commercial prosperity, toleration and good governance, here sig-

61 'Zy zal met grooter glans uit asch en stof verrijzen: | Want d'opperste beleit zijn zaecken wonderbaer. | De Hollandsche gemeent zal, eer drie honderd jaer | Verloopen, zich met maght van bondgenooten stercken, | En schoppen 't Roomsche outaer met kracht uit alle kercken, | Verklaeren 't graeflijck hoofd vervallen van zijn Recht, | En heerschen staetsgewys; het welck een bits gevecht, | En endeloozen krijgh en onweer zal verwecken, | Dat zich gansch Christenrijck te bloedigh aen wil trecken. | In 't midden van den twist, en 't woeden nimmer moe, | Verheft uw stad haer kroon tot aen den hemel toe, | En gaet door vier en ys een andre weereld vinden, | En dondert met geschut op alle vier de winden.'

nals anxiety, rather than civic pride—the ship is literally at sea, exposed to the fighting elements, and, apparently, rudderless. Several years before he would take the final step of severing his ties to Protestantism, Vondel had come to view the legacy of Revolt and Reformation as an ambiguous one, leading, on the one hand, to the rise of the Republic as a great power, and on the other, to schism, division and war. A later edition of the play, printed in 1659, emphasizes this sense that the historical destiny of Amsterdam and its ruling dynasty are taking separate courses even more strongly, by having Raphael, in four lines following 1684 enjoin Gijsbreght and his family to remain loyal to ‘the old faith’:

Valt u 't verwoesten der godtsdienstigheit te lastigh,
 Volhardt by 't out geloof en Godts altaer stantvastigh,
 Op 't spoor der ouderen, u moedigh voorgetreên.
 Zoo draeft men recht naer Godt, door alle starren heen.

(Does the destruction of religion grieve you too sore,
 Persist in the old faith and God's altar constantly
 In the trail of the ancestors, who bravely preceded you.
 That's how one hastes to God, through all the stars.)

Gijsbreght, meanwhile, is charged to resettle the remnants of his people on the Baltic coast of North-Eastern Germany where his family shall meet peace and prosperity, but where they will have to forego any part or role in Amsterdam's future glory. The comforting presence of Raphael, whose appearance seems a response to Badeloch's despair as much Brother Peter's prayer, echoes that of Venus, Aeneas's mother in the *Aeneid*. But this scene also connects to earlier moments in the play in which the female perspective, consistently overruled or ignored by the male characters in the play is validated through a higher authority, and a woman's alleged flaws of weaknesses and emotionality turn out to make her more receptive to numinous insight, and more responsive to the divine will.⁶² Gijsbreght, for once, appears to have got the message when,

62 See Marco Prandoni, 'Intertextuality—*Gysbreght van Aemstel*', in Bloemendal and Korsten, *Joost van den Vondel*, pp. 271–284, esp. p. 283: 'The involvement of the supernatural, which bypasses the realm of human discourse, restores dignity to the woman's voice, and grants her a divine seal of approval. The voice that had been marginalized is restored to its central place'; Frans-Willem Korsten similarly insists that the play validates Badeloch's perspective, but he is, I believe, mistaken in identifying Badeloch with an alternative ethics that challenges a patriarchal order based on divine sovereignty. See Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability*, pp. 164–167. Badeloch's position is not per se antithetical to Christianity,

in response to the angel's message he turns to his wife: 'Now I bow down for God, my love, my chosen one | And no longer refuse to heed your counsel and here lay down my armor. Resistance is of no avail.' (ll. 1872–1875).⁶³ Gijsbrecht charges Brother Peter to take his family's crucifix, and take the lead, followed by the people, while he himself will guard the rear.

Yet this new insight, and the radical reversal of values it entails has come at tremendous cost, and the last moments of the play underline the pain of loss and separation as husband and wife say farewell to their native town, and Gijsbrecht speaks the concluding words: 'Farewell, my town of Aemstel, expect a different Lord'. It is, however, this trauma, this historical rupture which opens up an alternative horizon, a space wedged in between the legendary past and the foretold future that offers neither repetition nor redemption, but release from history. The deep archaeology of the plot, with its different layers of historical allusion, creates an effect of dissonance, prohibiting a straightforwardly confessional reading of the play. Why have the city's saints left her churches and altars? The play confronts such questions of trauma, historic rupture and loss, with honesty and daring, yet such acknowledgment appears to have come at a great cost. The *Gysbreght* registers not one, but several areas of conflict and division within Dutch culture, and perhaps, within the poet's mind; the tension between a fierce civic pride, and an increasingly dim view of the country's recent past, between the conflicting demands of peace, and of religious toleration, and between an revulsion from the violence of religious strife, and the subterranean lure of the martyr-narratives on which he had been reared. In a poem written several years after the publication of the *Gysbreght*, Vondel would revisit these questions and remarkably, seemingly attempted to undo the work of the play. Interestingly, it is a celebration of the third centenary of the 'Miracle of Amsterdam', a Eucharistic miracle through which, during the late Middle Ages, Amsterdam had risen to European fame as a site of pilgrimage. The poem, which so offended former friends like Hooft, was dedicated to the 'old citizenry

but can be viewed in a tradition of late medieval and early devotion which values female models of affective spirituality and identifies Jesus with the figure of the nurturing mother. See on this topic for instance Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); on female models of affective spirituality, see Debora Kuller Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, Subjectivity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994) ch. 5: 'Saints and Lovers: Mary Magdalen and the Ovidian Angel', pp. 167–191.

63 'Nu buigh ick my voor God, mijn lief, mijn uitverkoren: | Nu weiger ick geensins na uwen raed te hooren, | En legh hier 't harnas af. Hier baet gheen tegenweer.'

of Amsterdam', identified as those who have 'sprung from Gijsbreght's patrimony', and 'who have stayed true to the lawful Church'.⁶⁴ Like the *Gysbreght*, the poem evokes the burning of Troy, yet here, rather, to praise that special providence which twice spared the miraculous host from the all-consuming flames. The descendants of Gijsbreght, whom the play had so emphatically placed outside history, are in a remarkable reversal, re-instated as the city's true heirs, now to the exclusion of their Protestant fellow citizens.

Further Reading

- Bloemendal, Jan, and Frans Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe, 1.
- Brietz Monta, Susannah, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Gregory, Brad S., *Salvation at Stake Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Pollmann, Judith, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520–1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- Prandoni, Marco, *Een mozaïek van stemmen: Verbeeldend lezen in de Gysbreght van Aemstel* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2007).
- Walsham, Alexandra, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

64 Vondel, 'Eeuwgety der Heilige Stede t'Amsterdam. Aen d'oude Burgery', WB, v, pp. 133–137: 'O BURGERY, uit Gysbrechts erf gesproten, | En noit veraert van uwen ouden struick, in 't wetting kerkgebruik'. Hooft compared the poem stance to the way in which a champion fighter might stick a knife in a wall as a public challenge: Hooft to Barlaeus, 20 april 1645, in Sterck, *Vondel-brieven*, p. 113.

PART 2

Religion



Political Martyrdom at the English College in Rome

Howard B. Norland

Although martyrdom had been a popular subject in medieval England as attested by the widespread distribution of *The Golden Legend* and the frequent performance of saints' plays, it took on a new life in the sixteenth century with the Reformation. John Bale, a former Carmelite prior who married and became a prolific Protestant playwright as well as a controversial religious author, may have stimulated an interest in martyrs by his collection of Wycliffite martyrologies and publication in 1574 in Marburg of 'The Examination of Anne Askew', an account of the only woman to be tortured in the Tower of London and then burned at the stake as a heretic in 1546. Bale returned to England in 1547 after the accession of Edward VI and resumed his role as a religious controversialist, but he was forced to leave England again at Queen Mary's accession. Narrowly escaping arrest, he fled to the Netherlands and then on to Switzerland, where he settled in Basel during Mary's reign. He returned again to England after Elizabeth's accession and died there in 1563.

However, it was John Foxe who became the major spokesman of Protestant martyrology. He began his account of martyrs in 1559 in Latin, but in 1563 he chose English for his *Acts and Monuments*, which was expanded in six subsequent editions over the next fifty years.¹ Although Foxe's *magnum opus* sought to include Christian martyrs of the early Church, its focus remained on the martyrs of the sixteenth century, some 284 of whom were killed during Mary's reign² as well as 63 who had been executed during Henry's rule. Probably the most famous were the Oxford martyrs—Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer—who were burnt at the stake in 1555 and 1556. Tried as heretics, these victims are described in detail from arrest to execution in the commentary on the published text. The emphasis on the physical suffering in the commentary is graphically portrayed in the accompanying woodcuts. Being burned at the

1 For the texts of the versions of John Foxe's martyrology, see <http://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php>. On its relevance see, for instance, John N. King, *John Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); William Haller, *Elect Nation: The Meaning and Relevance of John Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

2 John Foxe claimed there were 300 victims of the Marian persecution.

stake and then drawn and quartered was a fate suffered by many of the declared heretics; the effect of course created an intense hatred and fear of Catholicism, which was compounded by plots and rumors throughout Elizabeth's reign and that of her Stuart successor, James I: the Northern Rebellion in 1569, followed by the St. Bartholomew Day massacre of Huguenots in Paris in 1572, the Babington plot in 1586, and the Spanish Armada in 1588, but most threatening of all, the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. In 1606 the Oath of Allegiance to James I was required of all subjects in the kingdom. It further specified that the pope had no authority to depose a king or to authorize a foreign prince to invade the kingdom, nor did the pope have the power to absolve any subject from subscribing to this oath. In 1606 this was the context of religious conflict—with many political implications—from the Protestant perspective at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The Catholic view was very different. The martyrdom of Catholics extended periodically from 1534, when Henry VIII declared his independence from Rome and assumed the role as head of the English Church, until 1680 according to Catholic records. After Mary acceded to the throne in 1553, following the Protestant reign of Edward VI, she sought to re-establish Catholicism, and the pope appointed Reginald Pole as the Archbishop of Canterbury, who became the leader of the anti-Reformation movement in England. Nicholas Harpsfield became a major spokesman for the Catholic cause after Mary's death and plots to restore Catholicism in England implied a major change in the government involving, not only a change in the monarch, but also in the succession. At its base it was treasonous, as the Protestant government realized. That is the central difference between the Catholic martyrs and the Protestants who were viewed as heretics. The Catholics in the kingdom were viewed as the enemy within, a kind of Fifth Column that was most dangerous because it depended on secrecy and deception. For Elizabeth and her ministers, as well as her successors, the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath of Succession were the bulwark determined to protect the monarch's person and his/her rule.

The creation of Catholic colleges for English recusants in various towns and countries in Europe posed a threat with serious implications for the Protestant societies, particularly in northern Europe. The immediate danger to England must have been recognized as the colleges of Douai and St. Omer became popular training sites for English boys; they were the closest and most accessible for Catholic families who had not accepted the new English Church, though some boys found their ways to colleges, many operated by the Society of Jesus, as far away as Prague, the Iberian peninsula, and Rome. The English College in Rome was founded in 1580 with fifty students, a number that later increased to seventy-five, and like other colleges of its kind, it soon began producing plays.

Though 'not constitutionally Jesuit, it followed the regulations of the *Ratio studiorum* only as far as the rector might dictate', as Suzanne Gossett points out.³ This allowed for some individual interpretation of the rules. Several of the plays performed at the college had already been put on at St. Omer, a common practice among the Jesuit schools, although some were apparently written by members of the faculty where the plays were performed. This seems to be the case for the three martyr plays we shall examine, *Thomas Morus*, *Thomas Cantuariensis*, and *Roffensis*, commemorating Henry VIII's celebrated Lord Chancellor, Thomas More, the much loved Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry II, Thomas Becket, and the revered Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher.⁴ All three plays appear to have been written for performance at Carnival, and all three are anonymous; whether they were written by the same author or by two or three authors has not been determined,⁵ but the attitude toward the secular power expressed in them is consistent.

Thomas Morus

Performed at the English College in Rome in 1612 according to the preserved manuscript in the college archives, *Thomas Morus* is said at the end of the text to have been 'thrice given, always pleased.' In fact, according to the records, it appears to have been performed at least six times during Carnival of 1612.⁶ The choice of subject was perhaps natural since More was one of the most popular English Catholic heroes on record, and his grandson may have been a student at the English College at that time. Also, a play entitled *Sir Thomas More*, written in English and designed for public theater performance in England, had been prepared and submitted to the official censor, Edmund Tilney, some dozen years earlier. The surviving manuscript, which had been marked for required

3 Suzanne Gossett, 'Drama in the English College, Rome, 1591–1660', *English Literary Renaissance* 3 (1973), 60–93, esp. p. 62.

4 All three plays, bound with four others performed at the college, are found in MS English College (Rome), Lib. 321, fols. 2^r–38^r (*Thomas Morus*), 61^r–101^v (*Thomas Cantuariensis*), and 179^r–217^r (*Roffensis*). In this essay, all Latin quotations and their English translations (with the occasional alteration) are taken from *Thomas Morus, Thomas Cantuariensis, and Roffensis*, ed. by Dana F. Sutton, *The Philological Museum* (2004, 2005, 2013): <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk>.

5 See Gossett, 'Drama in the English College', p. 69, and Sutton, 'Appendix: Overview of English College MS 321'.

6 See Gossett, 'Drama in the English College', p. 91.

revision, is believed to be the work of at least five authors: Anthony Munday, Henry Chettle, Thomas Heywood, Thomas Dekker, and William Shakespeare.⁷ This play was not published until centuries later, although its existence was known, despite its performance never having been allowed. A comparison of the texts of *Sir Thomas More* and *Thomas Morus* does not reveal that the author of the Latin version was aware of the English popular play, but its existence and the requirement of textual revisions point to the controversial nature of the subject matter. In fact, the martyrdom of Thomas More continued to be a sensitive issue because it questioned the power of the king in relation to the Church and prompted the charge of treason. However, a comparison of the two plays throws into bold relief the way in which More was represented for the Protestant popular English audience on the one hand and perceived by the Catholic Church for its audience of candidates for the priesthood and potential martyrdom on the other. More's reputation as a man of the people underlies the character of the protagonist in both plays. In the popular English play More's sense of humor and his appreciation of wit, which he demonstrates on many serious occasions, make him a comic figure that lightens the mood and emphasizes his intelligence as well as his self-control. Thus he emerges as a guide for the audience to evaluate the speech and action of other characters present on stage. In comparison, Thomas More in the Latin Catholic play is not a comic wit per se, although he does on occasion show a flash of humor. Rather, he is a symbol of piety and right judgment, who is courageous and determined to remain true to his faith in spite of pressures from the king, his friends, and his family. His relationship with the king appears to be very strong; clearly Henry VIII admires More's character but is frustrated by his refusal to alter his judgment that God's command must come before the king's desire. As a result, Henry is cast as denying God and flouting God's lieutenant on earth, the Pope. Assuming the role as Head of the English Church, Henry is represented as a self-appointed tyrant without authority. By contrast, the English popular play does not question Henry's authority or his right to demand obedience from his subjects. This is not an issue, and Henry VIII never appears on stage.

Another significant difference in the two plays is the portrayal of More's relationship to his family and their attitude toward his martyrdom. Well known were Erasmus's letters celebrating More's family for their learning, scholarly discipline, and family devotion that extended to court wards and family friends,

7 For a discussion of this play and its context, see *Sir Thomas More*, ed. by John Jowett (London: Methuen, 2011).

Anne Cresacre and Margaret Gyge.⁸ Harpsfield and Stapleton, early apologists for Thomas More, emphasized his particular fondness for them and the very strong bond he had with his eldest daughter, Margaret. Clearly his relationships with the young women in his family were especially noted.⁹ His interest in young women from the perspective of learning and protection, as well as the appropriate selection of marriage partners, was indicated in his correspondence with his friends and family. The English popular play includes More's wife and his daughter Margaret, who was married to William Roper, as well as 'More's other daughter', unspecified by name. In the Latin version performed at the English College in Rome, neither More's wife nor any of his daughters appear. This would have been in accordance with the Jesuit dictum against women roles in college productions. The one More family member cast was More's only son John, who does not appear at all in the English popular version. John has a somewhat questionable reputation. Historically, after More's execution, he signed the necessary allegiance to King Henry VIII and was pardoned, but rumors circulated about his intellectual capacity. He did not attend either Oxford or Cambridge and did not enter the Inns of Court for legal training. Erasmus dedicated his commentary on the poem *Nux* (1523) to him, but John appears to have left no literary heritage.¹⁰ Clearly, he was introduced into the Latin play as a figure with whom the audience of teen-age boys could identify. John's role must not have been an unmitigated success because his part was reduced in a manuscript revision of the play.

The Latin *Thomas Morus* adopts an old-fashioned image of evil from the morality play in the figure of Cacodemon, who introduces the source of the evil in Henry VIII's court; he focuses upon the tyrant's rage, which he encourages and applies to the current situation:

8 On this, see Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher, *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985–1987), II, pp. 456–459, where the relevant letters are mentioned.

9 Nicholas Harpsfield, *The life and death of Sr Thomas Moore, knight, sometymes Lord high Chancellor of England*; a modern edition of the manuscript in William Roper and Nicholas Harpsfield, *Lives of Saint Thomas More*, ed. by E.E. Reynolds (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1963); Thomas Stapleton, *Vita Thomae Mori*, in id., *Tres Thomae* (Douai 1588); see also *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More, Formerly Lord Chancellor of England* (Part III of "Tres Thomae", printed at Douai, 1588), transl. by Philip E. Hallett (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1928).

10 See P.S. Allen and H.M. Allen, *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, 12 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906–1958), V, pp. 363–365, Ep. 1402. On John More see Bietenholz and Deutscher, *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, II, pp. 454–455 (s.v. John (111) More).

Invisa exulat,
 Sed puritate nobilis, regum genus
 Catherina, pellex Anna regalem obtinet
 Incesta thalamum, filia an coniux viro
 Incerta. Dubia sobole perturbat domum,
 Dum sibi sororem parturit, neptim viro.

i.ii, ll. 75–80

(Catherine is in exile, hated but noble for her purity and born of kings, while unchaste Anne, the whore, obtains the royal bedchamber. It is unclear whether she is a daughter or a wife. She throws his household into confusion with her questionable offspring, she gives birth to a sister for herself, a niece for her husband.)

This suggests that Henry is guilty, not only of deserting his lawful wife, but also of committing incest because of his previous affair with Anne's mother. This charge of lustful incest is repeated several times in Catholic propaganda.¹¹ Thus Henry is identified at the beginning as the source of the evil in the court and the natural opponent to virtue and goodness, while More becomes the antagonist of tyranny and defender of the Catholic Church. Henry's supporters—Cromwell, Cranmer, and other corrupt officials in the government—encourage the repeal of the pope's laws and applaud the king's opulence, which will turn the spoils from the closure of the monasteries into rewards for Henry's followers. Although the members of the king's party are not individualized in the play, in Act IV Henry draws out Cromwell, Cranmer, and Audley, revealing their harsh characterizations of each other—their treachery and disloyalty as well as their hypocrisy. These judges of More, who sentenced him to death, are completely discredited before they reach their verdict.

The preserved manuscript does not reveal much of the music that must have been included in the production but, in a feature characteristic of Catholic college productions, six dancers in pairs provide a distraction from the dialogue (II.iii). The courtiers accompanied by the Chorus liven things up for a

11 The first to suggest this, according to William Camden, was Nicholas Sander in his 1585 *De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani*. The Catholic writers, Nicholas Harpsfield, Reginald Pole, and William Rastell, do not mention it. The issue is discussed by Christopher Highley in "A Pestilent and Seditious Book": Nicholas Sander's *Schismatis Anglicani* and Catholic Histories of the Reformation', in Paulina Kewes (ed.), *The Uses of History in Early Modern England* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006), pp. 147–167.

little while, but the final two acts bring the martyrdom of More to an unspectacular end. More and the king's men are at an impasse. When confronted by them, he refuses to endorse the king's will to make Anne his wife and mother of the heir to the throne. Although More begs for compassion because of old age weariness, he is not allowed to avoid the king's demand. To increase the pressure on him, the Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, is introduced into the play; Rochester proves as adamant as More in refusing to endorse Henry's scheme to reject the pope's role as head of the Church and ignore his refusal to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. More and Fisher are thus brought together as traitors, and both are sentenced to be executed. They are beheaded within a few days of each other, the audience is told, but the comparison between the two martyrs is inevitable. A short time after Fisher is introduced into the play, he is beheaded and his head placed on a pole, whereas More is represented as meeting his son John for the last time. He chides John for foolishly prating and not living up to his family training, and he instructs him on the importance of virtue, saying: 'Here the turning wheel spins, here too contrary winds do blow. Virtue is the single sure foundation; relying on it, you will stand' ('Versatilis et hic volvitur gyro rota, | Contrarii etiam hic saeviunt venti. Basis | Est una stabilis virtus, hac nixus stabis', III.vi, ll. 1225–1227). John here becomes an example for the seminary students in the audience for occasions when they will encounter a critical situation. Only a few minutes later, the Bishop of Rochester's head is brought onto the stage, and More declares that he will bring his aged body to the blessed scaffold. Joining the martyrdoms together, the author emphasizes the virtue of More, which reaffirms the courage and conviction of Fisher.

The scene in which More meets with the king and his accusers takes the form of a trial as the prosecutor presents the charges and the king's supporters question his responses (IV.iii). Offering a defense of his actions based on his Catholic beliefs, More explains his intransigence as a demonstration of his Christian faith. He welcomes martyrdom as the price he is willing to pay. When he is sentenced to high treason, a crime punishable by drawing and quartering, he does not blanch, but as an act of mercy it is announced that he will instead be beheaded and his body will be buried. Other signs of pity and respect are introduced but passed over. More links his fate with Fisher at the end of the trial. Before departing, he says: 'Am I to follow pious Rochester? You command. I shall follow wholeheartedly. Let eternal hymns of praise be sung in your honor' ('Pium | Sequar ego Roffensem? Iubes, totus sequar, | Aeterna laudum cantica sonentur tibi', IV.iii, ll. 1664–1666). He refuses to call Henry a tyrant, saying he has followed the bad advice of his counselors, who are now at this trial. The scene nevertheless ends with a mild witticism on More's part. To Cromwell's

news that Henry has reduced the sentence from hanging to decapitation, More rejoinders: 'at least he is saving work for the hangman' ('Labore nempe carnificem levat', III.iv, l. 1742).

The final act of the play opens with John More complaining about the disappearance of justice and piety, deploring the reign of crime, and appealing to those martyrs who have gone before: 'o you, destined to be member of the sacred company and part of the purple-clad choir of martyrs' ('O tu futurus caetui comes sacro, | Et purpurato martyrum aequalis choro!', v.i, ll. 1810–1812). The disposal of the martyrs' bodies is raised as a practical issue of martyrdom when More returns to the stage on his way to his execution. Although the execution itself is not staged and stories about More's conversation with the hangman and his witticisms at his final critical moments on the scaffold are ignored by the Latin author of the production at the English College in Rome, More does have a witty exchange with two men on the way to his death. A citizen kisses More's hand as repayment for security conferred upon him to befall him in heaven and More answers, 'Let God grant you whatever you wish, such a brave heart never asks for forbidden things' ('Det tibi quaevis Deus, | Tam forte nunquam pectus illicita rogat', v.iii, ll. 1838–1839). This conversation is interrupted by a little merriment. The king's servant, Audley, tells More he has heard that he has changed his mind, to which More replies that indeed he has: 'I had thought to remove the beard from my head, but now beard and head will be discarded together' ('Barba statueram ponere erasum caput, | At barba nunc ponetur et caput simul', v.iii, ll. 1843–1844). Audley takes this as mockery of the king, to which More responds, 'Why should I not joke? Our serene king bids me set aside things I take seriously. I obey, and set aside my head' ('Quid ni iocare? Seria benignus iubet | Princeps remittam. Pareo, demitto caput', v.iii, ll. 1847–1849). After More has departed from the stage the last time, the Chorus speaks to the grieving John More:

Puer

Miserande nimium. flere nos vices tuae
 Possent coegisse, publicae casus rei
 Ni postularet quos damus lachrimas tibi.
 Non filio tantum perit Morus tuus,
 Eripitur Anglia, occidit tibi pater.

v.iii, ll. 1877–1882

(You very piteous boy, your catastrophes could compel us to weep, if the public calamity did not require the tears we are giving for you. Your More did not just die for his son. He is taken from you, but stolen from England.)

This emphasis on the national calamity that More's martyrdom represents makes John's grieving appear selfish. The martyrdom is not shown in all of its inherent violence but it is rendered in dignity with a touch of More's old wit.

Thomas Cantuariensis

Just one year later at Carnival of 1613, the English College at Rome performed another martyr play, *Thomas Cantuariensis* (*Thomas of Canterbury*), celebrating a most popular English saint, Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162 to 1170. Although the shrine at Canterbury Cathedral had been brutally destroyed in 1538, along with its relics, on the orders of Henry VIII, Thomas Becket continued to be honored by Catholics in England and was a favorite saint at the English College in Rome. This may help to explain the choice of *Thomas Cantuariensis* as the follow-up play to *Thomas Morus*. However, more important, it carried on the conflict between papal authority and secular power, a central issue of the Reformation in England, and also provided an historical mirror of the past that presented a warning of the future. This must have been particularly relevant to the historical context of 1613 when the English were still mourning the loss of Prince Henry, the eldest son of King James, a particularly promising and popular eighteen-year-old heir to the throne. His death on 6 November 1612 left Prince Charles, aged eleven, next in line; however, he was so weak and sickly that parliament passed a bill making Princess Elizabeth, aged thirteen, and her newly married teenaged husband, the Elector Palatine, joint heirs to the English crown should Charles not survive or prove incapable of ruling. The line of succession was a delicate point, and in case James should die, the king's immediate heirs would be children, which suggested instability and political maneuvering in the competition for power. The youthful monarch lacks experience in judging the people and circumstances with which he must deal, and as a result he fails to control the developing action and makes serious errors, as the text of *Thomas Cantuariensis* illustrates in the person of the Young Henry, the son of Henry II.

The Latin author provides an image of Henry II's court apparently ruled by Henry the Younger, who had been crowned king on June 14, 1170, while Becket was in exile, by his father with the collaboration of the Archbishop of York and Bishops of London and Salisbury, apparently to ensure the succession. However, Henry II is absent when Becket returns to Canterbury, and Young Henry appears to be in charge; in fact, his father never appears in the play. The conflict waged between papal authority and secular power is thus represented by the Young Henry, who is described or identified as a boy several times,

particularly in the first three acts, usually in relation to his immaturity and vulnerability to evil. As Becket says, ‘the Young King’s heart is youthful, it is quickly swept to wrath, and, as is youth’s way, the emotion he conceives will very soon be set aside’ (‘Iuvenile regi pectus est, aestu citus | Raptatur irae, quodque iuvenes assolent | Motus quos concipit cito ponet cito’, II.iv, ll. 561–563). The Earl of Leicester, in a choric speech, responds to Young Henry’s refusal to hear Becket’s entreaties unless he absolve the bishops who had defied him and whom he excommunicated—in other words, unless he allow the king to dictate the government of the Church as well as the state. Leicester explains the implications:

Quid hoc? Praesulis tanti preces
 Aure obstinata respuit iuuenis? Negat
 Manum osculandum tendere. O patriae vices!
 O sortem acerbam! Fertili a cuius sinu
 Tot prodiere principes vere pii
 Et Christiani, dispares quantum videt
 Surgere nepotes, impios, duros, feros!
 Fulsero quondam decore regali, Angliae
 Torsere quondam sceptras queis studium fuit
 Cleri tueri iura, pontifices ope
 Protegere certa, praesules sacri gregis
 Quem purpuratus proluit Christi liquor
 Honore summo prosequi. Hinc regni decus,
 Hinc res secundae plebis, hinc pietas viget.
 At nunc sequentes quantus incessit furor!
 Quam terminum ultra moris humani tument!
 Utinamque finis iste contingat, gradus,
 Nec sit futuri nuper admissum scelus.
 Nam quanta adultus ista qui fecit puer?

II.iii, ll. 519–573

(What’s this? Does the boy scorn so great a prelate’s entreaties with a stubborn ear? Does he refuse to hold out his hand for the kissing? Oh our nation’s misfortunes! Oh its bitter fate! From its fertile bosom have issued so many truly pious and Christian sovereigns, and how unlike the descendants it sees cropping up, impious, harsh and fierce! Once England’s scepters shone when they were wielded by men zealous to protect pontiffs with their assured strength, to attend with the greatest honor on prelates of the holy flock, washed with Christ’s ruddy blood. By

this flourished the realm's glory, by this the people's prosperity, by this piety thrived. But now what madness has overcome their successors! How they are puffed up beyond human limit! And would this were the limit, and not a step further towards future crime! For what great crimes will he commit as an adult, who has done these things as a boy?)

The worry is what the young heir to the throne might be capable of doing as an adult, if he shows such disrespect to the senior Archbishop of the Church in England. The fear that the youthful monarch is leading the state into degradation is an interpretation of the present and a warning for the future if the state is governed by a youthful monarch. In the context of Stuart England, this would mean the case of the country being ruled by the weak, sickly Charles or his sister Elizabeth and her boyish husband.

The Latin author may have found it easier to cast a teenage seminarian as a young king than the fifty-year-old Becket, but this dialogue also served his interpretation very well by inverting the usual relationship of youth and age as the young man holds a superior position to the senior spokesman for the Church. This changes the dimensions of the conflict between secular power and religious authority immensely. However, in Act III the action shifts toward the martyrdom of Becket and its source, which is put squarely in the mouth of the older Henry II. The potential assassins discuss at length the king's wrath provoked by Becket, and Moreville claims the king 'turned to him and said: "Will nobody free me from that man?"' ('*Conversus ad me deinde, me nemo ex meis | Liberat ab illo?*' III.i, ll. 762–763), referring to Becket; this question supposedly articulated by Henry II has been repeated so often by writers about these events that it is taken to be true. Even though the king does not appear in the Latin play, he is charged with the responsibility for the martyrdom. Young Henry returns to the stage in the following scene with his brother Richard, who provides a choric commentary on Young Henry's response to the Hermit, in actual fact an Angel, who provides a prophetic image of the future. Addressing Young Henry as 'feckless boy' ('*puer impotens*', III.iii, l. 897), the Hermit predicts that he and his brothers will rise up against their father: 'the sons will wage wicked wars against their felonious father' ('*Scelerata nati bella scelerato inferent | Dira parenti*', III.iii, ll. 926–927). This future family rebellion is perceived as stemming from royal evil, which is punished by providence. The Latin author also uses a supernatural being later, in Act IV, to reassure Becket that although he will suffer martyrdom, the benefits are worth the suffering. There, the Angel explains that

Sorte felici cades

(Si casus iste transitus dici potest),
 Cuius salutem morbidis dabit cinis
 Veniam dolenti scelera, solamen bonis,
 Durisque presso pectori laetas vices,
 Sol Anglicanum lumine illustrans solum
 Quacunque puram tellus admittit fidem
 Dicere clarus.

IV.ii, ll. 1193–1200

(You will fall by a happy stroke of fate (if that passage can be called fate's stroke), you whose ashes will give health to the ailing, forgiveness for the man who repents his sins, consolation to the good and happy turns of fortune for those with hard-pressed hearts, you will be called a great sun brightening English soil with your light, illuminating wherever the land admits pure faith.)

The Angel then proceeds to prophesy the Reformation, beginning with Wycliffe and continuing with Luther, which produces the martyrdoms of Thomas More, John Fisher, and later Campion, Southwell, Walpole, Garnet, the Roberts, and the Barkworths. Finally, he addresses the audience at the performance in the English College: 'Nor should I pass you by, you Roman youth ... Here you have Sherwins, Harts, Haycocks, Newportos. Another Gregory, rival to the Great, will send these.' ('Nec te praeteream, pubes Romana ... | En ibi Sherwinos, Hartos, Hadocos, Neuportos. | Aemulus hos magni mittet Gregorius alter', IV.ii, ll. 1254–1255). This direct appeal to the students who were carrying on the mission of the Church by following Becket's example of martyrdom reinforces the purpose of the play. It also prepares the audience for Becket's assassination.

Becket is not murdered on stage, though his death is graphically described; however, it is the way the martyrdom is represented that focuses its meaning. Unlike the executions of More and Fisher, the murder of Becket is unauthorized by government decree; rather, four landowners from southwest England take justice into their own hands as they put loyalty to the king before reverence to the Church. The way in which Becket is killed emphasizes the dishonorable nature of the act. Four armed knights launch a cowardly attack on an unarmed priest in his place of worship, dash his brains out, and then run away. Young Henry, to whom the messenger directs his report, interrupts the account by shouting: 'Oh shameful deed and far more shameful, Henry, will be your name' ('O turpe facinus, turpius longe tuum, | Henrice, nomen!', v.i, ll. 1575–1576), and he accuses himself, a former enemy of Becket, of responsibility for the murder.

However, it is the assassins themselves who are focused upon in the final act. They are so overcome by their guilt that they expect to be crushed to death for killing the head of the English Church, their father as they call him. When all four assassins lie down awaiting their punishment and then consider suicide, they undergo a strange transformation. Their interpretation of the event is that though they deserved to die, God in His goodness has indulged them with time for penitence and will forgive them. The play ends with their promise to go ‘immediately to Rome, to the feet of the supreme pontiff’ (‘summi protinus Romam ad pedes | Praesulis abibo’) and, declares Tracy on behalf of all the assassins, ‘I shall endure whatever punishment he appoints’ (‘crimnis paenas dabo, | Quascunque ponet ille’, v.ii, ll. 1858–1860). The play thus ends on a note of piety as the promise of forgiveness through penitence triumphs over tragedy.

Roffensis

The third English martyr play produced at the English College in the second decade of the seventeenth century appears to have followed some five or six years after *Thomas Cantuariensis*. Although no record of performance has been discovered, it is believed to have been written about 1617–1618. Like the earlier martyr plays, *Roffensis*, which focuses upon John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, is anonymous; whether it was written by the same author or authors of the More or Becket plays has not been determined, though it was likely intended for performance at Carnival, as were the others.¹² *Roffensis* revisits the reign of Henry VIII that had been the context for the earlier *Thomas Morus*, and although a number of characters are repeated, including Henry VIII and members of his court, a major difference in their character conception is the role they play in the two dramas. More is shown more respect, perhaps as a result of his former position as Lord Chancellor, while Fisher is subject to ridicule, especially at the beginning of *Roffensis*. However, most significant is the different portrayal of the issues regarding papal authority and royal power.

Personifications of Madness and Heresy provide a prologue for the drama and play a major role throughout the action. Not only do they represent the negative aspects of the court and the state, they become cheer-leaders to stimulate and encourage the divisive elements on the stage. Their constant presence in the court emphasizes the toxic atmosphere at the heart of the government.

12 Suzanne Gosset, in ‘English Plays in the English College Archives’, *The Venerabile* 28 (1983), 23–33, says there is no evidence that *Roffensis* was ever actually performed.

To extend the international implications of the dimensions of the action in England, the Latin author includes a formal chorus representing Rome, England, Spain, and Germany. At the end of each act except the final one, they provide commentary on what they find relevant that is occurring in England. At the end of Act I, the chorus expresses its sympathy for Queen Catherine discarded and deserted by Henry VIII who has replaced the queen's piety with the embrace of a whore, but Germany reminds the audience that Charles, the new Caesar, is Catherine's nephew and should grieve for her. Catherine's situation evokes sympathy again after Act II, this time by Spain, but the chorus at the end of Act III focuses more particularly upon Henry. Compared to the archetypal tyrant Nero by Rome, Henry is said to be governed by madness says England, while Spain claims that Henry burns with a blood-thirsty passion, and Germany says he imitates barbaric kings and passions worthy of the Vandals. The fourth and final formal chorus celebrates the martyrdom of Rochester, concluding with the refrain by each member of the chorus: 'He will live, destined to enjoy eternal life' ('Vivet aeterno fruiturus aeo').

Early in the action, the Latin author provides an indication of the papal support of Fisher by a message from Pope Paul announcing that he has been named a cardinal. Called to the sacred purple, Fisher is assured that he has the support of the Church. It is notable that almost immediately after this news, the contrast between Lady Catherine, the former queen, and Henry's new queen, Anne Boleyn, is presented in conventional images of Age and Youth. Although neither woman is shown on stage, in accordance with the Jesuit ban against female actors in the theater, the playwright offers a moment of sympathy for the discarded ageing queen. To signal a change from the melancholic mood to a more lively effect, the chorus arrives on stage where they dance and then come at each other with their weapons drawn, apparently as a warning to King Henry VIII of the violence to come. It is in this context that Henry mentions the incest of moving from a mother's bed to a daughter's, which is an allegation about Henry's relationship with Anne Boleyn's mother before he married Anne. This particular piece of Catholic propaganda had also been expressed in *Thomas Morus*, as noted above.

Roffensis represents More and Fisher being imprisoned in the Tower at the same time and communicating with each other through messages conveyed by prison staff, though they do appear together on stage a couple of times. They are individually subjected to questioning by the King's men in a similar way: Fisher is told the lie that More has assented to the king's demands, while More is told the lie that Fisher has agreed to the king's remarriage and claim to become head of the English Church. What in fact happens is that neither More nor Fisher believes that the other has deferred to the king's will, both remain

stalwart in response to the pressures of secular power, and both willingly accept martyrdom as they demonstrate their faith and loyalty to the Church. The similarity of their responses to their inquisitors is also to be noted; their words are described as 'harmonious', and both are said to wish to die together, although in fact they die separately.

Despite these similarities, the treatment of martyrdom in the *Roffensis* play is very different from that of the earlier *Thomas Morus*. After being ridiculed in the early part of this play and subjected to the unrelenting pressure of the king's men, Fisher withstands the test admirably. He remains adamant in his faith, declaring as his execution approaches: 'I am compelled to prefer God to my king' ('cogor ut regi Deum | Preferre', IV.iii, ll. 1411–1412). His defenders as martyrdom nears are Darcy and Musgrave, who as choric commentators evoke sympathy for the old man who appears to be greatly outnumbered in a hostile world. The last act is devoted to the response of the king and his court to the death of Fisher and its effect on members of society. It begins with a sympathetic account of Fisher's fate, is followed by references to Cromwell, that 'creator of evil' ('sceleris artifex', v.i, l. 1691), and closes with Fisher being placed in the tradition of Saints Polycarp, John the Baptist, and Ignatius. However, most startling is the vision the king has of an apparition of a monster, which is described in detail and was perhaps intended to be seen by the audience. Finally, Walsingham appears on the stage bearing Fisher's head (v.iv). Henry notes its 'ancient bloom' and 'gentle expression', Cromwell remarks on its 'excellent beauty' and 'rosy cheeks', and Cranmer on its youthful and now peaceful appearance. Such rejuvenation and beautification was a traditional feature of hagiographical narrative, the bodily incorruption indicating a sign of sainthood and immortality. However, here such meaning is subverted by the king, Cromwell, and Cranmer, who attribute the restored youth and beauty to the fact that death has robbed Fisher of his 'venom', 'hatred' and 'savage malice'. The vehemence of their comments is reinforced a few lines further on when Bryan tells Henry, 'Queen Anne, your Majesty, greatly desires to see this head into which the poison wholly poured itself' ('Regina, princeps, Anna cernere percipit | Totus quod in se virus effudit caput', ll. 1930–1931). This request appears to echo Salome's desire to see the head of John the Baptist, especially as Henry was often likened to Herod by Catholic writers; moreover, Harpsfield had explicitly made a comparison between Anne and Salome in his *Treatise of Marriage*, and Stapleton had implicitly done so in his *Life of More*.¹³ Henry continues in violent vein with his threats to bring the Catholic North of England to submis-

13 See Highley, "A Pestilent and Seditious Book", pp. 157–158.

sion if they refuse to recognize him as head of the English church. The last words pronounced on stage reinforce the violence and negativity that have prevailed throughout the scene. Madness and Heresy, the evil personifications who prophesy the future, deliver curses on England, foretelling 'civil strife' and a 'conquered faith' through images of death and hell. In 1617–1618 when *Roffensis* appears to have been written, the winds of war were becoming manifest and within the year what we now call The Thirty Years' War had begun.

Conclusion

Of these martyr plays performed at the English College in Rome, *Roffensis* ends the most negatively, but all three are strong indictments of the power of the monarch. Henry VIII is the dominant example of secular power but also of heresy and evil. He destroys his best councilors and ignores his responsibility to rule justly. He is perceived as a tyrant who follows his own selfish desires as he deserts his queen and invites an insidious whore to his bed, and who is responsible for the martyrdom of two men loyal to the Catholic faith. The two other King Henrys represented, who lived more than three centuries earlier, are similarly responsible for the martyrdom of a man of great faith, Thomas Becket, and for the pursuit of a struggle between secular and religious power. All these rulers abuse their powers and ignore their duty to Christ and the true church according to Catholic belief, and from the perspective of the seminary training of priests for the English mission, namely to return England to the Roman fold, the succession of rulers following Henry VIII, with the exception of Mary, continue in their evil ways. At the English College in Rome Henry VIII could be criticized more overtly than on the stage in England itself, witness the differences between *Thomas Morus* and *Sir Thomas More*, which certainly has more to do with the ideological and geographical distance between Rome and England than with the different languages, Latin and English. The college had been a center of plots against the rulers of England, especially against Elizabeth,¹⁴ and the three plays give evidence of this role. However, this is not the only context. The plays may also figure in the conflict between papal authority and secular power that was still ongoing when the plays were performed; at least, that is especially true for the second play, *Thomas Cantuariensis*, which can

14 See James C. Briant, *Tudor Drama and Religious Controversy* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), p. 37. Briant mentions an interesting account of life at the English College by Anthony Munday: *The English Romayne Lyfe* (1582).

be contextualized in the delicate succession of King James. Thus, these three 'school plays', preserved in manuscript, but read, staged and seen at the English College, conveyed serious political-religious messages.

Further Reading

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Historical Tragedy and the End of Christian Humanism: Nicolaus Vernulaeus (1583–1649)

James A. Parente, Jr.

In 1656 the highly esteemed *rector magnificus* of the University of Louvain, Franciscus de Baillencourt, who was serving his fourth term in that office, was feted by his colleagues in anticipation of his departure for his new position as *consiliarius* of the Council of Mechelen. Baillencourt had spent his entire academic life at Louvain, from his student years in the 1620s and professorship in civil and canon law to his thirteen-year service as *praeses* of the *Collegium Winckelianum* (Wenkelem). As befitted such a long-standing colleague, he was presented with several gifts marking his career transition. Among the many tokens of appreciation that he received was a two-volume edition of the fourteen tragedies of the late Louvain professor of rhetoric and imperial Habsburg historiographer Nicolaus Vernulaeus, which was presented to him by the local printers Petrus Sassenus and Hieronymus Nempaeus. The printers deemed this gift especially appropriate, for Vernulaeus had also served as the university's rector, written its first history, and contributed greatly, as Baillencourt had done, to maintaining the distinguished academic reputation of the university for educating the Catholic nobility of Europe. But this particular gift suggested an even closer tie between the two rectors. Vernulaeus's plays were much more than the usual academic dramas that were produced in Catholic Europe by teachers of rhetoric to strengthen the faith of their students. In contrast to the largely biblical and hagiographic subjects favored by late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century school dramatists, Vernulaeus's writing was deeply grounded in history, especially medieval and contemporary history, and in the Catholic conception of the state and the ideal *Christianus politicus*. No gift was more suitable for the talented and administratively able Baillencourt than these dramatic *exempla* of the challenges of holding high political office in the mid-seventeenth century.¹

1 Nicolaus Vernulaeus, *Tragoediae in duos tomos distributae, editio II* (Lovanii: typis Petri Sasseni et Hieronymi Nempaei, 1656), sig. *2-*4. Franciscus de Baillencourt (1610–1681) continued his illustrious career at Mechelen ascending there to the position of Vicar General; in 1670 he was appointed Bishop of Bruges.

The turn to history and the proliferation of historical subjects in neo-Latin theater has generally received much less attention than the treatment of history in contemporary vernacular drama. Most recent discussions of early modern historical drama avoid neo-Latin theater altogether or discuss it only cursorily in order to move on to the grander and more complex vernacular plays of Shakespeare, Pierre Corneille, Andreas Gryphius or P.C. Hooft.² Such haste may be due, in part, to an eagerness to regard Latin theater as a preliminary rather than contemporary stage in the development of European drama from religious theater to secularized drama. More likely, the tendency of neo-Latin school playwrights to conceptualize history *sub specie aeternitatis* and to represent past events as the demonstration of God's Providential working in the world and the ultimate triumph of Divine Justice may have further contributed to the dismissal of historical theater in Latin as naïve and predictable. An investigation of the tragedies of Vernulaeus, however, complicates this simplistic understanding of historical representation, provides an opportunity to connect his theatrical praxis with contemporary historical events and political theory, and adumbrates the links between tragedy and history that underlie both neo-Latin and vernacular Baroque theater.

Despite the stature that Vernulaeus held among his learned contemporaries, his works have received relatively scant attention.³ Since most Netherlandic

2 See, for example, Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Matthew H. Wikander, *The Play or Truth and State: Historical Drama from Shakespeare to Brecht* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). More recently Dirk Niefanger has viewed neo-Latin historical drama alongside vernacular plays, but only for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: Dirk Niefanger, *Geschichtsdrama der frühen Neuzeit 1495–1773* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005).

3 Three of Vernulaeus's plays have been printed in modern editions and translated. The Wallenstein tragedy *Fritlandus* has been edited twice: Johannes Bolte (ed.), *Coligny, Gustav Adolf, Wallenstein: Drei zeitgenössische lateinische Dramen von Rhodius, Narssius, Vernulaeus* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1933) Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins, Sitz Tübingen, 280, and Jean-Marie Rousseau and Henri Plard (eds. and transl.), *Un 'Wallenstein' néolatine: Le Duc de Friedland, 'Fritlandus tragoedia' (1637) par Nicolaus Vernulaeus (Nicolas de Vernulz)* (Brussels: University Press, 1989). See also Antoine de Latour (ed. and transl.), *Jeanne d'Arc, tragédie latine par Nicolas de Vernulz, édition nouvelle* (Orléans: H. Herluison, 1880); Louis A. Schuster (ed. and transl.), *Henry VIII: A Neo-Latin Drama by Nicolaus Vernulaeus* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964). Beyond the prefatory materials in these editions, there have only been a few studies of Vernulaeus's plays. See: Ton Harmsen, 'Conradinus en de trits Vernulaeus, Oudaan, Smids', in Bert van Selm (ed.), *De letter doet de geest leven: Bundel opstellen aangeboden aan Max de Haan* (Leiden: Publikaties van de vakgroep Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde, 1980), pp. 172–189, and B.A. Vermaseren, 'Een onbekend drama over de H.H. martelaren van Gor-

Latin dramas after 1550 were produced in the Southern Netherlands by Catholic authors, there has been little incentive for literary historians fixated on the Protestant North to explore the extensive repertoire of Jesuit and Augustinian drama in Flanders, Hainaut, Artois, Brabant, and the bishopric of Liège. The literary historian Gerardus Knuvelder remarked, for example, that both Latin and vernacular drama in the Southern Netherlands was too traditional (i.e., medieval and religious) and unoriginal after 1600 to be of any importance.⁴ More progressive literary-historical surveys such as Maria Schenkeveld's *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt* (1991) and her magnificent *Nederlandse literatuur: Een geschiedenis* (1994) hardly mention neo-Latin theater, and for that matter any seventeenth-century writers of the Southern Netherlands, in the vernacular or Latin, save for Michiel de Swaen.⁵ More recently, Karel Porteman and Mieke Smits-Veldt have examined Latin writing alongside vernacular texts, and Jan Bloemendal has explored the elaborate interplay between Latin and vernacular drama, but there is still much work to do in analyzing and assessing these two traditions.⁶ The wide range of dramatic subjects presented

cum', *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis van de Provincie der Minderbroeders in de Nederlanden* 7 (1951), 25–38; Elisabeth Klecker, 'König Ottokars Glück und Ende in lateinischer Sprache: Nicolaus Vernulaeus, Ottocarus Bohemiae Rex', *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer Gesellschaft* 3. Folge, Bd. 21 (2003–2006), 65–107.

- 4 Gerard P.M. Knuvelder, *Beknopt handboek tot de geschiedenis der Nederlandse letterkunde* ('s-Hertogenbosch: Malmberg, 1952), p. 226.
- 5 Maria A. Schenkeveld, *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt: Themes and Ideas* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1991). Schenkeveld mentions Vondel's translation of Hugo Grotius's *Sophompaneas* (p. 53) and Daniel Heinsius's commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, *De tragoediae constitutione* (p. 151). See also M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Nederlandse literatuur: Een geschiedenis* (Groningen: Martinus Nijhoff, 1993), pp. 303–308.
- 6 Karel Porteman and Mieke Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuwe vaderland voor de muzen: Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur, 1560–1700* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008). Porteman and Smits-Veldt emphasize the contemporary Dutch translations of neo-Latin works, e.g., the discussion of Daniel Heinsius's plays, pp. 172–179. For a fuller examination of the many connections between vernacular and neo-Latin drama in the Netherlands, see Jan Bloemendal, 'Transfer and Integration of Latin and Vernacular Drama in the Early Modern Period: The Case of *Everyman*, *Elckerlijck*, *Homulus* and *Hecastus*', *Arcadia* 44 (2009), 274–288; Jan Bloemendal, 'Similarities, Dissimilarities, and Possible Relations between Early Modern Latin Drama and Drama in the Vernacular', in Philip Ford and Andrew Taylor (eds.), *The Early Modern Cultures of Neo-Latin Drama* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 2013), pp. 141–157, and Jan Bloemendal, 'Neo-Latin Drama in the Low Countries', in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013) Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe, 3, pp. 293–364.

by South Netherlandic Catholic writers during this period, from the Counter-Reformation polemics of Andreas Fabricius to the tragedies of Vernulaeus, and the elevated Latin style of seventeenth-century Augustinians such as Johannes Chrysostomus Loots and Emmanuel Rodriguez attest, however, to the lively productivity of these playwrights.⁷

Such neglect is indeed a pity, for Vernulaeus is a figure whose works and career must be seen against the larger canvas of seventeenth-century European history. Vernulaeus had come of age during a period of renewed Catholic devotion, whose intensity increased with the progress of the Dutch Revolt (Eighty Years' War). Born in Roblemont in the Duchy of Luxembourg in 1583, he studied at two institutions of Counter-Reformation fervor: the Jesuit school in Trier, where he may have first seen and, as a student, performed in the humanist religious plays of that school, and the University of Cologne, a city where the Jesuits also sustained an active school theater repertoire. In 1608, he was called to the University of Louvain as instructor in rhetoric, and two years later in 1610, he was appointed public orator (*Rhetor publicus*) and professor of eloquence in the Collège de Porc, an appointment finally confirmed by the Faculty of Arts in 1617. Vernulaeus remained at Louvain until his death in 1649 during which time he displayed an exceptional facility for publishing and a remarkable scholarly range even by prolix early modern standards. Besides his fourteen tragedies, he authored large tomes on political and economic theory, moral philosophy, contemporary history, and current religious issues. He pandered to the Habsburg regents in the Southern Netherlands, Albrecht and Isabella, as well as to their distant relatives in Vienna with embarrassing panegyrics of their militaristic, imperialist policies, and his loyalty was eventually rewarded with a position as Royal Historiographer to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III in 1646. He also edited and published several volumes of public orations by his students in order to glorify his university and enhance its reputation as a center of Catholic thought.⁸

7 No studies have been undertaken of all the dramas of Andreas Fabricius (1520?–1581), whose plays were written while he was in service to Duke Albert v of Bavaria, nor of the two tragedies of the early seventeenth-century Augustinian Emmanuel Rodriguez. For his fellow Augustinian Joannes Chrysostomus Loots, see Paul van Peteghem, 'Joannes Chrysostomus Loots', *Augustiniana* 19 (1969), 552–582.

8 The most complete overview of Vernulaeus's life and works can be found in Joost Depuydt's unpublished licentiate thesis: Joost Depuydt, *Nicolaus Vernulaeus (1583–1649): Een bio-bibliografische studie* (Louvain: unpublished doctoral thesis, 1991). Much of the valuable information there can be found at Joost Depuydt, 'Nicolaus Vernulaeus', in Jan Bloemendal and Chris Heesakkers (eds.), *Bio-bibliografie van Nederlandse humanisten*, Digital edition Digitaal

There are three aspects of Vernulaeus's writing that distinguish him from many other early modern Latin playwrights in the Low Countries. First, Vernulaeus was arguably the most prolific writer of historical drama in the early modern Netherlands. Eleven of the tragedies were published between 1610 and 1635; ten appeared together in a collected edition of his plays in 1631, and the widely disseminated two-volume 1656 collection that had been presented to Baillencourt contained fourteen dramas, two of which had never been printed before. In contrast to most sixteenth-century Latin school playwrights and to his Latin-writing contemporaries, Vernulaeus expanded the familiar repertoire of sacred theater to present topics from late antique, medieval, sixteenth-century, and even recent seventeenth-century history. In addition to tragedies on martyrs such as St. Eustachius (fl. second century AD), the sixth-century Spanish prince St. Hermenegildus, the seventh-century bishop St. Lambert of Maastricht, and the 1572 Dutch martyrs of Gorkum, Vernulaeus brought to the stage the hapless first son of Constantine the Great, Flavius Julius Crispus; the imperial usurper Maximianus (ca. 355–388AD); Theodoric the Ostrogoth; Thomas Becket and Henry II; the licentious eleventh-century Polish king, Boleslaus II; Conradin von Hohenstaufen; Jeanne D'Arc; Henry VIII and Thomas More; Rudolf I Habsburg and his rival Ottokar of Bohemia; and the disloyal Habsburg general Wallenstein. In many instances, these figures remained the staple of Counter-Reformation playwrights, especially the Jesuits, throughout the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century in the Latin schools of Central and Eastern Europe.⁹ Secondly, Vernulaeus's dramatic writing was closely allied with his extensive historical, political, and moral-philosophical orations, treatises, and handbooks. Many Latin school playwrights had also composed non-dramatic works, usually related to their pedagogical tasks, such as commentaries on ancient writers, compendia of didactic aphorisms, public orations, and devotional handbooks, but such writings rarely related to their works for the school stage. Vernulaeus's dramatic compositions, however, offer literary historians a unique perspective on a humanist Latin writer in his study distilling his view of history and political action into theatrical representations. Thirdly, and most

Wetenschapshistorisch Centrum (Digital Web Center for the History of Science in the Low Countries) / Huygens Institute, KNAW, 2009: <http://www.dwc.knaw.nl/>.

9 For plays on similar topics in the German Empire, see Jean-Marie Valentin, *Le théâtre des Jésuites dans les pays de langue allemande: Répertoire chronologique des pièces représentées et des documents conservés (1555–1773)* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1983–1984) Hiersemanns Bibliographische Handbücher, 3.1 and 3.2. For the Low Countries, see L. van den Boogerd, *Het Jezuietendrama in de Nederlanden* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1961), pp. 222–255.

importantly, Vernulaeus's historical plays foreground an increasingly complex problem in the late humanist world: the relationship between idealized political behavior informed by Christian moral-philosophical principles, and expedient political action attuned to the acquisition and maintenance of power and authority during the religious wars of the seventeenth century.

Tragedy and History: Tradition and Transformation

Vernulaeus's turn to historical topics must be seen in the context of contemporary theatrical practice, the humanists' alignment of tragedy and history, and his increasing interest in academic theater as a site for political instruction. No early modern Latin playwright operated in an artistic vacuum: Vernulaeus's concept of theater, its pedagogical function and his choice of dramatic subject were shaped by humanist and vernacular traditions. Vernulaeus's view of drama as an literary genre can be gleaned from scattered statements throughout his writings, chiefly the dedicatory letters that accompanied his published plays and from a brief discussion of the state's role in sponsoring theater from his *Institutionum politicarum libri IV* (*Political Instruction in Four Books*, 1623). To be sure, many learned contemporaries praised Vernulaeus's dramas in the liminary poems that accompanied his plays. With customary hyperbole, he was variously hailed as a new Aeschylus or Euripides, and as a model for Latin tragedy in the tradition of Seneca:

Si quis Tragoediam nosse, si quis Senecam
 Velit exhiberi, vel vetustorum stylum:
 Dramata theatris Vernulaeus sat dabit
 Gravitate, claritate concinna admodum
 Quae varia dubiae fata fortunae notent.¹⁰

(If anyone should wish to learn about tragedy,
 Or to see Seneca or the style of the ancients on display,
 Vernulaeus will guarantee theaters dramas
 That show a variety of stories of ever-changing Fortuna
 With gravity and exceptionally elegant clarity.)

10 Nicolaus Vernulaeus, *Divus Eustachius sive fidei et patientiae triumphus, tragoedia* (Louvain: typis Philippi Dormalii, 1612), p. 8. See also Vernulaeus, *Tragoediae* (1656), sig. *5.

Vernulaeus's style was repeatedly singled out for its elegance, and his dramatic subjects for their piety and utility in educating youth who would one day assume positions of power in society. Such a lofty purpose was advocated by Vernulaeus in his *Institutionum politicarum libri iv*, where, echoing the established Christian humanist practice of emending pagan theater, he criticized the raciness and frivolity of public plays focused on the erotic adventures and sexual violence perpetrated by libidinous youths. Instead, he admonished the state to oversee theatrical performances and to ensure that the young male performers would be instructed in virtue and piety, the traditional goals of earlier Christian drama, and in civic prudence ('civilis prudentia'), a new aspiration.¹¹ In Vernulaeus's hands, academic theater became the locus for political instruction and historical tragedy its preferred medium.

Tragedy had long been associated with history. The fourth-century grammarian Aelius Donatus had made history a defining characteristic of tragedy.¹² Whereas comedy represented everyday fictive events through characters of middling social status, tragedy was often grounded in history, and reserved for the highest ranking members of society and their calamitous end. Since the fourteenth century, humanist commentators on the tragedies of Seneca, such as Albertino Mussato of Padua, repeatedly underscored the political function of tragedy: tragedies, by definition, deal with the downfall of kings or great historical personages, and as fifteenth- and sixteenth-century commentators argued, tragedies were ideally suited for the dispensation of moral counsel of use to princes.¹³ In 1576, for example, the Frisian lawyer-humanist, Georgius

11 Nicolaus Vernulaeus, *Institutionum politicarum libri quatuor* (Lovanii: typis Philippi Dormalii, 1623), pp. 488–489.

12 Aelius Donatus, *Commentum Terenti* (Leipzig: B. Teubner, 1902–1908), pp. 2–3.

13 On the political messages inscribed in early humanist tragedy, see Hartmut Beyer, *Das politische Drama im Italien des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts: Humanistische Tragödien in ihrem literarischen und funktionalen Kontext* (Münster: Rhema, 2008), esp. pp. 89–103 on Mussato. The widely circulated 1514 Badius edition of Seneca's tragedies contains prefatory remarks by Badius, Gellius Bernardinus Marmita, Danielis Gaietanus, and Benedictus Philologus in which such sentiments were espoused. *L. Annae Senecae Tragoediae pristinae integritati restitutae per exactissimi iudicii viros ... explanate diligentissime tribus commentariis G. Bernardino Marmita Parmiensis, Daniele Gaietano Cremonensi, Iodoco Badio Ascensio* [Paris], 1514. Marmita remarks that the utility of tragedy lies in the elegance and richness of its language, and the knowledge that it provides about the mutability of fortune and the attainment of a virtuous life: 'Ex tragoediis utilitas multifariam habetur: carminis nitor elegans et venusta dicendi copia, cognitio rerum varia ut homines intelligent fortunam esse mutabilem et illius levitati non esse fidendum, solamque virtutem esse colendam et ad beatam vitam properandum' (sig. Aaiiii^v).

Ratallerus, confessed that the main impetus for his translation of the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides into Latin was to publicize the practical advice their works contained on morality, government, and the maintenance of civil harmony.¹⁴

Historical topics had occasionally served as the subject of neo-Latin tragedy, especially plays fashioned after the model of the historical drama *Octavia* that Renaissance humanists attributed to Seneca. Mussato composed his *Ecerinis* (ca. 1314) on the career of the notorious tyrant Ezzelino III da Romano after the Senecan model, and as Hartmut Beyer has recently shown, neo-Latin Italian tragedy in the later Trecento and Quattrocento, frequently imparted a political message through mythological or ancient historical subjects.¹⁵ In the transalpine world, the Bavarian *poeta laureatus* Jacob Locher, who studied humanist drama during his Italian sojourn and subsequently edited the *Octavia* along with two other Senecan plays, chronicled the disastrous 1494 Italian campaign of Charles VIII against Neapolitan Aragon in his *Historia de rege Franciae* (*History of the King of France*, 1495), which, though written in prose, betrayed traces of his familiarity with the language and structure of Senecan drama. His second historical tragedy, *Tragoedia de Thurcis et Suldano* (*Tragedy concerning the Turks and the Sultan*, 1497), inspired by Carlo Verardi's (1492) *Historia Baetica*, a triumphalist representation of the Spanish reconquest of Granada, exhorted the Emperor Maximilian I to launch a crusade against the marauding Turks by representing an imagined triumph of Habsburg over the sultan.¹⁶ Sixteenth-century German humanists such as Henricus Schottenius and Nicodemus Frischlin likewise introduced medieval and recent historical events to the neo-Latin stage, while their vernacular contemporaries Hans Sachs and Jacob Ayrer used historical subjects to praise or disparage political behavior.¹⁷ The prolific Bavarian biblical playwright Hieronymus Ziegler and dramatists from the Strasbourg academy also turned to subjects from ancient history, chiefly Herodotus, to vary their repertoire, and Italian and German Jesuits such as Bernardino Stefonio and Jacob Bidermann mined the annals

14 'ad vitam recte instituendam, moresque formandos, tum ad Rempublicam bene gubernandum exempla depromant principes et magistratus'. Georgius Ratallerus, *Tragoediae Sophoclis quotquot extant carmine latino redditae* (Antverpiae: ex officina Georgii Silvii, 1570), sig.*2^v–*3.

15 Beyer, *Das politische Drama in Italien*, pp. 33–314.

16 Cora Dietl, *Die Dramen Jacob Lochers und die frühe Humanistenbühne im süddeutschen Raum* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte, 37 (271), pp. 63–135.

17 Niefanger, *Geschichtsdrama der Frühen Neuzeit*, pp. 65–112.

of late antiquity to explore the moral dilemmas afflicting protagonists constrained to choose between personal ambition and virtue.¹⁸ In 1594, Georg Calaminus, a professor at the gymnasium in Linz, published an exceptionally erudite school play on the thirteenth-century ruler Rudolf of Habsburg, for which he was crowned poet laureate in Vienna, where, unfortunately, he contracted scarlet fever and died upon his return to his relatively hygienic hometown.¹⁹

The frequency of historical topics drawn from secular ancient, medieval, or early modern history on the neo-Latin stage increased markedly after 1600 and in Jesuit hands, gradually overshadowed tragedies based on the Bible.²⁰ To be sure, many biblical topics could also be construed as historical (consider, for example, the many plays about King Saul in the vernacular and Latin from the 1580s and 1590s), and many hagiographical subjects such as the martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria or St. Eustachius, both popular sixteenth-century topics, contain elements from late antique history. These biblical and hagiographical subjects frequently had a more secular intention—a lesson in the art of government, for example—than a moral-philosophical or religious purpose: one thinks here of the tragedies of the late French humanists Jean de la Taille and Robert Garnier in this regard, as well as many of the biblical tragedies

18 Hieronymus Ziegler argues for the utility of historical knowledge for future political leaders: Hieronymus Ziegler, *Cyrus Major: Drama tragicum* (Augustae: Philippus Ulhardus, 1540), sig. A3–A4. For the politicization of Strasbourg school drama, see: James A. Parente, Jr., 'Tragoedia Politica: Strasbourg School Drama and the Early Modern State, 1583–1621', *Colloquia Germanica* 29/1 (1996), 1–11. Bernardino Stefonio's widely disseminated tragedy *Crispus* (1597) explored the moral dilemma confronting the eponymous hero when his stepmother Fausta attempted to seduce him. See the introduction by Lucia Strappini to her modern edition and translation: Bernardino Stefonio, *Crispus* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998), *Bibliotheca di cultura*, 556, pp. i–xxvii. Jacob Bidermann's *Belisarius* (1607; published posthumously in 1666) delineates the moral rehabilitation of the protagonist after his fall from favor as the Emperor Justinian's leading general. Extensive commentary to Bidermann's work is provided by Harald Burger in his edition: *Jakob Bidermanns 'Belisarius': Edition und Versuch einer Deutung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1966).

19 Georg Calaminus's plays have been edited, translated, and extensively commented on by Robert Hinterndorfer. See Georg Calaminus, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Robert Hinterndorfer (Vienna: Edition Praesens, 1998), vol. 2 (plays and translation); vol. 3 (commentary); vol. 4 (Calaminus's life and works) Wiener Neudrucke, 13–15. For an analysis of Calaminus's *Rudolphottocarus* compared to Vernulaeus and Franz Grillparzer's nineteenth-century tragedy, see Klecker, 'König Ottokars Glück und Ende in lateinischer Sprache', pp. 67–96.

20 Elida Maria Szarota, *Geschichte, Politik und Gesellschaft im Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berne: Francke, 1976), pp. 7–62.

of Vondel.²¹ But even within such intersections between temporal and spiritual subjects, Vernulaeus's works are distinctive because of his extensive use of secular historical topics. His historical tragedies do not simply commemorate an unjustly slain hero, or transmit moral lessons through the punishment of morally deviant rulers, but provide political instruction for future statesmen weighing practical and expedient choices in a morally complex world.

In the Low Countries, the 1580s and 1590s witnessed an efflorescence of historical topics, especially those drawn from very recent history, on the vernacular and neo-Latin stage. Consider, for example, the 1593 tragedy *Maria Stuarta* by Adrianus Roulerius of Douai, the epicenter of the Catholic resistance to England; the tragedies on the murder of William of Orange by Caspar Casparius and Daniel Heinsius (*Auriacus*, 1602), a threnody for the loss of this great Protestant leader, and taking the Catholic side, the Latin poet, Panagius Salius (*Nassovius*, 1589), in which the assassin Balthasar Gerard is regarded as a savior of the Netherlands.²² In the early seventeenth-century, P.C. Hooft contributed to the creation of early modern Dutch national identity in his *Baeto* (1626), and to a lesser extent, in his earlier *Geeraerd van Velsen* (1613), while the poet Jacob Zevecotius idealized the Dutch triumph over the Spaniards before Leiden in his *Het belegh van Leyden* (*The Siege of Leiden*, 1626) and the happy sequel, *Het ontzet van Leyden* (*The Relief of Leiden*, 1630), victories which Zevecotius, a former Augustinian priest and Latin school playwright from Brabant, extolled with the zeal of a patriotic Protestant convert.²³ Historical topics were

21 On the political significance of Robert Garnier's biblical tragedies, see Gillian Jondorf, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century* (London and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). On tragedy and politics in Jean de la Taille, see Eugenio Refini, "Profiter de quelque chose à ma république": Poetica e politica nell'epistola *De l'art de la tragédie* di Jean de la Taille', *Studi Francesi* 52 (2009), 234–250. The political arguments underlying Vondel's dramas, both religious and secular, have been most recently examined by Frans-Willem Korsten, *Vondel belicht: Voorstellingen van soevereiniteit* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006) [= id., *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009)].

22 Daniel Heinsius, *Auriacus sive libertas saucia*, ed. Jan Bloemendal (Voorthuizen: Florivalis, 1997), Doctoral thesis, Utrecht, 2 vols. On Heinsius's *Auriacus*, see most recently Juliette A. Groenland, 'The Deadly Earnest of History Plays', in Bloemendal and Ford, *Neo-Latin Drama: Form, Functions, Receptions*, pp. 23–33. On Casparius, see Juliette A. Groenland, "'Toneel als pamflet'? De *Princeps Auriacus sive libertas defensa* (1599) van Caspar Ens', *De zeventiende eeuw* 25 (2009), 26–38.

23 Heinsius's *Auriacus* inspired several vernacular Dutch historical dramas: see Juliette A. Groenland, 'Predicting the Present: Final Prophecies in Latin and Dutch History Plays', in Christel Meier, Bart A.M. Ramakers and Hartmut Beyer (eds.), *Akteure und Aktionen: Fi-*

also popular in the Rederijker chambers in the early seventeenth-century: there were Seneca-inspired tragedies about the assassination of William of Orange by Jacob Duym and Gijsbreght van Hogendorp, following Heinsius's example, and the 1610 tragicomedy on the assassination of King Henri IV of France by Abraham de Koningh, a Rederijker of the Brabantine chamber in Amsterdam.²⁴ Humanist playwrights, and Rederijker writers inspired by humanist drama, used the stage to debate political issues, such as the legality of the Dutch Revolt and the legitimacy of the assassination of William of Orange, or the role of religion in the political order, as they assembled a cadre of Dutch and/or historical heroes for their audience to emulate.

Vernulæus's historical subjects were carefully chosen as a Catholic reprieve to this generally Protestant appropriation of the past. Only two of his plays betray a specifically Netherlandic context: his first tragedy from 1609 (printed 1610), *Gorcomienses*, on the 1572 martyrdom of nineteen Dutch Catholics at Brielle, and his later *Lambertus* (first published in the collected edition of his plays in 1656), on the martyrdom of St. Lambert, a topic honoring a patron saint of that hotbed of Counter-Reformation sentiment, the bishopric of Liège.²⁵ For the most part, Vernulæus's remaining subjects were drawn from German, English, French, and Polish medieval and early modern history: this topical range typified both the universalizing tendency of the Counter-Reformation to identify supra-national, supra-ethnic heroes, a practice canonized by later seventeenth-century Jesuit playwrights, and at the same time to honor the

guren und Handlungstypen im Drama der Frühen Neuzeit (Münster: Rhema, 2008), pp. 461–483. For later vernacular Dutch historical tragedies, see Henk Duits, *Van Bartholomeusnacht tot Bataafse opstand: Studies over de relatie tussen politiek en toneel in het midden van de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990).

- 24 Jan Bloemendal addresses the relationship between Heinsius's *Auriacus* and Gijsbreght van Hogendorp in his 1997 edition and study of Heinsius's play (n. 22). He also compares Casparius's and Heinsius's tragedies with vernacular Dutch dramatizations of Duym and van Hogendorp in: Jan Bloemendal, 'De dramatische moord op de Vader des Vaderlands: De verhouding tussen vier typen toneel in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden', *De zeventiende eeuw* 23 (2007), 99–117. For other vernacular connections to Heinsius, see Juliette A. Groenland, 'Playing to the Public, Playing with Opinion: Latin and Vernacular Dutch History Drama by Heinsius and Duym', in Jan Bloemendal, Arjan van Dixhoorn and Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011) Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 197, pp. 121–150. On Zevecotius's plays about the siege of Leiden, see Bettina Noak, *Politische Auffassungen im niederländischen Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Waxmann, 2002), pp. 85–100.
- 25 *Gorcomienses sive fidei exilium* (Coloniae: sumptibus Bernardi Gualteri, 1610). For *Lambertus*, see Vernulæus, *Tragoediae*, 1656, pp. 856–903.

multi-national student clientele from Catholic Europe that populated Vernulaeus's college.

At first glance the unusual size and topical variety of Vernulaeus's tragedies appear to suggest a marked break from contemporary practice, but in fact, his choice of subject reflects his sensitivity to the new work being produced elsewhere, and to the changing historical events that were unfolding in the German Empire and the Netherlands especially after the expiration of the Twelve Years' Truce in 1620. The early hagiographical play on St. Eustachius (1612), the patron saint of hunters, whose conversion to Christianity was effected by the appearance of the crucifix in the antlers of a stag he was pursuing, was very popular among Jesuit school playwrights in Austria, Bavaria and the Rhineland in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²⁶ The legend of St. Eustachius, which was typically set during the time of Emperor Trajan, provided an extensive narrative, reminiscent of Hellenistic romance, of the titular hero's fall from prosperity as a Roman tribune, the loss of his wife and children, his miraculous conversion to Christianity, and eventual reunion with his newly converted Christian family and their courageous martyrdom. The vicissitudes of fortune so fundamental to Senecan tragedy were on elaborate and frequent display throughout this early work.

Vernulaeus was also attuned to the neo-Latin Netherlandic tradition of Senecan tragedy. His posthumously published play on St. Lambertus, who was martyred by the seventh-century Frankish ruler Pepin of Herstal for refusing to acknowledge his concubine as his preferred partner, had also been treated in 1550s by the Liège neo-Latin playwright Gregorius Holonius as a Counter-Reformation warning against clerical concubinage. Although Holonius and Vernulaeus both employed the language of Senecan tragedy in their dramas, Vernulaeus's treatment contains few traces of Holonius's earlier work, and concentrates more on the failings of Pepin as an effective ruler than on the glorious martyrdom of St. Lambert.²⁷

26 Between 1584 and 1615, St. Eustachius plays were performed in Vienna (1584), Pruntrut (1593), Graz (1594; ca. 1600), Prague (1600), Augsburg (1603), Mainz (1603), and Innsbruck (1613). See Valentin, *Le théâtre des Jésuites: Répertoire*, pp. 24; 39; 40; 50; 56; 58; 77. Jesuit performances of St. Eustachius plays are recorded also for Ghent (1629) and Mechelen (1636). See van den Boogerd, *Het Jezuetendrama in de Nederlanden*, p. 238, and Raymond van Aerde, *Het schooldrama bij de Jezuiten: Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het tooneel te Mechelen* (Mechelen: H. Dierickx-Beke, 1937), pp. 70–71.

27 Gregorius Holonius, *Lambertias* (Antverpiae apud Ioannem Bellerum, 1556). On Holonius see: James A. Parente, Jr. 'Counter-Reformation Polemic and Senecan Tragedy: The Dramas of Gregorius Holonius (1531?–1594)', *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 30 (1981), 156–180.

Vernulaeus's increasing interest in political questions also informed his adaptation of recent works from both Italian and French Jesuit drama. In 1628, he published a tragedy on Crispus, the son of the Emperor Constantine who falls prey to the unbridled passion of his lascivious stepmother. Vernulaeus may well have been drawn to this topic because of the renown attached to the popular *Crispus* (1597; printed 1601) of the Italian Jesuit Bernardino Stefonio, and to Stefonio's attempt to outdo Seneca's rendering of the similarly ill-fated love of Phaedra for her stepson in his *Hippolytus*. Stefonio's tragedy also had the unusual distinction of being reprinted several times in Italy, France, and in Antwerp, and was more widely disseminated than many Jesuit plays.²⁸ In the hands of the Jesuit, Crispus inhabits a loftier exemplary state as a Christian repique to the pagan characters ('superior in the sanctity of his behavior, his actions, and his contempt for death', 'sanctitate morum, rebus gestis, et mortis contempzione superior').²⁹ Vernulaeus likewise shares Stefonio's shift of emphasis away from the tormented pangs of the unrequited love of Constantine's wife Fausta that characterized Seneca's treatment of the material, but he also expands the role of Constantine to underscore the perils of kingship and the disastrous consequences of allowing passion to determine his actions, and the personal and political loss of his son who is also a loyal, humble, and talented military leader.

There are even closer ties between Vernulaeus's *Theodoricus* (1623) and *Hermenigildus* (published in 1656 but most likely written much earlier) and the similarly named plays by the French Jesuit Nicolas Caussin (1583–1651), who had written these works as professor of rhetoric at the Collège de Henri IV (La Flèche) and the Collège de Clermont (Paris) in the late 1610s.³⁰ Both dramas, which were published in 1620, along with three other *tragoediae sacrae*

28 The *editio princeps* was printed in Rome, 1601 by Carolus Vullietus. For manuscript and printing history, see Stefonio, *Crispus*, ed. Lucia Strappini, pp. xli–xliii. The first Antwerp edition of *Crispus* was published in 1609 by Joachim Trogaesius; the play was reprinted in Antwerp in an anthology of French, Italian, and Flemish Jesuit drama: *Selectae Patrorum Societatis Iesu tragoediae* (Antverpiae: apud Ioannem Cnobbarum, 1634), vol. 1.

29 Stefonio, *Crispus*, p. 17.

30 Nicolas Caussin, *Tragoediae sacrae* (Parisiis: ex officina Nivelliana, apud Sebastianum Cramoisy, 1620). George Hocking first noticed the connection to Vernulaeus's *Theodoricus* in his *A Study of the 'Tragoediae Sacrae' of Father Caussin (1583–1651)* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1943), pp. 42–43. Caussin's dramas have been the subject of several recent studies: on *Theodoricus* see Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, 'Nicolas Caussin, héritier Sénèque et de Boèce dans *Theodoricus*', in Sophie Conte (ed.), *Nicolas Caussin: Rhétorique et spiritualité à l'époque de Louis XIII: Actes du colloque de Troyes (16–17 septembre 2004)* (Berlin: Lit, 2007) *Ars Rhetorica*, 19, pp. 79–102.

of Caussin, were drawn from historical material representing the late antique conflict between Christian orthodoxy and Arianism—a clear parallel to the contemporary controversy between the Protestants and the Catholics in both the Low Countries and the German Empire. Given their easy adaptability for confessional polemic, it is not surprising that the Theodoricus and Hermenigildus material was especially popular among Jesuit playwrights in the German Empire, many of whom reworked Caussin's *Hermenigildus* though not in the same way as Vernulaeus.³¹ In *Theodoricus*, the eponymous sixth-century Ostrogothic ruler, pursued the orthodox philosopher Boethius and his son-in-law the historian Symmachus and eventually had them executed for refusing to embrace Arianism. In *Hermenigildus*, the titular hero, the son of the sixth-century Spanish Visigothic king Levigildus, a staunch Arian, converts to Catholicism, fails to overthrow his heretical father, and is eventually condemned to death for refusing to abjure his new-found faith.

There are clear verbal and structural parallels between these two works of Caussin and those of Vernulaeus, but there are marked differences that give a broader indication of his evolving ideas about the political function of tragedy. In contrast to Caussin, Vernulaeus develops the historical material with an eye to both its religious and political message, for in his view, in the early modern confessionalized state, it was not possible, nor was it desirable, to separate ecclesiastical from political matters. The *Theodoricus*, for example, was expressly conceived as a study into the failings of kingship that can befall any monarch rather than as a partisan condemnation of an unrepentant heretic.

Vernulaeus's adaptation of the Theodoricus material for political instruction is further underscored by his introduction of the *senex* (old man), who functions variously as a commentator, chorus, and narrator in this play and in all the tragedies to follow. The *senex* is invariably on hand in almost every scene observing the historical events and drawing the audience's attention to each episode's significance. As the plot alternates between moments of exultant military victory and disastrous defeat, the *senex* reminds the viewers of the mutability of fortune and the vanity of worldly glory. But beyond such Senecan commonplaces, the *senex* also directs the audience to look beneath the surface of the plot, and especially at the motives underlying a character's statements and behavior. Given his didactic role, the *senex* unsurprisingly voices a myriad of memorable *sententiae* for the students to absorb and recall later as necessary. He also participates or eavesdrops on every debate among court counselors, political rivals, and spouses, or serves as an alter ego to a soliloquizing

31 Szarota, *Geschichte, Politik und Gesellschaft*, pp. 25–29.

prince struggling between obligation and desire, law and passion, heresy and orthodoxy. The presence of the *senex* ensured that the correct lessons would be learned by the young audiences, especially those lessons that would serve them well in their future careers as statesmen or ecclesiastical leaders and administrators. Because of the presence of the *senex*, Vernulaeus could take more chances with his protagonists than the French Jesuit, especially in the creation of more complex characters wrestling against themselves to choose wisely since the 'old man' was almost inevitably on hand to explain events that could potentially mislead or confuse his students.

The *senex* enabled Vernulaeus to complicate his characterization of Theodoricus, albeit to a limited degree. He took pains in the dedicatory letter not to condemn Theodoricus's excessive pride and proclivity to anger as the mere ragings of an obstreperous tyrant. He is well aware of the historical record in which Theodoricus, despite his allegiance to the Arian heresy, was widely regarded as an effective ruler: 'Pray, do not look down on or indeed despise the unfortunate king. While he lived—if you set aside his heretical beliefs—, he was beyond all human praise' ('Noli obsecro miserum Regem despiciere ac fastidire. Cum viveret (si Arianum in eo haeresin excipias) supra humanum praeconium erat').³² And indeed throughout the first three acts before Theodoricus falls irretrievably into unrestrained cruelty, he is repeatedly advised by the *senex* and his other counselors to adhere to the rule of law, to investigate the alleged crimes of Symmachus and Boethius, and to weigh carefully the apparent proofs of their complicity in a conspiracy to overthrow the state. But Theodoricus is possessed with unbridled ambition to attain ever higher levels of personal glory, and he becomes increasingly impatient with, and distrustful of, those who do not immediately accede to his desires. The alleged treachery of Boethius and Symmachus stokes his fundamental insecurity as a supreme ruler even further, and he orders their execution, but the fortitude that Boethius and Symmachus embody in the face of death immediately reassures the audience of the ultimate triumph of Divine Justice.

It is this confidence in the inevitable manifestation of Divine Justice that inspired Vernulaeus to dedicate this particular play to Georg Adam, Count of Martinitz (1602–1651), and in choosing this dedicatee, to establish new connections between his drama and the convulsive events of the Thirty Years' War. Like many humanists, Vernulaeus chose his dedicatees carefully in the quest for

32 Nicolaus Vernulaeus, *Theodoricus tragoedia* (Lovanii: typis Henrici Hastenii, 1623), p. 3. The *Theodoricus* had been presented by Vernulaeus's students in October, 1622, but it was not printed until the following year.

public approbation, financial support, social advancement, or as was primarily the case for his dramas, the intended message of the play. The unabashedly doctrinaire *Gorcomienses sive fidei exilium* (*The Martyrs of Gorkum or Faith Exiled*, 1610) had been dedicated to the renowned Counter-Reformation Cistercian preacher Bernardus de Montgaillard (d. 1628), who at that time was dazzling nobility and commoners alike with his inspiring sermons at the court of Albrecht and Isabella.³³ Vernulaeus's second play *Divus Eustachius sive fidei et patientiae triumphus* (*St. Eustachius or the Triumph of Faith and Patience*, 1612), arguably his least inspired work, was directed at Nicolas de Fanson, the abbot of the monastic community at St. Hubert from 1611–1652, in recognition of Nicolas's recent appointment as abbot and of the many parallels between the lives of St. Eustachius and St. Hubert, both of whom had converted to Christianity while hunting.³⁴ But with his third play *Theodoricus*, published after an eleven year hiatus, Vernulaeus moved beyond admired regional leaders to address administrators whose careers were deeply connected to broader contemporary political events.

Georg Adam of Martinitz was praised by Vernulaeus for his virtue and assiduity in his studies, but his noble Bohemian heritage linked him to the recent unrest in Prague that had precipitated the first stage of the Thirty Years' War.³⁵ Georg's father was Jaroslav Bořita of Martinitz (1582–1649), who was one of the four unfortunate ambassadors sent by the enervated Emperor Matthias in 1618 to install his cousin Ferdinand of Tyrol as the King of Bohemia.³⁶ Jaroslav and his fellow emissaries were harshly interrogated by the Bohemian estates, and once the Bohemians confirmed that the Emperor had indeed closed their Assembly with no intention of restoring it, they summarily threw the ambassadors out the window. Jaroslav survived the fall, protected as Vernulaeus imagined, by his virtue, and poised for even greater honor and distinction. In fact, Jaroslav's survival and subsequent reinstatement in his office was considered an *exemplum* of Divine Providence, reassuring his readers—were any in need of reassurance—that God will always protect those who defend Roman Catholicism. The glorification of the martyred Boethius and Symmachus thus provided the historical precedent for this contemporary reenactment of the triumph of orthodoxy.

33 Jean François Foppens, *Bibliotheca belgica sive virorum in Belgio vita scriptisque illustrium catalogus* (Brussels: Petrus Foppens, 1737), pp. 136–137.

34 Vernulaeus, *Divus Eustachius*, p. 5.

35 Vernulaeus, *Theodoricus*, pp. 5–7.

36 On Martinitz, see Zdenek Hojda, 'Martinitz, Jaroslav Bořita Graf von', *Neue deutsche Biographie*, 16 (1990), 302–303.

Vernulaeus's *Hermenigildus*, which was not published until the posthumous 1656 edition of his collected tragedies, provided yet another opportunity for the glorification of Catholicism in the face of heretical rage.³⁷ *Hermenigildus* was deeply indebted to Caussin's re-conceptualization of the historical sources: both writers centered the drama around the tragic relationship between Hermenigildus and his Arian father Levigildus, who, though longing for a lasting reconciliation with his allegedly rebellious son, is manipulated by his wife's advisors into believing that Hermenigildus is indeed determined to overthrow him. The conflict between orthodoxy and heresy that enlivened the *Theodoricus* of both playwrights is now accorded a lesser role so that the court intrigues that entrap both Levigildus and his son can become more apparent. Vernulaeus in fact enlarges upon the political lessons that can be gleaned from Levigildus's blindness to his queen's machinations and introduces the *senex* to explicate Hermenigildus's journey from outlaw to loyal, though orthodox, son of his father, to eventual martyr for Rome. The commingling of religion and history and the primacy accorded the political lessons to be learned henceforth become the distinctive signature of Vernulaeus's approach to tragedy.

By the mid 1620s, through his reworking of Caussin's plays, Vernulaeus had reconceptualized tragedy as political theater. In the dedicatory letter to his *Ottocarus* (1626), he observed that tragedy 'clearly reveals the nature of human existence and vicissitudes of states' ('humanae vitae mores et Rerumpublicarum mutationes aperte explicat').³⁸ Mindful of his students, Vernulaeus ascribed a moral function to tragedy; through experiencing the unfolding of tragic events, the students were enjoined to learn which virtues to acquire in order to avoid disaster in their own lives as future statesmen: temperance, moderation, clemency, and above all, prudence.³⁹ The centrality of civic prudence underlies Vernulaeus's embrace of history and provides an important link to his political writings. In the 1620s, as he was transforming historical subjects into political set pieces, Vernulaeus was also compiling his lectures on history and statecraft into his *Institutionum politicarum libri IV* (1623), and it is to that work we must now turn for a deeper understanding of the political ideas that would animate his historical dramas.

37 Vernulaeus, *Tragoediae* (1656), pp. 904–968.

38 Nicolaus Vernulaeus, *Ottocarus Bohemiae rex seu rebellio contra Rudolphum I imperatorum* (Lovanii: typis Philippi Dormalii, 1626), sig.*2v.

39 '... mirum quantum legendis tragoediis afficiantur, cum se procul ab iis malis abesse animadvertunt quibus alios tantopere vexatos cognoscunt'. Vernulaeus, *Ottocarus*, sig. *3–*3v.

The Political Origins of Vernulaeus's Tragedies

In adopting historical narratives for political instruction, Vernulaeus created a pantheon of Counter-Reformation heroes to challenge the Protestant cause. As hostilities resumed with the expiration of the Twelve Years' Truce in the Low Countries and the expansion of the religious conflict first to Bohemia and then throughout the German Empire, his productivity on historical and political topics increased markedly. During the 1620s and 1630s, alongside his dramatic writings, he penned treatises on the origins of the war in the Empire, and on the justice of the Catholic resistance to the new Dutch regime, a perspective reinforced by the many Catholic victories over the Protestant North at that time; he also published several embarrassingly obsequious histories and panegyrics of the Habsburgs. He spoke broadly about the unparalleled genius of the Spanish general Ambrogio Spinola, the virtues of the Archduchess Isabella, and the legitimacy of the Habsburg campaigns against the Protestant states in the German Empire. The political orations of his students also dealt with pressing contemporary issues such as the illegality of the Dutch revolt against Spain and the necessity for a single religion in a modern state.⁴⁰ But Vernulaeus's interest in politics was much more profound than the ephemerality that his choice of oratorical subjects implies. As an avid student of late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century political theory, he developed his own concept of the ideal modern state and used his dramatic works to illustrate the validity of his political ideas by historical example.

Vernulaeus delineated his political views in his *Institutiones politicae*, which was intended as the first part of a trilogy of treatises on civic life (*vita civilis*) and politics, family and household affairs (*oeconomia*), and ethics (*moralia*), and he published separate volumes in each of these areas.⁴¹ The *Institutionum*

40 As an example of Vernulaeus's unreserved embrace of the Habsburgs as representatives of *pietas Austriaca*, see his *Virtutum augustissimae gentis Austriacae libri tres* (Lovanii: typis Iacobi Zegeri, 1640). For an historiographic analysis of these writings, see Veronika Coroleu Oberparleiter, 'Nicolaus Vernulaeus' Darstellung der Habsburger: *Apologia, Virtutes* und *Historia Austriaca* mit einem Exkurs über die *Methodus legendi historias*, *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 56 (2007), 233–270. A full listing of the range of Vernulaeus's political writings can be found in Depuydt, 'Nicolaus Vernulaeus' (n. 8). For a useful discussion of several of Vernulaeus's political orations, see Katharina Graupe, *Oratio historica-Reden über Geschichte: Untersuchungen zur praktischen Rhetorik während des spanisch-niederländischen Konfliktes im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 303–369.

41 Vernulaeus, *Institutionum politicarum libri IV* (n. 11); *Institutionum moralium libri IV* (Lovanii, typis Philip. Dormalii, 1625); *Institutionum oeconomicarum libri II* (Lovanii: typis

moralium libri IV (1625) contains many passages about the affects—anger, avarice, lust, love, clemency—that reappear in Vernulaeus's dramatic characterizations, especially of rapacious tyrants, but his political handbook provides the best guide to understanding his historical plays. Here he set forth in detail his concept of the ideal Catholic state: a monarchy ruled by a prudent statesman who possesses the ability and power to maintain peace. No other aim was more fervently desired in the war-torn Netherlands of the 1620s, and Vernulaeus was quick to outline a political program on the best method to attain it.

The *Institutiones politicae* was heavily indebted to two contemporary schools: the practical Neo-Stoic political philosophy of Justus Lipsius and the recent Counter-Reformation revision of Lipsius by the German Jesuit Adam Contzen. Vernulaeus's treatise also revealed his extensive first-hand familiarity with many sixteenth-century political writers: Machiavelli; the Spanish scholastics Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), and Juan de Mariana whose handbook for princes, *De rege et regis institutione* (*The King and the Education of the King*; Toledo, 1598) with its notorious promulgation of tyrannicide challenged Vernulaeus to engage with that uncomfortable topic. The structure and scope of the *Institutiones politicae* indicated that Vernulaeus intended to align his work with the practical compendia of Lipsius and Contzen. He purposely imitated the breadth of Lipsius's *Politiorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (*Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction*, 1589) by restating in varying degrees of detail Lipsius's views about the origins of civil society, the advantages of monarchy, the moral qualities that the prince and his court should possess and promote, the importance of taxation, and the organization and use of a modern standing army.⁴² For topics that

Philip. Dormalii, 1626). All of these works were reprinted, and in the 1640s, each work appeared with extensive quotations from Vernulaeus's reading in political and moral theory. See especially the 1647 edition of the *Institutionum politicarum libri IV, Nunc primum testimoniis, autoritatibus, exemplis et documentis, quae instar commentariorum sunt adornati* (Louvani: Ioannem Vryenborch, 1647).

42 Justus Lipsius, *Politica: Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction (Politiorum sive civilis doctrina libri VI)*, ed. and transl. Jan Waszink (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004) *Bibliotheca latinitatis novae*, 5. On the relationship between Lipsius's political writings and Vernulaeus's *Institutiones politicae*, see Erik de Bom, *Geleerden en politiek: De politieke ideeën van Justus Lipsius in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2011), pp. 308–328. Generally Vernulaeus incorporated into the first two books of the *Institutiones politicae* Lipsius's ideas in *Politica, Books I–III* about the origin of the state, the preference for monarchy, and the virtues the ruler and his counselors must possess. In his Book III, Ver-

Lipsius omitted or for clarification of Lipsian opinions that appeared to clash with Catholic orthodoxy, Vernulaeus turned to the *Politicorum libri decem* (*Ten Books of Politics*, 1621) of Adam Contzen, the confessor of Maximilian of Bavaria.⁴³ From that work, Vernulaeus derived his opinions about the independence of the Catholic clergy from political control, and the necessity for ecclesiastics to possess both wealth and secular power. In keeping with the medieval view of the social hierarchy, Vernulaeus not only accorded clerics the highest rank, but even suggested that they, because of their celibate state, made the best political administrators and rulers. He further followed Contzen in emphasizing the importance of state-administered education in order to control the potential growth of heresy in Catholic lands.⁴⁴ But Vernulaeus did not always adhere to the Jesuit's opinions. On the ticklish question, especially in the Low Countries, whether private dissenters from a state's religion (the so-called 'quieti') should be permitted, Vernulaeus agreed with Lipsius's tolerant views but with the caveat that such citizens might one day endanger the security of the Catholic prince.⁴⁵ Similarly, Vernulaeus differed from Contzen about the

mulaeus devotes much more space than Lipsius to the relationship between the Church and the State, and the duties of the prince to the Catholic Church. In contrast, in Books III, IV, and V of *Politica*, Lipsius analyzes in great detail the different types of prudence including the concept of mixed prudence (*prudencia mixta*), or the careful use of deceit in governance, a term that Vernulaeus does not adopt though he shares Lipsius's belief that some secrecy and deception is necessary to govern well. Vernulaeus discusses taxation in III.5 following Lipsius, IV.3.5–11.

- 43 Adam Contzen, *Politicorum libri x* (Moguntiae: sumptibus Joannis Kinckii, 1621). On Contzen, see Ernst-Albert Seils, *Die Staatslehre des Jesuiten Adam Contzen* (Lübeck: Matthiesen, 1968), and Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 136–161.
- 44 Contzen discusses the importance of education in Book IV and the key role of the clergy in the administration of the state and church in Book VI of his *Politicorum, libri x*.
- 45 Compare Lipsius, *Politica*, IV.4 (expurgated version, 1596) with Vernulaeus, *Institutiones politicae*, pp. 96–97. Lipsius IV.4 is one of the most disputed sections of the *Politica*. In the first edition (1589), Lipsius appeared to argue for freedom of conscience and allowed for the possibility that quiet dissenters might gently be persuaded to reform. The revisions of the *Politica* of 1596, 1599, and 1604, undertaken in response to the Vatican censors who had placed the *Politica* on the *Index librorum prohibitorum* still allow for quiet dissension but warned that private heretics should be watched carefully and prosecuted if necessary. Vernulaeus may have known both versions of Lipsius's work, but as a loyal Catholic, he followed the argument of the later expurgated version. See Waszink's detailed explanation

use of deception (*simulatio*) in political matters and shared Lipsius's belief that a minor deceit ('*fraus levis*') was advisable in dealing with rebellious citizens and in upholding the secrecy of private councils.⁴⁶

Although Vernulaeus's originality as a political thinker was limited, he differed markedly from his sources and even contemporary political writing such as Carolus Scribanus's *Politico-Christianus* (1624) in the manner in which he presented his ideas. Whereas Lipsius and Contzen had addressed their political books to aristocratic rulers—Lipsius boldly directed his treatise to all 'imperatores, reges, et principes' ('emperors, kings, and princes'), and Contzen dedicated his treatise to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II—Vernulaeus composed his study exclusively for student readers.⁴⁷ For this reason, he dispensed with the learned citations from Greco-Roman and patristic writers that had characterized Lipsius's work, and perhaps even obscured his actual views, and with the even longer excerpts from Scripture and the ancients in Contzen so as to produce a school text whose brevity and perspicuity would capture his students' attention: 'I have looked towards utility and action; therefore I have omitted whatever does not pertain to these two. I have not taught about what has happened in the past, but what is happening and what could happen. I wanted to write something of use, not simply to fill up lots of pages, Indeed great knowledge is not not always found in huge volumes.' ('In Usum et Actionem respexi, ideoque quae huc non faciebant, omisi; nec quae olim facta, sed quae fiunt, aut fieri possunt docui. Prodesse enim volui, non chartas tantum implere. Neque sane in magnis voluminibus magna semper Scientia est.') Vernulaeus did, of course, possess an encyclopedic knowledge of previous political writing from Aristotle to the Jesuits, and in the subsequent 1647 Louvain edition of the *Institutiones politicae* he appended lengthy *testimonia* from this tradition to support his arguments. But in his original conception of the treatise, Vernulaeus emphasized its practical utility over its philological and scholastic roots. He took pains to present conflicting opinions about controversial issues such as the legitimacy of tyrannicide, or the necessity of a single state religion so that his students would be well equipped to debate intelligently about these problems. The stylistic significance of Vernulaeus's treatise lay in its reduction

of the controversy concerning IV.4 in the introduction to his edition of Lipsius's *Politica*, pp. 180–182. Seils overstates Vernulaeus's reliance on Contzen in this regard: Seils, *Die Staatslehre*, p. 215.

46 Vernulaeus *Institutiones politicae*, p. 154; pp. 160–165. Seils aligns Vernulaeus too closely with Contzen in the *prudencia* discussion: Seils, *Die Staatslehre*, p. 218.

47 Lipsius, *Politica*, pp. 226–229.

48 Vernulaeus, *Institutiones politicae*, sig.*7.

of contemporary political theory into an educational handbook without sacrificing the complexity of the original ideas. This same concern for a clear and effective form of political instruction informed the composition of Vernulaeus's historical dramas, and he adapted the existing Christian Senecan tradition of contemporary neo-Latin tragedy to his own pedagogical ends. Just as Lipsius had illustrated many of the political ideas described in his *Politica* in his subsequent historical collection *Monita et exempla politica* (*Political Warnings and Examples*, 1605), so too did Vernulaeus use the Louvain stage to represent both positive and negative examples of ideal political behavior described in his *Institutiones politicae*.⁴⁹

Vernulaeus was well aware of the disrepute into which the concept of a *politicus* had fallen because of the amorality ascribed to such behavior by the followers of Machiavelli. In contrast, he extolled the ideal politician as the 'good man skilled at governing' ('vir bonus regendi peritus'), a practical twist on the elder Cato's oratorical ideal of the 'good man skilled at speaking' ('vir bonus dicendi peritus') that was later echoed by Cicero, Seneca, and Quintilian. Vernulaeus further observes that the Christian statesman will possess 'a prudent mind, experienced judgment, and an eloquent way of speaking' ('pectoris prudentiam, consilii maturitatem, sermonis facundiam') and be a person 'who leads a good life, has a sincere faith, is always constant and courageous; who looks after everyone well, and who sets for himself the well-being of the people as the highest law' ('vita bonus, fide sincerus, semper constans, intrepidus, omnibus bene consulens, et salutem populi supremam sibi legem proponens').⁵⁰ The exemplary *politicus* will be knowledgeable about the law, pious and god-fearing, deeply familiar with history, and endowed with exceptional ability to act justly and prudently. Indeed, following Lipsius's revision of Machiavelli, Vernulaeus further argued that the successful statesman must possess prudence (*prudentia*) perhaps to an even greater degree than other virtues, for without *prudentia*, no ruler can effectively govern a state.⁵¹ Since statesmen are not born but

49 In the opening chapter of his *Monita et exempla politica*, Lipsius portrays himself engaged in a dialogue with his audience (*auditor*) who encourages him to finish the task he begun in his *Politica* by providing historical examples for readers to follow of the political ideas in the earlier work. Lipsius agrees, adding that warnings (*monita*) are also necessary for providing possible courses of action for future statesmen. Justus Lipsius, *Monita et exempla politica qui virtutes et vitia principum spectant* (1605; Amsterdam: apud Ioannem Blaeuw, 1668), pp. 7–10.

50 Vernulaeus, *Institutiones politicae*, pp. 7–8.

51 Vernulaeus, *Institutiones politicae*, pp. 144–147. Vernulaeus also writes about the characteristics of *prudentia* in his *Institutiones morales*, III.2, pp. 202–226.

shaped through education, study, and experience to assume ever greater roles of political responsibility, he charges the preceptors of future statesmen with the essential task of ensuring the sound governance of the state. In his nuanced characterizations of rulers *in extremis*, Vernulaeus envisions historical drama as the visual manifestation of *prudentia*, and the Habsburgs as the contemporary *exempla* of his *prudentia* ideal.

The Tragedy of *Prudentia* and the Limits of the *Christianus Politicus*

Vernulaeus's tragedies are replete with contumacious rulers such as Theodoricus and Levigildus whose reprehensible behavior is repeatedly called into question by loyal counselors and the ubiquitous *senex*. Though almost exclusively focused on monarchs whose anger and lust had reduced them to tyrants incapable of emotional control, Vernulaeus complicates these unidimensional characterizations in many of his works. His *Conradinus* (1628) chronicling the downfall of the last scion of the Hohenstaufens in the mid-thirteenth century presents a wide range of political activity exemplifying the centrality of *prudentia*.⁵² Having learned of Charles of Anjou's invasion of imperial lands in southern Italy, the youthful Conradin, eager to defend his inheritance, led an army of German nobles against the invader only to suffer a humiliating defeat in their first encounter. After a failed attempt to flee by sea, Conradin was captured, tried, and executed for his challenge to Charles's authority. Clearly Conradin's failed campaign against Charles of Anjou was a classic example of the prince's lack of *prudentia*. What makes *Conradinus* especially interesting, however, is the sophisticated manner in which Vernulaeus presented his case. First, he underscores the illegality of Charles of Anjou's seizure of Hohenstaufen territory. In this play, Charles is portrayed as the predatory tyrant who not only terrorizes his new Italian subjects into submission, but also later takes great pleasure in ordering the public execution of Conradin. In contrast to Charles's immorality, Vernulaeus juxtaposed the rashness of the politically

52 Nicolaus Vernulaeus, *Conradinus et Crispus, tragoediae* (Lovanii: apud Ioannem Oliverium, 1628), sig. ***i. Vernulaeus writes in his dedicatory letter to Albertus Hugonus Odonellus that he was drawn to Conradin and Crispus as exempla of noble forbearance when subjected to the vicissitudes of *Fortuna*: 'exhibuerunt ambo fato suo: instabilitatis Fortunae exemplum et fortitudine sua invicti animi documentum dederunt'. The ubiquitous presence of the *senex*, however, ensures that his student audiences also derive both political and moral lessons from the historical material.

inexperienced Hohenstaufen prince. To be sure, he presented Conradin's eventual death as a political martyrdom, but he also took pains to demonstrate that Conradin's imprudent actions were responsible for his demise. He drew parallels between Charles and Conradin by characterizing them both as ambitious, self-seeking rulers who rely exclusively on the whimsy of Fortuna to determine their respective political futures. Luck alone, rather than an exceptional ability at statecraft, accorded Charles his victory over the young prince. Conradin, however, was defeated by fortune because of his inability to control his emotions and govern prudently.

In light of Vernulaeus's remarks in the *Institutiones politicae*, Conradin acted unwisely in several respects: he placed his own quest for glory above the best interests of the state; he failed to consider the consequences that would befall his kingdom should he, as the sole remaining heir, perish; he conducted a just war not to conclude a hasty peace but to acquire personal renown; he placed himself in unnecessary danger by leading his troops into battle, and once defeated, he immediately fled in despair despite the entreaties of his generals to continue the campaign while they still had the resources.⁵³ Through this textbook example of the dangers of political ignorance, Vernulaeus encourages his viewers to acquire *prudencia* so that they could effectively counter the injustices with which *Fortuna* would inevitably burden them.

Political prudence also manifested itself in the ruler's commitment to secure internal stability and peace by upholding the one true religion, Roman Catholicism. In his *Institutiones politicae*, Vernulaeus had argued that if a king employed all his civil authority to protect Rome, then God would prevent any misfortune from befalling his land.⁵⁴ Vernulaeus was, however, politically astute enough to perceive the difficulties of maintaining such a state in the modern world: both kings and Catholic clergy could easily err and fall from divine favor. He therefore devised a system whereby the Church and secular government could work together to realize the common good. The clergy were entrusted with ensuring that the Catholic state religion never suffer from any moral weaknesses that could be imputed to them or to the princes who were obliged to support them. Similarly, princes were charged with the responsibility of preventing prince-bishops and other clerical rulers from being seduced by the worldly wealth and power that they wielded as statesmen. Just as the clergy

53 Cf. Vernulaeus, *Institutiones politicae*, p. 531 (on the necessity to wage war to ensure peace); p. 549 (on the need for princes to protect themselves on the battlefield); p. 589 (on the avoidance of despair after suffering a military defeat).

54 Vernulaeus, *Institutiones politicae*, pp. 93–95.

oversaw a prince's allegiance to Rome, so did the Catholic prince guard against corruption among the clergy.⁵⁵

In his dramas of the late 1620s, Vernulaeus proposed the Habsburg rulers of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire as the embodiment of this ideal coexistence of Church and state. This allegiance was especially evident in his 1626 tragedy *Ottocarus*, on the rebellion of Ottokar of Bohemia against Rudolf I, the first Habsburg emperor. Here Vernulaeus established the Habsburgs as contemporary models of political prudence and warned their enemies of the folly of disputing their divinely ordained mandate to govern Catholic Europe.⁵⁶ He illustrates this point by attributing the characteristics of the ideal Catholic prince to Rudolf of Habsburg. The emperor is shown to work tirelessly for the preservation of peace by cultivating the love of his people, defending the Church, and waging a just war to ensure the safety of his subjects. He never acts without consulting the other princes of the realm, and he employs a mild, but politically prudent deception to force the rebel Ottokar to desist from war and acknowledge his authority. In contrast, Ottokar possesses all the familiar qualities of a tyrant: ambition, cruelty, susceptibility to flattery, and a vain belief in Fortune's favor, faults that Vernulaeus had criticized earlier in his political writings.

Such lessons are obvious to any careful reader of the drama and Vernulaeus's political works. But the *Ottocarus* also had another less conspicuous purpose: the legitimization of the Habsburg rule of the Low Countries. The rebellion of Ottokar of Bohemia against Rudolf of Habsburg was chosen as a dramatic subject to warn those contemplating or engaged in a rebellion against the Habsburgs, a dynasty whose triumphs fated them to arouse the envy of other less successful families, that such actions only lead to defeat and the further expansion and consolidation of Habsburg power.⁵⁷ This message certainly struck a chord in the early 1620s, for the Dutch were assailed and overwhelmed on several fronts by the Spanish Habsburgs under Vernulaeus's favorite gen-

55 Vernulaeus, *Institutiones politicae*, pp. 334–341; 359–362.

56 Vernulaeus writes more expansively about the political function of tragedy in the dedicatory letter to *Ottocarus* than he does elsewhere. Building on the canonical definition of tragedy as the representation of the mutability of fortune and the downfall of kings, Vernulaeus observes that tragedy consequently is suited to impart instruction to rulers about the best way to avoid disaster. Tragedies are mirrors of kingship and educate statesmen in the virtues all successful rulers must possess: moderation, self-discipline, mercy, and prudence, for tragedy is, above all, the 'magistra prudentiae' ('teacher of prudence'). Vernulaeus, *Ottocarus*, sig. *2^v–*3.

57 Vernulaeus, *Ottocarus*, sig. *5–*5^v.

eral Ambrogio Spinola.⁵⁸ The Rudolf-Ottokar relationship also recalled the recent controversy between Frederick of the Palatinate, the luckless Protestant king of Bohemia in 1619–1620, and the Holy Roman Habsburg emperor Ferdinand II. Vernulaeus himself drew these connections in his dedicatory letter to the ‘prudent and eloquent’ Joannes Carolus, noting that both Rudolf and Ferdinand ‘found the imperial throne beset all around by armed men; they could then show themselves to be eminently worthy of the imperial majesty by definitely triumphing over the rebels against the imperial eagle’ (‘[ambo] enim circumseptum armis imperii solium invenerunt, ut dignissimos se primae majestatis throno ostenderent, qui tam fideliter de Caesareae Aquilae Rebelibus triumpharent’).⁵⁹ Just as Ottokar perished because of his refusal to submit to Rudolf, so too was Frederick crushed by a superior Catholic army in 1620 because he had challenged Ferdinand’s authority.

In the *Ottocarus*, the political lessons seemed remarkably clear; indeed Vernulaeus’s pedagogical purpose would have been thwarted had his message appeared obscure. But the apparently unproblematic use of tragedy for political instruction does not permeate all of Vernulaeus’s plays. His Counter-Reformation political ideas may explain his fascination with Church-state relations, but they do not provide much insight about the complex, and even contradictory, manner in which the secular and clerical humanist statesmen, all bent on maintaining their government’s loyalty to Rome, are often portrayed in the dramas.

To clarify this point, let us consider the example of Vernulaeus’s tragedy, *Henricus octavus seu schisma Anglicanum* (*Henry VIII or the English Schism*; 1624), an unabashedly Roman Catholic representation of the conflict between Sir Thomas More and Henry VIII.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, Vernulaeus paints an obviously partisan view of the conflict: he simplifies the political and ecclesiastical complexity of the debate, and reduces the crisis to a bedroom soap opera with Henry burning for the fulfillment of his carnal desires, Anne Boleyn’s coy refusal

58 Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic, its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 478–485.

59 Vernulaeus, *Ottocarus*, sig. *5. Vernulaeus deemed Joannes Carolus an especially worthy recipient of this play, for Carolus’s political service to the Prince Archbishop of Mainz, and to both the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs was much admired even by the emperor and the king of Spain for his ability to resolve difficult negotiations with other governments, both Catholic and Protestant. Vernulaeus attributes such skills to Carolus’s mastery of both eloquence and prudence: *Ottocarus*, sig. *6.

60 Nicolaus Vernulaeus, *Henricus octavus seu schisma Anglicanum* (Lovanii: typis Philippi Dormalii, 1624).

until the divorce from Catharine of Aragon, and Thomas More's constant, but fruitless, reproach of his perennially overheated king.⁶¹

In light of Vernulaeus's program of political education, and the political sophistication evidenced by his students in their school orations, such a naive approach to a still contemporary problem, Church-state relations, seems remarkably jejune. But there is an even more arresting problem: Vernulaeus's schoolboys were clearly enjoined to admire the piety of Thomas More, his Stoic withdrawal from the political arena, and his courageous martyrdom. In an historical drama purportedly written to impart practical political instruction, one paradoxically finds the ideal Christian humanist advisor upbraiding the king for his immorality, but failing to prevent the lapse of the king and the state into tyranny and heresy. Such an outcome is troubling in light of Vernulaeus's political mission, for this consequence calls into the question the effectiveness of the Christian political ethic to ensure good government and social stability. To be sure, the triumph of tyranny on earth is shown to be temporary, for Henry, along with the tyrants of Vernulaeus's other tragedies, goes quickly insane, or is dragged into hell by devils—a pedagogical device especially favored by the Jesuits. But the *Christianus politicus*, goes to the scaffold. How can this disparity between the private, spiritual triumph of humanist martyrs, such as Thomas More, and their political failure be explained? What historical circumstances have brought Vernulaeus, the leading humanist political dramatist of his time, to such a melancholy conclusion?

I can only suggest a brief answer here, but the complexity of this issue demonstrates the way in which disharmonies between the didactic program of the Latin dramatists and the plays themselves can uncover deep-seated problems in late humanism. Vernulaeus's paradoxical representation of the Christian statesman was not unique to his historical situation. At other humanist schools with aggressive political curricula in the early seventeenth century, such as the academy at Strasbourg, arguments were being made with similar enthusiasm for an ideal Christian state in which the well-trained students of the humanist gymnasia will guarantee a stable and peaceful government as long as they are permitted to play major roles in the administration of the court.⁶² This

61 Henry's passion for Anne Boleyn recalls the uncontrollable adolescent lust that afflicts enamored young men in Terentian comedy. Vernulaeus's female characters are often represented as alluring distractions who mislead accomplished rulers into imprudent behavior: Ottocarus's wife Kunegundis is especially blamed for inciting her husband's revolt against Rudolf (*Ottocarus*, sig. *5). Vernulaeus discusses the perils of lust for statesmen in his *Institutiones politicae*, p. 141.

62 Parente, 'Tragoedia politica', pp. 5–9.

case was generally made by means of negative exempla: the plays demonstrated the chaos that ensued upon the condemnation of the humanist courtiers/administrators. But these same humanist courtiers were, like Thomas More, often shown to be outwitted by other amoral court advisors whose clever manipulation of the generally weak monarch ensures them the greatest power and influence. The execution of the Christian humanist, though a spiritual victory, reveals a growing alienation between the political instruction in the schools and the harsh political and religious realities of the early modern state. When viewed against the shortcomings of the humanist political program, the glorious martyrdom of the Christian politician must be seen as an idealistic attempt to gloss over the inability of the Christian moral-philosophical system to serve as a political tool, and to perpetuate the self-serving argument that humanist-trained politicians remain the best statesmen (and even better martyrs), especially when their superior political advice has failed. This inability to separate an idealistic moral philosophy from political reality paradoxically ensured the growing marginalization of the humanist scholar in the seventeenth century from the institutions of power they so eagerly yearned to serve.

Not all of Vernulaeus's works betray such a damning view of the future of Christian, *i.e.*, Catholic, political action: there are ideal politicians such as Rudolf of Habsburg in the *Ottocarus*, who seem exceedingly exemplary—as do all Habsburgs in Vernulaeus's world, but such moments are rare. Instead Vernulaeus's schoolboys witnessed, and acted out, the brashness of Conradin von Hohenstaufen, the murders of Lambert of Maastricht, Stanislaus of Cracow, Thomas Becket, and the execution of Jeanne d'Arc. To be sure, divine choruses of angels and saints reassured the audiences of the temporary nature of the triumphs of the Machiavellian enemies of Rome, and the ultimate victory of Divine Justice, but in the face of the harsh political realities of the early seventeenth century, such sentiments are merely consolatory utopian projections designed to thwart the inevitable chaos of history. Through his vivid representation of the increasing ineffectiveness of the Christian humanist politician at courts in which law and power were regularly abused by arrogant and talentless rulers, Vernulaeus paradoxically transformed the traditional humanist view of history as a compendium of moral exempla into a melancholic lamentation on the mutability of political life—or, to speak with Walter Benjamin⁶³—of the *Trauerspiel* of human existence and the concomitant rift between Christian man and an increasingly secularized world.

63 Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972) Suhrkamp Taschenbücher, 69, pp. 51–54.

Vernulaeus's turn to historical and political drama was motivated primarily by his desire to prepare the noble students in his charge to assume positions of secular and ecclesiastical leadership in an age of near-perpetual war. He refrained from naïve representations of Christian morality to incorporate the ideas he garnered from his wide reading in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century political theory into his characterizations of rulers, bishops, generals, and counselors, and measured accordingly their respective abilities to govern the early modern state. He countered the efflorescence of historical and political drama emanating from the Protestant North, in both Latin and Dutch, and in some cases problematized the same issues (e.g., the legitimacy of tyrannicide; the relationship between church and state); he adapted repertoire from his Jesuit contemporaries and reshaped it to present a broader series of tableaux of the administrative problems that the new Christian statesmen were likely to encounter, and he brought new *exempla* of political behavior to the stage. As a gifted educator, he remained optimistic about the virtue, stability, and peace that could be celebrated and maintained through effective governance, but he also recognized that despite their best efforts, Christian politicians were overtaken frequently by misfortune or other unforeseen events. In such dire circumstances when all other options were foreclosed, the irreproachable manner in which the Christian statesman confronted the inevitable was more significant than expedient, morally reprehensible conduct. Vernulaeus's historical tragedies thus exemplified both the efficaciousness of prudent political action but also the limitations of a Christian statesman's ability to effect lasting change in an increasingly uncertain world.

Further Reading

Note: There is little secondary literature on Vernulaeus's works, especially his dramas. The following readings will provide further information about his writings and the broader literary and historical context in which he worked. See also note 3 above.

Bireley, Robert, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 136–161.

Bloemendal, Jan, 'Neo-Latin Drama in the Low Countries', in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013) *Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, 3, pp. 293–364.

- Groenland, Juliette A., 'Playing to the Public, Playing with Opinion: Latin and Vernacular Dutch History Drama by Heinsius and Duym', in Jan Bloemendal, Arjan van Dixhoorn and Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011) Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 197, pp. 127–150.
- De Bom, Erik, *Geleerden en politiek: De politieke ideeën van Justus Lipsius in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2011), pp. 308–328.
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- Duits, Henk, *Van Bartholomeusnacht tot Bataafse opstand: Studies over de relatie tussen politiek en toneel in het midden van de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990).
- Graupe, Katharina, *Oratio historica—Reden über Geschichte: Untersuchungen zur praktischen Rhetorik während des spanisch-niederländischen Konfliktes im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), *Frühe Neuzeit*, 156, pp. 303–369.
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- Parente, James A., Jr., 'Tragoedia Politica: Strasbourg School Drama and the Early Modern State', *Colloquia Germanica* 29/1 (1996), 1–11.
- Parleiter, Veronika Coroleu, 'Nicolaus Vernulaeus' Darstellung der Habsburger: *Apologia, Virtutes und Historia Austriaca* mit einem Exkurs über die *Methodus legendi historias*, *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 56 (2007), 233–270.
- Schuster, Louis A. (ed. and transl.), *Henry VIII: A Neo-Latin Drama by Nicolaus Vernulaeus* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964).
- Szarota, Elida Maria, *Geschichte, Politik und Gesellschaft im Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berne: Francke, 1976).

The Baroque Tragedy of the Roman Jesuits: *Flavia* and Beyond*

Blair Hoxby

Between 1556 and 1773, when the order was suppressed by order of the Pope, the Jesuits may have produced as many as 100,000 ‘solemn tragedies’.¹ They staged these at the seven hundred and fifty universities and colleges that they opened during those years, some located next to seats of power such as Rome, Paris, Munich, and Vienna, where they entertained monarchs and princes of the church and had access to the finest composers, musicians, and dancing masters of the day; others scattered as far afield as Brazil, Mexico, India, and the Philippines. The global reach of the Jesuits was already apparent to the Puritan William Prynne in 1633 when, in his giant anti-theatrical treatise *Histrionomastix*,

* I am grateful to Sarah Janda and Nolan Epstein for their research assistance, to Leon Hopper, S.J., for providing access to a copy of *Selectæ Patrum Societatis Jesu Tragoediae*, and to Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith for comments on an earlier draft.

1 For the estimate, which is based on colleges performing an average of two plays per year, see W.J. McCabe, S.J., *An Introduction to Jesuit Tragedy*, ed. Louis J. Oldani (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983), pp. 36, 47. In 1555, colleges averaged fewer than one per year, but in exceptional cases, such as Billom, France in 1557, a college might produce as many as eight. Performance schedules became more regular with time. For additional details on the first decade of productions, see Mario Fois, S.J., ‘La retorica nella pedagogia Ignaziana prime attuazioni teatrali e possibile modelli’, in Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio (eds.), *I Gesuiti e i primordi del teatro barocco in Europa* (Rome: Centro studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1995), pp. 57–99, esp. pp. 84–90. The diversity of the Jesuit repertoire is stressed in the same volume by Nigel Griffin, ‘Plautus Castigatus: Rome, Portugal, and Jesuit Drama Texts’. It is also demonstrated by Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013); see esp. Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, ‘Neo-Latin Theatre in Italy’ and ‘Jesuit Neo-Latin Drama in France’ and Fidel Rädle, ‘Jesuit Theatre in Germany, Austria and Switzerland’, pp. 25–101, 185–292, 415–469. Good introductions to Jesuit theater include McCabe, *An Introduction to Jesuit Tragedy*; Bruna Filippi, ‘The Orator’s Performance: Gesture, Word, and Image in Theatre at the Collegio Romano’, in John W. O’Malley et al. (eds.), *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 512–529; and Blair Hoxby, *What Was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), ch. 5. Also see (in Italian) Chiabò and Doglio (eds.), *I gesuiti e i primordi del teatro barocco*.

he deplored the 'histrionically' Society of Jesus for bringing their interludes and stage plays 'to their Indian Proselytes'.² Considered as a global phenomenon, the theatrical repertoire of the Jesuits displays a tremendous variety of form and content because the Society of Jesus was always ready to make concessions to local traditions, customs, and resources. Nevertheless, the tragedies produced at the *Collegio Romano* enjoyed a special authority because its faculty authored the official plan for Jesuit education known as the *Ratio studiorum* (*Plan of Studies*), which was issued in successive versions in 1586, 1591, and 1599, and because their example served as the surest guide to its proper implementation.³

Before Bernardino Stefonio (1560–1620) took up his pen, the most ambitious theatrical production that the *Collegio Romano* had mounted was Stefano Tucci's 1573 *Christus iudex* (*Christ the Judge*).⁴ The signal achievement of Stefonio, who directed Tucci's play, was to recast this tradition of sacred representation in a form suggested by the examples of Euripides and Seneca, authors who were achieving new salience in the Jesuit curriculum with the promulgation of the *Ratio studiorum* and with the publication of Martin Delrio's edition of all the remains of Latin tragedy (1593–1595). By noting when Stoic doctrine clashed with Christian dogma, Delrio's formidable edition not only made Seneca 'safe' for the classroom, it suggested how Counter-Reformation dramatists could revise Seneca for their own purposes.⁵

2 William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix, The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragaedie, Divided into Two Parts* (London: E[dward] A[l]lde, Augustine Mathewes, Thomas Cotes] and W[illiam] I[ones] for Michael Sparke, 1633), p. 117.

3 Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, transl., introd. and comm. George E. Ganns, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), par. 4., c. 7, n. 2, Declaratio c.

4 On Tucci, see Benedetto Soldati, *Il Collegio Mamertino e le origini del teatro gesuitico, con l'aggiunta di notizie inedite sulla drammatica conventuale messinese nei secoli XVI, XVII, XVIII. e con la pubblicazione della Giuditte del P. Tuccio* (Turin: E. Loescher, 1908). For selections in Latin with Italian transl., see Stefano Tucci, *Christus nascens; Christus patiens; Christus iudex: tragoediae* (Rome: Institutum historicum Societatis Iesu, 2011). For previous accounts of theater at the *Collegio Romano*, see Daniela Quarta, 'La drammaturgia Gesuita nel Collegio Romano: Dalla tragedia di soggetto biblico al dramma martirologico (1564–1614)' and Bruna Filippi, 'Il teatro al Collegio Romano, dal testo drammatico al contesto scenico', both in Chiabò and Doglio (eds.), *I gesuiti e i primordi del teatro barocco*, pp. 119–160, 161–182; Bruna Filippi, 'The Orator's Performance: Gesture, Word, and Image in Theatre at the Collegio Romano', in John W. O'Malley, S.J. a.o. (eds.), *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540–1773* (Toronto, etc.: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Marc Fumaroli, *Héros et orateurs: Rhétoriques et dramaturgie cornéliennes* (Genève: Droz, 1996), pp. 138–170; Chevalier, 'Neo-Latin Theatre in Italy', pp. 72–84; and Hoxby, *What Was Tragedy?*, ch. 5.

5 Martin Antonio Delrio, *Martini Antonii Delrii ex Societate Iesu Syntagma tragoediae lati-*

Stefonio responded to the stimulus of Delrio's edition and to his duties as professor of rhetoric by writing three original tragedies: *Santa Symphorosa* (1593), which dramatizes the martyrdom of a Christian widow and her sons under the emperor Hadrian; *Crispus* (1597), which casts a son of the emperor Constantine in the role of Hippolytus, falsely accused of rape by his stepmother and rashly condemned to death by his father; and *Flavia* (1600), which represents the martyrdom of three Christians of the imperial family during the reign of Domitian. If *Crispus* was 'an event within the bounds of the Jesuit pedagogical empire' ('un événement interne à l'empire pédagogique jésuite'), as Marc Fumaroli observes, *Flavia* acquired a truly Roman Catholic dimension' ('la *Flavia* acquiert une dimension vraiment catholique romaine'), not least because it was performed during Carnival of the Holy Year declared by Clement VIII in 1600 and because the pope's nephew, Cardinale Aldobrandini, contributed to its spectacular staging.⁶ An anonymous diarist from the *Collegio Romano* records its success:

Quest'anno se è fatta la tragedia della Flavia o di S. Clemente Flavio, si è recitata quatro volte con molto plauso e concorso. La spesa delle scene, palco e musica, l'ha fatta il Cardinale Aldobrandini, e la tragedia è stato composta dal P. Bernardino Stefonio. La prima volte ha durato quasi dieci ore, poi si è abbreviata acciò non recasse fastidio. Ciò non ostante, la varietà e novità delle cose, le mostre navali, i bastimenti, e sopra tutto l'eccellenza de recitanti e il numero degl'attori han dato gran varietà, a han cagionato gran diletto.⁷

(This year was produced the tragedy of Flavia, or of St. Clement Flavius, which was performed four times with much applause and large audiences. The theater, stage, and music were arranged by Cardinal Aldobran-

nae: in tres partes distinctum (Antwerp: ex Officina Plantiniana, apud Viduam [et] Ioannem Moretum, 1593–1595). On the edition, see Maturin Dréano, *Humanisme chrétien: La tragédie latine commentée pour les chrétiens du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1936); Roland G. Mayer, 'Personata Stoa: Neostoicism and Senecan Tragedy', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994), 151–174, esp. pp. 159–167; and Jan Machielsen, *Martin Delrio, Demonology and Scholarship in the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 137–203.

6 Fumaroli, *Héros et orateurs*, p. 146.

7 Quoted in Riccardo G. Villoslada, s.j., *Storia del Collegio Romano dal suo inizio (1551) alla soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù (1773)* (Rome: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1954), p. 166; Villoslada summarizes the plot on pp. 162–165.

dini, and the tragedy was composed by Father Bernardino Stefonio. The first time lasted almost ten hours, then it was abridged so that it might not be tedious. This notwithstanding, the variety and novelty of the matter, the naval displays, ships, and above all the excellence of the declamation and the number of the actors produced a great variety and occasioned great delight.)

The success of *Flavia* was not ephemeral. The *Collegio Romano* restaged *Flavia* and issued it in print in 1621, a few months after the poet's death.⁸ The authority of its example was then cemented by Stefonio's successors as professors of rhetoric at the *Collegio Romano*, Tarquinio Galluzzi (1573–1649) and Alessandro Donati (1584–1640). Galluzzi included a commentary on tragedy in his 1621 *Virgilianae vindicationes & commentarij tres de tragoedia, comoedia, elegia* (*Vindications of Virgil and Three Commentaries on Tragedy, Comedy, and Elegy*) and mounted a polemical defense of his teacher's tragedies in his 1633 *Rinovazione dell'antica tragedia e Difesa del Crispo* (*Renovation of Ancient Tragedy and Defense of 'Crispus'*). Donati won fame in his day for his 1622 tragedy *Pirimalus Celiani princeps*, performed to celebrate the canonizations of Sts. Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier, and his 1629 tragedy *Suevia*, a brutal analysis of sibling rivalry that dramatizes the attempted assassination of Conrad IV, the son of the German Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, in the aftermath of a military campaign against Naples. But Donati features in this essay chiefly as the author of the 1631 *Ars poetica* (*Art of Poetry*), one of the most lucid treatises on epic and tragedy published in the seventeenth century.⁹

8 Bernardino Stefonio, *FLAVIA, Tragoedia Bernardini Stephonii E Societate Iesu Diu antea, vivente Autore, flagitata: posthuma nunc tandem prodit* (Rome: Apud Haeredem Bartholomei Zannetii, 1621). I, however, have used the text printed in *Selectae Patrum Societatis Jesu Tragoediae* (Antwerp: Ioan Cnobbarvm, 1634); henceforth cited parenthetically in the text.

9 On *Pirimalus*, see Bruna Filippi, 'Le spectacle des idoles dans le théâtre de conversion jésuite (xvii^e siècle)', in Ralph Dekoninck and Myriam Watthee-Delmotte (eds.), *L'Idole dans l'imaginaire occidental* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), pp. 167–180; id., *Il Teatro degli argomenti: Gli scenari seicenteschi del teatro gesuitico romano* (Rome: Institutum Historicum s.l., 2001), pp. 104–112; on *Suevia*, see Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Italy', in Bloemendal and Norland, *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 80–83; on the *Ars poetica*, sive *Institutionum artis poeticae libri tres* (Rome: Faciotti, 1631), see Nienke Tjoelker, *Andreas Friz's Letter on Tragedies (ca. 1741–1744)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), *Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, 4, pp. 35–36; Barbara Bauer, '“Multimediales Theater”: Ansätze zu einer Poetik der Synesthäsie bei den Jesuiten', in Heinrich F. Plett, *Renaissance-Poetik/Renaissance Poetics* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1994), pp. 197–238, esp. pp. 213–215.

I make *Flavia* the center-piece of this essay for three reasons: first, because in dramatizing a minor episode in the history of the Church rather than a story drawn from the Old Testament, it illustrates a distinctive contribution of the Jesuits to our tragic repertoire; second, because, as one of the most exuberant theatrical productions of the Counter-Reformation, it invites us to inquire what is implied when we call a tragedy baroque; and third, because, as a drama that brings the pagan and the Christian into collision, striving to arouse not just pity and fear but admiration for those Christian martyrs who, renouncing the carnal world, suffered brutal tortures and perished as a sublime example to the faithful, it demands that we reflect on our most entrenched presuppositions about the nature and ends of tragedy.

Flavia as Sacred Representation

Flavia is set in the year AD 93, when Domitian was said to have descended into bloody tyranny, exiling the philosophers from Rome, killing some Roman senators and their families, and persecuting the Christians.¹⁰ As Marc Fumaroli observes, it is structured like a theatrical realization of the Ignatian ‘Meditation on Two Standards.’¹¹ This exercise asks us to meditate on two scenes. On the plain of Babylon, we should behold Lucifer atop a great throne of fire and smoke, dispatching his demons over the globe to ensnare men; and on the great plain of Jerusalem, we ought to visualize Christ selecting apostles and disciples to spread his sacred doctrine, instructing them to choose poverty in lieu of riches, the scorn of the world before honor, and humility rather than pride. The spiritual exercise concludes with a colloquy with which we, the exercitants, can appeal to the Virgin Mary to intercede with her Son that he might bestow grace and receive us under his (military) standard.¹² As the *Spiritual Exercises* make clear, however, choosing Christ does not depend on a simple election of will; it hangs, too, on a capacity to ‘discern spirits’, to differentiate

10 Stefano’s primary historical sources besides Philostratus’s *Life of Apollonius* are Suetonius, *Life of Domitian*, 15.1; Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, 67.14; and Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.17, 28; and the first two volumes of Cesare Baronio, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 12 vols. (Rome, 1588–1607).

11 Fumaroli, *Héros et orateurs*, p. 148.

12 Ignatius, *Exercitia spiritualia*, ed. Iosephus Calveras and Candidus de Dalmases (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1969) Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 100, pp. 135–147 (Second Week, Fourth Day).

between divine impulses and demonic solicitations, between true apostles and false prophets.¹³

In *Flavia*, we are asked to choose between Jesus Christ and Apollonius of Tyana, whom one nineteenth-century study aptly names *The Pagan Christ of the Third Century*.¹⁴ Classicists who have tried to pierce through the vortex of romance and polemic that swirls around Apollonius have suggested that he may have lived from about 40 A.D. to about 120 A.D., traveling among the Greek cities of the Near East, but his chief ancient biographer makes him an exact contemporary of Jesus, saying that he lived from the reign of Tiberius to that of Nerva (ca. 3/4 BC–AD 98). Perhaps he would have slipped into historical obscurity had not the Empress Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus, urged Philostratus to undertake that biography. Even if we assume that the notebooks of Damis that she purportedly gave him as source material are a fiction, there is little doubt of the imperial family's interest in Apollonius, for Julia Domna's son Caracalla dedicated a shrine to him in Tyana.

Philostratus's *Life*, which is the longest biography to survive from the classical world, became entwined with the history of the Church about sixty-five years after its composition when Sossianus Hierocles, an Antiochian adviser to the emperor Diocletian, compared Apollonius to Jesus of Nazareth in an anti-Christian tract that he circulated in Palestine and Syria before the persecution of the Christians in 302 A.D. It is not hard to see why the comparison occurred to Sossianus, for Apollonius, like Jesus, was remembered for his sermons and parables. He preserved his virginity, observed a rule of silence for five years,

13 On the rules for the 'discernment of spirits', see Ignatius, *Exercitia spiritualia*, pp. 313–336; Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, transl. Michael Barry (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), pp. 136–180; Jules J. Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits: A Guide to the Principles and Practice* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982); and Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, 'Angels Black and White: Loyola's Spiritual Discernment in Historical Perspective', *Theological Studies* 44 (1983), 241–257.

14 Albert Réville, *Apollonius of Tyana, the Pagan Christ of the Third Century* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1866). On Apollonius, see esp. Maria Dzielska, *Apollonius of Tyana in Legend and History* (Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 1986) and Jaap-Jan Flinterman, *Power, Paideia & Pythagoreanism: Greek Identity, Conceptions of the Relationship between Philosophers and Monarchs, and Political Ideas in Philostratus' "Life of Apollonius"* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1995), both with earlier bibliography. For the life, see *Philostratus: The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, ed. and transl. Christopher P. Jones, 3 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2005), henceforth cited parenthetically.

healed the sick, exorcized demons, defeated vampires, and raised the dead. He claimed to be an incarnation of Proteus the Egyptian, and late in his life, he appeared capable of escaping chains and appearing before his disciples in distant lands. As a sage who had lived in the shrine of Asclepius and learned the secrets of Babylonian magicians, Indian Brahmans, and the Naked Ones of Egypt, he seemed to represent all the occult wisdom and thaumaturgic powers of pagan religion and philosophy.

By comparison, said Hierocles, Jesus Christ was merely a robber and a magician. 'We [pagans] do not think a man who performed such deeds to have been a god', he wrote of Apollonius,

but only a man pleasing to the gods; while [Christians] are led by a few illusions to declare Jesus a god ... While the deeds of Jesus have been exaggerated by Peter, Paul, and people of their stripe—liars, yokels, sorcerers—, the deeds of Apollonius have been recorded by Maximus of Aegae, Damis the philosopher who studied with him, and Philostratus of Athens. All of these reached a very high level of culture and honored truth, and from motives of humanity did not wish the acts of a virtuous man, a friend of the gods, to go unknown.¹⁵

Although Lactantius (tutor of Constantine's ill-fated son Crispus) conceded the thaumaturgic powers of Apollonius, he believed that they depended on the use of illicit arts. What's more, he argued that because the Jewish prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah a thousand years before, Jesus had to be more than a mere magician. Indeed he was, according to one common interpretation of Revelation, the Lamb who opened the sealed book of the Old Testament (Rev. 5). Eusebius of Caesarea, author of the first church history, swiftly followed with a lengthier reply that defended the divinity of Jesus and dismissed Apollonius as a common wonder-worker or worse, an instrument of Antichrist.¹⁶ Despite, or because of, Eusebius's vituperative reply, the cult of

15 Quoted in Eusebius, *Reply to Hierocles*, 2.2, included in *Philostratus: The Life of Apollonius*, ed. Jones, vol. 3.

16 For this background, see Timothy D. Barnes, 'Sossianius Hierocles and the Antecedents of the "Great Persecution"', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976), 239–252; Stephen Benko, 'Pagan Criticism of Christianity during the First Two Centuries A.D.', in Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, ser. 2, vol. 23.2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 1055–1118; Tomas Hägg, 'Hierocles the Lover of Truth and Eusebius the Sophist', *Symbolae Osloenses* 67 (1992), 138–150; Jeffrey W. Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemic* (New York: Peter Lang,

Apollonius enjoyed a revival in the Greek east: statues and effigies were erected and talismans signed with his name circulated. But the renaissance was a brief one, for in AD 313 all restrictions were lifted from the Christians, and by AD 331, still within Eusebius's lifetime, the temple of Asclepius in Aegaeae had been razed to the ground. The senate of Rome nevertheless continued to harbor conservative, pagan aristocrats, one of whom, Virius Nichomachus Flavianus (ca. 334–394), translated Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* into Latin in order to erect a standard around which pagans could rally. Thus St. Augustine could still complain that pagans would believe the miracles described in the bible if only they were attributed to Apollonius or Apuleius.¹⁷

Apollonius's reputation as a false Christ-figure was still so notorious in the Renaissance that publication of the *editio princeps* of his *Life* required tact. For the Vatican had launched a concerted campaign against the occult arts, prosecuting humanists such as Pico della Mirandola for their study of magic. Aldus Manutius wisely elected to publish the *Life* in three parts consisting of the Greek text (1501), a Latin translation of Eusebius's *Reply* (1502), and Alemano Rinuccino's attractive Latin translation of the *Life* (1504). The Aldine edition started 'an avalanche of treatises, contributions, and literary works devoted to the prophet of Tyana', who henceforth began to occupy 'much space in Church historiography and in monographs devoted to the history of the early Roman Empire.'¹⁸ In Cesare Baronio's *Annales ecclesiastici* (1588–1607), for example, Apollonius appears as a deceiver, a magician, and an imposter elevated to divine honors by the worst of Roman emperors. Able to be everywhere at once and skilled in the arts of magic, he is ever averse to the Christians.¹⁹ Yet what made Apollonius the object of so much anxiety among Christian apologists was not his *difference* from Jesus but his indistinguishability. As Baronio himself concedes, some Christians gave up Christ as a true god once they met Apollonius, and at least one pagan worshipped him in the eclectic company of Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus. Thus the clergyman Edward Berwick was quite right to

1999); and Christopher P. Jones, 'Apollonius of Tyana in Late Antiquity', in Scott F. Johnson (ed.), *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 49–64.

17 Augustine, *Epistulae* 102, in Saint Augustine, *Letters, Volume II (83–130)*, transl. Sister Wilfrid Parsons (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1953), pp. 171–172.

18 Dzielska, *Apollonius of Tyana*, p. 197.

19 Cesare Baronio, *Annales ecclesiastici; tomus primus*, 682E; *Annales ecclesiastici; tomus secundus* (Venetiis: sumptibus Laurentii Basilii et Antonii Tivani, 1706), 264D1, 271D–E2, 506A1; on Baronio's project in general, see Cyriac K. Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius: Counter-Reformation Historian* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

be incensed by Edward Gibbon's pithy dismissal of Apollonius in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: 'Apollonius of Tyana was born about the same time as Christ. His life (that of the former) is related in so fabulous a manner by his fanatic disciples, that we are at a loss to discover whether he was a sage, or an imposter.'²⁰ As Gibbon's parenthetical clarification slyly insinuates, the fabulous nature of the gospels poses the same difficulty in the case of Jesus. Because *Flavia* is set in 93 A.D., some sixty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, the choice that Stefonio's play dramatizes is not between the historical Jesus and Apollonius but between Jesus Christ the co-eternal Son of God, and Lucifer, prince of demons; between the St. John the Evangelist and Cerinthus the gnostic, whom some biblical commentators identified with the Antichrist of 1 John 2:22; between Jewish prophecy and the pagan arts of augury, astrology, and thaumaturgy.

In the opening scene of *Flavia*, the Flamen of Jupiter hails the return of the sun and praises Domitian for promoting to the rank of caesar his nephews Domitian and Vespasian, the sons of Flavius Clemens and Domitilla. As the Flamen consults the sibylline books, a chorus of Roman youths sing Horace's *Carmen saeculare* to mark the arrival of a new *saeculum*, or era, in Roman history, precisely 110 years after Caesar Augustus declared *Ludi saeculares* to celebrate the fifth *saeculum* of Rome. But the temple is scandalously empty, and Christianity is responsible for this neglect of Rome's gods. In the act's final scene, hemi-choruses of Roman Christians sing a subtly revised version of Horace's *Carmen saeculare* in which Apollo and Diana yield to Christ and the Virgin Mary as the tutelary gods of Rome. Meanwhile, Apollonius, who has just won his release from prison determines to revenge himself on his persecutor, the Emperor Domitian. Once the scene has changed to present a horrible wasteland, Apollonius performs a hair-raising ritual (modeled chiefly on the scenes of necromancy in Seneca's *Medea* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*) to conjure up spirits from Hades. The barking of Cerberus and an eruption of flames forewarn us that the spirits have heard his invocation: Cerberus, the Hydra, the Centaur, the Dragon, the Harpy, and other hellish forms appear on stage. Enjoined to assume more attractive shapes, they transform themselves (behind the cover of a cloud machine) into a troop of sixteen comely Ethiopian youths, well-versed in all the arts of language, song, dance, and arms. In this new guise, they wear

20 Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* [1776–1789], ed. David Womersley, 6 vols. in 3 (London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, 1994), 1, p. 315 n. 63. In response, Berwick published the first complete English translation of Philostratus's *Life* in 1809; see Dzielska, *Apollonius of Tyana*, pp. 205–206.

flowing yellow barbarian costumes, Phrygian bracelets, and Sidonian boots. Like the exotic sorcerer who has conjured them up, they embody the strangeness that the play draws into itself.

In Act 2, the tension between Rome's traditional cults and Christianity is heightened, as a priest reveals the beliefs of the Christians to an incredulous Domitian (who orders their persecution) and John the Evangelist arrives in Rome upon the welcome news that the crypto-Christians Domitian and Vespasian are poised to assume the reins of empire. Once in Rome, John immediately encounters and repudiates Apollonius. Yet Apollonius's plot continues to prosper in Act 3, as he wins Domitian's favor with his gift of the Ethiopians, sets Fulvius Valens on the path to insurrection, and begins to prey on the paranoia of the tyrannous Domitian by dropping dark hints of a conspiracy in the palace. In Act 4, the Roman people express their fervent hope for a new golden age under the young caesars, but Apollonius's dark prophecy—that a father and two sons will have to be killed before the palace is safe—prepares us for their fall. In Act 5, the sorcerer—who, we should remember, claimed to be an incarnation of the shape-shifting Proteus—disguises himself as Fulvius Clemens, the father of the two caesars, and in that form tells them of Domitian's unexpected conversion to Christianity. He then instructs them to present the emperor with crosses at their accession ceremony. The results are predictably disastrous. Domitian imprisons their father, and when the sons refuse to sacrifice to Jupiter, he sacrifices *them* under the supervision of Apollonius, reserving their heads so that he, like Seneca's Atreus, may ask his brother with grizzly satisfaction if he recognizes his own sons. Having so revenged himself on the psyche of Fulvius Clemens, the emperor then decapitates him in full view of the audience. Apollonius consummates his own personal vendetta by presenting the heads of all three martyrs to John the Evangelist, who accepts them as sacred relics.

These events transpire amid an atmosphere of religious uncertainty and controversy, for not only does paganism remain the state religion of Rome, Christianity is still a religion in the making. Indeed, John arrives in Rome fresh from his polemical engagements with Cerinthus, a gnostic and chiliast whose teachings are recorded in Irenaeus's *Adversus haereses* (*Against Heresies*) (ca. 180):

Cerinthus, again, a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians, taught that the world was not made by the primary God, but by a certain Power far separated from him, and at a distance from the Principality who is supreme over the universe, and ignorant of him who is above all. He represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but

as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and that then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as he was a spiritual being.²¹

In Irenaeus's account, Cerinthus appears to blend gnostic beliefs (that the world was produced by a distinct and inferior Demiourgos, that a spiritual Christ possessed Jesus, and that his ministry consisted of revealing the unknown, Highest God) with beliefs more often associated with Judaism: that Jesus was a natural though righteous man who died and was resurrected. In works dating from 182–188, 260, and 374–376 respectively, Irenaeus, Victorinus, and Epiphanius of Salamis all advance the opinion that John wrote the Fourth Gospel or passages of his first epistle to refute Cerinthus.²² On the other hand, we also find early Christians urging the rejection of the Fourth Gospel and Revelation as the work of Cerinthus, a charge that seventeenth-century commentators still feel compelled to weigh.²³ In other words, just as Jesus and Apollonius could be all too readily compared, so John and Cerinthus could appear deceptively similar.

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- 21 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 1.26.1, transl. in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, rev. A. Cleveland Cox (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1885).
- 22 Martine Dulaey, *Victorin de Poetovio: Sur l'Apocalypse et autres écrits* (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 11.1; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 51.4.1–2; 51.6; 51.12.3–6. For an English translation of selections, see *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis*, transl. and ed. Philio R. Amidon, s.j. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), esp. pp. 87–89.
- 23 All the ancient accounts of Cerinthus are reviewed in Daniel R. Streett, *They Went Out from Us: The Identity of the Opponents of First John* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), pp. 53–77. Useful recent accounts include Klauss Wengst, *Häresie und Orthodoxie im Spiegel des ersten Johannesbriefes* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976); Charles E. Hill, 'Cerinthus: Gnostic or Chiliast? A New Solution to an Old Problem', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 135–172; Pamela A. Kinlaw, *The Christ is Jesus: Metamorphosis, Possession, and Johannine Christology* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005); Matti Myllykoski, 'Cerinthus', in Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (eds.), *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 213–246. To cite just one example, the Calvinist commentator David Pareus, *A Commentary upon the Divine Revelation of the Apostle and Evangelist John*, transl. Elias Arnold (Amsterdam: C.P., 1644), p. 6, feels the need to defend Revelation against the charge that it was written by Cerinthus.

In 1546, the Council of Trent adopted the final Catholic position on the matter: Revelation was a canonical book of the bible authored by John the Evangelist.²⁴ Thus in *Flavia*, the points of difference between John and his antagonist are clear. John grumbles that Cerinthus has pulled apart the shining glory of heaven by denying that God and Christ are one. This is in keeping with Irenaeus's suggestion that Cerinthus is the target of John 20:31 ('And these are written, that you may beleuee that Jesus is Christ, the sonne of God') and 1John 2:22 ('Who is a lier but he which denieth that Jesus is not Christ? This is Antichrist which denieth the Father and the Sonne.').²⁵ John explains to his Roman audience that, lest Cerinthus lead anyone into wickedness, he has traced the birth of the Son from the beginning (II.6.1076–1079):

Superiùs ipse exorsus, æterna indico
Principia generis. quippe de DEO DEVS,
De Mente Verbum, Patris exemplum, Patri
Par erat, & æqui Numinis Numen potens.

II.6.1038–1041

(I myself, beginning farther back, point out the immortal beginnings of his birth. Indeed, God from God, Word from Mind, a model of his Father, He was equal to his Father and, himself divine, was in command of an equal divinity.)

The world had not yet been created when the Son leapt forth as a likeness from the fertile mind of the Father (II.6.1051–1057). The Father and the Son were co-equal as creators, nor did the Father withdraw from his creation: 'Together with the Mind, the Word controls the world's vicissitudes' ('Cùm Mente Verbum temperat mundi vices', II.6.1070). In the fiction of *Flavia*, John's words provide an unimpeachable provenance for the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed of AD 381. But if they served as a confession of faith for the audience gathered to watch *Flavia*, they may also have reminded them of the purge that followed the Council of Nicea, a purge that saw bishop Arius exiled, his books burned, and his followers branded enemies of Christ.²⁶ Even in the sixteenth and seven-

24 Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* (London: T. Nelson, 1957–1961), 2, pp. 71–72.

25 *The New Testament of Jesus Christ, Translated Faithfully into English* (Rheims: Iohn Fogy, 1582), better-known as the Douay-Rheims Bible, henceforth cited parenthetically.

26 For a lucid account of the context, see esp. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* [1858–1892], 8 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 3, pp. 661–684.

teenth centuries, Arianism and other forms of Antitrinitarianism continued to appeal to heterodox theologians such as Faustus Socinus.

Not content to furnish a first-century pedigree for the Creed, *Flavia* also furnishes one for embattled beliefs and practices ranging from the use of vestments, candles, and images in worship (II.3.514–545, II.4.705–710) to the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Protestant view of all these is summed up by Thomas Brightman in his refutation of the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine's account of Revelation: 'al that your worship of Images, invocation of Saincts, adoration of the feighned body in the sacrament, veneration of reliques, and many such like things, is horrible Idolatry, and therefore Apostasie. But idolatry is spiritual whoredome: and therefore as the way of the whorish woman, which eateth, and then wipeth her mouth, and sayth, I have doon no iniquity; Prov. 30. 20. So is the way of Idolators: by no means can they be brought to acknowledge their impiety.'²⁷ By the time Brightman was writing, he could rely on the research that Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1574) and other Lutheran scholars had compiled in their *Ecclesiastica historia*, known as the *Centuriae Magdeburgenses* or *Magdeburg Centuries* (1559–1574). This massive historical enterprise sought to prove that the Church had fallen away from its primitive simplicity shortly after the death of the first apostles. But an unintended consequence of their project had been to document the antiquity of the very tenets that they wished to reform. Caesare Baronio's response in the *Annales ecclesiastici*, which he published in twelve volumes from 1588 to 1607, was to document the earliest appearance of those which the Church wished to preserve and defend. Thus we can find in Baronio's discussion of the Eucharist that, as early as AD 106, Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote letters to the Christians of Rome and Smyrna referring to the bread of God as the flesh of Jesus Christ. Not only Ignatius, 'a disciple of the apostles' ('Apostolorum discipulus'), but Irenaeus, 'an attendant of Policarpus the student of the apostle John' ('Policarpi Ioannis Apostoli discipuli auditor'), and Justin Martyr, 'himself indeed in the vicinity of Apostolic times' ('ipse etiam Apostolorum temporibus vicinus'), are called to bear witness to the apostolic origins of the doctrine of 'transubstantiation' ('transubstantiatum').²⁸

27 Thomas Brightman, *A Revelation of the Apocalyps, that is, The Apocalyps of s. Iohn, illustrated with an Analysis & Scolions: Where the sense is opened by the scripture, & the events of things foretold, shed by Histories* (Amsterdam: Iudocus Hondius & Hendrick Laurens, 1611), p. 509. For an introduction to Brightman and his context, see Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), esp. pp. 161–174, where she also discusses Jesuit interpretations of Revelation.

28 Baronio, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1, pp. 162B, 161D, 162C–D, 161A. On the celebration of the Eucharist more generally, see pp. 160–164, 466D, 470–471. For the chief texts themselves,

In a similar spirit, *Flavia* describes the celebration of Mass by a priest splendidly attired in a cloak of Phrygian work. He approaches an altar brightly lit by wax candles, set off with mosaics, and graced with a golden cross. The Christians, explains the pagan priest who is recounting this ceremony to Domitian, maintain that there is an efficacy in the words that the priest pronounces over the bread and the wine, that the blood of Christ replaces the wine and the body of Christ replaces the bread (II.3.558–559):

audivit simul
 Arcana verba, fruge depulsâ, simul
 Insinuat, astris lapsus, in frugis globum,
 Et in liquoris penetrat ejecti locum,
 Imago facti viva, simulamen necis,
 Amoris irritamen, exemplum sui.
 Blanditur oculis, naribus, linguæ color,
 Odor, saporque panis, ac vini quidem:
 Vtrumque verè, quisquis hæc credit, negat.
 Tegumenta tantùm panis, & vini manent:
 Quæ citima sensus hominis attingunt levi
 Specie, sed intus quidquid est, ipse est DEVS,
 Idem ille CHRISTVS, quantus æquævo Patri
 Assidet, honestâ luce præcinctus comas:
 Quantus rubente tela jaculatur manu,
 Et nube vectus terga ventorum premit,
 Sub orbe Cereris tantulo tantus latet.
 Hoc incruentæ cædis exemplum, vocant
 Quondam cruentæ cædis imitamenum.

II.3.571–588

(As soon as he has heard the sacred words, he makes his way with the bread having been pushed aside, into the circle of bread, having glided down from the stars, and he passes into the place of the liquid, which has been cast out, the living image of the deed, an imitation of death, an incitement of love [for him], a model of himself. The color, smell, and taste of the bread and wine caress the eyes, nose, tongue: each he

see 'The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans', ch. 7 and 'The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans', ch. 7, both in Roberts, Donaldson, and Coxe (eds.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1, pp. 76, 89.

denies, whoever truly believes in this. Only the shells of the bread and wine remain, which, being nearest, touch a man's senses with superficial appearance. But whatever is inside, that is God himself and likewise that Christ, as great as when he sits by the side of his coeval Father, His hair circled with honoring light, as great as when he hurls darts with his ruddy hand and presses on the backs of the winds, conveyed on a cloud, so great is he when he lurks in the little circle of bread. This example of bloodless slaughter they call a pious imitation of that bloody slaughter on another occasion.)

When the Christians consume the Eucharist, they behave 'like the Maenad when she rages with Bacchus received inside her, wandering the wooded mountains in the gleaming night' ('Qualis Lyæo Mænas accepto furit, | Neme-rosa lustrans nocte sublustri juga', 11.3.626–627). They become fearless and crave martyrdom (11.3.628–635).

The accounts of Christian worship that circulated in the first centuries were not always so benign: Christians were routinely accused of cannibalism, human sacrifice, and incest, or of what Athenagoras describes colorfully as 'Thyestian feasts [and] Oedipal couplings' (*Legatio* 3).²⁹ What must have made such accusations uncomfortable reading in the sixteenth-century is that Christians *did* sometimes commit such atrocities. As Michel de Montaigne memorably records, George Sechel, the leader of a peasant revolt, was tortured for three days and then fed to his followers in a bloody parody of Holy Communion that Sechel seems to have entered into, as he atoned for the sins of his followers:

En fin, luy vivant et voyant, on abbreuva de son sang Lucat, son cher frere, et pur le salut duquel il prioit, tirant sur soy toute l'envie de leurs meffaicts; et fit l'on paistre vingt de ses plus favoris Capitaines, deschirans à belles dents sa chair et en engloutissants les morceaux. Le reste du corps et parties du dedans, luy expiré, furent mises bouiller, qu'on fit manger à d'autres de sa suite.

29 See Jean-Pierre Waltzing, 'Le Crime rituel reproché aux chrétiens du 11e siècle', *Musée Belge* 29 (1925), 209–238; Albert Henrichs, 'Pagan Ritual and the Alleged Crimes of the Early Christians: A Reconsideration', in Patrick Granfield and Josef A. Jungmann (eds.), *Kyriakon: Festschrift J. Quasten* (Munich: Aschendorff, 1970), 1, pp. 18–35; and Andrew McGowan, 'Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism Against Christians in the Second Century', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994), 413–442.

(In the end, while he still lived and could see, they gave his blood to drink to his dear brother Lucat, for whose safety he kept praying, drawing upon himself all the hatred for their misdeeds. And they had twenty of his most favorite captains feed on him, tearing his flesh with their teeth and swallowing the morsels. The rest of his body, and the inner parts, when he was dead, were boiled and given to others of his followers to eat.)³⁰

During the Wars of Religion, Protestants accused Catholics of cannibalism because of their belief in transubstantiation, and Catholics sold the dismembered limbs of Huguenots in Paris and Lyon after the St. Bartholemew's Day Massacre (1572).³¹ In *Flavia*, it is Apollonius who has slaughtered infants over the fire, as he himself freely admits (1.1.256–265). More important, it is Domitian who, under the direction of Apollonius, sacrifices the young Flavians and prepares a Thyestian feast for his brother. 'I dread Thyestes' dish, and the sacred feast of the brothers' ('Ollam Thyestæ vereror, & fratrum dapes'), moan the chorus (5.9.1056). Thus *Flavia* not only asserts the antiquity of the Church's insistence that the bread and wine are the flesh and blood of Christ; it unleashes all the anxieties hovering over the ritual practices of sacrifice, communal meals, and burial.

If Christ's real presence in the Eucharist is one of the key mysteries of *Flavia*, the invisible operations of grace on the human spirit is another. Frustrated by his inability to shake the resolve of his nephews, Domitian prepares to throw them on their funeral pyres, but Apollonius intervenes in order to test their faith in the guise of John (yet another spectacular stage transformation enacted by the Protean sorcerer). The boys' stout resistance to John's specious arguments, which, among other things, urge a mere outward conformity with the state religion, reveal that they have sharpened their ability to 'discern spirits' and will prove 'faithful vntil death' (Rev. 2:10). As the boys use their momentary reprieve to dash down a statue of Jupiter, they experience an effluence of grace:

30 Michel de Montaigne, 'Courdisse mere de la cruauté', bk. 2, ch. 27 of *Les Essais de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. Pierre Villey, 2 vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), 1, p. 701, transl. Donald M. Frame, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 530.

31 Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 324.

- VESP. Quis hic in imis ossibus serpit calor
 Domiti?
 DOM. Medullas mollis afflatu levi
 Emulcet aura: pectus inspirat Deus.
 Agnoscis almi numinis sensus pios?
 VESP. Indicia recolo. Numen ô numen bonum!
 Excipere plenos, frater afflatus licet?
 DOM. Licet, libetque: pande sis omnes sinus
 Auræ influenti; funde taciturnas preces.
 VESP. Nescio quid instet: entheus, solito amplior,
 Insinuat ardor: magna sunt sensu mala,
 Quæ lenit, antè providus tantò, Deus.

v.6.532–542

- (VESP. What is this grace that creeps into my deepest bones, Domitian?
 DOM. A soft breeze touches my marrow with its gentle breath. God
 breathes on my heart. Do you recognize the holy touch of his
 nurturing divinity!
 VESP. I recognize the signs. Divinity, oh good divinity! Brother, is it
 possible to receive his full inspiration?
 DOM. It is possible, and it is pleasing. Come, open your whole breast
 to the breeze that influences it; pray silently.
 VESP. Something is about to happen. A divinely inspiring warmth
 greater than usual enters me. There are evils grievous to feel
 that God alleviates, foreseeing them far in advance.)

Key words in this passage evoke Roman values and pagan expectations only to overwrite them. We might contrast Andromache's chill when she thinks she is confronted by a divine messenger in Vergil's *Aeneid*: 'the warmth forsook her limbs' ('calor ossa reliquit', 111.308).³² Or we might contrast Thebes' longing for a soothing breeze in Seneca's *Oedipus*: 'No soft breeze with its cool breath relieves our breasts that pant with heat, no gentle Zephyrs blow' ('Non aura gelido lenis afflatus fovet | anhela flammis corda, non Zephyri leves | spirant' *Oed.* 37–38).³³ Or we might even recall the ardor with which Vulteius inspires Caesar's men to their last stand in Lucan's *Pharsalia*:

32 *Virgil*, transl. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. ed., 2 vols., Loeb Classic Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932).

33 Seneca, *Tragedies*, transl. Frank Justus Miller, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917).

'Agnosceret solis
 Permissum, quos iam tangit vicinia fati,
 Victorosque dei celent, ut vivere durent,
 Felix esse mori.' Sic cunctas sustulit ardor
 Mobilium mentes iuvenum.

IV.517–522

(None but those whom the approach of death already over-shadows are suffered to know that death is a blessing; from those who have life before them, the gods conceal this, in order that they may go on living.' By his words the hearts of all the warriors were changed, and swelled with martial ardor.)³⁴

In Stefonio, such classical diction (*calor, afflatus, ardor*) is deployed to describe the experience of grace, which the Jesuit Claude Delidél defines as 'an inspiration, a knowledge, a supernatural light that God pours into our understanding ... a divine enticement, a celestial fire that takes hold of our heart and which inflames a sacred desire to perform faithfully what God asks of our liberty' ('une inspiration, une connaissance, une lumière surnaturelle que Dieu verse dans notre entendement ... un attrait divin, un feu céleste qui se prend à notre cœur, et qui l'enflamme d'un sain désir d'exécuter fidèlement ce que Dieu demande de notre liberté').³⁵ In *Flavia*, this celestial fire manifests itself in the countenances of the boys as an intimation of the divine. When asked how the young Flavians endured their deaths, a messenger reports:

NVNC.	Quo nemo vitam. Certus æternæ spei Stetit acer animus: frontis excelsæ color, Et roseus, ille fulgor in vultu manet Lætior; & ille pectore ex imo decor Effloret, index certus ingenuæ facis: Et in ore, mentis hospes, existit
DEVS.	Neges perire puberes: nasci putes.

V.9.961–967

34 Lucan, *Pharsalia*, trans. J.D. Duff, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).

35 Claude Delidél, *La Théologie des Saints* (Paris: J. Henault, 1668), pp. 23, 339. David Clarke, *Pierre Corneille: Poetics and Political Drama under Louis XIII* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) discusses these passages on p. 246.

(HERALD. As no man endures even life. Their fierce spirit, secure in eternal hope, stood firm. The complexion of their haughty brow and that rosy glow on their face remained full of joy; and that beauty from their inmost heart bloomed up, a sure indication of their noble passion; and in their face appeared a visitor to their mind: God. You would not say the boys were dying; you would think they were being born.)

According to Gilles Deleuze, the 'essence of the Baroque entails neither falling into nor emerging from illusion, but rather realizing something in illusion itself, or of tying it to a spiritual *presence* that endows its spaces and fragments with a collective unity.'³⁶ The spiritual presence that unifies *Flavia's* involved theatrical architecture is Christ in his three-fold function as creator, as mediator, and Christ the judge.

Flavia as Baroque Drama

Since Jacob Burckhardt and Wilhelm Lübke pioneered the use of the term *baroque* to describe the style of art and architecture that succeeded renaissance classicism and Heinrich Wölfflin suggested that the term might be applied to the period's poetry and music as well, critics have employed the term in two broad senses: to refer to a mode of feeling and expression that recurs throughout history, alternating with the purity, restraint, and concentration of classicism; or to refer to a 'decadent' or 'hybrid' style of art that emerged in late sixteenth century when, as Benedetto Croce would have it, the Counter-Reformation papacy, having collapsed religion into politics, developed a new idiom to project its power in symbolic form, or when, as Peter Davidson prefers, the diaspora of European civilization that commenced with the voyages of discovery led to a 'system of international discourses, a "way of proceeding," a symbolic language' that transcended national and confessional lines, finding its most characteristic expression where colonists and missionaries encountered alien cultures.³⁷ It is no accident that the Jesuits, whether centered in

36 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, transl. Tom Conley (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), p. 33.

37 For valuable reviews of the word's popular and scholarly history, see René Wellek, 'The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5 (1946), 77–109; Peter Davidson, *The Universal Baroque* (Manchester and New York: Manch-

Rome or circulating among in their missions, whether resented as obstacles to Italian unification or lauded as trans-national agents, figure large in Croce's indictment and Davidson's valorization of the baroque.

For the purposes of this essay, I adopt Davidson's characterization of a 'universal baroque' that, if able to recur through history, nevertheless took a particular form in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not least because of the efforts of the Jesuits. Baroque art, as Davidson defines it, will always be grounded 'in reference to *antiquities*'—not antiquity conceived as a monolithic inheritance but antiquities conceived as a cultural plurality. It is 'so much in love with the remote and exotic that it draws strangeness unto itself.' It embraces hybridity and eclecticism. It often embarrasses us by its refusal to ignore the sensuous, and it is unabashed in its desire to provoke wonder.³⁸ If it 'establishes a total unity or a unity of the arts' as Deleuze observes, 'it does so first of all in extension, each art tending to be prolonged and even to be prolonged into the next art, which exceeds the one before'.³⁹ Although baroque art may not always be original, it is never at a loss; it has a response to every occasion, and therefore the festival is its most characteristic expression. A product of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, it treats heresy and religious controversy as givens of the world we live in.

Davidson could have been writing with *Flavia* in mind, for the play evokes a multiplicity of ancient cultures and religions originating in Greece, Babylon, India, Egypt, Ethiopia, Judea, and Rome itself. If it expects its audience to reject those elements of pagan civilization associated with the standard of Lucifer, it does not ask them to turn their backs on antiquity, for it frankly concedes that the grandeur of papal Rome is founded on the majestic ruins of imperial Rome. By means of its sumptuous costumes—probably based on Justus Lipsius's treatise of 1596, *De militia Romana (On the Roman Army)*—and

ester University Press, 2007), ch. 1, qt. at p. 1; and Helen Hills, 'The Baroque: The Grit in the Oyster of Art History', in Helen Hills (ed.), *Rethinking the Baroque* (Farnham, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 11–36. For the accounts referred to, see Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone* (Basel: Schweighauser'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1855); Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur von den Ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* (Cologne: E.A. Seemann, 1858); Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque* [1888], transl. K. Simon (London: Collins, 1964); and Benedetto Croce, *Storia della età barocca in Italia: Pensiero e Letteratura Vita Morale* (Bari: Laterza, 1929).

38 Davidson, *Universal Baroque*, pp. 12–19, qts. at p. 12. Davidson is especially influenced by two fine earlier studies, Eugenio d'Ors, *Du baroque*, transl. Agathe Rouart-Valéry (Paris: Gallimard, 1936); and Giovanni Careri, *Baroques*, transl. Alexandra Bonfante-Warren (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

39 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 123.

its elaborate reconstructions of Roman ceremonies, military displays, pyrrhic dances, and figured maze dances, *Flavia* creates a theatrical palimpsest in which the contemporary is written over the ancient—or the ancient over the contemporary—in the moment of performance. An instance of this effect occurs in the choral ode that closes Act 2, when the first hemi-chorus of Christians prays for the prosperity of Clemens's rule:

Dive, si sævos cohibes tyrannos,
 Mente si mundum moderaris æquâ,
 Regna CLEMENTIS, geminumque fratrum
 Stemma secundes.

II.7.1212–1215

(God, if you hold fierce tyrants in check, if you command the world with a fair mind, favor Clemens's rule and the double crown of the brothers.)

The devout wish of the chorus will, of course, be cruelly disappointed by the savage fury of a tyrant whom God does not hold in check, but the chorus must have sounded, too, like a prayer for the prosperity of Pope Clement VIII and his Aldobrandini nephews.⁴⁰ Although the play identifies itself as a tragedy, it might as accurately be called a theatrical hybrid or bricolage: part *autos sacramentales*, part Roman festival, part Senecan revenge tragedy. Its initial performance took a full ten hours because each of these genres displays a drive to extend itself, to break out of its frame, to overtop its rivals.

As *Flavia* revisits the controversies of the early Church in the context of a papal jubilee, it suggests that there is nothing unprecedented about the Counter-Reformation: the true Church has ever been defined against heresy and schism. By far the most striking way in which *Flavia* implicitly controverts the Lutherans is by dramatizing the historical conditions from which the book of Revelation emerged. In his 1522 Preface, Martin Luther (1483–1546) considered excluding Revelation from the New Testament as 'neither apostolic nor prophetic' because 'Christ is not taught or known in it'.⁴¹ But by the time he revised his preface, he was prepared to argue that, since the book was 'intended as a revelation of things that are to happen in the future, and especially the tribulations and disaster of the Church', the 'events and disasters that have come upon the Church before now' could be used as an interpretive key

40 Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, p. 164.

41 Martin Luther, 'Preface to the Revelation of St. John' (1522), in *Works of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), 6, pp. 488–489.

to its obscure prophecies.⁴² This new interpretation of Revelation became a powerful weapon in the Lutheran assault on Pontifical Rome, for it identified the papacy as the historical instantiation of Antichrist. Indeed, the structural principle of the *Magdeburg Centuries* has been identified by one commentator as ‘the hidden Antichrist, the public Antichrist, the unmasked Antichrist’ (‘l’Antéchrist caché, l’Antéchrist publique, l’Antéchrist dévoilé’).⁴³ It seeks to demonstrate that, from the death of the last of the Apostles to the restoration of the true religion by Luther, the Church had been misled by the Roman Antichrist.

By the time *Flavia* was performed in 1600, however, the Jesuits Francisco Ribera and Cardinal Robert Bellarmine had pioneered a historico-critical approach to Revelation that blunted the edge of the Lutheran exegetical tradition, for they denied that Revelation foretold history up to 1600 and demonstrated with great erudition that there was no sound reason to identify the papacy with Antichrist: Revelation was a product of its early Roman, Jewish, and Christian context, and the fulfillment of any prophecies it might contain in its final chapters lay in the future.⁴⁴ Two of Bellarmine’s specific arguments shed abundant light on *Flavia*. The first is that, according to John 2:22, the Pope cannot be identified with Antichrist because, whereas Antichrist ‘denieth the Father and the Sonne’, the Vicar of Christ acknowledges and serves them. And the second is that, although he may have had forerunners in the time of the apostle John, such as Nero and Simon Magus, Antichrist himself will not arrive until the Roman Empire has fallen, a historical event reserved for the future.⁴⁵ The frustration that reformers felt with such interpretations—which retain wide

42 Luther, ‘Preface to the Revelation of St. John’ (1545), in *Works*, 6, p. 481.

43 F. Gilmont, s.v. ‘Flacius Illyricus’, in *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1912–), vol. 17, col. 321.

44 For a brief introduction to these and rival accounts of Revelation, see Bernard McGinn, ‘Revelation’, in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 523–541. For more exhaustive guides, see D.E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5; Revelation 6–16; and Revelation 17–22*, World Biblical Commentary 52a, b, c (Dallas: World Books, 1997–1998); and Pierre Prigent *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John*, transl. Wendy Pradels (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). On Bellarmine more generally, see E.A. Ryan, S.J., *The Historical Scholarship of Saint Bellarmine* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1936); Aimé Richardt, *Saint Robert Bellarmine, 1542–1621: Le défenseur de la foi* (Paris: François-Xavier de Guibert, 2004); Stefania Tutino, *Empire of Souls: Robert Bellarmine and the Christian Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

45 For Bellarmine’s arguments and a Protestant response, see Brightman, *A Revelation of the Apocalypys*, pp. 497, 507, 522 [mispaginated 514]–529.

currency among modern scholars of Revelation—can be measured by their swift response. Thomas Brightman inserted a hundred page refutation of Bellarmine into his commentary on Revelation (1611), and in his own commentary on Revelation (1618, English translation 1644), the Calvinist David Pareus (1548–1622) complained, “The Jesuites, Antichrists chiefest Soldiers are very ingenious to corrupt, and wrest the plaine Oracles of this Prophesie into a contrary meaning, as if they were not only not to be applied against the Papacy, but also did make for the dignity thereof.”⁴⁶ Although these responses post-date *Flavia* they suggest the polemical force of Bellarmine’s interpretation and of *Flavia*’s dramatic realization. Both the play’s introduction of Cerinthus, a denier of Jesus Christ, and its insistence on the continuity of the Roman Empire have the effect of undermining the Protestant identification of the papacy with Antichrist.

When the John of *Flavia* is asked by his companion Nereus if the grief of the Christian community will find no limit (cf. Rev. 6:10), John responds that it will find one, but the things which God promises us are late in coming (v.9.783–784). He then provides a preview of Revelation that unfolds according to Jesuit interpretations of the book. Whereas Apollonius had established a reputation for his prescience about current events, John admits that he can see only distant things. He explains that of the seven storms that threaten Christians, one, Nero’s persecution of the Christians, has already raged; although he cannot foretell precisely how the others will manifest themselves, he predicts the destruction of Christians by sword, famine, fire, and wild beasts (Rev. 6:8). His roll-call of martyrs includes some, such as Agnes and Cecilia, whose remains had just been rediscovered in the Roman catacombs. The name of Nereus, whose martyred remains had recently been translated to Cardinal Baronio’s titular church, might have been silently added to the roll call by *Flavia*’s Roman audience. John then foretells a time when the Church will dominate Rome and the better part of the globe, erecting a hundred shrines arrayed with Thracian stone and adorned with princely luxury (v.9.828–847). Before he can proceed any farther, however, he is interrupted by a herald bringing news of Domitian’s bloody feast, ‘With what lament can I bewail the deadly rituals of Kings? | Does Domitian rule Rome, or is it Atreus ruling Corinth?’ (‘Quo dira Regis sacra ploratu queror? | Romam, an Corinthum, Domitius, an Atreus tenet?’, v.9.845–846). Thus *Flavia* cuts John’s prophecy short, preempting some of the most contentious chapters of Revelation.

It is a stylized ‘fact’ that whereas the drama of the Reformation promulgates propaganda, the Jesuit drama, ‘conscious of its immovable foundation, is more

46 Pareus, *A Commentary upon the Divine Revelation*, p. 15.

concerned to maintain and defend the ground it already commands than to collect new associates', that whereas the former courts political and ecclesiastical controversies and often satirizes the papacy openly, the latter generally eschews direct polemic against Luther, preferring to explore themes drawn from the bible and the deeper recesses of history.⁴⁷ If *Flavia* does nothing to explode this contrast, it nevertheless admonishes us not to assume too quickly that the controversies of the first centuries of the Church are of merely historical or pedagogical interest, or that setting a scriptural text in context is a neutral act of historical reconstruction. Jesuit tragedy is *founded* upon antiquities, not lost among them.

Flavia as a Tragedy of Tyranny and Martyrdom

A long tradition of criticism has used chapter 13 of Aristotle's *Poetics* to argue that martyrs cannot be tragic heroes because, as André Dacier put it succinctly in 1692: 'In whatever manner we regard martyrdom, either as a good, or as an evil, it cannot excite either pity or fear; and consequently cannot purge the passions' ('De quelque manière qu'on regarde le martyre, ou comme un mal ou comme un bien, il ne peut exciter, ny la pitié ny la crainte, & par consequent il ne purgera pas les passions').⁴⁸ Dacier's judgment is based on Aristotle's advice that a tragic hero be a man 'who on the one hand is not a paragon of virtue and justice and on the other hand does not suffer the change to misfortune because of wickedness or villainy but because of some mistake (*ἀμαρτίαν*); the philosopher adds that 'virtuous men' should not 'be shown shifting from good fortune to bad, for this is not fearful, and not pitiable either, but morally shocking (*μιαρόν*).'⁴⁹

Stefonio's successors at the *Collegio Romano*—Alessandro Donati and Tarquinio Galluzzi—formulated thoughtful responses to this dismissal of martyrdom as a valid subject of tragedy. An important starting point for their theories is Ludovico Castelvetro's commentary on the *Poetics* (1570, 1576). Castelvetro denies the psychological premise that leads Aristotle to describe the suffering

47 Karl von Reinhardstöttner, 'Zur Geschichte des Jesuitendramas in München', *Jahrbuch für Münchener Geschichte* 3 (1989), 53–176, quote at p. 59; McCabe, *An Introduction to Jesuit Theater*, pp. 26–31.

48 André Dacier, *La Poétique d'Aristote, traduite en français avec des remarques critiques* (Paris: Barbin, 1692), p. 178.

49 See Aristotle, *Poetics* 1452b31–53a10, transl. in Gerald F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

of a virtuous man as 'morally shocking' or 'polluted', maintaining that, even if ancient Greeks responded in this way to the plight of a holy man, there is no reason to assume that Christians will.⁵⁰ The suffering of innocents does not provoke moral scandal, says Castelvetro, because the common people have many ways of retaining their belief in God. They can turn 'their hate against the immediate causes which by God's permissive will had the power to work the holy man's hurt' ('odiando le cagioni prossime alle quali è prossima alle quali è stato permesso di poetero nuocere alla persona santa'). Or they can conclude that the 'holy man has been tried by misfortune so that he may become more perfect, as gold is refined in the fire. Or they may reason that he has been ill-treated because God chose this way to manifest His glory' ('che la persona santa sia tentata con simili disaventure, accioché, sì come l'oro nel fuoco s'affina, così ella nelle tentazione migliori e si faccia più perfetta, or che la persona santa sia così mal trattata perché Dio vuole col suo mal trattamento far rilucere la gloria sua').⁵¹ Pietro Sforza Pallavicino, a professor of philosophy and theology at the *Collegio Romano*, official historian of the Council of Trent (1656–1657), and author of the tragedy *Ermenegildo martire* (1644), which presented St. Hermenigildus as a martyr to Arianism, observed that the Jesuit theater had proven the justice of Castelvetro's claim: Martyr plays could excite the most tender devotion in every class of spectator, drawing tears from great intellects and melting the eyes of the obdurate.⁵²

That martyr dramas might not qualify as tragedies because death marks a change for the better in Christian belief occurred to early modern critics (as we have seen from Dacier) but has been even more forcefully stated in the twentieth century. 'The Christian hero has the card of immortality and beatitude with which he can trump the last tricks of his opponents, Paganism and Death', says Martin Jarrett-Kerr. 'Heads may be severed from bodies, but there is no suffering: what seems to be agony is unreal because it is willed, not undergone—the victim remains in control.'⁵³ Alessandro Donati's answer to

50 Tarquinio Galluzzi, *Rinovazione dell'antica tragedia e Difesa del Crispo* (Rome: Vatican, 1633), pp. 110–111.

51 Lodovico Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta* (1570, 1576), ed. Werther Romani, 2 vols. (Rome and Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1978–1979), 1, pp. 360–363, transl. in *Castelvetro on the Art of Poetry: An Abridged Translation*, transl. A. Bongiorno (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1984), p. 163.

52 Sforza Pallavicino, *Ermenegildo martire: Tragedia recitata da' Giouani del Seminario Romano ... Con un breue discorso in fine* (Rome: Gli Eredi del Corbelletti, 1644), p. 145.

53 Martin Jarrett-Kerr, 'Calderón and the Imperialism of Belief', in *Studies in Literature and Belief* (London: Rockliff, 1954), pp. 38–63 at p. 62.

such objections is that the serenity of the martyr, which is an extraordinary result of his free will and the gift of grace, is *not* easy for audiences to identify with. Instead, they wonder at it, fearing what exceeds their faculties, and in the meantime the horror of the physical punishment perturbs their souls. Even if a tyrant on stage stirs up affections such as hate or anger that are contrary to pity and fear, these can co-exist with the tragic passions. Whereas Alessandro Piccolomini had suggested in 1575 that the affective capacity of souls was finite and that when audiences felt hatred or loathing for a malefactor they might be less able to feel pity for his victim, Donati denies the premise.⁵⁴ We might recall the access of grace that the young Domitian and Vespasian experience in the moments before their death. Even though they face death unperturbed, we cannot behold their death without admiring their *ethos* and mourning its extinction. Their indifference to death is sublime; it at once defeats our comprehension and makes us aware that there must be some ineffable force, be it the greatness of the human spirit or the efficacy of divine grace, that can muster such a proud disregard of the carnal.

Characters of such exemplary virtue are not, Donati insists, a modern invention. Hippolytus cultivates his chastity, Alcestis dies to prolong the life of her husband, and the Hercules of Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* is even carried to the heavens by clouds once his pyre is lighted. If the ancients could applaud such heroes, asks Donati, why shouldn't Catholics dramatize the suffering of martyrs? He instances Macaria, who dies for her city with heroic resolution in Euripides' *Heracleidai* (*The Children of Heracles*): 'Lead me to the place where it seems good that my body should be killed and garlanded and consecrated to the goddess! Defeat the enemy! For my life is at your disposal, full willingly, and I offer to be put to death on my brothers' behalf and on my own. For, mark it well, by not clinging to my life I have made a most splendid discovery, how to die with glory!' (ll. 528–534).⁵⁵

Yet it is Tarquinio Galluzzi who responds most courageously and creatively to chapter 13 of the *Poetics*, for he undertakes to do nothing less than expose Aristotle's complicity with tyranny. In his 1633 *Rinovazione dell'antica tragedia* (*Renewal of Ancient Tragedy*), dedicated to cardinal Francesco Barberini, a former pupil at the *Collegio Romano*, the nephew of Pope Urban VIII, and a patron of the arts, Galluzzi maintains that the font and origin of tragedy was the Athenians' love of liberty and hatred of tyranny. The basis of his claim is

54 Alessandro Donati, *Ars poetica siue Institutionum artis poeticae libri tres* [Rome, 1631] (Cologne: Ioannem Kinchium, 1633), pp. 167–170; Pallavicino, *Ermenegildo*, 144–145.

55 Euripides, *Volume 2: Children of Heracles: Hippolytus: Andromache: Hecuba*, ed. and transl. David Kovacs, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

the *Minos*, a dialogue that classicists now generally ascribe not to Plato himself but to a pupil or follower. The ostensible subject of the dialogue is the nature of law, but the conversation turns to tragedy when Socrates says that Minos was a great law-giver.⁵⁶ Then why, objects his companion, is he reputed to have been uneducated and harsh-tempered? Minos's mistake, says Socrates, was in waging war on Athens, a city that has poets of every kind, especially tragic ones: 'Now tragedy is a thing of ancient standing here; it did not begin, as people suppose, from Thespis or Phrynicus, but if you will reflect, you will find it a very ancient tradition of our city. Tragedy is the most popularly delightful and soul-enthraling branch of poetry; in it, accordingly, we get Minos on the rack of verse, and thus avenge ourselves for that tribute which he compelled us to pay.'⁵⁷ The most poetic accounts, which persisted despite the denials of the Cretans and Aristotle alike, held that every nine years the Athenians were compelled to send seven young men and women to Crete to be destroyed by the Minotaur or to wander to their deaths in the labyrinth. 'And verily it seems to be a grievous thing for a man to be at enmity with a city which has a language and literature,' observes Plutarch in his *Life of Theseus* (26). 'For Minos was always abused and reviled in the Attic theatres; and it did not avail him either that Hesiod called him 'most royal', or that Homer styled him 'a confidant of Zeus', but the tragic poets prevailed, and from platform and stage, showered obloquy down upon him, as a man of cruelty and violence.'⁵⁸

Galluzzi supposes that Athens must have celebrated the return of Theseus from his encounter with the Minotaur with festivals that included 'some figured dances with interweavings, entanglements, and disentanglements both artful and wondrous, which imitated the intricate paths of the Labyrinth' ('alcuni balli ordinò, e dispose con intrecciamenti, viluppi, e suiluppi artificiali, e mirabili, che rappresentauano le intricate vie del Laberinto'). 'From such festivals,' speculates Galluzzi, 'the first tragedy against Minos must have been born and come to light, permitting the city to behold itself freed from his tyranny' ('Trà le quali feste è necessario, che nascesse, e venisse in luce la prima Tragedia contro Minosse, da che la Città vedeuarsi libera dalla Tirannide de lui').⁵⁹ Even in later centuries, Galluzzi speculates, tragedy must have retained a vestigial memory of this origin in the movements of its chorus, whose 'strophes and antistrophes

56 Delrío, *Syntagma tragoediae latinae*, p. 20.

57 Plato, *Minos*, 320d–321a. In *Plato*, vol. 8. transl. W.R.M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).

58 *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, 11 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), vol. 1, pp. 31–33.

59 Galluzzi, *Rinovazione*, pp. 33–34.

had been created by Theseus to commemorate the pathways of the twisting Labyrinth from which he had exited safe and sound' ('strophas illas, atque anti-strophas inuentas à Theseo fuisse ad commemorandas flexuosi Labyrinthi vias, ex quibus euaserat sospes').⁶⁰ At its first performance, the dance of Theseus and the Athenian youth had recreated a nightmarish labyrinth that threatened blind wandering and death in order that they might enact their own triumph over tyranny. The prime and ancient end of tragedy, then, was to engender a hatred of tyranny in the soul of the people by making them watch the examples of the cruelty and barbarity of tyrants while cultivating—not least through the chorus—a love of liberty. For at its root, choral dance was a joyous affirmation of freedom.⁶¹

It would square with what we know of the values of the Athenians to imagine that tragedy had some such beginning, says Galluzzi, for the first public statues that they erected commemorated the bravery of two would-be tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, whose unsuccessful attempt to cut down Hippias in 514 BC was remembered as a step toward Athenian democracy.⁶² Phrynicus's tragedy on the *Capture of Miletus* (511 BC) engendered such excessive grief among the Athenians precisely because it forebode their loss of liberty. But Aristotle could not acknowledge the true end of tragedy because he wrote at a time when the ancient liberty of Greece was extinct. Adapting to his political circumstances, for it would not do to offend Philip of Macedon or Alexander the Great, Aristotle praised tragedies in which persons of middling virtue bring suffering on themselves through some error. Although Aristotle justifies this formula in affective terms, saying that our pity and terror are aroused most effectively if we can identify with those on stage, his ulterior motive is to divert enmity away from tyrants and to use pity and fear to teach his contemporaries prudence and an acceptance of servitude.⁶³

Aristotle's ideal is so innovative in the history of Greek tragedy, says Galluzzi, that we ought by rights to distinguish between old and new tragedy. Old tragedy as Galluzzi defines it runs from the time of Theseus, through Thespis and

60 Tarquinio Galluzzi, *Tarquinii Gallutii Sabini e Societate Iesv Virgilianae vindicationes & commentarij tres de tragoedia, comoedia, elegia* (Rome: Alessandro Zannetti, 1621), p. 281.

61 Galluzzi, *Rinovazione*, p. 37. On the classical origins of labyrinth dances and their revival in the Renaissance, see Thomas M. Greene, 'Labyrinth Dances in the French and English Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001), 1403–1466.

62 For the place of Harmodius and Aristogeiton in Athenian art, see Michael W. Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth-Century B.C. Athenian Art and Politics* (New York: Arno Press, 1981).

63 Galluzzi, *Rinovazione*, pp. 56–58.

Phrynicus (who wrote tragedies on Alcestis, the daughters of Danaus, and Tantalus—none of them middling characters), and onto Euripides. Indeed, Euripides is the exemplary old-style tragedian, one who is not afraid to depict the tyranny of Minos in his lost *Cretenses* (*Cretans*) or the suffering of a pure young man in his *Hippolytus*. The new tragedy is a critical invention of Aristotle, an invention that may appeal to the example of Sophocles for sanction but that became politically *necessary* only during the reign of Alexander. Although Galluzzi recognizes that the Old Testament can furnish characters who meet all the requirements of an Aristotelean hero who falls into misfortune by committing an error, he urges his contemporaries to follow the *Minos* when determining the ends of tragedy and the persons who should be introduced to the stage and to obey the *Poetics* only when deciding on other elements of dramatic craft. For to Galluzzi's mind, the *Minos* sanctions plays that inspire a hatred of tyranny while confirming spectators in their faith, as they watch inhuman cruelties inflicted on faithful martyrs who die 'with steadfast and happy countenance, with intrepid heart, and often with unheard of wonders of nature' ('con fermo e con lieto volto, con cuore intrepido, e spesso con accompagnamento d'inusitati prodigii').⁶⁴

If Donati helps us understand how the stalwart deaths of the young Domitian and Vespasian can be dramatic, Galluzzi explains why Jesuit tragedies are so invested in displaying the insatiable cruelty of tyrants, which is not content with simple extermination. Domitian will not rest content until he has witnessed the anguish on this brother's face:

Cernere juvabit. Ora natorum pater
 Cùm abscissa cernet, ore quos motus dabit?
 Quos voce quetus? ingeram luctum improbe:
 Spectabo vultus: exigam fructum mei
 Sceleris: perirent cuncta, nisi moestum patrem
 Natis ademptis cernerem: nisi vulneris
 Imprimeret altum pectori sensum dolor.

v.10.1068–1074

(It will please me to see it. When the father sees his sons' severed head, what expressions will he display on his face? What laments will he offer with his voice? I will wickedly add to his grief. I will look upon his face. I will demand the fruit of my wickedness. Everything would be ruined if I

64 Galluzzi, *Rinovazione*, esp. pp. 52–53, 59–63, 66; quotation at p. 62.

could not see the father in grief now that his sons have been taken away, if the pain of that wound were not impressing the sensation deep in his heart.)

Having issued orders to his soldiers to dislodge and destroy the Christian community of Rome, Domitian menaces the Christians with all the torments that we find enumerated in the letters of the early Christians (v.10.1081–1082). Domitian then confronts his brother. Playing a part—for there are no more theatrical characters in Jesuit tragedies than tyrants, false counselors, and magicians—the emperor begs his forgiveness, pleading that he was dragged along by an unseeing rage (v.10.1098–1099). Although Flavius Clemens is prepared to forgive the torture and indignity he has suffered, he will not drink a libation to Athena, refuses the robes and crown of rule proffered to him, and clings to his chains:

Vinculus necti mihi
Dulce, & decorum est: Vincla sic CHRISTVS DEVS
Gessit: sed insons. Laude me tantâ frui
Permitte: CHRISTI, frater, imitabor decus.

v.10.1132–1135

(It is sweet and proper for chains to be tied upon me. Thus Christ the Lord wore chains, though innocent. Allow me to enjoy so great an honor: I will imitate the glory of Christ, brother.)

Ignoring his brother's *imitatio Christi*, the emperor removes his chains, dresses him in a fine mantle, and asks if he would like to see his sons. By the end of the scene, we will be certain, if we are not already, that the emperor has been playing an elaborate charade and would never have reconciled with his brother, for the libation cup is filled to the brim with the blood of the slaughtered boys, a dark parody of the Christian Eucharist.

Implying that the sons will be summoned alive, the emperor instead presents their severed heads, then poses the question that Atreus asks his brother Thyestes in a similar situation:

Filiis noscis, pater?
Agnosce vultus; fruire; complexum expedi:
Saturare: vissus pasce: contrecta duos.

v.10.1148–1150

(Do you know your sons, father? Recognize their faces. Take pleasure in them. Offer an embrace. Be satisfied. Feast on the sight. Touch them both.)

Whether such gory spectacles had a legitimate place on stage was a matter of critical debate in the seventeenth century. Those who wished to banish them appealed to Horace's *Ars poetica*, where, after admitting that what finds entrance through the eye more vividly stirs the mind, he nevertheless insists that Medea's butchery of her boys and Atreus's preparation of human flesh as food are not fit to be staged: They should only be narrated by an actor (ll. 180–188). But the professors at the *Collegio Romano* bridled at such restrictions. Misreading a passage from Philostratus's *Life* in which the sage defends the Brahmins's use of illusions to add dignity to their religion by comparing it to Aeschylus's use of spectacle in his tragedies, they observe that before Aeschylus invented the messenger's speech, the ancient Greeks used to kill men on stage for the sake of realism, and they add more accurately that the Romans revived the practice of theatrical bloodshed, castrating criminals cast in the role of Atys and burning alive those cast as Hercules.⁶⁵ Whatever Horace's tastes may have been, says Donati, they were not those of his fellow Romans who gathered to watch bloody *ludi*. Far from shunning the troubling comparison of tragedy with gladiatorial exhibitions—a comparison that has a long and equivocal history in accounts of tragic pleasure—Donati embraces it because he maintains that the more horrible the evils in tragedies, the more likely we are to feel wonder (*admiratio*). He extols the sublime effect of a violence that exceeds all measure.⁶⁶

In *Flavia*, the effect of the bloody spectacle is first registered by Flavius Clemens, whose somatic response—tears, slumped head, breaths drawn from deep in his chest—are enumerated with relish by the emperor as indices of psychological torment. This is one of many scenes in which Stefonio writes in a Senecan vein. But Flavius Clemens does not waver from his faith, and the emperor orders that his head be stricken off in plain sight of the audience. It is hard not to be reminded of Walter Benjamin's observation that in the *Trauerspiel* characters die not 'not for the sake of immortality' but 'for the sake of the corpse', the 'pre-eminent emblematic property' of baroque tragedy.⁶⁷

65 Galluzzi, *Vindicationes*, pp. 306–309; Donati, *Ars poetica*, p. 150.

66 Donati, *Ars poetica*, pp. 150–151, 163.

67 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, transl. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 217–218. But on the short-comings of Benjamin's account, see Blair Hoxby, 'The Function of Allegory in Baroque Tragic Drama: What Benjamin Got Wrong', in Brenda

Apollonius and his apostle Damis then gather up all three heads so that they might play a similar charade with John.

Saddened but not bewildered, John utters a series of apostrophes:

O dulce cari capitis exuvium hoc mihi!
 O car Iuvenum spolia, Romanis mihi
 Potiora Regnis! ite nunc comites fugæ,
 Sic ite mecum farcinæ pondus leve.
 O me beatum munere hostili senem!

V.10.1225–1229

(O the spoils of this beloved head, so dear to me! O beloved spoils of the Youths, better to me than the kingdom of Rome! Come now, as companions of exile, come with me, a light burden in my bag. O what a blessed old man I am in this gift from my enemy!)

By addressing the heads as *spoils*, John overwrites Rome's traditional language of war with a new gospel so revolutionary that it can express itself only in paradox. He also provides an apostolic provenance for the veneration of relics, another practice that Protestants depicted as idolatry.⁶⁸ The audience of *Flavia* would have been well primed for this transvaluation of values.

For in 1597, Cardinal Baronio had furnished a Christian triumph for the relics of the Roman Saints Domitilla, Nereus, and Achilleus, which had originally been buried in the catacombs before being brought in 1228 to S. Adriano on the Roman Forum.⁶⁹ Two of these saints appear in *Flavia*. Domitilla, whose history was published in 1597 by Baronio's collaborator Antonio Gallonio, is the Flavian maiden celebrated by the first hemi-chorus in Act 1:⁷⁰

Machowsky (ed.), *Thinking Allegory Otherwise* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 87–116.

68 See, for example, Brightman, *A Revelation of the Apocalypis*, p. 510.

69 The chief description of the process is provided in Caesare Baronio, *Martyrologium Romanum* (Venice: Haeredes Ioannis Guerilij, 1630), May 12, notes 283ff. My summary and interpretation relies heavily on Richard Krautheimer, 'A Christian Triumph in 1597', in Douglas Fraser, Howard Hibbard, and Milton J. Lewine (eds.), *Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower* (London: Phaidon, 1967). On Baronio's treatment of Rome as a sacred landscape, see also Simon Ditchfield, 'Reading Rome as a Sacred Landscape, c. 1585–1635', in Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. pp. 171–178.

70 Antonio Gallonio, *Historia della vita e martiro di gloriosi santi Flavia Domitilla vergine* (1597); see Fumaroli, *Héros et Orateurs*, p. 147.

Hæc tecta, fœlix prole fœlici, tenet
 DOMITILLA mater: neptis hîc CHRISTO placet,
 DOMITILLA virgo: &, vera si rumor ferit
 Huc remeat hodie Caesarum fœlix parens,
 CLEMENS, decoræ purpuræ æternum decus.

I.4.819–823

(Domitilla the mother, fortunate in her offspring, inhabits this house: here her granddaughter, Domitilla the maiden, is pleasing to Christ, and if rumor brings truth, to this place today the fortunate father of the caesars, Clemens, returns, eternal glory of glorious rank.)

And Nereus is the interlocutor of John the Evangelist in Act 5, the Christian who solicits John's *precis* of Revelation, including the roll call of martyrs that Nereus himself would join. Baronio's procession of 1597 moved with these relics from S. Adriano to the Gesù, where an altar was prepared in front of the church, and thence to the Capitoline Hill, passing between the Dioscuri and stopping at the statue of Marcus Aurelius. It processed under the arches of Septimius Severus (whose wife commissioned Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius*), Titus, and Constantine, following the Via Sacra to Baronio's title church s.s. Nereo ed Achilleo, where temporary honorific arches displayed the trophies of the martyrs. Inscriptions along the route explained the ideological program of the ceremony. The first claimed that Domitilla, by legend the cousin of the young caesars killed in *Flavia*, had cleansed the Capitol of the cult of daemons. At the Arch of Septimius, the Senate and the People of Rome declared that the martyrs had brought the peace of Christianity to the Republic and glory to Rome through their sacrifice. The Arch of Titus observed that if that emperor had avenged the death of Christ with the destruction of Jerusalem, Domitilla had avenged it more gloriously by shedding her own blood. The Arch of Constantine pronounced that, although Roman emperors had celebrated their victories over subject peoples along the Via Sacra, these martyrs had triumphed over the triumphators. Domitilla had brought greater glory to Rome through her renunciation of life and empire than the Imperial family and the twelve Caesars had by ruling. A book of poems written for the occasion, chiefly by students at the *Collegio Romano*, emphasized the *romanitas* of the martyrs, the glory that their blood had brought to Rome, their paradoxical triumph over worldly glory, and their defeat of paganism.

If the young caesars of *Flavia* bring greater glory to Rome by renouncing life and empire than by ruling, John will play a more pivotal role in history as a prophet than Apollonius will as a trusted adviser to the emperors of Rome. In

their parting exchange, John chides his rival that his arts can preserve him only to be punished by God; Apollonius responds that he will turn John over to his own kings for punishment; John counters that ‘the vengeance that comes at last comes not too late’ (‘non est sera, quæ ferò venit | Vindicta’, v.10.1234–1235); and Apollonius dismisses him with the words, ‘You sing an old and tired song’ (‘Tritum carmen antiquum canis’, v.10.1235). According to the logic of Senecan revenge tragedy, John’s ‘old and tired song’ is the hapless appeal to divine justice with which the impotent must always content themselves in this world. What Apollonius cannot foresee is the new canticle that John will sound on the Isle of Patmos:

And when he had opened the booke, the foure beastes and the foure and twentie seniors fel before the Lambe, hauing euey one of them harpes, and golden vials ful of odours, which are the praiers of saintes: and they sang a new canticle, saying, Thou art worthie o Lord to take the booke, and to open the seales thereof; because thou wast slaine, and hast redeemed vs to God in thy bloud out of euey tribe and tonge and people and nation, and hast made vs to our God a kingdom and priestes, and we shal reign vpon the earth. (Rev. 5:8–10)

Flavia's Baroque Folds

I have analyzed *Flavia* as a sacred representation, as a baroque drama, and as a tragedy. How are these aspects of the work related? I would like to start with the middle term, *baroque*. In the useful formulation of Deleuze,

[t]he Baroque refers not to an essence but rather to an operative function, to a trait. It endlessly produces. It does not invent things: there are all kinds of folds coming from the East, Greek, Roman, Romanesque, Gothic, Classical folds ... Yet the Baroque trait twists and turns its folds, pushing them to infinity, fold over fold, one upon the other. The Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity. First, the Baroque differentiates its folds in two ways, by moving along two infinities, as if infinity were composed of two stages or floors: the pleats of matter, and the folds in the soul. Below, matter is amassed according to a first type of fold, and then organized according to a second type ...⁷¹

71 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 3.

Flavia displays the formal properties that critics from Wölfflin to Deleuze have identified with the baroque. If one can refer to its dramatic architecture, it is no stretch to say that its façade and its interior are independent ‘but in such conditions that each of the two terms thrusts the other forward.’⁷² Each scene displays a will to spill out of its frame. And its maze dances and military exercises, with their turns and counter-turns, their tying and untying, their dissolutions and their resolutions in momentary epiphanies, brilliantly declare the work’s allegiance to the labyrinthine as a principle of organization. What’s more, its arrangement of the pleats of matter according to the folds in the soul means that the first line I took through the play, as I followed the play’s preoccupation with the nature and identity of Jesus Christ, with the suffering and sacrifice of the Son of God, and with the commemoration of that sacrifice in the Eucharist, runs parallel to the third fold, the play’s presentation of a tragic fable of suffering and sacrifice that is intended to train the judgment and exercise the passions of the audience. Put another way, *Flavia* asks us to see the passion of Christ as a tragedy, to identify the essence of tragedy with *pathos*, and to interpret the meaning of sacrifice and solemn commemoration through the joint example of the crucifixion and the Eucharist. It asks us to recognize theatrical representation as a form of sacred imitation, and it invites us to understand our own nature as beings at once spiritual and carnal—one of the conundrums that has often been thought to lie at the heart of Attic tragedy—through the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ. As it pursues the parallels between the pleats of matter and the folds of the soul, it establishes a commerce between the profane and the sacred, the carnal and the divine, the immanent and transcendent. It discovers the sublime in the humble and perceives intimations of immortality in inanimate relics. Its resonance is at once mortifying and exulted, mournful and expectant. It exhibits the ambivalence that we associate with classical tragedy, but it localizes the field of encounter between the human and divine, the past and the future, in the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

72 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 28.

Further Reading

- Bloemendal, Jan, and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013).
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- Davidson, Peter, *The Universal Baroque* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007).
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- Hoxby, Blair, *What Was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
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PART 3

Ethics



Mortal Knowledge: *Akrasia* in English Renaissance Tragedy

Emily Vasiliauskas

If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.¹



Akrasia in Ancient Greek Ethics and Poetics: Knowing and Doing

Is it possible to perform an action in the full knowledge that it would be wrong to do so? This may seem like a strange question with which to open an essay on the tragedy of early modern England, which produced such exuberant evildoers as Richard III, Sejanus, and the Cardinal from John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. Evidently, purposeful criminality was not only a logical possibility, but also a dramatic resource in a period that made ambition and revenge its abiding tragic motives. But the relationship between knowledge and wrongdoing was a serious problem within ancient Greek philosophy, and Aristotle's treatment of tragedy's aesthetic norms derives in part from his understanding of the crux. In this essay, I will show how *akrasia*—'the state of tending to act against one's better judgment'—a concept which Aristotle identified as un-tragic and whose very existence Socrates denied, became indispensable to English Renaissance tragedy, a genre designation which I apply to both dramatic and poetic narratives.² I will examine the consequences of this transformation for tragedy's account of the human will, its narrative form, and its purpose within a political community. Whereas Aristotelian tragedies link a momentary action in the

1 William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. M.M. Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) The New Cambridge Shakespeare, 2.1.11–12.

2 *OED Online*, s.v. 'akrasia', accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/240257>.

past with a permanent condition of abjection, akratic tragedies feature protagonists who purposefully commit themselves to evil for the medium term, often in the expectation that they will ultimately forsake it. A strange passage in the history of evil, when it became more closely allied with behavior than with identity: these early modern dramas depict wrongdoing as capable of being forgiven and redeemed, but also as undertaken knowingly, strategically, even dutifully.

In Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates makes a case for the unity of virtue. Not only are the various species of goodness—wisdom, temperance, courage, justice, and holiness—ultimately indistinguishable from one another, but goodness is also identical to pleasure, evil identical to pain. By establishing this synthesis, Socrates is able to undermine his interlocutor's intuitively sensible claim, namely, that those who act as they know they shouldn't do so because they are tempted by pleasure:

Let us lay it down as our statement, that a man does evil in spite of knowing the evil of it. Now if someone asks us: Why? we shall answer: Because he is overcome. By what? the questioner will ask us; and this time we shall be unable to reply: By pleasure—for this has exchanged its name for 'the good.' So we must answer only with the words: Because he is overcome. By what? says the questioner. The good—must surely be our reply.³

Here *akrasia* becomes a simple contradiction in terms—a man does evil in spite of knowing the evil of it because he is overcome by the good—and what initially seems to be an issue of moral weakness is recast as a defect in knowledge. As long as an agent can accurately measure quantities of pleasure and pain, he will always act so as to maximize goodness and minimize evil. Socrates, anticipating utilitarianism and the rise of *homo economicus*, concludes that no one can act against her better judgment, because no one will act knowingly against her own interests.

Aristotle takes an analytic rather than a synthetic approach to virtue in *The Nicomachean Ethics*. As a result, he provides a more nuanced account of the possible motivations for evil action, an account which makes room for both emotions, which are missing from Socrates' discussion of *akrasia*, and different degrees of knowledge. Particularly important for Aristotle is the power that certain emotions can exert, not over the existence of knowledge, but rather over the availability of knowledge within the mind:

³ Plato, *Protagoras*, 355B–C (transl. W.R.M. Lamb).

for it is evident that anger, sexual desire, and certain other passions, actually alter the state of the body, and in some cases even cause madness. It is clear therefore that we must pronounce the unrestrained to 'have knowledge' only in the same way as men who are asleep or drunk [...]. Persons in the states mentioned repeat propositions of geometry and verses of Empedocles; students who have just begun a subject reel off its formulae, though they do not yet know their meaning, for knowledge has to become part of the tissue of the mind, and this takes time.⁴

Knowledge does not always exercise mastery over action, because consciousness can be suspended in waking life, as well as during sleep. Aristotle portrays people who are alienated from their own knowledge as imperfect or incomplete—they are compared to madmen and children—and yet utterly ordinary—their defects are shared by all, at least some of the time. At no point in his taxonomy of self-restraint, unrestraint, temperance, and profligacy, however, does he dispute the core of Socrates' claim that full and available knowledge of evil is incompatible with its enactment. Instead, *The Nicomachean Ethics* describes the conditions that can disrupt the elegant circuit uniting cognition, virtue, and action, conditions which serve to mitigate wrongdoing by associating it with temporary or otherwise partial ignorance.

The word *akrasia* does not appear in the *Poetics*, but the concept informs Aristotle's definition of the best kind of tragedy. His ideal plot features a protagonist of intermediate moral standing—'someone not preeminent in virtue and justice' who is nevertheless basically good—falling into adversity because of an error (*hamartia*).⁵ The error should not involve evil, which would compromise the protagonist's fundamental goodness and, therefore, his ability to inspire pity and fear among spectators of the action. Relevant here is Aristotle's conflation of morality and class status in his categorization of epic and tragedy, on the one hand, and satire and comedy, on the other: 'the more serious produced mimesis of noble actions and the actions of noble people, while the more vulgar depicted the actions of the base.'⁶ Although the *Poetics* does not explicate the difference between mistakenness on the one hand and full-blown depravity on the other, it is knowledge that seems to mark the boundary between the two in the examples offered for analysis. Aristotle deplores tragedies in which 'the agents act in knowledge and cognizance (as Euripides [...] made Medea

4 Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 7.3.7–8, 1147A (transl. H. Rackham).

5 Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. 13, 1453A (transl. Stephen Halliwell).

6 Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. 4, 1448B.

kill her children’), tragedies, that is, in which *akrasia* plays a central role.⁷ To act knowingly in a tragedy is to veer away from error and toward evil; such an action, while of interest to some practitioners of the genre, does not for Aristotle conform to its highest standards. Better are plots in which the protagonist errs in ignorance only to be awakened into a recognition (*anagnorisis*) of the true nature of his action: Oedipus comes to understand the meaning of his mistakes long after he has already made them. This Sophoclean pattern of delayed understanding culminates in an excessive punishment of the protagonist: ‘in his tragedies suffering is likely to be either disproportionate to its cause or totally undeserved.’⁸ Just as in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, impediments to knowledge are necessary in the *Poetics* in order to attenuate an agent’s relationship to his own wrongdoing. The closer a protagonist like Oedipus comes to acting out of ignorance, the less damage is done to his reputation with the audience and the more inexplicable is his pain: evidence that human effort is no match for human helplessness. The closer a protagonist like Medea comes to authentically akratic action, the further she departs from the narrative conventions that establish the moral function of tragedy within a political community.

Because ignorance limits the ability of an agent to intend or consent to an action, modern scholars have examined ancient Greek tragedy and philosophy for evidence of free will. To what extent does the moral quality of an action depend on an agent’s power to choose? According to Kathy Eden, Aristotle’s preferred form of tragic action is neither purposefully elected by the protagonist nor completely inadvertent: ‘while it [*hamartia*] is not, strictly speaking, voluntary, in that the agent does not freely choose the act with full knowledge of its particulars, neither is it, strictly speaking, involuntary, in that it is not wholly unforeseen.’⁹ Although Jean-Pierre Vernant is probably right to contend that no formal category of the will is implied by Aristotle’s discussion of the kind of ignorance which at once causes and excuses error, it is nevertheless clear that the normative tragic protagonist experiences at least the desire to have chosen differently, the will for a will.¹⁰ No such flicker of voluntariness appears in the

7 Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. 14, 1453B.

8 Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966) Cornell Studies in Classical Philology, 35, p. 50.

9 Kathy Eden, ‘*Poetics*: A Defense of Tragic Fiction’, in Rebecca Bushnell (ed.), *A Companion to Tragedy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 41–50, esp. p. 46.

10 Jean-Pierre Vernant, ‘Intimations of the Will in Greek Tragedy’, in Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, transl. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone, 1990), pp. 49–84, esp. p. 65. The most important contribution of Vernant’s essay is to show that the divine necessity of tragic action is not incompatible with the

Socratic discussion of *akrasia*, where the unity of virtue makes the will utterly superfluous: there is no process of choosing goodness that can be separated from the fact of knowing pleasure. Yet whether the will is absent or insignificant, ancient Greek philosophy consistently prefers to explain evil in terms of barriers to cognition rather than in terms of the subject's ability to exercise free choice.

Helene P. Foley and Jean E. Howard have recently argued that any reading of English Renaissance tragedy must be based on an understanding of its historical and social conditions, assembling a list of the many ways in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries departed from the conventions of ancient tragedy:

These dramatists knew Seneca, but they imitated him with great freedom and put his closet drama onto the stage [...], and they hardly knew Greek theater at all. Very few early modern tragedies had a chorus, actors did not use masks, and plays were not produced in competitive festivals; rather, after 1576 tragedies in England were overwhelmingly produced for a commercial stage, employed a supple blank verse and vigorous prose, sometimes contained clowns, featured multiple actions if not multiple plots, and used boy actors to play women's parts.¹¹

It would seem that *akrasia* and the will belong on this list. These concepts are either excluded from or marginalized within Aristotle's *Poetics*, but they become crucial to the psychology of tragic action in early modern England: a rupture within a literary tradition that both reflects and contributes to a rupture within a broader understanding of human nature. Nevertheless, a remarkable feature of this innovation is the way in which it explicitly returns to ancient sources, not only in order to criticize them, but also in order to locate an alternative form of classicism. Try as he might, Aristotle could not eliminate Medea from his account of tragedy, and English writers would look to her as a model for their own experiments with *akrasia*.

personal responsibility of the protagonist: 'The sacrifice of Iphigenia is certainly necessary by reason of the situation that presses upon the king like fatality, but, at the same time, this murder is not only accepted but passionately desired by Agamemnon who is therefore responsible for it' (p. 72).

11 Helene P. Foley and Jean E. Howard, 'Introduction: The Urgency of Tragedy Now', *PMLA* 129 (2014), pp. 623–624.

Spenserian *Akrasia*: Temperance and Temporality in Tragic Narrative

Whereas Aristotle portrays *akrasia* as a threat to the generic integrity of tragedy, English Renaissance writers identify it as a primary cause of tragic outcomes. When these protagonists embark upon evil, they tend to consent—knowingly and willfully—to temptation. Although the evil to which they consent can take the form of action (as in the murders of Duncan and Banquo in *Macbeth*), it can also take the form of behavior. In the latter case, protagonists succumb to a condition such as lust or greed, from which redemption seems to be tantalizingly possible. The tragic climax occurs as the suspense over whether the protagonist will change his life resolves in favor of his irredeemability. A choice that seems at first to involve only a temporary lapse proves to be permanent.

That Book II of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* engages with a tragic mode of narration is evident from its opening canto. It begins with an episode that resembles the final scene in a gruesome drama of betrayal. Guyon, the knight of temperance, encounters a woman named Amavia at the edge of a forest. Badly hurt, she has just finished a virtuosic speech in which she welcomes death, when he manages to remove the blade from her wound and to bring her temporarily back to life. Asked how she came to be in such a state, she explains that Mortdant, her lover, went off in search of chivalric adventures, leaving her alone during her pregnancy. He became entangled with the aptly-named Acrasia, 'a false enchaunteresse, | That many errant knightes hath fowle fordonne.'¹² Amavia went searching for him, giving birth to a son in the middle of her journey, and eventually discovered Mortdant in the Bower of Bliss, subjected both to his own lust and to Acrasia's pleasure:

Him so I sought, and so at last I fownd
 Where him that witch had thralld to her will,
 In chaines of lust and lewde desyres ybownd
 And so transformed from his former skill,
 That me he knew not, nether his owne ill;
 Till through wise handling and faire gouernaunce,
 I him recured to a better will,
 Purged from drugs of fowle intemperaunce:
 Then meanes I gan devise for his deliuerance.¹³

12 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007) Longman Annotated English Poets, II, 1, 51.

13 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 1, 54.

Acrasia allowed them to leave the bower, sending them on their way with a cup as a parting gift. When Mortdant stopped to drink from a spring, however, the mixture of the water and a charm lurking in the cup killed him instantaneously. Just as Amavia is about to describe her response to her lover's death, she succumbs to her presumably self-inflicted injuries. Guyon is left in tears. He buries the two bodies, and swears an oath committing himself and the infant son of Mortdant and Amavia to revenge: 'with dew rites and dolorous lament | The end of their sad Tragedie vptyde.'¹⁴ Even beyond this explicit reference to genre, the language of stage tragedy runs thickly through the episode: 'Pageants of Mens Miseries', 'Pitiful Spectacle' (repeated twice in one stanza). But whereas performativity typically arouses the poem's suspicion about disguised identity and feigned feeling, Spenser here insists on framing Guyon's heroic purpose through a theatrical encounter.

The tragedy which Guyon observes and within which Mortdant and Amavia suffer is explicitly postlapsarian. Their son's hands, which have become covered in his mother's blood, cannot be cleansed by the water that poisoned his father, an emblem of guilt's grip on even the most innocent child: 'His guiltie handes from bloody gore to cleene; | He washt them oft and oft, yet nought they beene | For all his washing cleaner.'¹⁵ Although their story bears a resemblance to Adam and Eve's—the role of temptation, the shared demise of a couple—Mortdant and Amavia embody the fallen experience of sin, rather than its origin. This experience is ultimately self-inflicted, insofar as it proceeds from willful action. Mortdant chooses to leave Amavia for a campaign of heroic accomplishment and instead resigns himself to sexual servitude. Her own courageous efforts to rehabilitate him to a 'better will' succeed only in hastening both of their deaths. Even the infant Ruddymane's will leads him toward the 'cruell sport' of playing contentedly in Amavia's 'purple gore.'¹⁶ In postlapsarian tragedy, choices made through thoughtful deliberation and with beneficent intent still result in grave consequences. The will exists, but it seems to be capable only of wrongdoing.

By situating the will, a faculty intuitively associated with personal freedom, within a structure of narrative necessity, Spenser replaces the ancient Greek theory of tragic *hamartia* through ignorance with a Pauline psychology of sin. In his letter to the Romans, Paul describes the weakness of his own will, which drives him to act against his better judgment, that is to say, to behave akrati-

14 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 2, 1.

15 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 2, 3.

16 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 1, 40.

cally: 'For I knowe, that in me, that is to say in my fleshe, dwelleth no good thyng. For to wyll, is present with me: but I fynde no meanes to perfourme that which is good. For the good that I woulde, do I not: But the evyll which I woulde not, that do I.'¹⁷ Protestant theologians generally analyze the problem of *akrasia* by positing two distinct causes of action in the world. Humans in a postlapsarian condition can do nothing but evil; good can be accomplished only by God. As a consequence, the Lutheran doctrine of salvation by faith alone encourages believers to attribute good works to the action of divine will rather than to personal merit, and the Calvinist concepts of unconditional election and double predestination sever the sovereignty of grace from the contingency of human notions of justice. According to all of these teachings, the will resembles a diseased appendage: formerly integral to human health and happiness, distorted from its purpose, and now causing nothing but pain. Despite Erasmus's sympathy for many features of Protestant theology, his commitment to a robust notion of free will, as evidenced in his debates with Luther on the topic between 1524 and 1526, kept him aligned with Roman Catholicism.

What we now know as the Protestant ethic is a highly counter-intuitive historical consequence of this theology of the will. How could religious teachings that detach effort from reward give rise to such a prodigious model of labor and self-regulation as Benjamin Franklin? According to Max Weber's account of the relationship between doctrine and behavior, the transformation of good works from a cause of salvation to a sign or consequence thereof, a transformation which even some Protestants feared would lead to lawlessness, actually enhanced adherents' moral diligence:

however useless good works might be as a means of attaining salvation, for even the elect remain beings of the flesh, and everything they do falls infinitely short of divine standards, nevertheless, they are indispensable as a sign of election [...]. Thus the Calvinist, as it is sometimes put, himself creates his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it. But this creation cannot, as in Catholicism, consist in a gradual accumulation of individual good works to one's credit, but rather in a systematic self-control which at every moment stands before the inexorable alternative, chosen or damned.¹⁸

17 Romans 7:18–19, *The Bishops' Bible*.

18 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, transl. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner, 1958), p. 115.

It is the belief in the will's weakness, in its inability to choose rightly, therefore, that strengthens willpower. When choice is removed from an immediate chain of intention and consequence and re-inscribed within an abiding spiritual condition, the will can achieve remarkable consistency, because even a single lapse seems to indicate permanent damnation. The experience of life as a series of independent occasions to decide gives way to a sense that each and every choice reflects whether or not one has been chosen in turn.

If Spenser's purpose is to explore this theological terrain, then why does he choose Acrasia as the name of Guyon's sworn enemy, rather than something like Sin? Why would the poet go back to a concept derived from ancient Greek moral philosophy, when he had relevant Christian terminology at his disposal? Although some readers of *The Faerie Queene* have argued that, because temperance can be practiced outside of the framework of religion, Book II should be understood as an appraisal of a natural rather than a God-given virtue, the post-lapsarian tragedy with which Guyon's narrative begins indicates that theology is by no means irrelevant to Spenser's formulation of his subject.¹⁹ Nevertheless, prior to these questions of allegorical significance come more practical matters of literary construction. In a poem that purports to provide moral instruction to its readers—"The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline", Spenser writes to Sir Walter Raleigh—the doctrine of the will's depravity offers little hope for any didactic project, let alone material for narrative interest.²⁰ Right action is either a human impossibility or a kind of invariable compulsion; it certainly cannot be taught or learned. By setting Acrasia rather than Sin in Guyon's path, however, Spenser is able to give the will a purpose, if not within the soul, then at least within the story. She is a quintessential figure of romance, a witch in the tradition of Circe, Calypso, and the Sirens from *The Odyssey*, distracting men from their pursuit of epic goals with sexual temptation. For Homer, at least some of the men who fall victim to such temptation are capable of being redeemed. Odysseus in particular has a talent for enjoying pleasurable lures without being ensnared by them, relying on both external aids (the ropes that bind him to the mast of his ship, permitting him to listen to the Sirens' song without losing his life) and internal faculties (the will that allows him to forsake immortality with Calypso in favor of old age with Penelope) to preserve himself. By locating Acrasia in this lineage of romance temptresses, Spenser makes Guyon's resistance,

19 A.S.P. Woodhouse, 'Nature and Grace in *The Faerie Queene*', *English Literary History* 16 (1949), pp. 194–228, esp. p. 204.

20 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, p. 714.

which has the total consistency characteristic of the Protestant ethic and which critics, therefore, have often considered fanatical, seem purposeful and heroic. Moreover, Acrasia's lack of a formal theological identity allows Verdant, one of the poem's many surrogates for Spenser's ideal didactic subject—young, aristocratic, Protestant, and male—to be rescued from her by Guyon. Had Verdant been trapped in Sin's clutches instead, his redemption would have been difficult to justify within the poem's religious framework, and tragedy would have been the governing genre of Book II, rather than an object of its scrutiny.

Romance does not replace tragedy, however, as Book II's definitive mode. The genres compete with one another until—and perhaps throughout—the climactic final canto. The episode with Amavia and Mortdant establishes Guyon's motives for defeating Acrasia as vengeful and, therefore, potentially tragic. But readers discover in the next canto that, as a knight of the Order of Maidenhead, he had already been ordered by Gloriana, his queen, to put a stop to Acrasia's activities before his fateful encounter with the wretched couple: 'My Soueraine, | [...] Me all vnfitt for so great purpose she employes.'²¹ The disclosure of these prior motives ensures that Guyon's narrative proceeds in an over-determined fashion, at once a chivalric quest and a revenge tragedy. The competition only intensifies as he approaches the Bower of Bliss, a romance space that has nevertheless given rise to the tragic consequences suffered by Amavia and Mortdant. At the entrance to the bower is a delicately wrought gate displaying the story of Medea, a hinge figure who links the motif of the attractive witch (Circe is her aunt) to akratic tragedy in the tradition of Euripides:

Yt framed was of precious yvory,
 That seemd a worke of admirable witt;
 And therein all the famous history
 Of *Iason* and *Medaea* was ywritt,
 Her mighty charmes, her furious louing fitt,
 His goodly conquest of the golden fleece,
 His falsed fayth, and loue too lightly flitt,
 The wondred *Argo*, which in venturous peece
 First through the *Euxine* seas bore all the flour of *Greece*.

Ye might haue seene the frothy billowes fry
 Vnder the ship, as thorough them she went,

21 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 2, 43.

That seemd the waues were into yuory,
 Or yuory into the waues were sent;
 And otherwhere the snowy substaunce sprent
 With vermell, like the boyes blood therein shed,
 A piteous spectacle did represent,
 And otherwhiles with gold besprinkled;
 Yt seemd thenchaunted flame, which did *Creusa* wed.²²

Spenser is not the first poet to posit an explicit affiliation between Medea and *akrasia*. In Book VII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, she offers up a sort of slogan for all those who tend to act against their better judgment: 'video meliora proboque, | deteriora sequor', which Arthur Golding renders with the gorgeous fourteener, 'The best I see and like: the worst I follow head-long still.'²³ Spenser's *ekphrasis* serves a broad intertextual purpose, invoking the Medea of ancient tragedy and episodic romance as a precedent for Acrasia, but the gate also communicates something to the characters within the poem. This story should serve as a clear warning to potential followers of Acrasia about the dangers of what lies inside the gate. Even those viewers who do not recognize the relevant iconography—the golden fleece, the Argonauts, the murdered children—should be put off by the fact that the image appears to be covered with blood. Yet, as is typical of Spenser's characters' encounters with symbolically laden works of art, very little of the obvious relevance of Medea's story seems to register within the poem.²⁴ The narrator is more preoccupied with the image's impressive workmanship—the play between the form of the waves and their ivory matter—than with its moral lesson. The violence becomes aestheticized and abstracted: the magical fire which Medea used to burn Jason's new wife is transmuted into a golden decorative motif, and the field of red, meant to portray the blood Medea has spilt, is perceived only to be 'like' blood. At the level of

²² Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 44–45.

²³ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII, 20–21 (transl. Frank Justus Miller) and Arthur Golding, *Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, ed. W.H.D. Rouse (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), VII, 25.

²⁴ Jeff Dolven has shown how Britomart, the knight of chastity, gazes upon a series of tapestries depicting sexual violence, not with an understanding of their relevance to her chosen virtue, but rather with a 'combination of avid spectatorship and incomprehension.' Her unresponsiveness—an unwillingness or an inability to pick up on the cues that have been set before her—allows her to cut herself 'free from the narrator, from Spenser, and from the teaching poem that hosts her.' See Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 165–171, esp. p. 168 and p. 171.

action and behavior within the narrative, the critical point is this: by encountering the story of Medea and then passing through the gate, Acrasia's victims are themselves acting against their better judgment. Like Medea, they know they are choosing badly: the best they see and like, the worst they follow headlong still.

Guyon's decision to pass through the gate, however, does not implicate him in *akrasia*: he has seen its tragic victims face to face, and his forward progress continues to be motivated by both a sense of chivalric duty and a vengeful purpose. Temptation does not take root in his imagination, although he does over the course of Book II find various objects and persons—enormous piles of gold, two charming nymphs—momentarily attractive. His response is to wonder at and even admire what he observes, but to keep himself detached from these feelings: 'Much wondred *Guyon* at the fayre aspect | Of that sweet place, yet suffred no delight | To sincke into his sense, nor mind affect.'²⁵ His will remains in control, even of itself: 'Brydling his will, and maustering his might.'²⁶ Verdant, by contrast, has given himself over to temptation entirely:

His warlike Arms, the ydle instruments
Of sleeping praise, were hong vpon a tree,
And his braue shield, full of old monuments,
Was fowly ra'st, that none the signes might see,
Ne for them, ne for honour cared hee,
Ne ought, that did to his aduancement tend,
But in lewd loues, and wastfull luxuree,
His dayes, his goods, his bodie he did spend:
O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend.²⁷

He has lost every attribute of reflexive regulation—self-awareness, self-possession, and self-control—and abandoned every external source of his integrity—the physical support of his weapons, as well as the cultural models formerly inscribed on his shield. Bliss is a dangerous state, because it converts time into money and then into even more precious substances: an interlude that is initially measured in 'dayes' soon takes hold of 'his goods, his bodie.' Although Book II avoids the theological terminology of sin, it is clear that Verdant's soul comes next in the sequence, as a temporary lapse threatens to shift over into a permanent condition. Acrasia seems perfectly aware of the tragedy she is about

²⁵ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 53.

²⁶ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 53.

²⁷ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 79.

to inflict. Even as she looms over him in a sinister fashion, she experiences the Aristotelian affect of pity in anticipation of her lover's fate: 'she sighed soft, as if his case she rew'd.'²⁸ This eruption of tender concern, strange in so intractable a moral antagonist, is actually of a piece with her allegorical identity. Acrasia does not represent unadulterated evil; she regrets what she is about to do to Verdant, and she is prepared to go through with it nevertheless.

Just as Verdant's own generic ambivalence is about to resolve in favor of the tragic, Guyon succeeds in pulling him back into romance. Acrasia is trapped, Verdant redeemed, the bower destroyed:

But all those pleasaunt bowres and Pallace braue,
Guyon broke downe, with rigour pittillesse;
 Ne ought their goodly workmanship might saue
 Them from the tempest of his wrathfulnesse,
 But that their blisse he turn'd to balefulnesse:
 Their groues he feld, their gardins did deface,
 Their arbers spoyle, their Cabinets suppressse,
 Their banket houses burne, their buildings race,
 And of the fayrest late, now made the fowlest place.²⁹

Guyon's conduct at this moment has generated the poem's most famous crux. What can it mean for the knight of temperance to act so intemperately, to display such extreme behaviors as 'rigour' and 'wrathfulnesse'? To the rich discussion that has developed around this question, I will add only the following: Guyon's destruction of the bower means that his narrative remains suspended between tragedy and romance. His rage against beautiful buildings and gardens seems slightly unhinged, because it is completely extraneous to his chivalric intention, which is fulfilled at the moment of Acrasia's capture and Verdant's emancipation. The iconoclastic gesture pushes Guyon back into the territory of revenge tragedy: excessive, personally-motivated violence.

Moreover, in his effort to eradicate the bower, Guyon displays a deep-seated resistance to the contingencies of romance. He wants to eliminate even temporary pleasurable distraction, to perfect the will by destroying temptation. After Odysseus successfully resists Circe and saves the men she had transformed into swine, he remains in her company for an extended term of rest and recuperation: 'So there day after day for a full year we sat, feasting on abundant flesh and

²⁸ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 73.

²⁹ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 83.

sweet wine.³⁰ Guyon not only refuses to spend any more time in the bower, but also cannot accept its ongoing existence. In this sense, he resembles Aristotle, who acknowledges the existence of *akrasia* and then does everything in his power to exclude it from his philosophy. Guyon has already witnessed one non-Aristotelian tragedy; he cannot accept any more.

Spenser was known among friends for his serious interest in ancient Greek moral philosophy. Lodowick Bryskett, whose own studies in the field had been encouraged by Spenser, once tried to engage him on the topic at a social gathering, asking that he might 'open unto us the goodly cabinet, in which this excellent treasure of vertues lieth locked up from the vulgar sort.'³¹ Spenser demurred, but not because he objected to the request. He simply wanted his friends to wait for *The Faerie Queene*, which would satisfy their desire for an Aristotelianism accessible to a vernacular audience. As he explained, the whole poem was designed with Bryskett's purpose in mind:

to represent all the moral vertues, assigning to every vertue, a Knight to be the patron and defender of the same: in whose actions and feates of armes and chivalry, the operations of that vertue, whereof he is the protector, are to be expressed, and the vices & unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same, to be beaten downe and overcome.³²

In transforming moral philosophy into narrative, in adapting ancient virtues for a Protestant nation, Spenser discovered a place for *akrasia* within a system that originally excluded it. In so doing, he also helped to forge a tense, yet fruitful alliance between romance's intermediacy and tragedy's concern with permanence and ends.

Shakespearean *Akrasia*: Temporary Evil on Stage

Spenser's explicit engagement with *akrasia* and narrative structure should be understood as part of a broader interest in the relationship between temptation and temporality among English Renaissance writers. Some dramatists chose to pursue this interest through a version of festive comedy, where a set period for license makes wrongdoing more or less permissible. Ben Jonson's *The*

³⁰ Homer, *The Odyssey*, x, 467–468 (transl. A.T. Murray).

³¹ Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life* (London: William Aspley, 1606), p. 26.

³² Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life*, p. 27.

Alchemist, for example, centers on three characters who lie, cheat, and steal with impunity and great verve while most citizens are away from home during a season of plague. When Lovewit, the master of the house, returns to the city, he looks on what has happened with indulgence, even as he restores order and hierarchy. The transformation of Prince Hal into Henry V, of a wastrel into a king, makes temporary festivity an integral part of strategic self-fashioning. When Hal's extended adolescence (so like and then suddenly so unlike Falstaff's) comes to an end, it is as if sovereignty has taken possession of his whole being. When he speaks to Falstaff, he denies their long friendship as if it were a nightmare from which he has been roused once and for all: 'I have long dreamt of such a kind of man, | So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane; | But being awaked, I do despise my dream.'³³

Even when kept within strict temporal bounds, however, *akrasia* was more often treated as a tragic phenomenon. In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton posited intentional wrongdoing as the origin of mortality and, therefore, of temporariness as the condition of life itself. As Adam and Eve's story veers toward *akrasia*, the poet 'must change | Those Notes to Tragic.'³⁴ In *Doctor Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe probed the Protestant theology that Spenser only brushed up against, making the state of tending to act against one's better judgment explicitly a matter of sin. Faustus's scholarly profession ensures that the relationship between knowledge and *akrasia* is more pronounced for him than it is for Guyon, whose intellect lacks any remarkable distinction. The will, however, persists as the primary faculty through which wrongdoing can be either undertaken or resisted. A decision that seems to commit Faustus to evil only for the medium term, that he can cancel at any moment simply by repenting, comes to feel irrevocable.

I will end with a brief consideration of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which takes the unresolved tension between romance and tragedy that animates Spenser's engagement with *akrasia* and creates a more integrated whole. Guyon's generic indeterminacy—his suspension between vengeful and chivalric motivations—never compels him to act against his better judgment. Macbeth's experience of *akrasia* is more intimate and thoroughgoing: he wants to move beyond wrongdoing, but only by passing through it. The play's fundamental problem is how to get from here to there, from where one is at present to where one wants to be, from a prophecy to its fulfillment. Temporariness is both the

33 Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 2*, ed. René Weis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) The Oxford Shakespeare, 5.5.48–50.

34 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007), Longman Annotated English Poets, IX, 5–6.

problem—how can Macbeth embark on a course he knows to be evil—and the apparent solution—his crimes will come to an end once he has become king. But temporariness turns out to be a more demanding state than he bargains for, and the intrinsic insecurity of Macbeth's position, lacking an heir but plagued by rivals, pushes him to persist in wrongdoing long after he expected to abandon it. Initially, he acknowledges the evil of his actions, but he remains certain that he will be able to change. In the end, however, he cannot accept the fact that he has destroyed his soul for such an unstable, impermanent achievement. Temporariness, Macbeth's original justification, gives way to a desperate—and futile—effort to endure.

From the opening scene, the witches establish the medium term of romance at the center of the play's tragic design. The first four lines demonstrate the sisters' control over the boundaries of an action, both its beginning and its end, and their attribution of the intermediate phase to men:

- 1 WITCH When shall we three meet again?
 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
 2 WITCH When the hurlyburly's done,
 When the battle's lost and won.³⁵

Their knowledge of origins and consequences, of the current situation and its eventual outcome, sets up the prophecy's fundamental division of temporal labor, according to which Macbeth must act in order to transport himself from where he is to where the witches have promised he will be: 'All hail Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter.'³⁶

Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth see intermediacy as a problem which vigorous agency might solve. He has no trouble acknowledging what his 'Vaulting ambition' wants to happen, but his will lacks the sheer forcefulness it needs to proceed: 'I have no spur | To prick the sides of my intent.'³⁷ She has will enough to spare, so much in fact that she can feel 'The future in the instant', imagining each intervening barrier giving way to her desire.³⁸ The witches, however, reject this model of action along a forward trajectory. They imagine intermediacy, not in terms of epic purpose, but rather in terms of romance contingency:

35 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1984) The Arden Shakespeare, 1.1.1–4.

36 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.3.50.

37 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.7.25–27.

38 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.5.58.

‘Though his bark cannot be lost, | Yet it shall be tempest-tost.’³⁹ The certainty of the outcome does not guarantee the directness of the route.

Indeed, once Macbeth finds himself in the midst of this tempest, once the initial bout of murderousness has given way to a precarious hold on the throne, the experience of temporariness becomes a huge existential burden. The same prophecy that predicts his ascension to the throne also promises Banquo a line of royal offspring, so Macbeth begins to fret over his own natal legacy. (Up until Act III, the most notable reference to Macbeth’s offspring is Lady Macbeth’s hypothetical offer to crush her infant’s skull.) As Luke Wilson has brilliantly argued, Macbeth’s anxiety about paternity is related to a fear of cuckoldry: ‘the murder of Duncan as his own (one might say sexual) defilement [...], a defilement however that has paradoxically resulted in offspring that are not his own, but which he nevertheless finds himself providing for as if they were.’⁴⁰ Even more troubling to Macbeth than the sexual entanglement, however, is its temporal logic: he has sacrificed his immortal soul (‘mine eternal jewel | Given to the common Enemy of man’) without securing a worldly future for himself through his children.⁴¹ The permanence of damnation compels him to search for an analogous form of stability across earthly time. When hired assassins fail to kill Banquo’s son, Fleance, Macbeth can hardly endure the thought that his efforts to secure the future have failed. Temporariness has come to feel like a trap: ‘But now, I am cabin’d, cribb’d, confin’d, bound in | To saucy doubts and fears.’⁴²

Macbeth eventually recognizes that, as a mortal being, he cannot escape from his temporary condition: ‘I have liv’d long enough: my way of life | Is fall’n into the sere, the yellow leaf.’⁴³ But his acceptance of his own boundedness does not open him up to the contingencies of romance. Instead, he pursues epic action more single-mindedly than ever: ‘I’ll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack’d.’⁴⁴ His last words before he dies at the hands of Macduff curse the man who yields to another, the man who gives up his will to act, no matter how futile the effort: ‘And damn’d be him that first cries, ‘Hold, enough!’’⁴⁵

39 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.3.24–25.

40 Luke Wilson, ‘*Macbeth* and the Contingency of Future Persons’, *Shakespeare Studies* 40 (2012), pp. 53–62, esp. p. 59.

41 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 3.1.67–68.

42 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 3.4.23–24.

43 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 5.3.22–23.

44 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 5.3.32.

45 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 5.8.34.

Readers of Shakespeare have long noticed the way in which his late romances—*The Winter's Tale*, most notably—borrow from tragedy. Cruelty and death are redeemed, belatedly and incompletely, through a series of fantastical interventions. The brief literary history of *akrasia* I have traced shows that the influence also runs in the other direction, that English Renaissance tragedies borrow from romance. Medea, marginalized in Aristotelian tragic theory, brings knowing evil to the center of the early modern genre. In so doing, however, she and her consort witches shift from protagonists to tempters, the roles they typically occupy in romance. They draw in their victims with the promise that wrongdoing might be restricted to the medium term, that sin might be enjoyed for a time and then brought successfully to an end. Such a promise offers an alternative to various Protestant teachings about the will's depravity, on the one hand, and its fanatical consistency, on the other. But the experience of temporary evil, so bracing in the imagination, proves to be unbearable, leading to the total dissolution of Verdant, the frenetic violence of Guyon and Macbeth, the suicide of Lady Macbeth, the despair of Faustus, and the very mortality of Adam and Eve.

Further Reading

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A fabulis ad veritatem: Latin Tragedy, Truth and Education in Early Modern England

Sarah Knight

At the start of his 1582 Ash Wednesday sermon delivered in St. Mary's church *Apud Academicos Oxonienses* (*Before the University of Oxford*) and entitled *De fermento vitando* (*On Avoiding Leaven*), the Magdalen President and Regius Professor of Divinity Lawrence Humphrey (1525/27–1589) put a stern end to dramatic entertainment:

Satis iam satis (Auditores) Theatricis spectaculis aures & oculos oblectauimus: satis laruarum ac lemurum, vidimus, audiuius: satis & risui Comico, & luctui Tragico indulsumus ...

Listeners, we have entertained our ears and eyes enough, enough by now, with theatrical spectacles: we have seen, we have heard enough of specters and ghosts; we have indulged enough both in comic laughter and tragic lamentation ...¹

By 1582 Humphrey had been one of Oxford's most prominent theologians for over two decades, who had returned to Oxford in 1560 after a seven-year visit to Zurich, Basel and Geneva during Mary I's reign. His sermon vividly illustrates a leading Puritan's perspective on early modern institutional plays, and shows how we can look to contemporary Latin tragedy to see how scholars used the genre to communicate ideas and impart pedagogical lessons. Humphrey turns towards Lenten austerity by rejecting the ephemeral pleasures of drama and arguing that 'hoc festi quasi Cineritium' ('this Ashen feast, as it were') 'asks of every single one of us other habits, another prescribed lifestyle, another

1 Lawrence Humphrey, *De fermento vitando* (London: Henry Middleton for George Bishop, 1582), pp. 163–186, esp. p. 163; for the sections pertaining to drama, see also John H. Elliott, Jr. et al., eds., *Records of Early English Drama* (hereafter *REED*): *Oxford* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press/British Library, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 177–179 (Latin) and vol. 2, pp. 991–993 (English). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

persona' ('alios mores, aliam dietam, aliam personam ab vnoquoque nostrum postulat'). Making these changes will shift the *auditores* from 'silly to serious things':

vt à ludicris ad seria, à socco ad saccum, à Cothurno ad Cineres, à prophanis ad sacra, à fabulis ad ipsam veritatis inuestigationem & disciplinam transeamus: quandoquidem omni quantumuis² apparatissima scena nostra veritatis imago est illustrior, & Græcorum Helena pulchrior & amabilior est Christianorum veritas ...

(so we should pass from silly to serious things, from comedy to hairshirt, from tragedy to ashes, from the profane to the holy, from plays to that self-same examination and discipline of truth: for although our image of truth is more radiant than all stages, even the most lavishly equipped, Christian truth is both more beautiful and more loveable than the Helen of the Greeks ...)

However 'laudably performed' ('laudabiliter actis', p. 164), for Humphrey *fabulae* are *fabulae tamen* ('plays are still plays'), and 'certainly much more concentrated purpose' ('multo certè maius studium') must be applied to 'the understanding and contemplation of truth' ('in veritatis cognitione & contemplatione') than to drama.

Humphrey's sermon creates two interesting tensions: first, such a strenuous rejection suggests the power of theater even while it is being dismissed as trivial. Second, his description of the assumption of piety as 'aliam personam' ('another persona') is somewhat paradoxical: the artificiality and indulgence of drama must end, but with the putting-on of another 'mask' (an alternative meaning of the Latin *persona*). For men as drilled in the need to excel rhetorically as Humphrey's auditory would have been, this exhortation to worship correctly would not necessarily have conveyed the idea of dissimulation since each listener would have known that successful oratory invariably meant performing different roles dependent on the persuasive task at hand. Nonetheless the possibility is still raised that one can outwardly adopt and perform piety, which becomes a specious and deceitful act if one does not also have a genuine interior faith. If Humphrey saw this tension, he did not pause on it, but went on, instead, to articulate a series of rhetorical antitheses—such as carefree laughter

² The 1582 reading (p. 163) is *quantumnis*, reproduced in the *REED: Oxford* transcription (1, p. 177). This misprint has been corrected here to *quantumvis* ('although').

at a comedy versus uncomfortable itching in a hair shirt—to further establish the gap between *fabula* and *veritas*. It is enough, he argues, ‘spectasse tantum & intellexisse’ (‘only to have seen and understood’) plays, with the physical ‘ears and eyes’ he mentions in his opening clause, but one ‘ought to love and embrace’ (‘amare & amplecti oporteat’) truth with the heart and in the soul. As his Latinate *auditores* would instantly have grasped, Humphrey’s grammatical choices reflect the commitment truth demands: plays require a single completed action of spectatorship and comprehension (expressed by his use of the perfect infinitives *spectasse* and *intellexisse*) while loving and embracing truth are ongoing actions for which he chooses present infinitives (*amare*, *amplecti*). Surprisingly, and ignoring the moral seriousness which theorists from Aristotle onwards had accorded to tragedy, Humphrey lumps it together with comedy as diverting yet ultimately frivolous pastimes from which the Christian *auditor* must move on—à *Cothurno ad Cineres*—to arrive at an examination of religious truth.

The context of delivery for Humphrey’s sermon was also the most active site of composition and performance of drama, and so a study of Latin tragedy in early modern England must focus on the universities. Some examples taken both from Oxford and Cambridge, such as the work of Thomas Legge (ca. 1535–1607) and William Alabaster (1568–1640), and plays written by its graduates who wrote for continental Catholic institutions, particularly Edmund Campion (1540–1581), show how institutional drama evolved into an ideologically rich didactic medium. These plays suggest how the staging of such drama was not just an entertaining diversion (Humphrey’s *ludicra*) in this period, although collective enjoyment could be part of its appeal. The authors of these plays also express concern about impressionable young minds and the formative influence of curricular and other institutional activity in relation to dramatic performance. This suggestion of psychological flux on the part of the student spectators mirrors how Latin tragedy at the English universities repeatedly stages political instability, by representing a world in which, often, in the words of a pessimistic soothsayer in William Gager’s *Meleager*, ‘versus ordo est’ (‘the order of things has been reversed’, II; l. 688).

‘The schoole, where so many abuses flourish’: Attacks and Defenses of Institutional Drama

Ever since the Reformation had started to gather momentum many decades before Humphrey delivered his sermon, educators of various denominations had questioned drama’s moral value for the young, and some of the early

reformers, including Bucer, Calvin and Sturm, debated whether its ability to build rhetorical confidence and impart to students a deeper knowledge of biblical and classical narratives counterbalanced its potentially pernicious teaching of dissimulation and falsehood.³ Juggling theology, political theory and dramaturgy, Protestant scholars like John Bale (1495–1563) and John Foxe (1516/17–1587) used vernacular and Latin tragedy respectively to espouse Reformation thought. In his *King Johan* (1538), Bale, as Philip Schwyzer has argued, combined ‘explicitly and uncompromisingly reformist’ drama with the indigenous ‘traditional religious drama’ he had known in his youth,⁴ while Foxe’s ‘apocalyptic comedy’ *Christus triumphans* (1556) demonstrates, as Howard Norland has shown, a ‘particularly reformist perspective’ both in its use of biblical texts (especially Revelation) and in its fear-mongering about contemporary disasters.⁵ But a few decades later, several university Puritans chose to forbid drama altogether rather than harnessing plays to ideological purposes. Following co-religionists like Stephen Gosson (bap. 1554–1625), whose 1579 attack on poetry caused Philip Sidney famously to defend it, the Oxford scholar John Rainolds (1549–1607) argued in his *Th’Overthrow of Stage Playes* (1599) against the Christ Church dramatist William Gager’s defense of college drama. Rainolds had acted in Richard Edwards’s *Palamon and Arcite* when Elizabeth visited Oxford in 1566, but in later life decided that institutional theater made student actors appear ‘in most vnmodest guise, with vnseemely barbarous carousing songes and speeches.’⁶ This perceived immodesty was not just a concern for Protestants: despite their opponents’ accusations that the Mass was itself a

3 See, for example, William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 177–188; for Sturm and contemporary drama, particularly that of his friend George Buchanan, see Carine Ferradou, ‘George Buchanan dans les Pays Réformés’, in Jan Bloemendal and Philip Ford (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama: Forms, Functions, Receptions* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2008), pp. 55–76, esp. pp. 56–69.

4 Philip Schwyzer, ‘Paranoid History: John Bale’s *King Johan*’, in Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 499–513, esp. p. 501.

5 Howard B. Norland, ‘Neo-Latin Drama in Britain’, in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 471–544, esp. pp. 478–479.

6 John Rainolds, *Th’ Overthrow of Stage Playes* ([Middelburg: Printed by Richard Schilders], 1599), p. 122; facsimile reprint with a preface by Arthur Freeman (New York and London: Garland, 1974). On the attitudes of Puritans including Rainolds towards theater and ‘filthie books’—the phrase is that of the teacher and translator John Stockwood (d. 1610)—see also John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning, and Education, 1560–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 157–159.

kind of theater, characterized by ritualized performance, Catholic pedagogues also pronounced on the question of student drama: Rule 87 of the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum*, printed in the same year at Rainolds's *Overthrow*, makes clear that the plot ('argumentum') of any 'tragœdiæ et comœdiæ' performed should be 'sacrum ... ac pium' ('holy and devotional').⁷ Such thinking dated back to the earliest days of the church, manifest, for instance, in the writings of St. Augustine, whose critical attitude towards drama cast it, as Donnalee Dox has persuasively shown, as 'a debauched social activity rooted in Roman polytheism'.⁸ Augustine had argued in *De civitate Dei* that the theater offered only a 'mythical' or 'story-telling' theology ('theologia fabulosa'): in the same sentence he aligns this *theologia* with the 'theatrica scaenica, indignitatis et turpitudinis plena' ('the theology of the theatre and the stage, with all its vulgarity and foulness').⁹ By the late sixteenth century, anti-theatrical polemicists like Rainolds came to rely on this Augustinian critique, consolidating their own objections by invoking the early church. Near the start of his polemic, for example, positioning himself within this long-standing continuum of anti-theatricalism while bolstering his use of Augustine with even earlier classical authorities (Cicero, Livy), Rainolds explicitly equates stage-playing with a bad moral reputation and questionable legal status: 'such as come vpon the stage without gaine, are proved by S. *Augustin* and *Livie* to be infamous, because S. *Austin* and *Livie* doe shewe that all stage-players (free players not excepted) were branded with a marke of infamie & dishonestie, disfranchised in a sort'.¹⁰ Clearly drama was seen by some Puritans as forcefully pernicious, and not just as harmless bookish entertainment.

Alongside this Augustinian moral critique was positioned the Calvinist argument that plays reflected the fortunes of monarchs and the powerful. In Calvin's commentaries on Jeremiah (originally lectures to Geneva students, first published in 1576), he suggests that kings (*reges*) 'have been positioned, so to speak, in the theater' ('sunt quasi collocati in teatro') where 'everyone's eyes have been turned towards them so that they have no freedom for themselves' ('et

7 *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education*, transl. and ann. Claude Pavur, S.J. (St. Louis, MO: Institute for Jesuit Sources, 2005), p. 35.

8 Donnalee Dox, *The Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press), p. 11.

9 See Saint Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, VI, 7, vol. 2 (Books IV–VII), translated by William M. Green (London and Cambridge: William Heinemann Ltd. and Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 322–323. The English translation cited here is Green's, although the alternative translation of 'fabulosa' as 'story-telling' is my own.

10 Rainolds, *Overthrow*, p. 5.

omnium oculi in ipsos conversi sunt, ita ut nulla illis maneat libertas').¹¹ Calvin's idea of drama and monarchical representation would prove influential in England, where plays on religious and political subjects had existed since the early Reformation, as we have seen, but debates over such plays deepened as the century wore on, and as it became clearer to her subjects that the ageing Queen would be the last of the Tudors, and that Catholic threats from continental Europe, spearheaded by the Jesuit mission and Armada invasions of the 1580s, stemmed from several damaging sources. How the nation's youth would be brought up right-minded and steady was a fundamental concern to both Catholic and Protestant pedagogues, which explains, to some extent, why debates over theater intensified and why Latin tragedy so often touched on contemporary anxieties. Institutional drama, like the theoretical disputations staged in the lecture-halls of both universities, might seem abstracted, even ideologically toothless, but the frequency with which political power is represented is striking, and such popularity suggests that university dramatists were thinking carefully about forms of government as they pushed the history of tragic play-writing in England in interesting new directions. If we examine formative philosophical influences on Latin drama, the tensions Augustine suggested are implicit in the moral slipperiness of convincing rhetorical performance (as opposed to heartfelt piety or moral purpose), and the power of a kind of drama Calvin argued can raise potentially disturbing political questions, start to seem central.

Humphrey's sermon was printed under the title *Pharisaismus vetus et novus: sive de fermento Pharisaeorum et Iesuitarum (Phariseeism Old and New: Or, on the Leaven of the Pharisees and the Jesuits)*, reflecting both the play's scriptural source—'Matt. 16. Videte & cauete à fermento Pharisaeorum & Sadducaeorum' ('Matthew 16: Witness and avoid the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees'), as the title-page has it—and its polemical goal. Although the sermon has a separate title-page, it was printed at the end of Humphrey's *Iesuitismi Pars Prima (First Part of Jesuitism)*, also in 1582. Humphrey's polemic was directed against the English Jesuit Edmund Campion, who had just published his *Rationes decem (Ten Reasons)* with an inflammatory preface 'To the most learned scholars flourishing at Oxford and Cambridge' ('Doctissimis Academicis, Oxonii florentibus & Cantabrigiæ').¹² We shall return later to Campion, who obviously posed a serious threat to notions of institutional orthodoxy and stability: a star,

11 Calvin, *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Baum, Cunitz and Reuss, vol. 39 (Brunswick: C.A. Schwetschke, 1889), col. 178; see also Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, pp. 177–178.

12 Edmund Campion, *Rationes decem* (Henley-on-Thames: S. Brinkley, 1581), n.p.

as Humphrey had also been, of the rhetorical performances before Elizabeth I on her visit to Oxford in 1566, only a few years later he threw aside a promising academic career for the uncertain life of a recusant abroad.

Humphrey goes on to identify drama with the dastardly wiles of the Jesuits as a group, and not just Campion, which reflects the institutional reality of the early 1580s when universities were paranoid about the Society's influence on students. He equates the Jesuit and broader Catholic fixation on saints with pagan polytheism, an Augustinian rhetorical gambit, as well as with the naive belief that no altar should go un-laden with offerings (pp. 175–176):

Offerunt Iesuitæ non Deo soli sed Diuis aliis cultu[m], inuocationem; A Pharis[a]eis haustu[m] est, qui defunctos colueru[n]t ... Romanistæ ... Romæ Pantheon Ethnicu[m] in horum omniu[m] memoriam verterunt: deterriti, credo, miserando Oenei regis Exemplo, qui cùm omnibus Diis sacra fecisset, Dianam solam pr[a]eterisset, neglecti officii pœnas dedit ipse, vxor, liberi, vt vobis Scena Tragicè repr[a]esentauit.

(The Jesuits offer worship (and) prayer not to God alone but to other gods. (This) was derived from the Pharisees, who worshipped the dead ... The Romanists ... turned the pagan Pantheon at Rome into a memorial of all these (saints). (They were) terrified, I believe, by the pitiable example of King Oeneus, who when he had made sacrifices to all the gods omitted Diana alone. He, (his) wife, (and his) children paid the penalties of neglected duty as the stage has shown to you in tragedy.)

In the 1582 publication, in the margin to the left of this passage, a note reads 'Sophocl.', but this obscures Humphrey's point: the reference to 'Oenei regis Exemplo' ('the example of King Oeneus') is not to ancient Greek tragedy, but specifically to contemporary Latin tragedy.¹³ Only days before the sermon was delivered, many of his auditors would have seen William Gager's play *Meleager*, a Latin tragedy which represents the Caledonian boar hunt, indebted to Book VIII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and performed at Christ Church.¹⁴ Humphrey

13 For Sophocles at the early modern universities, see my "Goodlie anticke apparrell?": Sophocles' *Ajax* at early modern Oxford and Cambridge, *Shakespeare Studies* 37 (September 2009), 25–42.

14 See Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), vol. 2: 1567–1589, pp. 291–294, who dates the play 'probably in the week before Shrovetide (Wednesday 21 to Tuesday 27 February)' (p. 293). *Meleager* was first staged in 1582, then revived in 1585 for a visit of the Earl of

rey therefore develops an anti-theatrical argument into an argument which equates the behaviour of the Jesuits and other *Romanistæ* with the hubristic and neglectful Oeneus, and having dismissed the didactic potential of tragedy, he uses a tragic exemplar to reinforce his ideological point.

Although any reader of Renaissance drama is acclimatized to casual blending of the classical and the Christian, it is striking that Humphrey, like many Christian pedagogues in the period, uses the classical to define the Christian, even in negative distinction: Oeneus resembles the Jesuits, Helen of Troy should be loved less than Christian truth, and a classical analogy is clearly selected to drive home Christian doctrine. We see this tendency not only in early modern homiletics, but also in the drama, where the characters in the plays—and, by extension, of course, their authors—sometimes seem only to be able to assert their existence by reference to classical predecessors. In Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius*, for instance, Richard of Gloucester compares his confederate Rivers to Electra, complimenting him on returning his nephew to England from Wales 'just as Electra snatched her brother from her mother's menace' ('qualis cruentae matris eripiens minis | Electra fratrem', 1, 11, 1; ll. 157–158).¹⁵ With this in mind, Humphrey's rejection of *fabulae* in favor of *veritas* in the 1582 sermon starts to seem more complicated: he recognizes how fresh the tragedy would be in his audience's minds, and uses the play to reinforce the point he wants to make about right worship. Not just *ludicra*, then: drama is used even by its detractor here to underline a serious theological point.

Other contemporaries were similarly apprehensive of the power drama had over student minds, such as the Oxford Puritan Stephen Gosson. Gosson, whose perspective as a 'Stud. Oxon.' (declared on the title-page) gave him particular clout, 'because I haue bene matriculated my selfe in the schoole, where so many abuses flourish', luridly imagined students' moral decline in *The Schoole of Abuse*.¹⁶ On the one hand, Gosson contrasts civic responsibility with academic abstraction:

Leicester, Philip Sidney and other courtiers, and printed at Oxford in 1593. See Frederick S. Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), pp. 165–178; J.W. Binns, 'Introduction', in *William Gager "Meleager", "Ulysses Redux", "Panniculus Hippolyto Assutus"* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1982); Norland, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Britain', pp. 489–490.

15 Thomas Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, ed. and transl. Dana F. Sutton, in *Thomas Legge: The Complete Plays*, vol. 1 (New York etc.: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 20–21.

16 Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1579), sig. 6^v.

If it be the dutie of euery man in a common wealth, one way or other to bestirre his stumpes, I ca[n]not but blame those lither co[n]templators very much, which sit concluding of Sillogismes in a corner, which in a close study in the Uniuersity coope themselues vp fortie yeres together studying all thinges, and professe nothing (sigs. 34^{r-v}).

But if desiccated abstraction from responsibility is one temptation, another is the university's potential for licentiousness because of its teaching of rhetoric, which Gosson exemplifies as 'poetrie in the lowest forme' or first year of the curriculum: 'You are no sooner entred, but libertie looseth the reynes, and geues you head, placing you with poetrie in the lowest forme, when his skill is showne to make his Scholer as good as euer twangde' (sigs. 6^{v-7^r}). Like Humphrey, Gosson trivialises fictional writing on the one hand while implying its potential power—that exciting association with 'libertie'—on the other.

Gosson and Humphrey offer two related anti-theatrical perspectives, but not all of their co-religionists would have agreed that institutional plays were only for (at best) diversion, and (at worst) for giving 'libertie' full rein. Three decades before the Ash Wednesday sermon and *Schoole of Abuse* were published, the Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer (1491–1551) had argued in his *De Regno Christi* (*On Christ's Kingdom*), which he sent to Edward VI as a New Year's gift in 1550, for the value of 'honestis ludis' ('decent entertainments').¹⁷ Bucer was an important thinker for Humphrey, who describes in his 1573 biography of John Jewel how (also in 1550) he had watched Bucer, then Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, preach at Christ Church on John 17 ('Sanctifica nos ô pater in veritate'; 'O Father, sanctify us in the truth'). Humphrey was particularly struck by Bucer's identifications of the four best means of understanding Scripture and prophecy: 'painstaking reading, very fervent prayer, public assemblies and private conversations' ('Lectionem assiduum, precationem ardentissimam, conuentus publicos, & priuata colloquia').¹⁸ By 'conuentus publicos' Bucer would have meant occasions like that of his preaching the sermon, but his account of drama, particularly tragedy, could be argued to describe a different kind of 'conuentus publicus'. Play-going is, for Bucer, meaningfully communal: he writes how 'the spectators' can be collectively stimulated 'by piety' ('pietate spectatores'), for instance.¹⁹ Bucer argues that plays are more

17 See Basil Hall, 'Martin Bucer in England', in D.F. Wright (ed.), *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 129–143.

18 Lawrence Humphrey, *Ioannis Iuelli Angli ... vita & mors* (London: John Day, 1573), pp. 42–43.

19 Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi* (1550), in *Opera Latina* vol. 15, ed. François Wendel (Güter-

than *ludicra* and can in fact be *seria* (to use Humphrey's terms): 'these stories' ('hae historiae'), Bucer states, have 'so wonderful a power of confirming faith in God' ('cum mirificam uim habeant fidem in Deum confirmandi').²⁰ Bucer stresses the importance of tragedy based on biblical rather than classical narratives, since 'the Scriptures everywhere offer an abundant supply of material for tragedies' ('Tragoediis scripturae ubique perquam copiosam afferunt materiam').²¹ Humphrey, conversely, admits no real pedagogical space for drama, and does not distinguish between different forms of subject-matter. The Ash Wednesday sermon channels this experience into his discussion of drama in the contemporary institution. First, while underplaying its force, Humphrey nonetheless acknowledges drama's didacticism, that plays written in the Latin of an intellectual and theological elite offered opportunities to indoctrinate correctly but also to corrupt, so their subject-matter needed to be chosen carefully and their ideological lessons were paramount. The second aspect of Humphrey's sermon relevant here is the pervasiveness of the religious undercurrents in so much institutional Latin writing of the period.

Tragedy and Tyranny

In his sermon, Humphrey assumes that his *auditores* were as attentive to the nuances of tragedy as he hoped they would be to the argument of a sermon: he refers frequently to the play fresh in everyone's minds, which we have already encountered as a depiction of civic chaos, Gager's *Meleager*. Humphrey goes straight to the moral exemplarity of the play and all of his references refer to the character Oeneus, Meleager's father, who is mentioned only fleetingly by Ovid as the king of Calydon who forgets to sacrifice to Diana in thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest; 'only Diana's altar was passed by (they say) and left without its incense' ('solas sine ture relictas | praeteritae cessasse ferunt Latio-dos aras').²² In Gager's play, however, Oeneus becomes an archetypal hubristic

sloh and Paris: C. Bertelsmann and Presses Universitaires de France, 1955); 'De Honestis Ludis' is chapter 54 (pp. 252–260; p. 257 cited here). For an English translation of *De Regno Christi*, see Wilhelm Pauck (ed.), *Melanchthon and Bucer* (Louisville, KY and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969, reissued 2006), pp. 153–394; chapter 54 is on pp. 346–354 (p. 351).

20 Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, p. 257; Pauck, *Melanchthon and Bucer*, p. 351.

21 Ibid.

22 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 277–278, transl. Frank Justus Miller, rev. by G.P. Goold (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977). Third ed., pp. 424–445.

tyrant, the vehicle for the play's 'lesson' that power corrupts, to an almost cartoonish extent: his first words at the start of the second act are 'Par diis superbis gradior' ('I walk as an equal to the proud gods').²³ Gager tends to concentrate his didactic content in the scenes featuring Oeneus: in the same scene, for example, the *senex* (old man) with whom Oeneus converses articulates a series of apothegms about pride and loftiness which go on to shape the future action of the play. After stichomythia between the two characters on ideas of destiny, pride and fear (ll. 528–537), the *senex* delivers the clinching if abstract point. To Oeneus's proud 'I am alive, a notable king' (*Rex vivo clarus*, l. 537), he replies:

Nomine hoc magis expave.
 Graviore turres decidunt casu arduae,
 Altosque montes crebrius fulmen ferit,
 Et vasta morbo membra maiori patent.

II; ll. 538–541

(Then feel fear because of this title. Lofty towers collapse with a steeper fall, lightning strikes high mountains more often, and huge frames suffer greater maladies.)

We find similar protagonists articulating their overweening will-to-power throughout institutional tragedy in this period. To some extent the pattern is Senecan, and so the tragic preoccupation with tyranny is no surprise. But we can argue for an awareness among university playwrights that their works were both being seen by powerful men and also that the *potentially* powerful of the future might also be watching them, among the student body, or even acting in them. The visits of Elizabeth to Oxford in 1566 and 1592 and to Cambridge in 1564 were just the most high-profile examples of this kind of heightened scrutiny of Latin drama, but we know that many Elizabethan and, later, Jacobean and Caroline worthies were entertained at the universities. The 1592 preface to the publication of Gager's *Meleager* makes clear Gager's awareness of this process: the work contains two prologues, one 'Ad Academicos' ('To the members of the university'; sig. A7^r) and the other to the two courtiers who watched the play's revival on a visit to Oxford in January 1585, 'Ad illustrissimos Pembrôchiæ et Lecestriæ Comites' ('To the most distinguished Earls

23 Gager, *Meleager*, Act II; l. 472, ed. and transl. Dana Sutton (translation here mine). <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/gager/plays/meleager>.

of Pembroke and Leicester'; sig. A8^r).²⁴ During that visit, we know from his household accounts that Leicester met with Lawrence Humphrey, whom he had nominated as vice-chancellor between 1567 and 1576: we might speculate as to whether the men discussed *Meleager*.²⁵ I have argued elsewhere that these progresses were not visitations, but seemed to have functioned, nonetheless, obliquely as opportunities for the testing of conformity among the academic community.²⁶

One of Gager's contemporaries at Cambridge offers a different illustration of how scholar-dramatists were committed to writing ethically challenging tragedy. When Elizabeth visited Cambridge in 1564, Thomas Legge, a canon and civil lawyer and head of Gonville and Caius, was among those college heads chosen by the then Chancellor William Cecil 'to set fourth and to teache suche playes as should be exhibited before her grace'.²⁷ During the next decade, Legge was one of the first at the universities to write an English history play: his *Richardus Tertius* (performed in 1579), a long play divided into three separate *actiones*, made a lasting impression on those who saw it, including Thomas Nashe and John Harington. Like Gager's *Meleager*, Legge's play seems sharply aware both of its classical ancestry, as we saw in the example of Rivers's Electra analogy, and also of its political resonance, for we see similar explorations of hubris in the English history play as we did in the Ovidian tragedy. Early in Legge's first *actio*, for instance, the melancholy Queen Elizabeth articulates the same concerns as Gager's *senex* about the likelihood of the powerful toppling from their great height (1, 1, 1; ll. 150–154):

timere didicit quisquis excelsus stetit,
rebusque magnis alta clauditur quies.
auro venenum bibitur. ignotum casae
humili malum, ventisque cunctis cognita
superba summo tecta nutant culmine.

24 William Gager, *Meleager Tragoedia Noua* (Oxoniae: Excudebat Iosephus Barnesius, 1592).

25 See Simon Adams (ed.), *Household Accounts and Disbursement Books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1558–1561, 1584–1586* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 211–218, esp. p. 212.

26 Sarah Knight, 'Texts Presented to Elizabeth I on the University Progresses', in Edward Jones (ed.), *A Concise Companion to the Study of Manuscripts, Printed Books, and the Production of Early Modern Texts* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), pp. 21–40, esp. 27–28.

27 John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (London: John Nichols & Son, 1823), 1, p. 406.

(Anybody with high standing has learned to fear, and deep peace is excluded from great affairs. Poison is drunk from a golden cup, but evil is unknown to a humble house. Lofty buildings, buffeted by every wind, collapse from the top downwards.)

To some extent these are familiar, even well-worn, Senecan *sententiae*, but if we look at the ‘Epilogus’ to Legge’s tragedy such maxims fit into the work’s larger stated didactic purpose and into the teleology imposed by the dramatist on his three *actiones* taken as a whole. Legge reminds his audience what it has witnessed through pointed use of anaphora, drawing them in through the second-person plural, reminding them of the particular threat posed to ‘boys’ who get caught up in *Realpolitik*: ‘You have seen the dead boys’ bodies’ (‘extincta vidistis puerorum corpora’; l. 4667), ‘You have seen the murderous struggles of the powerful and the deserved punishment received by the tyrant’ (‘funesta vidistis potentum proelia | et digna quae cepit tyrannus praemia’; ll. 4669–70). The epilogue ends on a Tudor triumphalist note: all of this political turbulence has led up to the accession of the *filia* (‘daughter’) and *virgo* (‘virgin’) Elizabeth (ll. 4696–4697). Humphrey and Gosson had figured drama as a means of distracting young men away from piety, but, knowing his audience and the turbulent historical moment they inhabited, Legge uses the tragic mode to argue for obedience, even if such obedience involves killing a tyrant like Richard of Gloucester, and, more subtly, he also stresses the value of a mature mind in making decisions and advising the youth.

Throughout *Richardus Tertius* Legge returns repeatedly to the suggestibility of young minds and the effects of vertiginous power: the premature responsibilities of the boy-king Edward v are often used as a means to discuss youth and power in more abstract terms, for instance in an extended stichomythia between the characters Buckingham and Catesby about boyhood, temperament and political power, as they exchange, and share, rapid-fire iambic *senarii* (ll. 1279–1281, 1287–1289):

BUCKINGHAM	furor brevis pueri statim restinguitur.	
CATESBY	at ira praeceps est magis pueri levis.	...
BUCKINGHAM	ducis potest autoritas	
	ferociam pueri minuere.	
CATESBY	dum puer	
	est.	
(BUCKINGHAM	A boy’s quick anger is soon suppressed.	
CATESBY	The easy anger of a boy is more headstrong...	

BUCKINGHAM The Duke's authority will lessen the boy's ferocity.
 CATESBY So long as he stays a boy.)²⁸

One of the main ways in which Legge aims tragedy squarely at a student audience, as this exchange shows, is through his use of stichomythic exchanges for spectators trained both in catechistical inquiry and in dialectics.

As an extension of this technique, *Richardus Tertius* also frequently stages public rhetorical acts, which exemplify to the audience how such oratory should work, and, in several cases, offer a negative definition by presenting versions which go wrong. In Act 3, scene 3 of the first *actio*, for example, the skilled boy orator Edward v addresses his people of London with a 'Dear city, I greet you' ('urbs chara, salve'; 1, III, 3; ll. 636). But conversely, in the second *actio* the Cambridge Doctor of Theology and 'vir literis insignis' ('distinguished man of letters', 2.1.1.1996) Ralph Shaw (d. 1484) preaches a sermon in support of Richard of Gloucester's usurpation at Paul's Cross: the sermon is reported by a citizen of London, who first calls Shaw a 'divinus ... praeco' ('sanctimonious preacher', 2.1.2134), but concludes that the citizens 'stupent' (were 'stupified', 2.1.2169) by the seditious content of the sermon. Later in the *actio* we hear directly from Shaw this time, not through a third party, about his terrible regret at deploying his rhetorical skill and theological training in support of a tyrant's unlawful claim: *heu mihi*, Shaw laments, *animus semet scelere plenus fugit* ('Alas, my mind, full of crime, flees itself'; 4.1.2541). In conversation with a 'friendly Londoner' (*Civis Amicus*), who slips into catechizing mode again, Shaw's conscience is interrogated and the effects of guilt analysed (4.1.2572–2573):

AMICUS mors sola maculam demere infandum potest?
 DR. SHAW foedata nescit vita crimen ponere.

(FRIEND Can death alone remove this unspeakable stain?
 DR. SHAW A corrupted life does not know how to free itself of crime.)

By staging so vividly a university-educated orator's regret at an ill-advised political intervention, and misguided use of his training, Legge communicates how such powerful skills need to be used advisedly, and how book-learning alone does not always result in good moral decision-making. At this point of the tragedy, through the agonized conscience of Dr. Shaw, Legge educates his

²⁸ Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, ed. and transl. Sutton, pp. 94–95.

student audience about the potentially pernicious effects of rhetorical display, and of badly directed efforts to persuade, harnessing his medium to offer a staged example.

Unsafe Kingdoms: Rhetoric and Power in Campion and Alabaster

Edmund Campion, target of Humphrey's 1582 polemic, was also aware of drama's exemplary power; an equally prominent orator during Elizabeth's 1566 visit, he eventually directed his impressive rhetorical gifts into the composition of Latin drama. Campion's experience of institutional performance was entrenched: while Humphrey had been in exile during Mary's reign, as a London schoolboy Campion had delivered a speech to Mary I on her accession in 1553,²⁹ and in 1566 Miles Windsor lists 'Mr Campion at Saint Johns' as one of the 'Scholars appoynted to receive the Quene'.³⁰ Such accounts, and Campion's subsequent career, point to someone keenly aware of all elements of rhetorical performance: expression and costume, gesture, analytical acuity, and adaptiveness to context.

So often cited as a scholarly exemplar himself, by Protestants up until 1570 and thereafter by Catholics, Campion also possessed a strong idea of the exemplary student. He wrote a treatise entitled *De iuvene academico* ('On the Scholarly Youth') which dwells in detail on how the young man tending towards the study of theology should comport himself, and which offers, in its author's words, 'quoddam exemplar et quasi speculum iuvenis excellentis' ('a certain exemplar and, as it were, a mirror for an outstanding youth').³¹ Campion is concerned that the young man should have performative as well as more interior spiritual and intellectual qualities: his 'voice' should be 'adaptable, sweet and resonant' ('voce flexibili, dulci et sonora', p. 105), for instance. As a *poeta*, besides the works of Virgil, Ovid and Horace, he 'imitated Seneca's tragic verses' ('Senecae cothurnos expresserat', p. 113). And next, as an *orator* 'by the sweetness of his speech' he 'could most elegantly stir the audience both by his subject-matter and cause' ('qui pro re et causa ornatissime poterat auditores sermonis dulcedine titillare'; p. 113). Campion figures the academic arena as a place in which one needs strenuously to compete in order to win: 'And so,

29 Thomas McCoog, *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits* (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 1996), p. xv.

30 Nichols, *Progresses*, 1, p. 474, n. 177.

31 For a relatively recent printed version, see *Beati Edmwndi Campiani e Societate Iesv Martyris in Anglia Opvscvla* (Barcelona: Franciscus Rosalius, 1888), pp. 103–117, esp. p. 103.

with great hearts and great hope, push on into this wrestling-school of learning' ('Itaque magnis animis et magna spe in hanc litterariam palaestram incumbite', p. 116). Champion's treatise shows us how seriously he took rhetorical training both for the improvement of the mind and for the training of the ministry. His own background as a celebrity orator at Oxford clearly sharpened his sense of the importance of rhetorical gifts in a theological context, and there is considerable overlap between the skills expected of a scholar and of an orator—even of an actor—described in the treatise.

Champion's pedagogical theory can be read alongside his tragic practice. His only extant full-length play is *Ambrosia*, set in the fourth century and performed at the Clementinum in Prague 'ipso Caesare spectatore' ('in the presence of the Emperor' Rudolf II) in 1578, a year before Legge's *Richardus Tertius*.³² Champion's college audience was most likely younger on average than that of the English university plays, but he nonetheless assumed a high degree of theological sophistication among his spectators. Patrick Collinson has shown how Saint Ambrose's prioritising of church over state made his story a troublesome one for Elizabethan churchmen like John Jewel, citing Jewel's citation of Ambrose as an important example: 'Trouble not yourself, my lord, to think that you have any princely power over those things that pertain to God'.³³ As Robert Miola and Alison Shell have discussed, in *Ambrosia* Champion also takes the opportunity to debate this incendiary topic, which he may have first seen 'staged', as it were, in the previously mentioned debates of the 1566 progress visit in which Humphrey also participated, on whether a prince should accede by election or succession, and also whether 'a private citizen [should] be allowed to take up arms against a bad ruler'.³⁴ Shell's point that, given its initial performance before Habsburg royalty, we would 'be misinterpreting Champion to read *Ambrosia* as a play belittling monarchy' is well made, as is her argument that nonetheless, 'princes ... must be accountable to the Church in a way that

32 See Wiggins, *Catalogue 2*, pp. 206–211. All citations from *Ambrosia* are taken from the text and translation by Jos. Simons (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970), p. 135.

33 Patrick Collinson, 'If Constantine, then also Theodosius: St. Ambrose and the Integrity of the Elizabethan *Ecclesia Anglicana*', in id., *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), pp. 109–133, esp. p. 109.

34 See Robert S. Miola, 'Jesuit drama in early modern England', in Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay and Richard Wilson (eds.), *Theatre and Religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 71–86, esp. pp. 76–81; Alison Shell, "'We are made a spectacle': Champion's Dramas", in Thomas McCoog and Joseph Munitiz (eds.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Champion and the early English Jesuits* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 1996), pp. 103–118.

other Catholic monarchs can claim to be.³⁵ What we might think of as the ‘radicalizing’ power of *Campion’s* play—*against* unaccountable (non-Catholic) monarchs, and *for* (Catholic) monarchs deferential to the church—in its fertile context at the Clementinum seems clear, and it is worth thinking in more detail about precisely how *Campion* represents rhetorical skill leading to ecclesiastical and political success. His play can be read as a lesson in how to be both articulate and seditious, in how to direct ‘Seneca’s buskins’ in ‘hanc litterariam palaestram’.

In his 1582 sermon Humphrey had distinguished sharply between play and sermon. In *Ambrosia*, by contrast, *Campion* embeds homiletics, hymn, catechism and prayer in his five-act drama to extraordinary effect, blurring the lines between the rhetorical forms. As Legge does in Ralph Shaw’s botched sermon to the citizens of London, *Campion* also presents a variety of rhetorically performative acts as both exemplary and negatively defined in *Ambrosia*, to put before the eyes and ears of his audience how a speaker could move or alienate by turns. In Act II, scene 7 Saints Ambrose and Augustine pray together, singing (the stage direction has ‘Cantant’). In Act I, scene 4, for example, St. Ambrose preaches (‘Ambrosius Pro Concione’), and presents the dream spectacle of two *ephebi* (‘young men’; I, 4; l. 154) whose bodies mark the spot where he is to build a basilica. Legge presents us with the ill-judged sermon of Ralph Shaw as an example of bad rhetoric, while *Campion* gives his audience the skilful and pious sermon of St. Ambrose: both use the medium to present examples of a particular rhetorical act, but Legge uses Shaw to show the pernicious effects of cynical political rhetoric, while *Campion* charges Ambrose’s sermon with theological polemic. And while Legge had focused on boys’ morality in the abstract and the exemplary youth Edward V in particular, *Campion* wrote many of the play’s speaking roles specifically for boys, embedding this in the stage directions, as in Act I: ‘A boy carrying a scourge stands higher than the others and recites’ (‘Puer ferens flagellum stat caeteris altior et recitat’), who then alternates in song with ‘another boy carrying a club and sword’ (‘Puer secundus ferens fustem et gladium’).³⁶ Boys also provide the play’s rare moments of comic relief, as in II. 6 where two boys, Syrus and Mopsus, fight and long for games to play. For the most part, the drama of *Ambrosia* depends on how church and state negotiate each other’s power, but its spectators are not allowed to forget the importance of young men to that delicate balance: in their play-fighting, they unconsciously mirror the more serious battles fought by the powerful.

35 Shell, “‘We are made a spectacle’”, p. 108.

36 *Campion, Ambrosia*, l.2.s.d. before l. 89; s.d. before l. 110.

The sententious and pedagogical qualities of Legge's, Gager's and Campion's plays extended into the university drama of the late sixteenth century. William Alabaster's *Roxana*, performed at Trinity College, Cambridge in the mid-1590s, is our final example, a play full of disturbing moments even for those used to the period's public acts of violent punishment, crude medical treatments and Senecan tragic excess: *Roxana* presents us with a woman gruesomely tortured and children fed to their parents. Alabaster writes brutal yet sharply visual tableaux into his tragedy, such as the 'fearefull dungeon' (or, in the Latin, 'secretus ... thalamus'—'hidden bed-chamber', IV, 1; l. 988) reported by a messenger as full of 'ominous pictures of reproach' ('horrenda ... signa'—'fearful tokens', IV, 1; l. 1016) to which Atossa lures Roxana to her grotesque death. The description also combines two characteristics which we associate most readily with the baroque: first, a painterly eye for *chiaroscuro*: the room is uniformly painted in 'unstayn'd black' ('constans nigror', IV, 1; l. 1010) against which Roxana's 'golden locks' ('fulvae comae', IV, 1; l. 1032) shine; and second, a ghoulislingering on violence: shortly afterwards, Atossa whips Roxana, then makes her stab her children. Forcing spectators to dwell on the vulnerable, suffering human body, and pushing us into a kind of tragic mode paralleled on the English commercial stage by vernacular dramatists like John Webster, Alabaster also shows his debt to earlier university writing. In *Roxana* too, as in Humphrey's sermon and Gager and Legge's tragedies, classical and biblical antecedents jostle for supremacy. Alabaster skillfully juxtaposes both traditions to heighten the horror of the tragic denouement, again in Atossa's black-hung chamber: neither 'Egypt wat'red with seaven mighty foulds' ('ostiis septum suis | Aegyptus undans', IV, 1; ll. 957–958) nor 'a draught of Styx infernall lake' ('abhorrendae Stygis | Epotus imber', IV, 1; ll. 963–964), the oblivion-inducing river Lethe, can make the messenger forget the tragedy. Here, too, characters and particularly royalty instruct through exemplary behaviour: 'The people take example by their king | He allwayes teacheth best, that liveth best' ('Rex plebis est mensura, pietatem docet | Qui facit', III, 1; ll. 665–66) says the councillor Arsaces at one point to Oromasdes, King of Bactria.³⁷ Shortly afterwards the two characters engage in the kind of apothegmatic stichomythia we have already observed in Gager and Legge, on general political topics (III, 1; ll. 727–729):

37 William Alabaster, *Roxana*, ed. Dana F. Sutton, III,1; l. 674 (www.philological.bham.ac.uk/alabaster); Sutton also reproduces a contemporary English translation by 'I.B.' found in manuscript at the Folger Shakespeare Library (MS v.b.222, fols. 29^r–37^v).

- OROMASDES Ius est, salutem quicquid auget publicam.
 ARSACES Ius illud esse, iura quod tollit, potest?
 OROMASDES Ubi regna non sunt tuta, ius fasque excidunt.

 (OROMASDES That which procures the kingdoms good, is right.
 ARSACES Can that be right which overthrowes all right?
 OROMASDES Where kingdoms are not safe the right can't stay.)

But Alabaster also touches on topics more contentious in Elizabeth's last decade, however, such as how succession might work when the monarch leaves no heirs. When Oromasdes suggests that 'Regina sterilis impedit regni vices' ('The barren queene denies our crownes succession'), we are reminded of the more oblique (although not necessarily more tactful) 1566 debates in which Humphrey debated on the question of election *versus* succession. The royal court in *Roxana* is a petri-dish of vice, too: 'huc omnis illa turba vitiorum ruit' ('All kinds of sinns resort unto the court'; III, 4; l. 882), says Arsaces. Alabaster converted to Catholicism shortly after the performance of *Roxana*, and perhaps some of that disillusionment with contemporary political institutions finds its way into the play. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza has argued for the 'subversive content' of 'this savage little play', based on its Orientalism and the agency it accords to its female characters.³⁸ Whether we see Alabaster's work as deliberately provocative, or fashionably brutal but politically non-committal, the gap between Latin and slightly later English translation is intriguing. The Latin version ends with the desperate fall of Atossa into hell or Hades, battered by dire birds and condemned by Minos, judge of the dead: 'Abite, volucres pessimae. Sequar, sequar' ('Minos saith noe. | Then goe yee hellish feinds I come I come'; v, 1; l. 1560). The contemporary English translation, on the other hand, ends with a pious epilogue which begins: 'Nor ought we to doe one another wrong | Nor wrongs revenge, but leave them unto God': it is as though the translator wanted to provide moral solace, and a kind of didactic tidiness, which the Latin version eschews. Four decades later, when the play was eventually printed, Alabaster dismissed it as a 'morticinum ... abortum' ('stillborn abortion'), and, by extension, as juvenilia, suggesting that he has brought this 'foetum iuventutis' ('offspring of youth') back 'ad calculos' ('for a reckoning'); he

38 Richmond-Garza, "She never recovered her senses": *Roxana* and Dramatic Representations of Women at Oxbridge in the Elizabethan Age, in Barbara K. Gold, Paul Allen Miller and Charles Platter (eds.), *Sex and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Texts* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 223–246, esp. pp. 224, 227.

also caustically suggests that it should be ‘recited with a froth of sound’ (‘recitare cum spuma soni’), ‘as poets typically read their tragedies’ (‘ut solent poetae tragoedias suas’).³⁹ As Humphrey had half a century earlier, in retrospect Alabaster finds a way to make university tragedy seem both trivial and pompous.

But the content of such plays during this period suggests the opposite: the monarch kept scholars close during these years, and the academic playwrights responded by staging works of serious-minded political and theological relevance for the benefit of a student auditory who would go on to shape the state and church. I do not suggest that their authors envisaged these highly imitative works, typically based on ancient—biblical or classical—subjects, as straightforwardly reflective of contemporary political situations.⁴⁰ But the insistence of a tutor-theologian like Humphrey on the ephemerality of drama and even his studied dismissiveness demonstrate a concern that the questions drama raised in the abstract might be absorbed and pondered by its impressionable audience. Humphrey seems well aware that young minds are particularly prone to being distracted by entertainment rather than moved by profound religious truth, and makes it clear that, although both are highly rhetorical and performative modes, the sermon is more edifying than the play, which he accomplishes by emphasizing the relative triviality of drama. Yet despite his sermon’s emphasis on *veritas*, this stance is disingenuous: if such plays were only *ludicra*, why bother to argue so vehemently against them? One argument is that a considerable number of early modern Latin tragedies were ideologically engaged, even if that engagement, to modern tastes, acclimatised as we are to more explicitly political dramatists like Berthold Brecht and George Bernard Shaw, seems highly abstracted, as it maybe did to its contemporary spectators. Yet even if the play’s politics look conformist, the spectator’s reaction is unpredictable: well-intentioned orthodox lessons can always be reacted against and twisted. State management of the institutions of learning, and the fact that many Privy Council members including Leicester and William Cecil, to name but two university Chancellors from Elizabeth’s reign, were intimately concerned with the universities, meant that institutional stages were not neutral

39 Alabaster, *Roxana tragoedia* (London: Gulielmus Jones, 1632), sigs. A3^r–v.

40 See Siobhan Keenan, ‘Spectator and Spectacle: Royal Entertainments at the Universities in the 1560s’, in Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, Sarah Knight (eds.), *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 86–103; and Linda Shenk, ‘Gown before Crown: Scholarly Abjection and Academic Entertainment under Queen Elizabeth I’, in Jonathan Walker and Paul Streufert (eds.), *Early Modern Academic Drama* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 19–44.

spaces.⁴¹ Many of the monarch's chaplains, bishops and courtiers were taken from universities, and student actors and spectators often grew into politically influential men. And as Humphrey, for one, well knew, given the fluctuations in royal favor which had affected his career throughout the 1550s, court and university were not separate worlds, and the tragedy performed on academic stages reflected their mutual interests.

Further Reading

- Bloemendal, Jan, and Philip Ford (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama: Forms, Functions, Receptions* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms, 2008).
- Ford, Philip, and Andrew Taylor (eds.), *The Early Modern Cultures of Neo-Latin Drama* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013).
- Norland, Howard B., 'Neo-Latin Drama in Britain', in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 471–544.
- Records of Early English Drama, Cambridge*, ed. by Alan H. Nelson (2 vols.) (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1989).
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41 See H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1958); Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967, repr. 1971), pp. 67–83; C.M. Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 47–73; Penry Williams 'State, Church and University 1558–1603', in James McConica (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), vol. 3, pp. 397–440, esp. pp. 397–401.

The Political Theater and Theatrical Politics of Andrea Giacinto Cicognini: *Il Don Gastone di Moncada* (1641)*

Tatiana Korneeva

The dramatic production of Giacinto Andrea Cicognini (Florence 1606–1649 Venice) provides a fruitful forum for reflection on the problematics of the political dimension of aesthetics and the aesthetic dimension of politics in the context of Italian Baroque tragedy. Brilliant and productive playwright and librettist, author of some forty-five prose tragedies, *commedie regie e politiche*, and sacred dramas—as well as of four opera librettos—Cicognini was a man of remarkable theatrical pedigree¹ as well as a courtier *par excellence*. From his earliest years, he was closely tied to the Medici court: he was introduced to the court at the age of seven and thereafter came to be employed as a page boy thanks to the special interest his godmother, the grand duchess Christine de Lorraine (1565–1636), took in him.² Thanks to her patronage, Cicognini gradu-

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- 1 Giacinto Andrea’s father, Jacopo Cicognini (1577–1633), was a poet, playwright, and member of the Intronati, Instancabili, and Incostanti academies. He may have been a correspondent of Lope de Vega, who wrote a letter in order to convince his Italian fellow-dramatist that blind obedience to the regulations laid down by Aristotle’s *Poetics* was nothing short of foolish. Although Jacopo refers to Lope’s advice in the preface to his play *Il Trionfo di David* (written 1628, printed 1633), his direct acquaintance with Lope has been questioned by Maria Grazia Profeti in her article ‘Jacopo Cicognini e Lope de Vega: “attinenze strettissime”?’ in id. (ed.), *Materiali, variazioni, invenzioni* (Florence: Alinea, 1996), pp. 21–31. Legend has it that Jacopo entrusted his son’s education to Pier Maria Cecchini, a famous Fritellino of the day. For the most recent account of Cicognini’s life and dramatic production, see Flavia Cancedda and Silvia Castelli, *Per una bibliografia di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini: Successo teatrale e fortuna editoriale di un drammaturgo del Seicento* (Florence: Alinea, 2001), pp. 25–74.
- 2 Silvia Castelli, ‘Il teatro e la sua memoria: la compagnia dell’Arcangelo Raffaello e il “Don Gastone di Moncada” di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini’, in Maria Grazia Profeti (ed.), *Tradurre, riscrivere, mettere in scena* (Florence: Alinea, 1996), pp. 85–94, esp. p. 86; Barbara Maranini, ‘Il

ated from the University of Pisa with a degree in law; after his father's death he decided to pursue the career of a writer while earning his living at court as an *Ufficial d'Onestà*, an officer of the Florentine Office of Decency. By autumn 1646, Cicognini had moved to Venice³ and was participating in the cultural activities of the *Accademia degli Incogniti* (The Academy of the Incognitos), 'which functioned as an unofficial seat of political power'.⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, that many of his plays' plots involve political situations and consistently feature themes touching on kings, royal ministers, courtiers, attendants at court, and the relationships between a prince and his subjects, and between sovereignty and individual consciousness. Well-known for adapting and reworking Spanish *comedias* of the *Siglo de Oro* for the Italian stage,⁵ Cicognini often set his plays

comico nel tragico: I drammi per musica di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini', in Alessandro Lattanzi and Paologiovanni Maione (eds.), *Commedia dell'Arte e spettacolo in musica tra Sei e Settecento* (Naples: Editoriale Scientifica, 2003), pp. 185–212, esp. p. 185.

- 3 Cicognini's departure from Florence has been attributed to his serious falling-out with some of the Medici's *protégés*, whom he accused of being panderers. See Anna Maria Crinò, 'Documenti inediti sulla vita e l'opera di Jacopo e Giacinto Andrea Cicognini', *Studi secenteschi* 2 (1961), 255–286, esp. pp. 258–282.
- 4 Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 37. The membership of the academy, which was founded in 1630 by the patrician Giovan Francesco Loredano, consisted of almost all upper-class Venetian intellectuals of any importance as well as a number of non-Venetians. The *Incogniti* were distinguished from other learned academies by their involvement in most aspects of *La Serenissima's* cultural, social, and political life. They were also remarkable for their openness to unorthodox thinking: they opposed cultural conformism and had a distinct predilection for licentious living. Prolific writers of prose, moral and religious tracts, and opera librettos, the members of this powerful academy found their models in the allegorical and satirical literature inspired by Traiano Boccalini's socio-political compendium *Ragguagli di Parnasso* (*Advice from Parnassus*, 1612–1614) and expressed their anticonformist views in covert and highly allusive ways. On the *Incogniti*, see Monica Miato, *L'Accademia degli Incogniti di Giovan Francesco Loredano (1630–1661)* (Florence: Olschki, 1998); Lucinda Spera, *Due biografie per il principe degli Incogniti: Edizione e commento della Vita di Giovan Francesco Loredano di Gaudenzio Brunacci (1662) e di Antonio Lupis (1663)* (Bologna: I libri di Emil, 2014); Giorgio Spini, *Ricerca dei libertini* (Rome: Editrice Universale, 1950). Cicognini was not considered an official member of the academy, and evidence of his relationship to various members of the *Incogniti* is somewhat speculative. For the connections he may have had with the academy after he settled in Venice, see Nunzia Melcarne, 'Giacinto Andrea Cicognini: Un amico dell'Accademia veneziana degli Incogniti', *Aprosiana. Rivista annuale di studi barocchi*, n.s., 14 (2006), 34–40.
- 5 There is a burgeoning literature on Cicognini's role in disseminating Spanish theater in Italy and on the notable bravura with which he transformed his Spanish sources. See, for example, Fausta Antonucci and Lorenzo Bianconi, 'Plotting the Myth of *Giasone*', in Ellen Rosand

in the Spanish court—as is, for example, the case with *Le gelosie fortunate del principe Rodrigo*, *Il principe giardiniere*, and *Il Don Gastone di Moncada*. The socio-political environments of other European courts also appear in his oeuvre: Norway in *L'Admira, ovvero La statua dell'honore*, Portugal in *L'innocente giustificato*, England in *La moglie di quattro mariti*, Sardegna in *Il tradimento per l'onore*, and Poland in *La vita è un sogno*. Sometimes the courts in Cicognini's dramatic works are mythological (*Giasone*, one of the most enduringly popular and influential operas of the entire Seicento), historical (*Gl'amori di Alessandro Magno e di Rossane*), exotic (*L'Oronthea*), or even biblical (*La Mariene ovvero Il maggior mostro del mondo* and *Iuditta*). His characters include highborn princely protagonists as well as low-ranking *commedia dell'arte* or *gracioso*-like figures, but even the latter belong without exception to aristocratic court culture. The court as a state in miniature, as a centre of decision-making and governance, as a stage for royal and aristocratic representation, and as a social network thus permeates Cicognini's plays at a most profound level. Across the full spectrum of his political plays, we see a playwright exploring different forms of governance and princely conduct, exposing the unavoidable conflicts that arise between ethical behavior and the *ragion di stato* (reason of state, or national interest),⁶ and engaging with political practice and seventeenth-century theories of statecraft.⁷

(ed.), *Readying Cavalli's Operas for the Stage: Manuscript, Edition, Production* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 201–227; Guelfo Gobbi, 'Le fonti spagnole del teatro drammatico di G.A. Cicognini: Contributo alla storia delle relazioni tra il teatro italiano e lo spagnolo del Seicento', *La biblioteca delle scuole italiane* 11, series 3, no. 18 (30 November 1905), 218–222; no. 19 (15 December 1905), 229–231; no. 20 (31 December 1905), 240–242; Nicola Michelassi and Salomé Vuelta García, 'La fortuna del teatro spagnolo a Firenze: Il *Don Gastone di Moncada* di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini', in Valentina Nider (ed.), *Teatri del Mediterraneo: Riscritture e ricodificazioni tra '500 e '600* (Trento: Editrice Università degli Studi di Trento, 2004), pp. 19–42; Nicola Michelassi and Salomé Vuelta García, 'Il teatro spagnolo sulla scena fiorentina del Seicento', *Studi secenteschi* 45 (2004), 67–137; Diego Símini, 'Alcune opere 'spagnole' di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini fra traduzione, adattamento e creazione', in Paola Andreoli et al. (eds.), *Teatro, scena, rappresentazione dal Quattrocento al Settecento: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi* (Lecce, 15–17 maggio 1997) (Galatina: Congedo, 2000), pp. 305–313. Whereas Cicognini scholars have focused either on his role in the diffusion of Spanish Golden Age theater in Italy or on his opera librettos, no attention has been paid thus far to the political dimension of his dramatic works.

- 6 The bibliography on the *ragion di stato* or *raison d'État* is vast. See, for instance, Artemio Enzo Baldini and Anna Maria Battista, 'Il dibattito politico nell'Italia della controriforma: Ragion di Stato, tacitismo, machiavellismo, utopia', *Il pensiero politico* 30 (1997), 394–439; Michael Stolleis, *Stato e ragion di stato nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), pp. 31–68.
- 7 It is difficult to establish definitively the parameters of Cicognini's political thought: as was

What makes Cicognini's dramatic production even more interesting for an investigation of the relationship between politics and aesthetics in Italian Baroque tragedy is his versatility and his remarkable ability to adapt himself to rapidly increasing demand for professional entertainment and to the ravenous theatrical market of the first commercial playhouses and their audiences. Indeed, precisely during his Venetian period (which represents the high-point of his artistic career), Cicognini brought about the successful 'encounter between tragedy and musical drama'⁸ that was to shape the genre of opera over the next several hundred years.

Cicognini's dramatic production, therefore, stands at the intersection of courtly performance, theater produced by learned academies, and entertainment that was only just starting to see professionalization. It thus permits us to explore a fundamental set of questions, beginning with how sovereignty is portrayed in dramas that represent a way station, as it were, in the decisive transition from absolutist court theater to commercial playhouse.

Taking into account the intense engagement of Baroque drama with the socio-political life of the communities in which (and for which) it was written, as well as its function as a harbinger—and then diffusive mechanism—of changing political attitudes, we might also seek to uncover the import of Cicognini's tragedies for seventeenth-century audiences. My aim, then, is to explore the significance of this particular playwright's works both within the localized traditions of Italian theater and on a larger European stage.

If we approach Cicognini's political plays as a product of the supply-and-demand forces of the marketplace and with the active influence of his spectators in mind,⁹ we may also be able to learn something about the public's taste in

the case with many of the *Incogniti* with whom he likely associated, he was too enigmatic a playwright to express openly his stance on political and ideological matters. Nevertheless, certain discernible patterns emerge in his dramatic output. In particular, his interest in politics and in a variety of forms of government suggests that these were central concerns of his writing career and were not exclusively imposed by a need to please either patrons or spectators.

8 Federico Doglio, 'La tragedia barocca', in id. (ed.), *Il teatro tragico italiano: Storia e testi del teatro tragico in Italia* (Parma: Guanda, 1958), pp. LXXIX–CLXIV, esp. p. CV.

9 Cicognini claimed in the preface 'A i Lettori, & Spettatori del Drama' to *Giasone* that he composed it on a whim and with no aim other than to delight: 'Io compongo per mero capriccio; Il mio capriccio non ha altro fine che dilettere; L'apportar diletto appresso di me, non è altro che l'incontrare il genio, & il gusto di chi ascolta, ò legge.' *Giasone: Dramma Musicale del D. Giacinto Andrea Cicognini* (Venice: Per il Giuliani. Con Licenza de' Su. e Privilegio, 1649), p. 7. The importance of pleasing a wide audience was also a *Leitmotiv* of the *Incogniti's* literary production.

theater (or, in other words, their aesthetics), and this leads me to the two final questions whose answers I will pursue in these pages. First, in what ways did their performance of sovereignty and the aesthetics of power make Cicognini's plays appeal to different kinds of audiences and, therefore, make them portable to other parts of Italy and across Europe?¹⁰ Second, what was it about his writing for theater that caused his plays to remain phenomenally popular into the eighteenth century?¹¹

A Mixed Tragedy for A Mixed Public: A New Aesthetics of the Tragic Genre

In order to begin laying bare the relationship between the theatrical stage and the political culture it served, the following analysis will focus on one of Cicognini's political tragedies, *Il Don Gastone di Moncada*.¹² Written during his Florentine period (though published in 1658, posthumously, as were almost all his works), it was staged at the public playhouse Baldracca in Florence in 1641. *Il Don Gastone* was Cicognini's most often performed play in Florence during the grand duchy of Ferdinand II (1610–1670) and Cosimo III de' Medici (1670–1723), and it is by far one of his best-travelled and dramatically effective works.¹³ The play's success was so sensational that it even encouraged its author to write

10 For example, on the performance of Cicognini's plays in Russia under Peter the Great (and, in particular, of his *Tradimento per l'onore*, which was adapted for Russian audiences from a German translation), see Nikolai Tikhonravov, *Russkie dramaticheskie proizvedenia 1672–1725 godov*, 2 vols. (Saint Petersburg: Izdanie D.E. Kozancikova, 1874), I, p. 44 and II, p. 80.

11 Symptomatic of the remarkable success, enduring positive reputation, and editorial fortune that Cicognini's works still enjoyed in the eighteenth century is Carlo Goldoni's claim that the Florentine playwright was among his most read and studied dramatic authors: 'Degli autori di commedie che leggevo e rileggevo spesso, il mio preferito era Cicognini. Tale autore fiorentino, poco conosciuto nella repubblica delle lettere, aveva scritto molte commedie d'intreccio, miste di patetico lagrimoso e di comico triviale; eppure vi si trovava molto interesse: egli aveva l'arte di dosare la sospensione e di suscitare diletto grazie allo scioglimento. Mi ci appassionai moltissimo, lo studiai attentamente e, a otto anni, osai abbozzare una commedia'. Goldoni, *Memorie*, ed. Paolo Bosisio (Milan: Mondadori, 1993), pp. 29–30.

12 All citations of the play are from *IL DON | GASTONE | DI MONCADA | Opera scenica, e Morale | DEL DOTTORE | GIACINTO ANDREA | CICOGNINI. | [image of vase with flowers] | IN BOLOGNA, 1682. | Per Gioseffo Longhi. Con lic. de' Sup.* Translations of the play and of other sources are mine unless otherwise noted.

13 Michelassi and Vuelta García, 'La fortuna del teatro spagnolo', p. 22.

a sequel, *Il Celio* (written in 1645 and first performed in 1646), which had as its protagonist Don Gastone's son Celio. As the preface to Cicognini's first *dramma per musica* states,¹⁴ the audience of *Il Don Gastone* consisted of both privileged and common playgoers: the play was, according to Cicognini, 'enjoyed so much by all' ('all'universale così gradito').¹⁵ Subsequently, as Nicola Michelassi and Salomé Vuelta García have pointed out, 'Cicognini's play was performed in Florence in the most diverse theatrical spaces: from religious confraternities to public theaters, from noble academies to private houses. Its success was due to the perfect equilibrium between the subject matter of the work and its scenic efficacy'.¹⁶

Il Don Gastone is set in Spain, and takes place during the rule of the corrupt and decadent tyrant Don Pietro Rè d'Aragona. At the outset of the play, Don Gastone of Moncada, who is retired from public court life, lives happily with his loving, faithful wife Donna Violante and devotes his leisure time to hunting. This peaceful existence is disrupted when the king and Don Merichex di Buccoì, a nobleman exiled for having avenged a family dishonor, arrive at Don Gastone's duchy. The host welcomes the newcomers, generously offering Don Merichex his protection and hospitality. In the meantime, the king meets Donna Violante and is immediately so infatuated with her that she becomes the sole object of his attentions. Ignoring the lady's resistance to his advances, the king hatches a plot to pursue her further by inviting the couple and Don Merichex to return with him to the Aragonese court. Although his attempts to seduce Donna Violante continue to be rebuffed, Pietro persists in his determination to possess her: he restores Don Merichex's honor and, in exchange, requires that he exile his new friend Don Gastone and arrange an amorous encounter between the lust-filled king and Donna Violante. Don Merichex,

14 Cicognini, *Celio* (Florence: Per Luca Francesc. & Alessandro Logi, 1649), p. 10: 'Insomma, ti prego a gradire *Celio* mio se no per altro, almeno perché è figlio del mio *Don Gastone*, che è stato all'universale così gradito' The preface is dedicated to Leopoldo de' Medici, who commissioned and promoted the production of Florentine *libretti* that imitated Venetian ones. Cf. Nicola Michelassi, 'La "Finta pazza" a Firenze: commedie "spagnole" e "veneziane" nel teatro di Baldracca (1641–1665)', *Studi secenteschi*, 41 (2000), 313–353, esp. p. 335.

15 On the social diversity of the spectators at the Baldracca theater, see Nicola Michelassi, 'La "Finta pazza"', p. 315: 'Baldracca non appare dunque uno stanzone malfamato condannato alla sterile ripetizione dei lazzi dell'Arte, ma un luogo di irradiazione culturale, pacificamente condiviso da tutte le fasce sociali (compresa l'aristocrazia nobiliare e i principi medicei, che vi si recavano regolarmente), dove si potevano apprezzare novità spettacolari di portata determinante'.

16 Michelassi and Vuelta García, 'La fortuna del teatro spagnolo', p. 31.

after debating with himself over the right course of action, appears to obey the king's commands: he tells Don Gastone that he is to be exiled by the king and orchestrates the murder of the couple's son, Celio, in order to weaken Donna Violante's resistance to her unwanted royal suitor. Don Merichex goes even further than the king demanded: he takes it upon himself to invite Don Gastone and Donna Violante to a farewell dinner during which they are served their dismembered son. Finally, Don Merichex succeeds in arranging the long desired encounter between the king and Donna Violante. Only at the end of the play do the characters (and the spectators) learn that Celio is still alive and that the king spent a night with his neglected wife—not with Donna Violante. Don Merichex, therefore, only feigned his execution of the tyrant's orders and did not betray Don Gastone, his friend. In the end, Don Merichex's shrewd manipulation of appearances makes the king better understand his obligations to his people, leads to the re-establishment of order from confusion, and restores domestic and political stability.

Fausta Antonucci has identified as *Il Don Gastone's* possible sources three plays by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Lope de Vega, and Tirso de Molina.¹⁷ With Calderón's *Gustos y disgustos son nada más que imaginación* (*Pleasure and Displeasure are Nothing but Imagination*, 1638), Cicognini's drama shares the motif of a king's inappropriate desire for a married noblewoman. Unlike *Gustos y disgustos*, however, *Il Don Gastone* places much more emphasis on the problematics of power, the opposition to tyranny, and the courtier's relationship to the prince. As for his other potential sources, Cicognini may have derived the motif of the faithful noblewoman's resistance to the tyrannical king from Lope de Vega's *La corona merecida* (*The Deserved Crown*, 1603) and the motif of friendship between two noblemen as well as the political meaning of their bond from Tirso de Molina's *Cómo han de ser los amigos* (*How Friends Should Be*, 1612). Antonucci goes on to suggest that *Il Don Gastone* also recalls the early dramatic works of Guillén de Castro because of the play's gravity and its moral and political implications. She argues, therefore, that while *Il Don Gastone* clearly embraces sequences, situations, and plot lines taken from several Spanish *Siglo de Oro comedias*, the problematics structuring Cicognini's play are not present in these sources.¹⁸ In contrast with them, in my interpretation, Cicognini gives centre stage to reflections on tyranny and thoroughly integrates discussions of politics with the play's action. *Il Don Gastone* thus resonates with the political

17 Fausta Antonucci, 'Spunti tematici e rielaborazione di modelli spagnoli nel *Don Gastone di Moncada* di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini', in Profeti (ed.), *Tradurre, riscrivere, mettere in scena*, pp. 65–84.

18 Ibid., pp. 80–81.

themes of its age: the theatricality of royal power, the overriding importance of appearances at court, the courtier's relationship to the prince and to other courtiers, the discourse on civility, and the art of dissimulation.

There is, in fact, good reason to believe that Cicognini's decision to modify the plot lines of the plays on which he drew so as to emphasize the political significance of his narrative was neither random nor casual. The political resonance of *Il Don Gastone* is heightened by its tragicomic form¹⁹—which, in an Italian context, was itself politically charged if not politically dangerous, as it offered an alternative to existing systems of government.²⁰ Indeed, Giambattista Guarini, who set a foundational precedent with the publication of *Il pastor fido* (*The Faithful Shepherd*, 1590), defended the genre of pastoral tragicomedy, with its controversial social mingling of the upper and lower classes, by comparing it to the mixed political form of the republic, asking rhetorically: 'Why cannot poetry make the mixture, if politics can do it?'.²¹ By deploying the tragicomic form, Cicognini, as we will see, was thus deliberately elaborating a new aesthetics for a tragic genre that was suited to a mixed audience—a genuine cross-section of the population—that could (and did) identify in complex, bespoke ways with the social and political conflicts portrayed upon the stage.²²

19 The play was defined as an *opera spagnola* in the Laurenziano manuscript, as an *opera tragicomica* in the 1658 editions of Rome (published by Angelo Bernabò dal Verme with the title *Il D. Gastone, ovvero la più costante tra le maritate. Opera tragicomica*) and Perugia (published by Sebastiano Zecchini with the title *Il gran tradimento contra la più costante delle maritate, ovvero L'amico traditor fedele: Opera tragicomica*), and as an *opera scenica e morale* in the 1658 Venetian edition (published by Nicolò Pezzana with the title *Il Don Gastone di Moncada, Opera scenica e morale*). On the complex textual tradition and printing history of the play, see Antonucci, 'Spunti tematici', pp. 67–68.

20 I owe this point to James J. Yoch's discussion of the political message in Italian tragicomedies. See his 'The Renaissance Dramatization of Temperance: The Italian Revival of Tragicomedy and the Faithful Shepherdess', in Nancy Klein Maguire (ed.), *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics* (New York: AMS Press, 1987), pp. 115–138. See also Marvin T. Herrick's still valuable *Tragicomedy: Its Origin and Development in Italy, France, and England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962).

21 Giambattista Guarini, *Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (*The Compendium of Tragicomic Poetry*, 1601), in Allan H. Gilbert (ed. and transl.), *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), pp. 505–533, esp. p. 511.

22 It is worth noting that the Arcadian *letterato* Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni claimed in 1700 that Cicognini's creation of a rich impasto of tragedy and comedy was emblematic of the decline of Italian theater: '[...] Giacinto Andrea Cicognini intorno alla metà di quel secolo con più felice ardimento introdusse i Drammi con suo Giasone, il quale per vero dire è il primo, e il più perfetto Dramma, che si truovi; e con esso portò l'estermio dell'Istrionica,

To return for a moment to Cicognini's dramaturgical models, it should also be pointed out that the sententious discourses of the characters, the violent *coups de théâtre*, and the vivid horrors of the banquet scene—in which Gastone and Violante are served the blood and heart of their apparently murdered son—recalls some aspects of Senecan tragedy, as revived by Giovan Battista Giraldi.²³ Particular prominence given to suspense, the *inganno a lieto fine*, and the play's untroubled resolution all echo the innovative form of the *tragedia di lieto fine* created by Giraldi, who justified tragic plots with happy endings, claiming that events 'should come about in such a way that the spectators are suspended between terror and pity until the end, which, with a happy outcome, should leave everyone consoled'.²⁴ Though Cicognini's play is also tragicomic, it does not conform exactly to Giraldi's mixed-mood form of tragedy (which depicts the virtuous characters' escape from their tragic fate as well as the evil characters' downfall), since *Il Don Gastone* ends happily for the villain as well as for the protagonists.

In sum, what makes Cicognini's play worthy of our attention is its status as a product of intense cultural exchange and as an assemblage of different sources, genres, and dramatic models ranging from Spanish *comedias* and the native Italian tradition of *commedia dell'arte* to Giraldi's tragedies with happy endings. In fact, it is the very heterogeneity of Cicognini's source material that enables

per conseguenza della ver, e buona Comica, e della Tragica stessa; imperciocchè per maggiormente lusingare colla novità lo svogliato gusto degli spettatori, nauseati ugualmente la vista delle cose Comiche, e la gravità delle Tragiche, l'inventor de' Drammi uni l'una e l'altra in essi, mettendo pratica con mostruosità non più udita tra Re, ed Eroi, ed altri illustri Personaggi, e Buffoni, e Servi, e vilissimi uomini. Questo guazzabuglio di personaggi fu cagione del total guastamento delle regole Poetiche, le quali andarono di tal maniera in disuso, che nò meno si riguardò più alla locuzione [...]. Cf. *La bellezza della volgar poesia spiegata in otto dialoghi* (Rome: Buagni, 1700), Dialogo VI, pp. 140–142.

- 23 Giovan Battista Giraldi, *Discorso intorno al comporre delle commedie e delle tragedie* (*Discourse on the Composition of Comedies and Tragedies*, 1543), in id., *Scritti critici*, ed. Camillo Guerrieri Crocetti (Milan: Marzorati, 1973), p. 184: 'E ancora che Seneca tra i Latini non abbia mai posta mano alle tragedie di fin felice, ma solo si sia dato alle meste con tanta eccellenza che quasi in tutte le tragedie egli avanzò (per quanto a me ne paia) nella prudenza, nella gravità, nel decoro, nella maestà, nelle sentenze, tutti i Greci che scrissero mai [...]. Nondimeno noi, n'abbiamo composta alcuna a questa immagine, come l'Altile, la Selene, gli Antivalomeni e le altre, solo per servire agli spettatori, e farle riuscire più grate in iscena, e conformarmi più con l'uso dei nostri tempi'.
- 24 Ibid., p. 184: 'Si debbono nondimeno far nascere gli avvenimenti di queste men fiere tragedie in guisa che gli spettatori tra l'orrore e la compassione stiano sospesi insino al fine, il qual poscia riuscendo allegro gli lasci tutti consolati'.

and results in his ambivalent portrayal of both sovereignty and tyranny. At the same time as he was influenced by them, however, the playwright seems to have drawn on this wide range of sources in order to unsettle and, indeed, depart radically from them. What is striking about *Il Don Gastone* is that it is critical throughout in its representation of royal sovereignty, and yet its outcome is entirely forgiving of the villainous king. We might easily expect otherwise, since Pietro d'Aragona is characterised as a tyrant right from the outset. In Act I, scene 1—even before the audience is granted their first glimpse of the king—we hear several comments, mostly negative, about his character. The first of these is by Scappino, a servant of Don Gastone,²⁵ who explains to another secondary character that although he has never seen the king in person, it is better to stay away from him:

Non hò mai visto in viso il Rè d'Aragona perche subito, che andai alla Corte con D. Gastone m'amalai [...]; mà credimi pure, che lo star lontano da lui, è un star lontano dal Diavolo, perche di Rè non hà se non il nome, l'opere son da bestia, e da Tiranno.

I.1

(I have never seen the King of Aragon in person because as soon as I went to court with D. Gastone I fell ill [...]. But believe you me: to stay away from him is to stay away from the Devil, because he has nothing of a King about him but the title—his deeds are those of a beast and of a Tyrant.)

Later in Act I, Don Gastone (reproaching Scappino for not having recognised Don Merichex as a nobleman, and thus failing to greet him properly upon his arrival) is also indirectly critical of the king's tyrannical rule: 'whence have you learned the Doctrine of Tyranny? If you were instructed in such errors at the Court of Aragon, know that my Duchy is a place where one employs only respect' ('ove imparasti la Dottrina della Tirannide? Se nella Reggia d'Aragona fosti ammaestrato in cos' fatti errori, sappi che la mia Ducea è luogo solo ove s'esercita la pietà', I.3). In the words of Donna Violante, the king's court is a 'ves-sel of impiety, [a] school of Hell' ('ricetto dell'empietà, scuola d'Inferno', II.17) where, according to Scappino, 'the floor is scorching and the air is pestiferous'

25 Cicognini's dramatic works and opera librettos (and seventeenth-century Venetian librettos more generally) are replete with comic, clownish, Spanish *graciosos*-like low-ranking characters. Their function is to play the role of side-kick to a highborn character, to support primary characters in helper roles, and (as is the case with Scappino) to predict the deeds of the hero. See Antonucci and Bianconi, 'Plotting the Myth', p. 202.

(‘il pauimento scott[a], e [...] l’aria [è] contagiosa’, 11.16). The king of Aragon clearly stands for an absolutist monarchy gone terribly wrong: he is driven by impulse, he craves sex and enjoys the reckless pursuit of pleasure, he is indifferent to the rights of his subjects, and he is ruled by blind *libido dominandi*—the principal characteristic of tyrants great and small. And yet this decadent and destructive king is permitted to redeem himself completely at the end of the play, when he discovers that Don Merichex’s *lieto inganno* has set right the king’s private life and, consequently, the affairs of the state.

On the one hand, it is apparent that, far from being mere *diletto*, Cicognini’s drama is highly politically charged. On the other hand, however, it not easy to disentangle mid-Seicento commonplaces about tyranny, bad governance, and court corruption from what I view as a specifically Cicogninian treatment of royalty. The following pages will thus attempt to interrogate this central interpretative challenge in order to show how images of Baroque kingship change when Cicognini attempts to satisfy not only the prince-as-patron and privileged playgoers, but also the collective desires of an increasingly large market and the socially diverse audience of public playhouses, academies, and religious confraternities.²⁶

The King in Love

Given that Cicognini’s attitude toward his sources was to minimise his dependence on and flaunt his departure from them—and that, as a result, comparing his play with its sources does not help us unravel the ambiguities inherent in its portrayal of sovereignty—it may be useful to consider *Il Don Gastone* within the specific institutional framework of the court. From Quattro- to Settecento, after all, the court was the fundamental building block of the European political system and functioned simultaneously as a platform for monarchical representation and for political negotiation. Cicognini’s play is essentially a court-centred drama, but it is also a play that marks the transition from court to public the-

26 Despite Cicognini’s proximity to the Medici court, the absence of references to his plays in the court diaries suggests that most of the work he produced between 1630 and 1640 was performed within the framework of the Florentine learned academies and religious confraternities (Cf. Castelli, *Il teatro e la sua memoria*, p. 91; Cancedda and Castelli, *Per una bibliografia*, pp. 54–55). Situated at the boundaries of the royal court, these assemblies were distinguished by their acceptance of participants’ social diversity, their flexibility within an arena removed from royal power, and their ability to articulate new forms of sociability.

ater. German social historian Norbert Elias's theoretical model of court society and his account of the civilizing process and the genesis of the modern, bourgeois world can thus provide a promising point of entry for the interpretation of our Florentine playwright's dramatic work.

Elias's central thesis in *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (*The Civilizing Process*, 1939)²⁷ is that court society constitutes an important step along the path from feudal to modern state society; from society based upon physical force towards society characterized by the restriction of one's expressions of raw emotion, the control of affect, the virtue of self-discipline—indeed, precisely the dictates of early modern court etiquette. He argued that the processes of state formation and of 'courtisation' (especially as expressed in the absolutist states of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe),²⁸ the growth of administrative infrastructure, and the centralization of taxes and the use of force, reduced the level of violence between feudal lords—which in turn resulted in an increased demand for the restraint of aggressive, emotional, and sexual drives, as well as for the refinement of manners.²⁹ Indeed, Elias maintained

27 Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols. (Basel: Haus zum Falken, 1939). English translations of this text are from Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, ed. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Menel, transl. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

28 In Elias's scenario, the civilizing process was most pronounced in the French absolutist court (*The Civilizing Process*, pp. 190–191, 205). On the applicability of Elias's model to the Italian Baroque court, see Marcello Fantoni, *La corte del granduca: Forma e simboli del potere mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994), p. 131: 'Quanto è rilevato per Firenze contraddice l'ipotesi che il Re Sole sia stato il primo sovrano a fare del cerimoniale uno strumento di potere. Nonostante che dalla fine del XVII secolo Versailles assurga a modello europeo, quello descritto da Elias non può quindi definirsi un fenomeno storicamente originale: i codici comportamentali che improntano la società di corte si elaborano altrove, ed in un periodo precedente.' See also Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. 69: 'The courts of Europe, which grew in power and number during the early modern period with the weakening of feudalism and rise of absolutism, drew extensively on the Italian model at first, only subsequently to surpass it, a process culminating at Versailles under Louis XIV'.

29 According to Elias's paradigm, it is with the arrival of the absolutist court, which took on the 'monopoly organization of physical violence', that '[...] individuals learn to control themselves more steadily; they are now less a prisoner of their passions than before. But [...] they are much more restricted in their conduct, in their chances of directly satisfying their drives and passions. Life becomes in a sense less dangerous, but also less emotional or pleasurable, at least as far as the direct release of pleasure is concerned [...]. Physical

that manuals on the education of princes and manners books—which he saw as catalysts of the ‘civilizing process’—imposed increasingly severe standards of control over impulse and fashioned individuals who would fit within the structures of society by instilling in them ‘a compulsion to check one’s own behavior’.³⁰ Elias’s observation can be confirmed by (among countless other examples) a brilliant Baroque moralist, Baltasar Gracián, who claimed in his *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (*The Art of Worldly Wisdom*, 1647) that ‘no mastery is greater than mastering yourself and your own passions: it is a triumph of the will’. He also pointed out that ‘if one is master of oneself, one will then be the master of others’.³¹ It is Elias’s contention that the management and control of emotion (*Affektbeherrschung*) and the ability to conceal one’s true feelings thus functioned simultaneously as an expression and confirmation of differences in status and power.³² In other words, the absolutist court (the setting in which, according to Elias’s scenario, the transformation of the individual’s emotional life was the most profound) required that its members uncouple the outward display of their feelings from their inner emotional state.

Personal interactions within court society were thus characterized by the norms of ‘court rationality’—that is by a balance ‘between short-term desires and emotional needs, and the longer-term consequences of human action’.³³ What Elias’s landmark analysis of the historical development of self-surveillance makes clear is that the aristocratic court was marked by an almost com-

clashes, wars and feuds diminish [...] But at the same time the battlefield is, in a sense, moved within. Part of the tensions and passions that were earlier directly released in the struggle of man and man, must now be worked out within the human being. [...] [A]n individualized pattern of near-automatic habits is established and consolidated, a specific “super-ego”, which endeavours to control, transform or suppress his or her feelings in keeping with the social structure’. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, pp. 374–375.

30 Ibid., p. 70.

31 Quoted in Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy*, p. 43.

32 Elias elaborates on this argument in *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie: Mit einer Einleitung: Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft* (Berlin: Luchterhand, 1969). English translations of this text are from id., *The Court Society*, transl. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Pantheon, 1983): [...] affective outbursts are difficult to control and calculate. They reveal the true feelings of the person concerned to a degree that, because not calculated, can be damaging; they hand over trump cards to rivals for favour and prestige. Above all, they are a sign of weakness; and that is the position the court person fears most of all. *In this way the competition of court life enforces a curbing of the affects in favour of calculated and finely shaded behaviour in dealing with people*, p. 111.

33 Robert van Krieken, *Norbert Elias* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 87.

plete absence of the distinction between public and private life, since one's private feelings came to be turned to the profit and advantage of one's public life.

Elias's hugely influential study provides a viable framework employing which we might be able to offer a preliminary explanation as to why the king in Cicognini's play is characterised as a tyrant. Building on Elias's insight into the courtly bonds closely connecting social and power relations, on the one hand, and interpersonal interactions between individuals with distinct personalities and dispositions, on the other, it is possible to suggest that Pietro d'Aragona is defined as a tyrant because he is ruled by unbridled emotion and the reckless pursuit of pleasure. Indeed, in describing his feelings after encountering Donna Violante for the first time, the king demonstrates clearly that, far from being motivated by the norms of 'court rationality', he is ruled by passion and self-interest:

Venni, viddi, e persi, venni à far preda, e fui predato, viddi quella beltade, che in un punto m'accese, arse, & incenerì, persi, ò Cielo, persi il core, è potente un Rè, dà la vita, e la toglie, mà più potente è la bellezza, che toglie la vita sì, mà per miracolo d'amore la può ridonnare; son morto, ò miei fidi, tutti gli Scettri, tutte le Monarchie non mi possono rattivare, mà la beltà di colei è l'ultimo rimedio all'amoroso mio male.

I.10

(I came, I saw, and I was conquered; I came to be a predator and was preyed upon; I saw that beauty that, in an instant, inflamed, burned, and incinerated me; I lost—Oh Heaven!—I lost my heart! A King is powerful, he gives life and he takes it, but yet more powerful is beauty that, yes, takes life, but because of the miracle of love can also give back life. I am dead, oh my faithful subjects! Neither all the Sceptres nor all the Kingdoms can revive me—naught but her beauty is the final cure for my love-suffering.)

It is thus his neglect of the core principle of the interdependence of social structures and human interactions, as well as his willingness to seek base pleasure at the expense of his courtiers' honour, that mark Pietro as a despot. This is made especially evident when we note that the king uses words most often confined to the political sphere and to war (his 'venni, viddi, e persi, venni à far preda' explicitly recalls Caesar's 'veni, vidi, vici'), relocating them within the sphere of private emotion. Indeed, the king's claim that he alone has the right to possess a woman who, in fact, belongs to another man ('only I am permitted to desire her and to pursue her, because only an Eagle can look

straight at the Sun'; 'à me solo è lecito il desiderarla, e conseguirla, perche lice all'Aquila sola fissarsi al Sole', I.10), reveals that he is unable to suppress his own self-interest for the greater good of the community and that he prioritises his individual pleasure above the interests of his subjects.³⁴ The process of pursuit reveals the dangerously seductive power a prince has, namely the power to follow his passions without fear of opposition or sanction:

Sono il Rè, ò son l'ombra? Son Vassallo, ò Signore? Più dunque può l'ostinazione d'una femina, che la mia autorità? Don Merichex, già che il sangue del figlio ucciso non fu bastante à piegare l'animo di Donna Violante, adoprisi pur la violenza, così felicitando me se stesso in Amore, farò anco conoscere à lei che un Rè è Padrone della vita, dell'honore, e dell'arbitrio ancora.

III.8

(Am I King or shadow? Am I Vassal or Lord? Is the stubbornness of a woman more potent than my authority? Don Merichex, given that the blood of her murdered son was not enough to subdue the soul of Donna Violante, let us resort to further violence. In this way, I will make myself happy in Love and I will also make her learn that a King is the Master of life, of honour, and even of will.)

If, to continue to employ Elias's sociological perspective, court society was based on 'courtly rationality' as well as on the absence of a distinction between private and public life, it is reasonable to suggest that Cicognini's king is portrayed as a tyrant precisely because he allows his private feelings to overwhelm his public role: the sovereign's uncontrolled, undisciplined private body here takes centre stage, illustrating by analogy the ineptness of a body politic under tyrannical control.

The King's Failed Performance

At this point, it will be helpful to make use of Elias's account of the rationalization of human conduct (which he places in the category of the 'civilizing pro-

34 From this point of view, the queen's accusation of her husband is also revealing: 'I tuoi gusti hanno hauuto sempre per fine il tuo sfrenato piacere, il tormento della moglie, la vergogna d'altrui', III.17.

cess') alongside his theoretical model of early modern European courts elaborated some years earlier in *Die höfische Gesellschaft* (*The Court Society*, written 1933; published 1969).³⁵ Elias argued that the growth of civilization and the establishment of the court as a socio-political configuration did not straightforwardly cause domestic pacification among the élite. Instead, it transformed social, economic, and political confrontations that had previously been won or lost by means of brute force into symbolic struggles in which both weapons and spoils were replaced by political acts. This new kind of representation meant that political gains and losses came simultaneously to be substitutions for and external manifestations of violence. In contrast to bourgeois-capitalist societies (where the exercise of power revolves around the acquisition of economic capital), in early modern royal courts the exercise of power required the acquisition of symbolic capital, namely status and prestige.³⁶ Its members were therefore engaged in continuous small-scale competitive maneuvering for social advantage, power, and prestige in their efforts to secure or protect their status. This meant that king and courtiers were interdependent, as each used the other to reaffirm his (or her) position within a strict hierarchical order. Court ceremonies and etiquette were the vehicles used for expressing this interdependence: the king employed them as a means of emphasizing his unique position and his social distance from his courtiers; the courtiers employed them to display their own status within the hierarchical order of the court. As Robert van Krieken, commenting on Elias's model, explains, 'in court society, individual existence and identity were profoundly *representational*—they consisted of how one exhibited one's position and status to everyone else, and this process of exhibition and performance was highly competitive and constantly fluctuating'.³⁷ In other words, the successful conduct of courtly life depended upon the offstage equivalent of theatrical role-playing.

A brief comparison with Baldassare Castiglione's much translated and often reprinted *Il libro del cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*, 1528), a major contributor to the 'civilizing process', illustrates the point. In the *Cortegiano*, Castiglione emphasizes the importance to the courtier of both appearances and making a good impression ('imprim[ere] bona opinion di sé', I.16).³⁸ He was

35 Although *The Court Society* was published after *The Civilizing Process* (1969, in German; 1983, in English), Elias wrote it in 1933 and it thus anticipates the subsequent development of his ideas in *The Civilizing Process*.

36 See Elias, *The Court Society*, esp. chap. IV, 'Characteristics of the court-aristocratic figuration', pp. 66–77.

37 Van Krieken, *Norbert Elias*, p. 88.

38 Baldassar Castiglione, *Il Libro del cortegiano*, ed. Giulio Carnazzi (Milan: Rizzoli, 2010),

well aware that, by presenting his readers with an image of the perfect courtier, he was instructing them in the art of wearing different masks on different occasions ('vestirsi un'altra persona', 11.19). The *Cortegiano* thus teaches its readers to produce and maintain an image of themselves that allows (indeed encourages) others to view it as a continuous aesthetic performance. For Castiglione, the ideal courtier was never unmasked.³⁹

In a similar vein, the little known Italian moralist Don Pio Rossi (1581–1667), an aristocratic friar from Piacenza, observed in his moral lexicon *Convito morale per gli etici, economici, e politici* (*The Moral Banquet for Ethicists, Economists and Politicians*, 1639), 'most useful to he who reads, writes, teaches, governs, and Rules' ('utilissimo a chi legge, scrive, insegna, governa, Impera'), that

Questo è vn secolo d'apparenza, & si va in maschera tutto l'anno. Pur che altri appara, non si cura d'essere da douero. [...] Pare hoggidi, che chi non sa adulare, mordere, e simulare, che chi non sa auanzare con la depressione, e sorgere con la sommersione altrui, vaglia nulla: sia nulla.⁴⁰

(This is an age of appearances, and one wears a mask every day of the year. As long as one appears otherwise, one does not take care to be so in fact [...]. It seems that, these days, he who does not know how to flatter, snipe, and feign; he who does not know how to advance by pushing others down and to rise by means of submerging others, is worth nothing: is nothing.)

p. 71 and chap. 11.26. The issue of appearances in Castiglione is explored in depth by Giulio Ferroni, "Sprezzatura" e simulazione', in *La Corte e il 'Cortegiano'*, 2 vols. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), 1: *La scena del testo*, ed. Carlo Ossola, pp. 119–147.

39 As Peter Burke suggests in *The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 31: 'courtier is itself such a role, and one which was becoming institutionalized into what Castiglione himself calls a 'profession' (11.10), in other words an art or discipline (*arte e disciplina*). See also Stephen J. Greenblatt's discussion of Castiglione's *The Courtier* in his *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and his Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 38: 'Castiglione offers not a paradigm of man's freedom, but a model for the formation of an artificial identity; his courtier is an actor completely wedded to his role'.

40 Pio Rossi, *Convito morale per gli etici, economici e politici* (Venezia: Appresso i Guerigli, first part published 1639; second part 1657), 1, chap. 'Secolo corrotto', p. 428. For more information on Rossi, see Albano Biondi, 'Il Convito di Don Pio Rossi: Società chiusa e corte ambigua', in *La Corte e il 'Cortegiano'*, 11: *Un modello Europeo*, ed. Adriano Prosperi, pp. 93–112.

As Elias insists, then, the royal court developed increasingly performative and theatricalized codes of behavior that demanded mastery from its members. It can thus be defined as society of performance—a cultural and political arena of continual self-dramatization in front of one's peers and superiors. In the words of Jeroen Duindam, 'the absolute ruler and the nobility unknowingly acted out a *tableau vivant* of the civilizing process'.⁴¹ In this institutional configuration, where self-representation was crucial for both obtaining and retaining power, good manners, hospitality, politeness, and gift-giving became the primary gestures of that power.

If we return now to Cicognini's drama, we find a scene in the play's very first act during which the king attempts to bestow honors upon Don Gastone and Don Merichex, an action that illustrates Elias's formulations about the sociology of power relations at court. What we notice immediately, however, is that the social and commercial exchange (or gift-giving) is here reversed—it is the king's subject, Don Gastone, who gives his sovereign a considerable sum of money, not vice versa:

Conseruo in questa Ducea gran quantità d'oro, quale appresso di me infruttuoso rimane, pur troppo mi è noto, che nelle passate guerre l'Errario Regio fu in parte suiscerato dal suo tesoro, supplico la M.v. si degni per mano d'un suo seruo ricevere in tributo vn mezo million d'oro, che con douuta humiltà le presenta il più fido Vassallo della sua Corte.

I.12

(In this Duchy I guard a large amount of gold—which, in my keeping, remains without use. Unfortunately, it is known to me that during the recent wars the royal treasury was plundered of part of its wealth. I beg of Your Highness that he deign to receive, from the hand of one of his servants, a gift of half a million in gold, which with all due humility is presented to Him by the most faithful Vassal of his Court.)

It is not that subjects never gave gifts to their patrons: on the contrary, courtiers who could not offer a worthy gift to the prince would not go far. This scene, however, is revealing in that it highlights how this sovereign's gestures and actions (which, according to Elias, should mark him as a unique individual entitled to hold power over his courtiers) fail to impress his peerless status upon his subjects. If, for Elias, gift-giving confirms a power imbalance between dependent

41 Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early European Court* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), p. 166.

and superior and, far from representing a purely economic exchange, affirms the exchangers' status, identity, and credibility, Don Gastone's gesture puts an end to the patron-dependent relationship since the king fails to perform appropriately the ritual of gift and counter-gift. Indeed, rather than produce a gift in return, the king immediately passes Don Gastone's gift to Don Merichex, clearly demonstrating that he cares little about the well-being of his impoverished state. Indeed, this scene presents us with a subject who is a better caretaker of his kingdom than is his king.

Though apparently incapable of exchanging gifts in the usual, accepted manner, the king still recognises his obligation to reciprocate Don Gastone's gift in some form; he thus attempts to confer an honorific title upon Don Gastone's son in exchange:

RÈ D. Gastone hauete figliouli?
 D. GAST. Vno mio Rè, e Celio si chiama.
 RÈ Di chè età?
 D. GAST. Non ha ancora compito il sesto anno.
 RÈ Sarà Celio nostro Cavallarizzo maggiore.

1.12

(KING Don Gastone, do you have children?
 D. GAST. I have one, my king, and his name is Celio.
 KING How old is he?
 D. GAST. He is not yet six years old.
 KING Celio will be our Senior Horse Master.)

The king's ability to reciprocate is thwarted, however, when Don Gastone explains his error in attempting to confer this honour upon a child:

D. GAST. Favore al certo non meritato, ma vaglia a dire il vero, ò Signore, come potrà così tenera mano reggere il freno di bizzaro destriero? come potrà Celio mio con fanciullesco fianco premerli il dorso? questo è honore, che a sperimentato Caualliero s'aspetta, questa è carica, che all'adolescenza, non che alla puerilità si adatti; Il zelo del buon seruitio di v.M. m'innanimesce a parlare con disinteressata libertà.
 RÈ Fingo, che anco a gl'infanti non si conferiscono honori; Chi adunque giudicareste habile a tale carica?
 D. GAST. Già che mi chiede v.M. dico, che giudico proportionata la carica al valore di D. Merichex.

RÈ Sia adunque D. Merichex nostro Caualarizo maggiore.

1.12

(D. GAST. This is certainly an unmerited favor—it is worth telling the truth, my Lord—how will such a soft hand control the reigns of a crazed steed? How will my Celio, with his child’s hips, press upon the horse’s flank? This is an honour hoped for by a young Knight; this is a duty better suited to a young man than to a child. The zeal of Your Highness’s good servant spurs me to speak with impartial liberty.

KING I imagine that one doesn’t confer honors upon an infant. Who, therefore, would you judge able to take on this charge?

D. GAST. Since you have asked me, Your Highness, I say that I judge the task in proportion to the valor of D. Merichex.

KING D. Merichex, then, will be our Senior Horse Master.)

In Elias’s scenario, as we have seen, the mechanism by which power operated in early modern court societies was representational in character and was thus heavily dependent on the extent to which others recognized it. We might therefore suggest that what makes Pietro d’Aragona a poor monarch is that he fails to represent himself properly to his subjects and to deal appropriately with his courtiers’ questioning of his social superiority. The king here explicitly contributes to an all but complete reversal of power in soliciting and then deferring to Don Gastone’s judgment above Pietro’s own. The court in *Il Don Gastone* thus becomes an arena in which power is continuously renegotiated—but not to the king’s advantage, though at times by his own hand.

Elias’s insights into the centrality of theatricality to the construction of successful social and political agency in the early modern court can productively be brought into conversation with recent critical assessments of early modern political thought that suggest that Baroque rulers regularly displayed their power theatrically. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong were the first to point out that it was by means of court spectacles and public festivities that princes and the privileged élite exhibited their prominent status and attempted to reinforce their self-mythologizing via ostentatious displays, exaltations of political power, and splendid spectacle.⁴² Jean-Marie Apostolidès compared the role

42 Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

of the king to that of an actor in a heroic drama, in which courtiers were at once audience and secondary players,⁴³ and Stephen Greenblatt explored the theatrical means by which English Renaissance rulers and historical figures created their 'selves'.⁴⁴ Indeed, the oft-quoted response of Queen Elizabeth to a parliamentary petition for the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots ('we princes [...] are set on stages, in the sight and view of all the world dulle observed; the eies of manie behold our actions'), epitomizes what Greenblatt has called 'the whole theatrical apparatus of royal power' and the dependence of Elizabethan power 'upon its privileged visibility'.⁴⁵ According to Louis Marin's compelling study of the semiotics of French absolutism in *Le portrait du roi*, the representation of sovereignty in Baroque political regimes involved the theatricalization of public action and its resulting effects.⁴⁶ Even Jürgen Habermas, working within a different framework and distinguishing between the forms of publicity that set the early modern period apart from the eighteenth century, suggested in a somewhat similar vein that the exercise of sovereignty involved the public display of power before the people. Monarchs and their peerage 'represented their lordship not for but 'before' the people' ('sie [die Herrscher] repräsentieren ihre Herrschaft, statt für das Volk, 'vor' dem Volk').⁴⁷ A sovereign thus established his authority via a mode of public self-representation that rendered the invisible source of his political power visible in physical—bodily—form, a type of ceremonial representation that marks the body of the lord with what Habermas calls the mystical 'aura' of his own authority. It is worth noting that the English and French monarchies were, however, scarcely different from any other monarchy from almost any historical era in their reliance on the application of the arts of theater to the projection of kingship.⁴⁸

43 Jean-Marie Apostolides, *Le roi-machine: Spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Minuit, 1981), p. 8. See also his *Le Prince sacrifié: Théâtre et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Minuit, 1985).

44 Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

45 Id., 'Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*', in Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (eds.), *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 44.

46 Louis Marin, *Le portrait du roi* (Paris: Minuit, 1981).

47 Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Mit einem Vorwort zur Neuauflage* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990). English translations of this text are from Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, transl. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (repr. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), p. 8.

48 See, for example, John Huxtable Elliott, 'Power and Propaganda in the Spain of Philip IV,

These critical perspectives complicate Elias's picture of court society and shed light on the fact that when politics, like all the world, was a stage, Baroque princes saw themselves on a rostrum before spectators and understood themselves and their activities in terms of the theatricality of their roles. In light of these broader insights, the specific scenes in *Il Don Gastone* of the king's lack of self-control and his subjects' absent recognition of his authority—not to mention the numerous other critiques he receives—suggest that one of his failings is ineffective role-playing. Let us therefore see whether there are other aesthetic criteria of the performance of sovereignty that Cicognini's king of Aragon fails to satisfy.

A Theater of Dissimulation

The most influential phenomena to contribute to and reflect on the increasingly performative codes of behavior in early modern political regimes were, according to Elias, courtesy manuals and advice books for princes. If one of the cornerstones of social and power relations at court was self-control, the other governing principle—upon which contemporary manners books rather insisted and which was closely connected to both the manipulation of appearances and the theatricality of political behavior—was the art of dissimulation. Indeed, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been known as 'the age of dissimulation',⁴⁹ a feature of the period that figures prominently in contemporary courtesy books and in literature on politics and statecraft (perhaps because, as we have seen, politics during the same period took on a decidedly theatrical dimension). It is interesting to note that the decade of the 1640s—precisely when Cicognini's play was first performed—saw the climax of the debate over dissimulation and its correlative, simulation.⁵⁰

in id., *Spain and its World, 1500–1700: Selected Essays* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 162–188 on how symbols were manipulated to enhance the power and majesty of Philip IV. On the Italian context, see Matteo Casini, *I gesti del principe: La festa politica a Firenze e Venezia in età rinascimentale* (Venice: Marsilio, 1996).

49 See Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy*, p. 5. See also Rosario Villari, *Elogio della dissimulazione: La lotta politica nel Seicento* (Rome: Laterza, 1987); Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

50 Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, p. 3: 'Although the term *dissimulation* occurs somewhat more commonly in the literature than *simulation*, the two are simply different sides of the same coin. [...] *Dissimulatio* signified dissembling, feigning, concealing, or keeping secret. *Simulatio*

Of course, Niccolò Machiavelli had already argued (in the famed eighteenth chapter of *Il principe* (*The Prince*, 1513), a book which has been a *vademecum* for tyranny ever since) that a prerequisite for the virtuous prince was the ability to manipulate appearances. Machiavelli asked his prince to play his part with care; to lie yet to seem to tell the truth. A ruler, he argued, must be strong like a lion and clever like a fox, and a key element of this cleverness is the ability to be a 'great feigner and dissembler' ('gran simulatore e dissimulatore').⁵¹ A politician may be successful while entirely lacking in admirable qualities, 'but it is very necessary that he seem to have them' ('ma è bene necessario parere di averle', my italics).⁵² Dissimulation had thus long been thought of as an inescapable component of the political world.

Many Seicento works on dissimulation extended this Machiavellian principle beyond the conduct of princes to that of other members of the body politic. What had originally been characteristic of princely conduct thus became the standard *modus operandi* (or, to quote Castiglione, the *regula universalissima* or universal rule) of other groups within the state apparatus.⁵³ Jon Snyder has pointed out that, 'as a practice of self-censorship, dissimulation assisted those who sought not to reveal or disclose anything of their own interiority, but were at the same time intent upon not uttering any untruth to others.'⁵⁴ He further explains that '[d]issimulation at court was a supremely self-conscious art of producing an image of oneself for others through language, gesture, and action, among other things, even if such a representation was intended to disclose little or nothing about the courtier's true intentions [...]':⁵⁵ Castiglione's courtiers famously named this principle of hypocrisy-by-design, coining the neologism *sprezzatura*—that is, a certain cultivated nonchalance; a masking artifice that makes everything appear spontaneous and effortless.⁵⁶

also meant feigning or a falsely assumed appearance, deceit, hypocrisy, pretense, or insincerity. The two words might therefore be used interchangeably, each denoting deception with the further possible connotation of lying'.

51 Nicolò Machiavelli, *Il principe*, in id., *Opere*, 2 vols., ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1997), vol. 1, chap. 18, p. 166.

52 Ibid.

53 Castiglione's *regula universalissima* for court behavior consists in avoiding 'quanto più si po, e come un asperissimo e pericoloso scoglio, la affettazione; e per dire forse una nova parola, usar in ogni caso una certa sprezzatura, che nasconda l'arte, e dimostri, ciò che si fa e dice, venir fatto senza fatica e quasi senza pensarvi'. Cf. Castiglione, *Cortegiano*, 1.26, p. 81.

54 Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy*, p. 6.

55 Ibid., p. 75.

56 *Cortegiano* 1.26 is an important chapter for the praise of apparent effortlessness ('certa

But if, for Castiglione's courtiers, engagement in a kind of theatrical self-presentation (both simulative and dissimulative) was the convention of a gracious court game, in the new historical constellation of Seicento Italy, wearing masks and disguises became an indispensable ingredient of life for other members of the political élite: courtiers, secretaries, bureaucrats, counselors, ambassadors, and spies. Indeed, Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623), a counselor to the Venetian Republic and both a practitioner and a theorist of politics, openly recommended hypocrisy, describing himself as a chameleon that takes on the color of its surroundings:

Ego eius ingenii sum, ut, velut Chamalaeon, a conversantibus mores sumam; versum, quos ab occultis, et tristibus haurio, invitus incordio: hilares et apertos sponte ac libere recipio: personam coactus fero; licet in Italia nemo sine ea esse possit.⁵⁷

(My character is such that, like the Chameleon, I imitate the behavior of those amongst whom I find myself. Thus if I am amongst people who are reserved and gloomy I become, despite myself, unfriendly. I respond openly and freely to people who are cheerful and uninhibited. I am compelled to wear a mask. Perhaps there is nobody who can survive in Italy without one.)

If we read the king's behavior in Cicognini's play against the backdrop of Machiavelli's and Castiglione's recommendations to princes and courtiers as well as of Sarpi's self-portrait, another reason for *Il Don Gastone's* representation of the sovereign as dissolute becomes apparent: the king rejects the cardinal rule of highly theatricalized courtly etiquette, the *ars simulandi et dissimulandi*. In the gift-exchange scene discussed above, the king—irritated by Don Gastone's spontaneous act of generosity that is, apparently, devoid of personal ambition—claims to dissimulate:

sprezzatura', or 'sprezzata disinvoltura'). For further discussion on this point, see Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 93–95.

57 Paolo Sarpi, Letter to Jacques Gillot, 12 May 1609, quoted in David Wootton, *Paolo Sarpi: Between Renaissance and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 119. For more detailed information on Sarpi, see Filippo De Vivo, 'Paolo Sarpi and the Uses of Information in Seventeenth-Century Venice', *Media History* 11 (2005), 37–51.

Superbo è D. Gastone, la sua humiltà è la superbia stessa, convien *simulare*. Accetto di buon grado il vostro dono, perche ne vediate gli'effetti, ecco che ne dispongo, come Padrone; dono à D. Merichex il mezo millione con altrettanto appresto.

I.12

([Aside] D. Gastone is proud, his humility is pride itself—it is fitting to *feign*.)

[To D. Gastone] I willingly accept your gift; so that you can see its effect, see how I dispose of it, as a Lord: I give to D. Merichex the half million with the same eagerness.)

With these words, Pietro d'Aragona openly acknowledges theatrical artifice, whereas a skilled dissimulator does exactly the opposite, announcing nothing and allowing no one to know for sure whether a mask is or is not being used. The king, in contrast, signals his own role-playing, pointedly exposing the mechanisms of theater at work and reminding the audience of the circumstances of performance. In a society in which each member is an actor who pursues strategies of covert action and theatrical deception, Cicognini's king exhibits Castiglione's *disgrazia dell'affettazione*, the cardinal sin of affectation.⁵⁸

The king's inability to rely on his skills as a dissimulator and on his dramatic self-representation becomes even more apparent when we see not only that he does not (or cannot) properly perform his royal role, but also that he makes his subjects play his role instead. At the outset of the play, for example, when Pietro first arrives at Don Gastone's duchy, he asks his servant to pretend to be a king in order to deceive Scappino and to discover why Don Gastone had fled the court for the country. Later in the play, unable to seduce Donna Violante by threat or force, he commissions Don Merichex to arrange her seduction. During the next two acts of the play, therefore, the king increasingly becomes a mere spectator of a well-staged performance that is orchestrated almost entirely by Don Merichex.

58 Castiglione, *Cortegiano*, II.7, pp. 122–123: 'Voglio adunque che 'l nostro cortegiano in ciò che egli faccia o dice usi alcune regole universali, le quali io estimo che brevemente contengano tutto quello che a me s'appartien di dire; e per la prima e più importante fuga [...] sopra tutto l'affettazione. Appresso consideri ben che cosa è quella, che egli fa o dice, e 'l loco dove la fa, in presenza di cui, a che tempo, la causa perché la fa, la età sua, la professione, il fine dove tende, e i mezzi che a quello condur lo possono'.

The eclipsing of the king as a model royal figure is particularly evident when we compare him to the character of Don Merichex, a man skilled at wearing masks and at prudently simulating and dissimulating. Don Merichex is a hero with a particularly theatrical vision of reality who sees himself and others as theatrical fictions defined by outward appearances. His dramatic sense of life is immediately apparent: when introducing himself to Don Gastone for the first time, he describes his prior life as a *tragedia*, thus portraying himself as a self-aware performer in his own drama:

Non vorrei, ò Signore, che la miserabile historia de' miei funesti accidenti turbasse le delizie dell'anima vostra, che nel resto, il narrar *la mia tragedia* mi darà doppio contento, l'uno perche vi ubbidisco, e l'altro perche il raccontare i suoi travagli à Prencipe Generoso è di sollievo al tormento.

I.4, my italics

(I do not wish, dear Sir, that the sad history of my woeful mishaps disturb the delights of your soul, though for the rest, telling *my tragedy* will give me double pleasures: one because I am obeying you, and the other because describing one's travails to a Generous Prince is to relieve one's torment.)

His words display an acute awareness of and radical conviction that Baroque man was not just similar to a character on the theatrical stage—he was in fact identical to an actor on stage and viewed both himself and the world as a theatrical fiction.⁵⁹

When receiving the king's orders to exile Don Gastone and to arrange the seduction of Donna Violante, Don Merichex is torn between his loyalty to his friend and to his prince:

Oh Dio, ed a qual segno son io ridotto? ò devo mancar al giuramento dato al Rè, ò tradire nell'honore l'amico, se io voglio osseruare, come Caualliero, e forza ch'io manchi, come traditore; non posso preparare la cura alle

59 On the flourishing of the *theatrum mundi* topos in early modern writing and the Baroque fascination with the theatricality of the world, see Ernst Robert Curtius's foundational *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 138–144. See also the excellent surveys by Lynda G. Christian, *Theatrum mundi: The History of an Idea* (New York: Garland, 1987), pp. 150–192; Frances A. Yates, *Theatre of the World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Georges Forestier, *Le Théâtre dans le théâtre sur la scène française du XVIIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1981), p. 341.

dolcezza di Sua Maestà, ch'io non fabbrichi la tomba della riputatione di D. Gastone.

11.9

(Oh God, to what act am I reduced? Either I must break my oath to the King, or betray my friend's honor. If I want to keep my oath, like a Knight, I am forced to break faith, like a traitor; I cannot attend to His Majesty's pleasures unless I build a tomb for D. Gastone's reputation.)

He thus struggles to make ethical sense of the issues and to act with both justice and humanity:

O tormentato Don Merichex: in qual tenebroso laberinto ti sei ciecamente condotto? S'io penso alla promessa fatta al Rè, sento inuitarmi all'osservanza; s'io mi ricordo dell'obligationi con D. Gastone, mi sento sconsigliare, il giuramento mi sforza, il tradimento mi respinge, l'autorità Reggia mi comanda l'amicizia non lo comporta, mancar di fede al Rè non posso; machinar contro l'honore di D. Gastone non deuo, l'essere spergiuro mi spaventa, tradir l'amico mi vitupera: oh promessa, oh tradimento, ò giuramento, ò amicitia, ò Rè, ò Don Gastone, ò fierissimi tiranni dell'anima mia, così mi tormentate? così m'affliggete.

11.9

(O tormented Don Merichex! Into what shadowy labyrinth have you blindly allowed yourself to be led? If I think of the promise I made to the King, I feel compelled to keep it; if I recall my obligations to D. Gastone, I feel advised against it. The oath binds me, the betrayal repels me, the authority of the State commands me, friendship does not permit it, I cannot break faith with the King, I must not conspire against the honour of D. Gastone, becoming a liar frightens me, betraying a friend vilifies me. Oh promise, oh betrayal, either oath or friendship, either King or D. Gastone, oh haughtiest tyrants of my soul, how you torment me! How you afflict me!)

While this audience-directed, emotionally-charged soliloquy reveals the internal conflict and emotional turmoil of the character, his subsequent actions show an extraordinary mastery of self-dramatization. Indeed, his thoughts and feelings remain completely inaccessible both to other characters and to the play's spectators until the very last scene. His actions thus put into practice Pietro Bembo's advice from the second book of Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, which

states that nothing should ever be said unless it has been well thought through beforehand and that one should never trust anyone, not even a dear friend, to the extent that he ‘communicate without reservation all one’s thoughts to him’.⁶⁰

Don Merichex is a complex character who is conscious of the degree to which the inner self reflects the outer, public self in its daily interactions with one’s sovereign and fellow courtiers. Indeed, he reminds himself, ‘remember that, with regards to one’s actions, one must think of the end result, and that breaking faith with the King has as its end the honour of a friend, and that keeping faith has as its outcome that friend’s shame’ ([r]iccordati, che nelle attioni si deue pensare al fine, e che il mancar di fede al Rè hà per fine l’honor dell’amico, e che osservarui fede ha per scoppo le sue vergogne,’ 11.9). In addition to his status as savvy central character and his vital role as problem-solver, Don Merichex is a stage manager, a role through which his character comes to compete with that of the king, and through which the performance of an onstage courtier comes to echo and challenge the ‘performance’ that is state ritual. Don Merichex, in fact, is always in control of the monarch’s movements on stage, as well as of the entries and exits of the other characters. Contrary to what we might expect given the title of the play, Don Merichex—not Don Gastone—is thus the true protagonist of Cicognini’s drama.

Yet another aspect of theatricalization in Baroque political regimes is the dependence of princes on their audiences. Indeed, Don Pio Rossi emphasized ‘living a theatrical life’ (‘vivere una vita da teatro’) among the ‘many miseries which accompany the greatness of the prince’, precisely because the great were always ‘in the view of a world of spectators’ (‘alla veduta d’un mondo di spettatori’):

La Grandezza trà le molte miserie, che l’accompagnano, ha questa non inferiore ad ogn’altra; di viuere vna vita da teatro: percioche esposti i Grandi continuamente sono alla veduta d’vn mondo di spettatori: & ogni minimo loro portamento è specolato da tutti, con ogni più critica diligenza, come di quelli, che sono posti sopra ’l Candelliero dell’Eminenza, ò sopra la colonna delle grandezze per illustrare tutta vna casa, e tutta una Prouincia.⁶¹

(The condition of the great: among the many miseries that accompany her, the one that is inferior to no other is that of living a theatrical life, due

60 Castiglione, *Cortegiano*, 11.29, p. 236.

61 Pio Rossi, *Convito*, 11, chap. ‘Grandezza Regale’, p. 175.

to which Great men are continually exposed to the glare of a world of spectators, and their most insignificant action is watched by all with the most critical diligence, like those who are placed upon the Chandelier of Eminence, or on top of the column of the great to represent a whole house, and a whole Province.)

As David Scott Kastan has observed, '[a] spectacular sovereignty works to subject its audience to—and through—the royal power on display, captivating, in several senses, its onlookers. But this theatrical strategy of what Stephen Greenblatt has called "privileged visibility" carries with it considerable risks. Significantly, it makes power contingent upon the spectators' assent [...].'⁶² The monarch must, in other words, continually play to his subjects, subjecting himself to their admiration and showing that he takes seriously his responsibility to represent performatively—theatrically—his unique status and peerless power as evidence of his leadership ability.

The numerous critiques of Pietro d'Aragona's rule reveal that *Il Don Gastone* is not merely an expression of aesthetic concern about the centrality of theatricality to the construction of successful social and political agency. Instead, what makes this king a tyrant is his inappropriate liberation from the restraints of popular opinion—he does not care about the response of his audience. Scapino (who, despite being a lower-class character demonstrates a good deal of moral wisdom) makes a revealing comparison between the king and his master (Don Gastone) that underlines the king's indifference to popular opinion:

Don Gastone è persona honorata, il Rè d'Aragona non hà altro pensiero, che compiacere à sè stesso. Don Gastone è Cauallero d'azzioni Illustri, il Rè è solo Rè di nome, ma perche pure è il Rè, e mescolando l'autorità Reggia con la Tirannide, e *facendendosi vn decotto al fuoco delle opinioni del Mondo* scema due terzi dell'huomo da bene, e dell'altro terzo se ne caua vn siroppo di furfante.

1.7, my italics

(Don Gastone is an honorable person; the King of Aragon has no other thought than to please himself. Don Gastone is a Knight of Illustrious Actions, the King is only King in name, but precisely because he is King and confuses the authority of the State with Tyranny, and, *if he were brewing himself a herbal remedy from of the opinions of the world*, he would

62 David Scott Kastan, 'Proud Majesty Made a Subject: Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986), 459–475, esp. p. 466.

discard the two thirds coming from virtuous men and obtain his syrup from the other, good-for-nothing third.)

When Scappino, after having discovered that he had been speaking to the king in disguise, asks Pietro d'Aragona to forgive him for having spoken so improperly, the king replies that 'the great do not care about the injuries of buffoons' ('I grandi non curano l'ingiurie de buffoni', 1.8). In addition to his refusal to role play according to the established rules of courtly etiquette; his inability to manipulate the visual and verbal symbols of power; and his subjects' lack of recognition of his authority, therefore, the king's chief flaw—what, in other words, makes him a tyrant in the eyes of his subjects and of the play's audience—is his indifference to his own public image and to the popular opinion of it—and, by extension, of his status and ability as a ruler. If, during the Baroque age, the theater metaphor was a governing mode of almost all forms of human behavior—social, political, and aesthetic—Cicognini's king's failing is that he forgets that theater and, in particular, the performance of politics is always dependent on its audience. The theatrical metaphor, therefore, has here ceased to describe political authority.

The Dramaturgy of the Spectator

If early modern theater was a medium for the circulation of information, ideas, and opinion formation in particular concerning political institutions and events, what conclusions can be drawn about the explicit or implied meaning(s) of Cicognini's drama for its seventeenth-century audiences? Why did its performance of sovereignty and the aesthetics of power make it appeal widely to different kinds of publics? How can we explain the interest of the eighteenth-century reading public in this court-focused play and the related—and immense—editorial success of *Il Don Gastone*? One answer to these questions could be that, by exposing royal sovereignty as empty, by revealing the monarch's position as precarious, and by showing the king's subjects assuming his role, the play provides an astute illustration of the historical transition from what Jürgen Habermas termed the 'representative' public sphere (in which monarchs represented their authoritative power and unchallenged sovereignty to quiescent subjects) to the bourgeois public sphere (in which private individuals come together to confront and problematize political authority). According to Habermas, the king's subjects under absolutism were not rational and self-conscious—they were passive spectators of a political scene that was orchestrated by the monarch and subjected to the 'aura' of his God-

given authority.⁶³ In this scenario, the swapping of roles between king and courtiers in Cicognini's play and the latter's evolution into genuine political actors might be linked to a decisive event: the emergence of a radically new kind of public.

It may be helpful at this point to rehearse some of the prominent aspects of Habermas's discussion, particularly as it relates to the model of the public sphere. In *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 1962, a work of social and political theory that is one of the foundational texts for current debates on the public sphere),⁶⁴ the German philosopher and cultural theorist provided an account of the genesis of a public sphere that embraced private citizens who engaged in rational-critical debate (*öffentliches Raisonement*) on the political norms of the state. In Habermas's scenario, this 'authentic' public sphere established itself in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, between absolute state and bourgeois society.

Habermas's influential definition of the public sphere helps us unravel the significance of Cicognini's drama, allowing us to consider it as a sustained illustration of his account of the new public that was just beginning to articulate its distinctiveness from past audiences. Indeed, by watching onstage characters move from *subjecta* to reasoning individuals; from receivers of regulations to interlocutors with authority, the spectators of *Il Don Gastone* were compelled to experience vicariously a particular kind of identity formation. By empathically identifying with the play's dramatic heroes, who engage critically in public

63 Habermas's contention is confirmed by a brilliant aphorism of Pio Rossi, who compared the great to the actors who fill the stage, leaving commoners to watch them from the dark of the parterre: 'Vn gran torchio leua il lume à i piccioli: E le picciole candele non vagliono gran fatto à rischiariar le tenebre, se i maggiori non s'ecclissano'. *Convito*, I, chap. 'Grande Primate', p. 214.

64 For critical discussion of Habermas's theory of the public sphere and its impact on literary studies, see Jonathan M. Hess, *Reconstituting the Body Politic: Enlightenment, Public Culture and the Invention of Aesthetic Autonomy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999); Jan Bloemendal and Arjan van Dixhoorn, 'Early Modern Literary Cultures and Public Opinion', in Jan Bloemendal, Arjan van Dixhoorn, and Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 267–291. On the importance of theater to crafting the public sphere cf. especially Logan J. Connors, *Dramatic Battles in Eighteenth-Century France: Philosophes, Anti-Philosophes, and Polemical Theatre* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2012) and Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theatre and French Political Culture, 1680–1791* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

discussions and take on the role of active political actors, audience members were invited to project their own ability to judge matters usually considered arcane mysteries of the state. Even though we must be cautious about drawing far-reaching conclusions based upon a single playwright's body of work, my analysis of Cicognini's drama and the history of *Il Don Gastone's* reception suggest that the play could well have exercised a shaping influence on the formation of rational and active spectatorship. Moreover, Cicognini's drama reveals that features of the 'mature' Habermasian bourgeois public sphere were anticipated well before the Enlightenment, and *Il Don Gastone* can therefore be considered a theatrical precursor to this societal shift.⁶⁵

If, from one perspective, Cicognini's play called into being critical and active consumers of cultural products, from an alternative perspective, the play is symptomatic of how the aesthetics of power and the dramatic treatment of royalty have been fashioned with respect to the rise of this new, potentially powerful and adjudicating public, and in response to this new public's horizon of expectations. Indeed, one can read the happy ending and the final redemption of the king as the playwright's pandering to the audience's dissatisfaction with tragic conclusions.⁶⁶ The redemption of the tyrant, however, also implies

65 Although Habermas located the genesis of the modern institution of 'the public' in late seventeenth- and especially eighteenth-century England and France, insisting on the geographical specificity of his claim, literary scholars and historians of cultural and political communication have found evidence of his 'public sphere' in early modernity. See Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (eds.), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Massimo Rospocher, 'Beyond the Public Sphere: A Historical Transition', in id. (ed.), *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe* (Bologna: Il Mulino; Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2012), pp. 9–28. To the best of my knowledge, however, there are no critical studies that explore the role played by Italian theater in shaping the emergence of a critically productive spectatorship.

66 One example of the declining taste for tragic plots in the mid-sixteenth century is the influential statement of dramatist and theater theorist Angelo Ingegneri, who claimed that 'le tragedie, lasciando da canto che così poche se ne leggono che non abbiano importantissimi e inescusabili mancamenti, onde talora divengono anco irrappresentabili, sono spettacoli malinconici, alla cui vista malamente si accomoda l'occhio disioso di diletazione'. Maria Luisa Doglio (ed.), *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche* (Modena: Panini, 1989 [1598]), p. 7. Also revealing is the scene from the fifth chapter of Giambattista Marino's *Adone* (1623), in which the homonymous hero falls asleep well before the end of the magnificent tragic performance that Venus stages for her lover. For a detailed analysis of this scene, see Franco Vazzoler, 'La spettacolarizzazione

the success the characters' agency (and, by extension, that of the audience) enjoys in bringing the tyrant to justice and, ultimately, in re-negotiating rather than simply accepting the sovereign's monopoly on self-representation.

Given the centrality of reliance on the spectator for successful political action and the paramount importance assigned to the experience of a receptive subject in *Il Don Gastone*, it is furthermore possible to locate in Cicognini's theater the emergence of a dramatic aesthetic that is attentive to public response. My analysis shows that this kind of aesthetics—one that is typically associated with eighteenth-century dramatic poetics⁶⁷—in fact emerged precisely at the moment of transition from court theater to public playhouse. Of course, there have already been numerous attempts to emphasise the centrality of the spectator even before this moment,⁶⁸ but it seems that only under the pen of a 'transitional' playwright like Cicognini does the aesthetic start to take shape in a practical way on stage.

Ultimately, the interpretation of *Il Don Gastone* undertaken in these pages reveals that Cicognini's wide appeal to different kinds of audiences—or publics—and his fame well into the eighteenth century was due only in part to his ability to 'tempt with novelties the listless taste of his spectators' ('Iusin-

del mito fra manierismo e barocco sulle scene italiane', in Valentina Nider (ed.), *Teatri del Mediterraneo. Riscritture e ricodificazioni fra '500 e '600* (Trento: Università degli Studi di Trento, 2004), pp. 75–87. On Cinquecento tragedy see the excellent essay by Antonella Calzavara, 'L'"amor soverchio" e lo "sfrenato sdegno": Rassegna di testi e studi sulla tragedia italiana del Cinquecento (con un'appendice secentesca) (1970–1993)', *Lettere italiane* 46 (1994), 642–676.

67 See, for example, Hans Robert Jauss, 'La teoria della ricezione: Identificazione retrospettiva dei suoi antecedenti storici', in Robert C. Holub (ed.), *Teoria della ricezione* (Torino: Einaudi, 1989), pp. 3–26. See also my 'Il pubblico teatrale nel *Genio buono e il genio cattivo* di Carlo Goldoni', *Italian Studies* 70 (2015), 93–117.

68 Theories that stressed the necessity of providing satisfaction to the audience were postulated in an Italian context by Giambattista Guarini, Giraldo Cinthio, Angelo Ingegneri, and Leone de' Sommi in particular. Anna Tedesco has recently linked Cicognini's dramatic aesthetics (which emphasises keeping the public pleased and entertained) to the shaping influence of Lope de Vega's treatise *El Arte nuevo de facer comedias en este tiempo* (*The New Art of Writing Plays in This Age*, 1609, first printed in Italy in 1611), which oriented Italian playwrights towards a new kind of dramaturgy that recommended against the Aristotelian rules in favour of a more public-oriented paradigm. See her "'Capriccio", "Comando", "Gusto del pubblico" e "Genio del luogo" nelle premesse ai libretti per musica a metà del Seicento', in Giulia Poggi and Maria Grazia Profeti (eds.), *Norme per lo spettacolo, norme per lo spettatore. Teoria e prassi del teatro intorno all'"Arte Nuevo"*: Atti del seminario internazionale, Firenze, 19–24 ottobre 2009 (Florence: Alinea, 2001), pp. 345–358.

gare colla novità lo svogliato gusto degli spettatori')⁶⁹ and to his play's dramatic effectiveness, moral resonance, and treatment of sovereignty—one that, unusually, both critiques and affirms the current political regime. Instead, the overriding reason for *Il Don Gastone's* success and the principal cause of its adaptability to different theatrical contexts lies in the fact that the play is a true site of public making: Cicognini's aim was explicitly political and was designed to compel the audience to recognise its own centrality in social, theatrical, and political domains alike, and to raise consciousness among the public that it is, itself, the ultimate repository of power.

Further Reading

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- Cancedda, Flavia, and Silvia Castelli, *Per una bibliografia di Giacinto Andrea Cicognini: Successo teatrale e fortuna editoriale di un drammaturgo del Seicento* (Florence: Alinea, 2001)
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- Greenblatt, Stephen J., *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980)
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- Zanlonghi, Giovanna, 'La tragedia fra *ludus* e *festas*: Rassegna dei nodi problematici delle teoriche secentesche sulla tragedia in Italia', *Comunicazioni sociali* 15 (1993), 157–240

69 Crescimbeni, *La bellezza della volgar poesia*, p. 142.

French Tragedy during the Seventeenth Century: From Cruelty on a Scaffold to Poetic Distance on Stage*

Christian Biet

Criticism, when it speaks of tragedy, generally has the goal of dissociating two terms: the tragic and tragedy as a genre. But, at the same time, critics are encouraged to see tragedy as a tragic way to represent people dealing with destiny, as Aeschylus did, as Shakespeare is supposed to have done, as Beckett shows us. Speaking of the tragic in tragedy is generally obvious as far as we admit, because we have seen in Nietzsche, or in Hegel before him, that the two terms can be put in the same basket: a tragedy is tragic, and the tragic is the first idea, the very first notion tragedy has to follow, because both of them are talking about destiny, and the position of man in front of God. That is the main stream of criticism, or at least, that was the main stream until we saw that in seventeenth-century France the majority of tragedies had nothing to do with this definition.

At the end of the sixteenth century and at the beginning of the seventeenth, when tragedy was a matter of death and blood, it took its examples from ancient history, from mythology and from current affairs (regicides—Henry III, Henry IV—or the violent deaths of prominent figures). Examples include Étienne Jodelle's (1532–1573) *Cléopâtre captive* (1553), which is considered as the first 'humanist' tragedy in French, and *Didon se sacrifiant* (ca. 1555), Robert Garnier's (ca. 1545–1590) *Les Juives* (1583) that took its subject from Biblical history, *Cornélie* (1573) and *Marc Antoine* (1578), both based on Roman history, and *Hippolyte* (1573), *La Troade* (1579) and *Antigone* (1580), with subjects taken from Greek history and mythology, as well as Jacques de Fontenay's (1587–1615) *Cléophon* (1600) and Claude Billard's *La Mort de Henry le Grand* (1610).¹ At the

* I would like to thank Joe Johnson (NYU PhD student) for his comments and corrections.

1 For modern editions, see Étienne Jodelle, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Enea Balmas (Paris: Gallimard, 1968); *Didon se sacrifiant*, ed. Jean-Claude Ternaux (Paris: Champion, 2002); Robert Garnier, *Les Juives*, ed. Sabine Lardon (Paris: Champion, 1999); ed. Michel Jeanneret (Paris: Gallimard, 2007); *Cornélie*, ed. Ternaux (Paris: Champion, 2002); *Marc Antoine*, ed. Jean-Claude Ternaux (Paris: Garnier, 2010); *Antigone ou la Piété*, ed. Jean-Dominique Beaudin

start of this early modern period, when tragedy in France and all over Europe re-emerged on stage in a sort of re-birth, tragic theater became an alternative scenery for social action, a virtual scene for experimental lives, but also another judicial court for the audience, taking place inside theaters. At that point in time, the audience was spatially situated (and with more than 70% of the spectators *standing* in the 'parterre') in front of the stage, where it witnessed the cruelty, crimes and bloodshed *often represented on stage*.

Tragedy as a Reenactment of the Cruel Atrocities of Recent History

Yet we have to consider that at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century France was trying to survive after a terrible shock and bloodshed of the wars of religion. Simultaneously Europe was trying to come to terms with what happened in Latin America (the genocide of the Indians), or even in England (the Wars of the Roses during the fifteenth century and their aftermath during the sixteenth). In France, for more than thirty years, the country had been immersed in horror: blood, rapes, lootings, and murders committed in the name of religion. 'Are the others more barbarians than we are?', asks Montaigne, thinking of the cannibalism that happened in Sancerre during the wars of religion and comparing it with the real and regulated cannibalism of the so-called barbarians or 'sauvages'.² Literature and theater, then, had to grapple with and answer some urgent questions: was it possible to write after those absolute and massive crimes? Was it possible to play these stories and cases on stages? Was it possible to represent this terrible past? Just as Adorno and other philosophers of the twentieth century after Hiroshima and

(Paris: Champion, 1997); Christian Biet (ed.), *Théâtre de la cruauté et récits sanglants en France (fin XVIe-début du XVIIe siècles)* (Paris: Laffont, 2006) Collection 'Bouquins' (including De Fontenay's *Cléophon* and Billard's *La Mort de Henry le Grand*). See also, for instance, Gilian Jondorf, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969); Raymond Lebègue (ed.), *Les Guerres civiles de Rome et les tragédies de Robert Garnier: Actes du colloque de la Renaissance et du classicisme du Maine* (Paris: Nizet, 1975); Phillip John Usher, 'Tragedy in the Aftermath of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre: France's First *Phèdre* and the Hope for Peace', *Romance Notes* 52 (2012), 255–262; Christian Zonza, 'Le discours politique dans les tragédie de Claude Billard', *Albineana, Cahiers d'Aubigné* 22 (2010), 101–123; Donald Stone, *French Humanist Tragedy: A Reassessment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974).

2 See Jean de Léry, *Histoire lamentable du siège de Sancerre*, 1574, and Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, first ed., 1580, chap. I, 31.

the Holocaust, the 1590/1620's authors (and the spectators) had to face the acts of their fathers, had to confront their own acts or non-acts, their own crimes, their cowardice, the way in which they were only impotent witnesses, silent in the face of such massive bloodshed. At the same time, literature and theater had to consider their audiences, to reflect on the action or the non-action the people of this very audience had displayed a few years beforehand. How to write? How to represent? What? And where? The representation of that bloodshed will be in some instances on the stages, on the scaffolds, after the massive destruction which had been done by still living murderers, and seen by still silent people. This historical and moral situation is, for us, at once an ancient and extremely modern, contemporaneous, problem, and not only by way of analogy: the early modern period has something to say about our post-modernity.

It is generally acknowledged that Elizabethan drama inherits from Seneca its obsession with blood, cruelty and violence. It is less well-known in critical circles that French tragedies of the same period are also markedly 'Senecan', equally obsessed with violence and able to represent this violence directly on stage.³ In some respects, Elizabethan drama (as Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and the tragedies of revenge from Thomas Kyd, Cyril Tourneur or John Webster) and the early French tragedies of the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries resemble each other to such a degree that they are almost identical in form and in subject, especially in their adoption of Senecan tragedy as a model—during this period, France was not as 'classical' as it would later become, if indeed French theater has ever been as classical as certain twentieth-century critics, who have their own understanding of the term, suggest. But if in Senecan tragedy we find a kind of equilibrium—the element of cruelty generally remains within the discourse, within the theatrical text—in this new tragedy everything (rapes, murders, etc.) can be on stage while the chorus provides a moral, political or didactic interpretation of the atrocities taking place in and off stage. As in other European countries

3 From Elliott Forsyth, *La Tragédie française de Jodelle à Corneille, 1553–1640: Le thème de la vengeance*, rev. and augm. ed. (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1994), and Raymond Lebègue, *La tragédie française de la Renaissance* (Brussels: Office de publicité, 1944, 21954), some articles have been published on this topic. And lately, with Marie-Madeleine Fragonard and Fabien Cavaillé, Charlotte Bouteille-Meister, Corinne Meyniel, Sybille Chevallier-Micki, Tiphaine Karsenti, Mathilde Bernard, Michaël Meere, we are trying to re-discover this important corpus. See Sybille Chevallier-Micki, *Tragédie et théâtre rouennais 1566–1640: Scénographies de la cruauté*, Thèse de doctorat, Université Paris Ouest-Nanterre, 2013 (Paris: Classiques Garnier, forthcoming 2015).

(Elizabethan drama for instance) crimes and punishments were at that time 'hyper-present' and 'hyper-performed', and at the same time theater created a sort of ceremony of remembrance in which the guilt of a community was witnessed, observed and analyzed by its members: tragedy was *this* ceremony, where memory was in charge of the revival story that was enacted in front of the public (and for the cruel moments, behind a tapestry at the back of the stage or, often, directly on the stage itself): Alexandre Hardy (1570?–1632) in Paris, Nicolas Chrétien des Croix and some anonymous playwrights in Normandy are the main representative authors of this period.⁴

The exhibition of the faults, of the mistakes and of the horrors took place in front of the people who had seen, lived through, or heard of terrible events before. In a sort of cathartic procedure, the audience saw the representation of guilt and had to *judge* the present of the representation and the past of the city.

These tragedies from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries function as a sort of reenactment of the thirty years of civil and religious wars that troubled the second half of the sixteenth century. They were performed in the immediate aftermath of shocking violence and recent massacres to a still traumatized audience; and while, after thirty years of troubles, audiences may re-discover the pleasure of being inside a theater and being a part of this very particular social gathering in conditions of relative calm, these same members of the theatrical audience also discovered a new way of seeing, observing *and commenting upon* the violent acts of the bloody years of the wars of religion that derived from their representation on stage. This new theater, unconstrained by the (so-called 'classical') rules aspired to by a later age, left spectators free to comment on and judge its fictions. However, the spectators did not confine themselves to commentary, thus generally responding to whatever they saw and heard in a great hubbub of whistles and cries. It was as if the audience, three quarters of whom were standing in the pit while the remainder were seated in boxes or up in the galleries, had actively become a sort of chorus, responding to every remark, commenting on and discussing the action, creating a racket out of sheer enjoyment, for the pleasure of participating in this assembly.

It would appear, then, that the attempts of the crown to promote a politics of reconciliation and the activities of the theater are not really compatible. Even

4 See Biet (ed.), *Théâtre de la cruauté et récits sanglants*, where some of these tragedies are re-published and, for tragedies of martyrdom, see Christian Biet and Marie-Madeleine Fragonard (eds.), *Tragédies et récits de Martyres en France (fin XVIIe-début XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2009). See also Bénédicte Louvat-Molozay, *L'“Enfance de la tragédie” (1610–1642): Pratiques tragiques françaises de Hardy à Corneille* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 2014).

if the kingdom and the king himself were espousing a policy intended to lead to reconciliation, or were attempting or claiming to do so, it was, at the same time impossible to escape the dreams of retaliation, vengeance and judgment still supported by the citizens of the kingdom. By performing bloody acts on stage and letting them be revived in the audience's feelings, theater tried to prevent the audience from materializing the cruel acts from stage in 'real action', but at the same time a risk still remained, leading to new disorders. What remained was an enduring fear: how could anyone prevent a recurrence of the wars of religion? This is why Henry IV of France, in the *Edict of Nantes*, set out in 1598 the legal requirement, following other similar ordinances or agreements, that his people should forget what had occurred and he did so in the very first two articles of the Edict:

(Henry, par la grace de Dieu roy de France et de Navarre) ... avons, par cest eedit perpetuel et irrevocable, dict, déclaré et ordonné, disons, déclarons et ordonnons:

I. Premièrement, que la mémoire de toutes choses passées d'une part et d'autre, depuis le commencement du mois de mars 1585 jusqu'à notre avènement à la couronne et durant les autres troubles précédents et à leur occasion, demeurera éteinte et assoupie, comme de chose non advenue.

II. Défendons à tous nos sujets, de quelque état et qualité qu'ils soient, d'en renouveler la mémoire, s'attaquer, ressentir, injurier, ni provoquer l'un l'autre par reproche de ce qui s'est passé, pour quelque cause et prétexte que ce soit, en disputer, contester, quereller ni s'outrager ou s'offenser de fait ou de parole, mais se contenir et vivre paisiblement ensemble comme frères, amis et concitoyens, sur peine aux contrevenants d'être punis comme infracteurs de paix et perturbateurs du repos public.

(We (Henry, by the grace of God King of France and of Navarre) have, by this perpetual and irrevocable edict, established and proclaimed and do establish and proclaim:

I. First, that the recollection of everything done by one party or the other, between March, 1585 and our accession to the crown, and during all the preceding period of troubles, remain obliterated and forgotten, as if no such things had ever happened.

II. We forbid all our subjects, of whatever estate or quality, to revive its memory, to attack, resent, scold, or provoke each other with reproaches regarding past events, for whatever reason and on whatever pretext, to dispute, contest, quarrel, or to take umbrage or offence, in deed or word, but [command them] to contain themselves and live peacefully together as brothers, friends and fellow countrymen, on pain of punishment for those who contravene this order as disturbers of the peace and public rest.)⁵

This policy of oblivion or forgetting in the name of reconciliation and harmony, ordered by royal decree, can be extended to actors and authors. But, as the regime in France was a monarchy (and not a totalitarian state), exceptions could be made, particularly for authors who wrote for the regime, especially those who were in the process of writing the history of the new Bourbon dynasty. It was however the reason why authors and actors who were generally forbidden by law to express their views on the recent past, even through a character or a role, and who were forbidden to portray this past (although it must be said that they sometimes did),⁶ employed the strategy of an historical or fictional 'detour' through ancient or medieval history or mythology. This enabled them to recount and represent on stage, for the benefit of their audience, the horrors of a very recent past that was still so vivid in the popular minds. And by these detours (through ancient history, or through a geographical estrangement), the recent past was shown. At the same time the authors employed the theatrical device of invoking the audience through a direct and personal address: by a *performance*, a philosophical, political and theatrical performance.

5 1598, Édit de Nantes. Édit général (see: <http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/editsdepacification>). The first article continues: 'Et ne sera loisible ni permis à nos procureurs généraux, ni autres personnes quelconques, publiques ni privées, en quelque temps, ni pour quelque occasion que ce soit, en faire mention, procès ou poursuite en aucunes cours ou juridictions que ce soit.'

6 As Charlotte Bouteille-Meister has recently demonstrated in her doctoral thesis, 'Représenter le présent: Formes et fonctions de l'actualité dans le théâtre en français à l'époque des conflits religieux (1554–1629)', Paris Ouest-Nanterre, 2011 (Paris: Classiques Garnier, forthcoming 2015). On Alexandre Hardy, see Fabien Cavaillé, *Alexandre Hardy et le théâtre de ville français au début du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015).

The Tragedy of the Scaffold

Faced with the horrors of recent history, these 1590/1620s tragic authors were mainly taking the path of cruelty, excess, fury, as a mirror of the acts which had been just performed: this is how they interested their audiences. As the definition of 'tragedy' as a genre was not yet ruled by the notion of the 'tragic' that Hegel and Nietzsche proposed during the nineteenth century, the word 'tragic' often meant 'bloody': 'tragedy' was primarily understood as an enacted story about death and crimes, horror and guilt. This is the way the idea of the tragic was understood by the contemporaneous audience, and we can easily point to these tragic plays, linked to the end of the Wars of Religion, as being marked by historical catastrophe, an aesthetic and spectacular disposition of all the exceptional but possible transgressions man can perform.

Yet this sort of tragedy is not specific to the French stage: as 'baroque' tragedy it is also related to a larger aesthetical European movement where the representation of mankind, manners and actions has to be bloody, tragic both in theater and in prose stories. Fascinated by the wounds, the distress and the bloodshed, and at the same time able to think about the disposition of the actions and to interpret the violence of the former past as well as the present, European audiences could follow the verisimilitude of those times, after the real horrors the spectators have really experienced. The question for the playwright is not only how to represent excess, but to imagine with urgency a plot that copes with the memory people have of its past and of its present. To be seen, theater has to take place on an exceptional stage, recalling another exceptional place: the scaffold. To do so, the audience was located in front of the scaffold/stage which is above a standing parterre that is mobile, noisy, reactive, just like in front of a real scaffold.

We know that in those times the same word 'scaffold'—in French 'échafaud'—meant a scenographic system built to be easily seen, first for executions, but also for shows. The scaffold will never lose its first meaning: that of an elevated location easily seen, where there is a separation between the action and those who are witnessing the action. Everybody recalled, and simultaneously considered in the same time, that this system was both in reference to executions and plays: the *échafaud* is literally and virtually the location where people were killed or where deaths take place. On the judicial scaffold the executioner and his victim act the bloody parts of a real tragedy and the spectators know why there is an execution as they know the case. The execution is a ritual representing punishment by law, but also, the scaffold celebrates the way a criminal is going through expiation in order to be saved. Punished by society, confessed by the priest and forgiven by God, the convict, if he has a real contrition, can

hope to be saved. On the scenographic system, death becomes a ceremony: judicial, social, and legitimated by law. On the theatrical scaffold, the audience can observe a bloody tragedy from the cause of the acts to the punishment, arriving at the conclusion by way of the criminal action. Those two scaffold ceremonies can lead the audience to be morally and religiously educated (the execution has to convince by example), but also to see the convict as a victim or a hero. In a sense, the medieval drama may never have been really absent, and the proximity between the judicial scaffold and the theatrical one is not yet a novelty. Jody Enders in *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends*, or Jelle Koopmans and Marie Bouhaïk-Gironès have already noted this link during the medieval period.⁷ The way to enact the violent punishments in the *Mystères* or in the *Passions* can even be found in the numerous tragedies of martyrdom that the second part of the sixteenth century had produced.

The last possibility, of course, is that the audience might enjoy the spectacular suffering and bloodshed. If the crimes and the punishment were supposed to bring horror or pity, they brought several pleasures too: the pleasure to be with others to see what is going on, the pleasure to see the sacrifice, the pleasure not to be killed like the victim, the pleasure to enjoy the scene, and also the pleasure to judge that the convict is not guilty and that he/she is a sort of martyr or a hero. Those pleasures can be simultaneously felt. Taken by the strength of the striking effect or bloody effect, and caught up in the numerous feelings he can have, the spectator hesitates as to what reactions he can have and, simultaneously, is able to judge by himself what he sees. Staging of disorder, of contradictions, then of debate (usually judicial), then of the expression of mourning, grief, or of poeticized blame, and lastly, sometimes, the re-establishment of order and harmony, tragedy then represents on those scaffolds a critical and poetic reflection on the universe, power and the law, and after having transformed the contradictions into ambiguities. This allows the spectator (and the reader) to go back to the complexity of the case and

7 See Jody Enders, *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); among other publications: Jelle Koopmans, 'L'effectivité de la législation sur le théâtre: Le Parlement de Paris a-t-il interdit les mystères (en 1548)?', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 23 (2012), en Hommage à Jean Dufournet: Droit et pratiques théâtrales (XIIe–XVIIe s.), 141–150; Marie Bouhaïk-Gironès, 'Introduction. Droit et pratiques théâtrales' and 'Le statut de l'acteur face aux pratiques du droit: L'exemple de l'affaire Poncelet au Parlement de Paris (1416)', *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* 23 (2012), 106–107; 127–140; Christian Biet and Marie-Madeleine Fragonard (eds.), *Tragédies et récits de Martyres en France (fin XVIe–début XVIIe siècle)* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2009), see the bibliography and the notes.

to criticize and judge it. If some desire for harmony or resolution often hangs over the plot (the persuasive effect of stability), the staging of confrontation, contradiction and ambiguity afforded, all at once, the release of a violent and long lasting emotion, a reflection on the means of representation, and finally a critical reasoning on the status of the questions raised by the tragic act.⁸

This is how tragedy will interest its spectators, and how these spectators will use their own judgment to determine, as the plot advances, the competence or incompetence of the sovereign, of the father and of the husband, of the legitimacy to which they aspire, and of the competence of the fictitious sovereign (public: the king, or domestic: the father) as it or he is compared to the current, real sovereign. For the purpose of tragedy and of tragicomedy is to show that judgment is not obvious, that it is difficult and therefore interesting as well as entertaining. It is thus critical that the spectator hesitate and pause, for a second, when he/she must evaluate an extreme and complicated case arising from a specific and violent conflict which the playwright has chosen as his subject and as his fable, a case the spectator will follow through its course. It is finally because there is extraordinary excess and an extreme representation of the world that there is interesting subject matter necessitating judgment, and it is because these excesses may appear unrealistic that they are put forth as examples by which to evaluate power, the law and its customs, because they grip the audience, because they move and because they shock it.

An Aesthetic Shift to the 'Classical' Tragedy

Although the idea of judgment and the architectural disposition (stage-scaffold, 70% of the audience standing, etc.) remained more or less the same during the whole century (except that after 1637 between thirty to more than sixty spectators were regularly seated on the two sides of the stage itself), the aesthetics were changing. With the cultural and political actions of Louis XIII and Richelieu,⁹ theater could now be recognized as an 'honest' and useful

8 One could then see in this re-birth of tragedy, a type of response to what happened in Greece several centuries before. See, on this subject Emmanuelle Danblon, 'Du tragique au rhétorique', in Michel Meyer (ed.), *Rhétoriques de la tragédie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003).

9 See the Déclaration du Roy Louis XIII au sujet des Comédiens. 16 Avril 1641. Ordonnances enregistrées au Parlement, 8ème vol. de Louis XIII, Archives, coté GGG, fol. 234; and Christian Biet, 'Le lent dressage des publics de théâtre, l'avènement du théâtre dans le champ littéraire

medium if its plays were 'honest' (i.e. becoming 'literary' and connected to the ideology and to the aesthetics of the forthcoming absolute power), if its actors were good citizens and if its audience was able to reject some individuals or groups who caused disturbances and damage inside the playhouse. Theater of seventeenth-century France was not, in the big cities, a 'popular theater' which mixes all the different social classes. Even at the 'parterre' (the standing places in front of the stage), the entrance was rather expensive (the price of two days' labor of an artisan). And as long as the playhouses became more selective and more 'honest' and 'civilized', a new 'taste' ('goût') emerged, more gallant, with an important feminine component, and literary concerns. Actually, we can notice a shift from the 1630s and just before the middle of the seventeenth century: with Jean de Rotrou, Pierre Corneille and the other 'modern' authors such as Georges de Scudéry, theatrical French aesthetics were becoming 'classical'.¹⁰ The enactment of violence weakens, the new authors link back to the humanist theatrical tradition (Jodelle, Garnier), move away from Seneca's tragedies to get closer to Sophoclean and Euripidean models, and begin to read, translate and discuss Aristotle's *Poetics*. This does not mean that cruelty or blood had become absolutely forbidden, but just that they had to stay *inside the discourse*, inside the plot, and declaimed through a theatrical poem. If the main questions stayed the same—political and sentimental passions, *libido dominandi*, *libido sentiendi*, *curiositas*, sovereignty, *auctoritas*, tyranny, etc.—the way to represent them had to be different and suitable to the new aesthetics of tragedy: a tragedy which has to be noble and honest, even if theater knows how to remain critical and if conformity is not a blind compliance nor an absolute obedience to power. But before everything else tragedy was now to be poetry and speech, a spoken

(xvii^e–xviii^e siècles français), in Donatella Pallotti and Paola Pugliatti (eds.), *La guerra dei teatri: Le controversie sul teatro in Europa dal secolo sedicesimo alla fine dell'ancien régime* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2007) Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Filologia Moderna.

10 In this article, I will not insist on the opposition between 'baroque' and 'classicism' which I consider simplifying and, in a way, dangerous. If, during the first part of the seventeenth century, there is a shift that this present text tries to describe, in the way to think—with appropriate theories and a return to Aristotle—, to represent and to compose theater, I doubt that this shift can be summarised by a change of labels ('baroque' to 'classicism') that seventeenth century's theoreticians and authors did not even endorse. See Christian Jouhaud, 'The Notion of "Baroque": Polemical Debate and Political Issues in France', <http://www.enbach.eu/en/essays/revisiting-baroque/jouhaud.aspx>; and Jean-Pierre Cavaillé and Cécile Soudan (eds.), *Les dossiers du GRIHL, La notion de baroque, approche historiographique*, 2–2012, <http://dossiersgrihl.revues.org/5057>.

poetic text, and less and less enacted actions. Everything would have to happen by means of poetic discourse, even the most violent actions, which, in general, were reported by confidants or messengers who borrow an epic style in order to relate a fight, a murder or a horrible action: think of Thérémène's narrative in Racine's *Phèdre* (1677). More than a playwright, Jean Racine was a poet, and his auditors or readers recognized in him a charm and an evocative power that combined tenderness and intensity. Interest is thus sustained by speech and poetry, and the spectator's pleasure is supposed to come both from this speech and from the unfolding of the crisis.

This so-called 'classical tragedy', from ca. 1630 to the eighteenth-century in France, is thus a noble dramatic poetry and a noble plot in five acts, with noble characters, saying noble but simple lines (alexandrines), concerning noble or terrible goals: sovereignty, tyranny, the way a king is conducting his state, the way he resists his passions, the passions themselves (which can be devastating) and the means to cope with them by will, the place of the 'libre-arbitre'. If the play is announced as a tragedy, the audience knows that everything will be noble: characters, language, manners and stakes. This is the verisimilitude, which is understood as a contract: a king has to act, talk and behave as a king. That is why, too, *bienséance*, *decorum* are here: as the characters are noble, it is impossible for them (or it is a huge transgression for them) to perform non-noble acts or to think non-noble ideas. In parallel, to guarantee the effects tragedy wants to have on the audience, the dramatic poem submits to rules. Far from binding the poet's imagination, these constraining rules have, from the beginning, the function of concentrating the emotions. Unities of place, time and action: the spectator's concentration must not be stopped. That is why, from ca. 1640, the authors and theoreticians assume that the audience does not want to be taken in several places, in several times, or by several actions—as we said, this is a return to Aristotle's *Poetics*, rediscovered by theoreticians and authors in France around 1635 and that l'Abbé d'Aubignac developed and updated in his *Pratique du théâtre* (1657). There is here a sort of contract: if the authors want the spectators to think about politics, passions and heroism, they have to fix their plot on one story only and to let their spectators think and have comfort in their pleasure; they must free them from observing different places in more than a twenty-four hour period. Thanks to this, the audience can follow the text, and can think and appreciate its complexities.

The subject of this type of play is usually borrowed from myth or history (mainly Latin history), rarely the Bible (especially for the 'college' tragedies, the tragedies written for and played in the (religious) colleges), rarely history of the Middle Ages, rarely contemporary history after the second part of the seventeenth century (but, as we have said, often before), sometimes oriental

history (Racine's *Bajazet* (1672), for example, takes place at the Ottoman court of the sixteenth century), depicting renowned characters, heroes and kings and representing an action whose evident goal is, according to Aristotle 'to excite terror and pity by the spectacle of human passions and of catastrophes which are their fatal result': by this excitation of terror and pity, the tragedy is then supposed to lead the audience to a *catharsis* (a purgation, or an purification of the passions). If *catharsis* is, in this period, a notion that some theoreticians understand it from Aristotle's *Poetics*, for most authors of the seventeenth century, the idea is difficult. Some of them try to use the notion to bring terror and pity in a positive way—with terror and pity, tragedy fights negative passions (dangerous ambition, love passion, hate, jealousy)—, some forget and replace *catharsis* by admiration, and the rest think that terror, pity, admiration and even horror have to be discussed contradictorily on stage. Pierre Corneille assumed that admiration was the real passion tragedy has to give to the audience, and Racine tried to activate a Christian version of pity: compassion. But if there is a clear moralizing finality that tragedy had to endorse, which is to edify the public, this poetical and theatrical genre is also supposed to make the audience think, discuss and judge. Negative passions are presented before the eyes of the spectators to show all the disorder that they cause, but also to show them what important and fascinating notions they are.

Dramaturgic Structure

From the dramaturgic point of view, the conflict is at the heart of classical tragedy's plot, and the crisis opens with a conflict: a man's conflict among men, mostly, and sometimes a man's conflict with himself, much more even than with the gods. The 'risk of death' (a 'péril de mort') has to be inside its plot, a plot that can end well or finish in a real catastrophe, with some deaths at the very end. The tragedy begins *in medias res*, in the middle of the unfolding of the story: in Racine, the first scene often begins in the middle of a conversation (the first word is a response: 'Yes, ...', 'No ...'); generally at dawn (beginning of the twenty-four hours); in one place (a vestibule, a palace, 'at will'); a hero, most often, and a confidant discuss the situation and relate what has happened earlier, which allows the tragedy to orient itself to the crisis, which is the essential matter. The exposition scene must be quick, short, interesting and believable; it must concentrate the subject in order to give place immediately to the crisis. The following scenes (Nicolas Boileau, in his *Art poétique* (1674), wishes that the exposition lasts, at most, no more than two scenes) continue to present the action by making the main characters intervene (to slow down their

arrival is thus an effect) and by complicating the action. After the exposition, tragedy can follow different methods. The first and main one (with Corneille for example) multiplies the *obstacles*, *peripeteias* and *coups de théâtre*; the obstacles arise in the course of the crisis that develops to the extent that they come to dominate, and the *peripeteias* are the unforeseen events that modify the hero's situation. During the second part of the century (with Racine) they are more or less forbidden for this 'noble genre', as they are external to the plot, would shatter the logic of it and thus become confused with tragicomedy. That is why the *construction by degrees* (*step by step*) is chosen by Racine. The plot, then, faces the ineluctable accomplishment of destiny. The playwright must see to it that a continuous tension is set up and that multiple effects determined by the rebounding of the action, now refused by the genre, be replaced by a concentration of the speeches on the peril of death. In this sense, Racine is in the modern 'tragic', but he is isolated. Both systems have the effect of dilating the action, of amplifying it, in the rhetorical sense of the term, by playing upon the retarding, the installation of dilemmas, the rhetorical reversals in the speech of a character (*pro* and *contra*) allowing a verbal amplification of the conflicts.

Then, the *dénouement* or the *catastrophe* is the final event that cuts the thread of the action by the suspension of the perils and obstacles. Misfortune is then generally consummated without, in many cases, grace having appeared. The denouement of a tragedy can be untragic (a tragedy with a happy ending) or can be deadly, but redoubled by a second ending that provides a result to the play (declaration, appearance or intervention of an external or innocent character who 'saves' the plot from absolute disaster).

Tragedy Takes Place in Political Field: Behind the Clemency of Augustus

Although this genre, during the seventeenth century, comes to be a constrained aesthetic code, it is at the same time a means to explore the possible transgressions of man and especially men and women of power. In *Cinna, ou la clémence d'Auguste* (1641) Pierre Corneille offers a good example: noble characters (an emperor of Rome, Auguste—Augustus—; noble men and women—Cinna, Émilie), noble lines, five acts. The play contains a noble plot and a noble goal representing the way for a tyrant to conquer a new legitimacy and to become a real sovereign. During the five acts, except the last scene, Octave, the former tyrant, has to face the disorder of a conspiracy (lead by Emilie and Cinna), and in the second part of the very last scene Octave becomes Auguste, a real

sovereign, who knows how to forgive the former conspirators, and who initiates a new legitimate political order.

First of all and at a first reading, it could be easy to conclude that this tragedy corresponds perfectly to the idea of absolute monarchy. It begins with a crisis—the king wants to be a good king but he has to face conspirators coming from his difficult past—and ends with the beautiful gesture of the monarch—the man of power prefers to forgive than to punish. Using the Senecan *De clementia*,¹¹ Corneille could be seen as an advocate of Richelieu and Louis XIII's politics.¹² But going back to the play, it is also possible to understand that, as the text demonstrates, before the beginning of the crisis and before becoming Auguste, the emperor was named Octave and was a violent, illegitimate tyrant, established as an emperor by force, murder and villainy.¹³ If we follow this line, we see that Octave tries to resist a legitimate conspiracy led by noble enemies. The main question of the tragedy, then, changes. How, in all actuality, can Auguste become a legitimate sovereign when everybody knows that he is perhaps still a tyrant? And how can he prove a legitimate sovereignty? First answer: by showing the fact that he endorses the qualities of a real king: prudence, justice, force, and also clemency. Being prudent, using good justice, practicing clemency, Auguste then can conquer his legitimacy by forgiving Cinna and Emilie. He does that in a brilliant action, in one line and a half: 'I am master of myself as of the world; I am, I wish to be.' ('je suis maître de moi comme de l'univers, | Je le suis, je veux l'être', ll. 1696–1697), and with the decision of clemency: 'Cinna, let us be friends. This I entreat. As once, my enemy, I spared your life in spite of your insane and base design, I spare you, as my murderer, again.' ('Soyons amis, Cinna, c'est moi qui t'en convie: | Comme à mon ennemi je t'ai donné la vie, | Et, malgré la fureur de ton lâche destin, | Je te la donne encor comme à mon assassin.', ll. 1701–1704).¹⁴ With clemency, which is justice and prudence *and a political coup* (a 'coup d'État'), he shows that he is, now, a good sovereign, and thus Cinna, Emilia and Maximus will recognize the fact. The play can end. The new order of legitimate monarchy can reign.

11 Seneca, *De clementia* 1, 9.

12 See John D. Lyons, *The Tragedy of Origins: Pierre Corneille and Historical Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), and *Kingdom of Disorder: Theory of Tragedy in Classical France* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2011).

13 See Corneille, *Cinna*, ed. Christian Biet (pref., ann. and comm.) (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2003), Christian Biet, *La Tragédie* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010) Collection 'Cursus', and Georges Forestier, *La Tragédie française* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010).

14 Pierre Corneille, *Cinna, ou la clémence d'Auguste, tragédie. 1643*, ed. Christian Biet (pref., ann. and comm.) (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2003), acte v, scène 3, pp. 121–122.

Yet at the same time we have seen what was behind the ‘curtain of the state’: if Auguste had been so absolutely clement, and so ideally absolute when he forgives Cinna and Emilie, it is also because he was told by Livia, his wife, during the fourth act, that clemency is the best way to win, and to earn his legitimacy. Entering behind the curtain of state, tragedy problematizes politics, shows the calculations and the ambiguity of absolute power. Even if Auguste is clement, even he is a good sovereign because he shows the virtue of clemency, even if he seems to be suddenly illuminated by grace and providence, anybody can read, or see, that it is also because he is a good politician and a good calculator helped by a Machiavellian woman who tells him to do so. Thus the question is, is he, at the end, a good sovereign or still a tyrant?

This is the interest of this Cornelian political tragedy: the audience can feel the ambiguity of sovereignty and can see what is hidden behind the curtain representing the beauty of the State ... We, the audience, can judge or decide. We have to interpret, to think, and take the necessary distance to evaluate these ‘noble’ matters.

The Weakness of the King in *Le Cid* and Horace

We could say the same thing about *Le Cid*, *Horace*, *Sertorius*, *Othon*, Cornelian plays, but also, of all these seventeenth-century tragedies, even Racinian ones. *Le Cid* and *Horace* for example, are two political moments (in their fictional worlds, but also in respect of when they are written, between 1636 and 1640) where the aristocracy hesitates between its own power and the concession of it to the absolute power of the absolute king. And we, the audience, are hesitating too, to condemn or to forgive the characters of aristocrats—exactly like the weak king does in these plays.

In Corneille’s tragicomedy *Le Cid* (1637) Rodrigue fights in a duel Don Gomès (the father of the woman he loves, Chimène) because Rodrigue’s father had been offended: it is thus an aristocratic duel forbidden by the crown and this is Rodrigue’s first mistake. As a consequence of this, the king has to judge this fault, but does not have enough strength to render justice in front of the aristocratic party. Moreover he also does not have enough strength when his country is assaulted by the Mores. Hence, to recover a sort of judicial and political virginity, Rodrigue escapes the stage, fights the Mores with his own army, *without the order of the king*, triumphs like a hero with his own strength and becomes a brilliant general that the king has to consider and respect. Rodrigue saved the crown but he threatens it because he is, now, in a position to have more power than the king. Between heroism and rebellion, Rodrigue, once

again, has to be judged. Not only because of these two political mistakes (the dual and the battle held without the king's order), but also because Chimène demands, requires a judgment on her case (the murder of her father, Don Gomès). As we can see, oscillations, hesitations, difficulties in arguing for one or the other of the options given by every character, are the dynamics of this play. Thus, at the very end of the tragedy, the king speaks, and forgives Rodrigue in the interests of an internal and political peace, and of the crown: 'Time often enough made lawful what first seemed to be without crime' ('Le temps assez souvent a rendu légitime | Ce qui semblait d'abord ne se pouvoir sans crime.'). says the king to Rodrigue, ll. 1839–1840.¹⁵ Rodrigue will be forgiven if he becomes a general under the king's power and sovereignty. All that ends well and the king speaks the law: 'Hope in your courage, hope in my promise, and having already the heart of your mistress, let time, your courage, and your King defeat a point of honor that fights against you' ('Espère en ton courage, espère en ma promesse, | Et possédant déjà le cœur de ta maîtresse, | Pour vaincre un point d'honneur qui combat contre toi | Laisse faire le temps, ta vaillance, et ton Roi', ll. 1863–1866, end of the play).¹⁶ But, at the same time he establishes a blackmail of sorts in order to submit and forgive the heroic aristocrat. Thus the audience have seen that the king had been weak, and that his weakness has something to do with the strength of his aristocracy. Moreover the audience has now to think that the king's power comes from his nobles and therefore the king has to forgive the betrayals of his nobles if he wants to reign in peace.

In *Horace* (1640), the question is almost the same since it examines how a king must forgive the murder *in the name of the state* of a sister by a brother in an aristocratic family, by an aristocrat who before saved the country: at the same time that it is a discussion of Aristotelian magnanimity, the play draws a debate on the legitimacy of the aristocracy to endorse and enact the values of the State. Horace is in fact a hyper-legitimate hero. In the first part of the play Tulle, the king of Rome, gave Horace the role of fighting for the State against Albe and the Curiaces, Horace prevails and saves the city (even if it is in a way, by deception). But then when Camille, Horace's sister, learns that her brother had killed Curiace, the man she loves, the crisis begins. Camille vehemently insults Rome and the state and therefore Horace, by himself and without an order, kills her. As he does this without an order or the permission of the king, once again,

15 Pierre Corneille, *Le Cid, tragi-comédie, éd. 1637*, ed. Jean Serroy (Paris: Gallimard, 1993) Folio Classique, Acte v, scène 7, p. 148.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

we can see a hero saving the crown, acting to defend the name of the king, but betraying and threatening him because he acts for himself. The end of the tragedy will be the same: Tulle will forgive (he is not in a political position to do thing else) and at the same time he will say that Horace has to act under his power, which Horace accepts. ‘Then live, Horace, live, you, too brave a warrior, your virtue puts your glory above your crime, your noble ardor has produced your crime, for such a good cause one has to suffer the outcome. Live to serve the state ...’ (‘Vis donc, Horace, vis, guerrier trop magnanime, | Ta vertu met ta gloire au-dessus de ton crime, | Sa chaleur généreuse a produit ton forfait, | D’une cause si belle il faut souffrir l’effet. | Vis pour servir l’État ...’), says Tulle, the king of Rome, to Horace in the last scene of the tragedy (ll. 1759–1763).¹⁷

The audience has seen what stands behind the curtain which covers the secrets of the state, and had the opportunity to observe the intentions which drive the acts of the kings, their passions, their calculations, their sovereignty analyzed on the stage itself; and these facts, presented in these tragedies are cases difficult to judge, ambiguous but interesting for the public. The distance between appearance (the power of the king) and the real (the weakness of the crown), between the brilliant actions of absolute power and the history behind it, with the calculations, the murders, the role of the passions, create a space of judgment, a possibility of thinking politics for the audience, and a space to understand what stands behind the sovereignty, the power, and the legitimacy.

King’s Passions in Racine’s Tragedies

Even Racine, in *Britannicus* and *Bérénice*, plays the same game, with different weapons. With him, the intimate passions are poetically verbalized in front of the public. The sovereign is held by his passions, and often overwhelmed by them. In *Britannicus* (1670), before the tragedy begins, Neron was becoming a good emperor: he had Seneca for a teacher and philosopher and was trying, as Agrippine his mother asserts, to escape his monstrosity. But with Seneca gone, Burrhus, a good but inefficient adviser, is weak in front of Narcissus, the bad adviser—a dangerous freedman. The crisis can happen: the first scene of the play shows Agrippine trying urgently to see her son and emperor, at dawn, in order to know what is going on. Neron, says Agrippine, is taken back by his heritage (his fate? his destiny?) and it seems that, seized by his ambitious

17 Pierre Corneille, *Horace*, 1641, ed. Jean-Pierre Chauveau (Paris: Gallimard, 1994) Folio Théâtre, Acte v, scène 3, p. 118.

passion (*libido dominandi*) he becomes a tyrant neglecting the former power of his mother. In fact, he ordered the imprisonment of Junie, who is a political threat to him. The *libido dominandi* of Neron is the first passion which appears, but, from this, he falls into another one: the *libido sentiendi*, a *libido* which involves him in an irresistible love passion. 'Spurred by a curious desire that night, I saw him arriving in these places, sad, raising to heaven his eyes wet with tears, that used to shine through torches and weapons, beautiful, unadorned in the simple device of a beauty that one comes to get in sleep ...' ('Excité d'un désir curieux | Cette nuit, je l'ai vue arriver en ces lieux, | Triste, levant au Ciel ses yeux mouillés de larmes, | Qui brillèrent au travers des flambeaux et des armes, | Belle, sans ornement, dans le simple appareil | D'une beauté qu'on vient d'arracher au sommeil ...', ll. 385–390, Acte II, scène 2).¹⁸ He will confess to his adviser that, during the former night, he saw Junie amid the guards who were there to arrest her, in the twilight of the candles, almost naked, and from this vision, he conceived passion for her: the *libido dominandi*, political *libido*, leads him to *libido* of love, and then to jealousy, hate and murder.

The crisis has begun and the whole play will represent Neron's exercise of passion on Junie, Britannicus, and Agrippine. The audience sees an emperor, a king, overwhelmed by his passions, taken by desire, and the spectators must be fascinated by these transgressions. Hence the emotion the audience has for Junie and Britannicus, the two innocent heroes, is then *compassion*: the spectators are supposed to cry with the pathetic heroes, have pity for them, share their sufferings. On her side, Agrippine tries to see her son, succeeds, but fails to convince him to let her govern for his own sake. The audience observes her calculations, her ambiguous character, and hesitates between compassion and condemnation. Britannicus believes Neron and finally drinks Neron's poison. Junie tries to resist, cries, and finally escapes. And when Neron loses Junie, but not his own tyrannical power, in the end of the tragedy, the audience can observe and spy on the intimacy of the court, its failures and its tragedies. The spectator can be taken by the tears of Junie and by the dark sensation which is seen to be behind Neron: if the tears of Junie lead to compassion, they are, in the same time, a good way to fascinate. We know, and Racine knows, that an innocent woman in tears gives pleasure, and if it is the case for Neron, it is also the case for the audience—obviously, the pleasure of cruelty does not appear only with Sade ...

18 Jean Racine, *Œuvres complètes, Britannicus, tragédie, 1670*, ed. Georges Forestier (Paris: Gallimard, 1999) Pléiade, p. 389.

Even if this tragedy is apparently moral, there is a space for something dark, something like a pleasure of evil inside its disposition and its plot. We are thus interested in seeing the intimacy of the kings not only to admire them, but also to understand that they are men like us, held by passions, indulging pleasures, and even acknowledging the evil they do ... Once more there is a distance, a moment for thinking, a place for interpretation and judgment, and a place for the (dark) passions of the characters, and also of the spectators ...

Bérénice (1670) shows the same phenomenon, but backwards: Titus's father has just died, and Titus automatically becomes the emperor. Hence, if he wants to become a moral sovereign, he has to change his life and abandon any 'divertissement'. He also has to leave Bérénice as an emperor (described as a French king) who is unable by law to marry a foreign queen. But if he still wants to marry Bérénice, he will be a tyrant. If not, he can be legitimate. The tragedy takes place in the very moment when the prince becomes an emperor, when a young man in love with a foreign queen has to forget his passion to be a complete king: this is the crisis, and the denouement will be, five acts later, when Bérénice leaves Rome and Titus. 'Be here a witness of all my feebleness' ('Soyez ici témoin de toute ma faiblesse'), says Titus at the last scene of the tragedy (ll. 1439).¹⁹ At the same time, the audience can observe, with tears and compassion, the way the king becomes a true king, the way he resists his passions, and the way Bérénice, in the end, helps him to do so. Once again the veil which covers the state is lifted and we see the man, his passions, his hesitations, and we hesitate with Titus. Once again, we have to consider the fact that power is fragile because it is held by a man, both weak and strong like we all are.

Tragedy, Tragic and Distance

We have seen with Corneille that admiration and observation of political contradictions are at the center of his interest. We have seen that compassion, tears, pathetic issues and observation of men's passions in the figure of the king are specific to Racine. But the dramatic notion and issue which is treated experimentally by both is also *distance*. A distance (not so far, for Corneille, from the *distanciation*—*Verfremdungseffekt*—that Brecht will theorize during the twen-

19 Jean Racine, *Œuvres complètes, Bérénice, tragédie, 1671*, ed. Georges Forestier (Paris: Gallimard, 1999) Pléiade, p. 506.

tieth century) for the audience to think, to judge and to interpret, even though this audience feels admiration or compassion, even though the spectators are taken by a dark sensation of pleasure or seized by a beautiful sensation provoked by heroes. And if Corneille uses admiration, it is not to dazzle his public, not to give an absolute model to the spectators, but to build a case with concrete *and* abstract elements they can admire, observe and evaluate.

All those remarks might lead us to think that there is no tragic in Corneille's tragedies and in most of the tragedies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: kings and heroes are fighting with other heroes and kings and against themselves, they are enacting politics. The audience, at a distance, can appreciate that these kings and heroes are noble, exceptional, but not exempt from human passions. Then, the historical situation, the circumstances, the contradictions are more important than destiny or fate, the passions of ambition and love are stronger than everything, and men and women are in the middle, playing their role, trying to fight the passions with their will in a political state, monarchy that is always in question. Confronted by these enacted cases, the audience, mainly standing, often noisy, can judge, admire, condemn or share with the characters, and with the other spectators, the situation, conversing, thinking about the circumstances and the story of those heroes. This is the interest and the pleasure of the Cornelian, and sometimes Racinian, tragedy.

Yet if there is absolutely no *tragic* in Corneille's tragedies, there is perhaps, in a sense, some with Racine, stemming from his faith. But to understand the type of tragedy the seventeenth century could propose, we have to consider tragedy's relationship with religion. We have seen that Corneille confronts his characters with themselves and with the other characters in a political situation with a corresponding love situation, and all those elements are in contradiction: the hero has to choose between his passion and his honor, his will. For Corneille it is always possible to choose the good by will, as Providence is there to help, or by interest: the structure is open, can allow sudden changes of chance, *peripeteias*, choices, but the idea is to show how heroes, kings, aristocrats, can fight the (human) conditions under which they exist. And there is always an opportunity to do so, with the help of Providence, or not ... God loves every man and Providence is offered to everybody till man embraces it, choosing the Good.²⁰ The question then is to know if man chooses really the Good or if he gives the appearance of choosing it; if man is given contrition or

20 The ideology that Corneille follows is the Jesuit theory of grace called la 'grâce suffisante'. Following Thomas Aquinas's reflections, Corneille places his characters in front of the relation between grace and free will. How can the all-persuasiveness of grace, which imposes such a potent influence on the human will and elicits therefrom such good works,

if he gets it; if the world, the political world, can be, or not, a matter for grace, or something which is beyond grace; if the king or the hero is, as every man, subjected to grace or if he is somewhere else, because of the political situation. The end of the tragedies shows that a king, a hero, a man, is always able to choose the Good, for his own sake and for the sake of the state, but Corneille does not hide that, inside the play, some disorders happened which enable the spectators to hesitate in their proper judgment about good or bad, sovereignty or tyranny, heroism or rebellion ...

At the opposite, Racine's tragedies do not suppose Providence and the protagonists are related to a sort of uncertainty with regard to their salvation. Nobody is certain of his access to salvation, but somebody can be sure that, if he fails, he will be damned.²¹ The tragic dramaturgy of Racine rests upon a simple principle: an inextricable and fatal situation at the heart of which contrary passions collide with each other. The result being known in advance, all of the attention bears on the logical progression of the action. Tragedy thus begins with a crisis where the hero is powerless, is condemned to unhappiness, is the victim of ravages caused by love or ambition, a passion that is total and irrepressible, and which is substituted for any other form of consciousness or interest. Grace is always uncertain, and impossible to catch. And God says nothing, is hidden as Goldman said a long time ago: evil reigns, which is terrible, and could be fascinating. In this religious sense, there is some tragic.

However in general French tragedy cannot end with a tragic situation that only engages terror and pity. To remain in a crisis, in France, is to allow the spectator to decide and to struggle with the passions represented on the stage. Tragedy cannot allow the hero to be the victim of an abstract fatality without considering that the terrible effects represented in the theater can be assigned to specific causes. It is necessary to substitute a real intelligibility in order to present a solution to the theatrical emotions. French tragedy offers a solution

reside harmoniously in the same subject with the simultaneous consent of the free will? In a way, and because the love of God is infinite, the *gratia sufficiens* is always open to the individual who can choose it or not. Since merely sufficient grace (*gratia mere sufficiens*) in its very concept contains the idea of a withholding of consent on the part of free will, and is therefore at the very outset destined to inefficiency (*gratia inefficax*), the question in its last analysis reduces itself to the relation between free will and efficacious grace (*gratia efficax*), which contains an ultimate discussion: the idea that by the efficacious grace the free will does precisely that which this grace desires should be done.

21 If Jesuitical providence can save protagonists if they have the human will to resist to their passions, this Jansenist ideology cannot provide any insurance and uses a tragic way to present heroes life.

to the spectator, closes the plot, but in the same time, leaves something open, and allows for the spectator the freedom to oscillate and to judge.

If the spectator-subject of the seventeenth century cannot accept the ancient fatality, what he wants is to think and evaluate a consonance between the plot and the world, his world, even *in extremis*. If in the end, like in Elizabethan theater, a return to order is sometimes necessary, if there is often a positive lesson drawn in the last scene, the tragedy itself, during its process, leads the spectators to understand, interpret and evaluate the contradictions. However, in spite of the attempt at final resolution, tragedy has the particularity of having the crisis open for several acts, and of having asked essential and dangerous questions. The story and the plot impose it. Even if the spectators admire a pure or an heroic character at the end, the dramaturgy has opened a crisis with parricide, incest, fraternal hatred, tyranny, or destructive love-passion, and these terrible things cannot be spoken of with impunity. If the crisis is open and even if the play ends sometimes, for example with Corneille, on an optimistic note, the crisis and the transgressions resist and fascinate.

There is a shift during the first part of the seventeenth century: during the 1630s, the genre of tragedy takes its distances with the performance of actions on stage. Tragedy gets back to the declamation of a simplified poetry. The spectacular gestures and stage effects are then erased, replaced by a theatrical poem. An obvious priority is given to the text, and rhetorical, political and judicial debates between the characters hold a preeminent position. Tragi-comédies, then the comédie-ballet of Molière and the lyrical or musical tragedies of Lully will play the former hyper-spectacular role. In the same time, authors and theoreticians move away from Seneca's aesthetics, rediscover and comment upon Aristotle's *Poetics*, re-appreciate and adapt Sophocles' and Euripides' tragedies. But tragedy remains a genre of experimentation, and this is the interest of the tragedy: to experiment, in Corneille, with the pleasure of political, moral and amorous contradictions inside the play, and, with Racine in particular, the discovering of the dark pleasure of passion. Hesitation between consolation and indignation, admiration and repulsion, compassion (more than pity) and horror (more than terror), are the experiences that tragedy builds in its dramaturgy for the pleasure of the spectators. Such processes make for a complex pleasure: these spectators are made to experience contradictory and competing feelings, contrary passions and simultaneously (or consequently) to think and elaborate political, moral and philosophical judgments. They are taken by passions *and* stay in a constant distance from them. This kind of tragedy then, and in multiple ways, can be seen as an art of oscillation.

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PART 4

Mobility



German *Trauerspiel* and Its International Nexus: On the Migration of Poetic Forms

Joel B. Lande

Generic Status of German *Trauerspiel*

Generic terms are, of necessity, not idiosyncratic. In order to execute the task of classifying multiple individual poetic objects, they must possess a sufficient degree of generality.¹ Such classification is not a value-neutral activity: employment of generic categories ennobles at the same time that it orders, setting up lines of filiation between the venerated forms of antiquity and the present moment. Deviation from established onomastic conventions risks disconnecting the tether to the past and interrupts the invocation of authority. An exception to this rule within the history of early modern European poetry is seventeenth-century German *Trauerspiel* or, as it has come to be called in the English context, ‘play of mourning’ and ‘tragic drama’. While English speakers have labored to find a distinctive rendering for the usually unproblematic term *Trauerspiel*, scholars writing in German still today associate *Trauerspiel* with the so-called ‘*Kunstdrama*’ written by a select group of playwrights. These lexical oddities, along with the influential reception of Walter Benjamin’s habilitation, especially within the Anglo-American context, participate in the widespread belief in an early modern German tradition irreducibly different from its European counterparts.² The aspiration to uniqueness, the desire to carve out a unique tradition of *Trauerspiel*, served to elevate rather than denigrate the status of the genre. And yet, as the scholarship has amply demonstrated, the claim to singularity set forth in Benjamin’s *Trauerspiel*-book itself emerged from a scholarly landscape littered with attempts at uncovering a

1 In order to avoid the question whether the texts I focus on this essay count as literature in the emphatic sense this term is used today, I use the conventional term of the seventeenth-century—poetry—to refer to, at a minimum, drama, epic, and lyric.

2 See Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 1991), vol. 1/1, pp. 203–430.

distinctly German literary heritage.³ Benjamin's study was directed against contemporaries who affiliated the German Baroque with the larger European Renaissance and its inheritance of the ancients as well as against those who advanced what Benjamin regarded as a wrongheaded conception of a German literary heritage. The terminological anomalies mentioned above are the effect of this attempt to isolate and thereby heighten the status of the plays written by a small group known as the Silesian School, especially the plays of Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664) and Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein (1635–1683). Since the early twentieth century, a formidable body of scholarship has emerged, with its attention focused squarely on the connections between the plays of these two figures and the major political and theological controversies of the seventeenth century. Throughout this time, the denominations have been firm: Baroque and not Renaissance, *Trauerspiel* and not *Tragödie*. With that, the connection to the contemporaneous European world of letters has been dissevered and the communion with ancient paradigms disturbed.

Rethinking *Trauerspiel*—German Lands and the Dutch Republic

As the historical conditions of Benjamin's own study, including the contextual factors that contributed to his search for a distinctly German tragic tradition, have been unearthed, the belief in an idiosyncratically German *Trauerspiel* has persisted. There are, however, sound reasons for resisting a wholesale acceptance of this view and for rethinking just how idiosyncratic *Trauerspiel* is. In the following, I deal with a body of texts that bear the name *Trauerspiel* but that superficially appear to be translations from another European vernacular. As such, they seem to endanger any claim to the purity of the genre. The fact of the matter is that *Trauerspiel* emerged through contact with other existing European poetic forms, past as well as contemporaneous. If the genre emerged into something unique—and I submit that it did—then it did so within a matrix that contained both the appropriation of alien forms and autochthonous developments. Many plays were brought into the German language and context, and in the act of importation were shot through with insertions and modifications that often radically altered their shape and meaning.

3 Jane O. Newman, *Benjamin's Library: Modernity, Nation, and the Baroque* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

I wish to focus on two sets of examples. My claim is that the emergence of *Trauerspiel* in the mid-seventeenth century depended upon a unique inflection of a traditional generic category, but this inflection drew on channels of communication that stretched beyond the German-speaking territories. In keeping with the general theme of this volume, my essay takes its start from and circles back repeatedly to the great Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679), whose contemporary European reception was most pronounced in the German-speaking territories. The circulation and redeployment of Vondel's texts in German contexts is particularly remarkable because we are dealing here with traffic between two poetic vernaculars. Exchange of knowledge across Europe was commonplace within the *Respublica literarum* or Republic of Letters; in this domain, the shared knowledge and use of the Latin language facilitated mutual intelligibility.⁴ Although Dutch was spoken only in the remote yet commercially influential corner of Europe, its poetry played a very significant role in the broader European landscape. That this relatively minor tongue had such purchase in the instances that will concern me in this essay was surely enabled by the Republic, by the common educational roots and shared commitment to Latin letters.⁵ The plays I am concerned with, however, were not written in Latin, but in German and Dutch. Linguistic traffic across the Dutch-German border played a decisive historical role for the Germans, whose epoch-making project of establishing a poetic language drew much of its energy from the Dutch.⁶ Even though my focus in this essay shall be drama, a strong case could also be made for the influence of Dutch lyric in the German setting. For Germans, the more advanced neighbors to the northwest, with whom they shared linguistic kinship, were a source of inspiration and of textual material.

There is good reason to take the Dutch-German nexus seriously. Among the many connections, I wish to identify two in a preliminary fashion. First are the English traveling theatrical troupes that made their way through Dutch and Northern German territories during the final decade of the sixteenth and early decades of the seventeenth century. They brought with them not just Shakespeare's plays (among others), but also a stage fool named Pickelhering. In both

4 Anthony Grafton, *Worlds Made by Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

5 Tom Deneire (ed.), *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), esp. the introduction by Deneire, pp. 1–17. Additional references can be found in this volume.

6 Ulrich Bornemann, *Anlehnung und Abgrenzung: Untersuchungen zur Rezeption der niederländischen Literatur in der deutschen Dichtungsreform des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976).

the Dutch and German contexts, this fool-figure remained a mainstay of the stage over subsequent decades, long after his English roots had passed into oblivion.⁷ At the same time, there were Dutch acting troupes, influenced by the English, who traveled through northern German territories.⁸ The overlap between the Dutch and German context is evident in the many surviving plays from across the seventeenth century featuring a stage fool of the name Pickelhering, but also in paintings such as the Frans Hals's 'Peeckelhaeringh' from ca. 1628–1630.⁹ The second point of contact is more immediately relevant to the foregoing remarks on genre. The Dutch humanist tradition exercised an unparalleled influence on German poetry, especially during the first half of the seventeenth century. Nearly a quarter of the students enrolled at the university of Leiden during this period were German-speakers on their *perergrinatio academica*.¹⁰ The impact of the Dutch university can be most powerfully felt in the writings of Martin Opitz (1597–1639), who studied in Leiden under the eminent humanist Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655), and remained a loyal champion of his teacher as both a theoretician and poet.¹¹ Through his own translations, original poems, and treatises, Opitz pioneered the almost century-long efforts to elevate the German language to equal standing with its European neighbors. The close affinity between the two languages as well as the Dutch humanist tradition formed the foundation of Opitz's reform endeavors.¹²

7 I address these developments at greater length in my forthcoming study, *The Persistence of Folly*, currently in manuscript.

8 Emil Herz, *Englische Schauspieler und englisches Schauspiel zur Zeit Shakespeares in Deutschland* (Hamburg: Verlag Leopold Voß, 1903).

9 For a collection of such plays, see Manfred Brauneck, *Spieltexte der Wanderbühne* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970–2007), 5 vols. in 6.

10 Bornemann, *Anlehnung und Abgrenzung*, pp. 11–18.

11 Bornemann, *Anlehnung und Abgrenzung*, pp. 18–42.

12 See Gunter E. Grimm, *Literatur und Gelehrtentum in Deutschland* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1983). For a more recent and more detailed consideration of these themes, see Guillaume van Gemert, 'Vom *Aristarchus* zur Jesuiten-Poesie: Zum dynamischen Wechselbezug von Latein und Landessprache in den deutschen Landen in der Frühen Neuzeit / From *Aristarch* to Jesuit Poetry: The Shifting Interrelation between Latin and the Vernacular in the German Lands in Early Modern Times', in Jan Bloemendal (ed.), *Bilingual Europe: Latin and Vernacular Cultures, Examples of Bilingualism and Multilingualism c. 1300–1800* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 118–143.

German 'Trauerspiel' and the Dramatic Oeuvre of Joost van den Vondel

Much like Opitz, the plays that stand in the focus of this essay turn to the Dutch context as the foundation for their own forays into the newly emerging world of German poetry. Almost every play refers to itself as writing 'according to' or 'after' the Dutch plays written by Vondel. The German word they use to refer to their writing practice, *nach*, admits of both these meanings: it can refer to the more closely hewn linguistic interchange from Dutch to German and the more loosely construed adaptation. The one exception to this rule, which claims to be 'out of' or 'from' (*aus*) Vondel's Dutch text still takes significant liberty with its source material. I belabor this seemingly minor point because the plays at stake in this essay all operate with what I wish to call a weak conception of *authorial propriety*. By weak authorial propriety I mean, firstly, that there was no sense that Vondel's plays were cemented in the shape he published them and, secondly, that there was not a tacit imperative to maintain fidelity to the plays as Vondel published them. To write after or according to Vondel is to feel free to insert and excise, to appropriate and transform, at will. The German plays I discuss in this essay employ a distinct practice of writing—a writing out of, after, and according to—that allows for the use of Vondel's name of the frontispiece of plays that retain very little just as well as on plays that retain essentially all the contents of Vondel's original play. No text that I am dealing with thinks of itself as a translation as we would employ the word; none evinces anxiety about living up to the intentions of the original author; none feels beholden to reproducing the compositional unity of Vondel's plays.

In examining the various plays that bear the name Vondel with the corpus of seventeenth-century German *Trauerspiel*, one is not examining the (better or worse) translations of an author in the usual sense. However naturally attractive and readily accessible concepts like author and translations may seem, they fail to capture the practice these writers are engaged in and the use to which they were putting Vondel's plays. Within this practice and use, Vondel functions more as a template. I prefer the term template because his plays were added to, subtracted from, expanded and truncated as they were being transferred to a different linguistic and cultural setting. Thinking of Vondel as a template has the additional advantage of avoiding the normative dismissals that many of the German plays I deal with have garnered. Because these texts have been treated as translations of an original drama, they have been subject to evaluations that operate with the distinction between greater or lesser accuracy. In working with the concept of a template, by contrast, one has a significantly more flexible heuristic: this writing format admits of, indeed depends

for its life upon, alterations of all sorts. What is more, the quality of a template is, in general, assessed in terms of its utility—which is to say in terms of its capacity to serve as an instrument for bringing forth something different from itself. In the following I therefore speak of modifications and adaptations made to the Vondel template and not translations and deviations from Vondel's text.

Some of the template, especially its rudimentary formal features, is immediately evident. For instance, the use of choral passages—called *Rey* in Dutch and *Reyen* in German—was drawn from neoclassical Dutch tragedy and gained a life of its own within the German context, assuming highly unusual allegorical and even cosmological shapes in later plays.¹³ The same could be said of use of stichomythia, of line-by-line verbal battles. Such passages, a conventional feature of Ancient Greek and Roman tragedy also appropriated by Vondel and his contemporaries, were expanded to an almost exhausting degree and became the key formal technique for articulating the central conflict in German *Trauerspiel*. One literary historian has gone so far as to call Gryphius's first original tragedy, *Leo Armenius*, an 'overgrowth of stichomythia' ('Auswucherung der Stichomythien').¹⁴ This expansive trend continued through Lohenstein's last play *Sophonisbe* (1680). Such developments illustrate the contingent effects that can emerge when conventions from one context are appropriated in another; forms deviate from their original path and are taken in unanticipated directions. Even when considering such manifest formal debts, one sees that transfer is not a frictionless enterprise; the choral passages and verbal back-and-forths become something different—and stranger, less overtly classicizing—in *Trauerspiel*. Attention to the roots and the divergent ramifications of Dutch classical drama in seventeenth-century German drama helps to lend greater precision to one of the key strategies by means of which the generic distinctness of *Trauerspiel* has been established in the scholarship: the claim to its non-Aristotelian design. It would be more accurate to say, in light of the manifest influence of Dutch neoclassical tragedy on the Germans, that *Trauerspiel* comes into being on the basis of a neo-Aristotelian template, but perpetuates itself in the untroubled and unwitting manipulation of Aristotelian conventions.

In looking at the various deployments on the Vondel template, I shall consider the periphery of what is usually treated in discussions of *Trauerspiel*. My goal is not to redeem these as unacknowledged literary masterpieces, but

13 This is particularly evident in the plays of Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein.

14 Gerhard Kaiser, 'Leo Armenius, Oder Fürsten=Mord', in Gerhard Kaiser (ed.), *Die Dramen des Andreas Gryphius: Eine Sammlung von Einzelinterpretationen* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag, 1968), pp. 3–34, esp. p. 30.

instead to draw out the way that *Trauerspiel* comes into being as an appropriated but transformed genre, one that in the act of migration discloses new possibilities for the reproduction of forms and the production of meaning. And in focusing on the lines of filiation stretching back from *Trauerspiel* to Dutch drama, my goal is not to undercut but instead alter the shape of the claim to the uniqueness of German *Trauerspiel* in the seventeenth century. Much like many other instances in the history of European poetic and artistic forms, *Trauerspiel* made its claim to legitimacy on the basis of an already established and ennobled genre, namely the Dutch neo-classical *Treurspel*. Central to the formation of German *Trauerspiel*, it turns out, is the appropriation and modification of a positively valorized template—Vondel, in this case. *Trauerspiel*, one might say, is marked out by fuzzy and porous boundaries, where the migration across national, linguistic, and cultural boundaries—the circulation of genres across Europe—brings along with it alteration and mutation. This zone—where to write is to write out of, after, and according to—does not allow for a clear-cut division between invention and imitation.

Case 1: Gryphius's *Die sieben Brüder* and Vondel's *Gebroeders*

The natural point of ingress for any consideration of the connection between seventeenth-century Dutch and German drama is the figure of Andreas Gryphius.¹⁵ Beginning with Gryphius has the distinct advantage of showing the scope of the uses that were made of the Vondel template. In his wake, others took up work with the same material, but modified the template further than their predecessor Gryphius had. The process of appropriation and transformation entails changes not just to the formal arrangement of the template, but also to its thematic focus.

Gryphius greatly admired Vondel, and may have well encountered his plays both in print and at the newly opened Amsterdam theater during his student days in Leiden (1638–1644).¹⁶ Although not printed until after his death but

15 Among the more recent articles that touch on many of the issues I discuss in this essay, see Ferdinand van Ingen, 'Die Übersetzung als Rezeptionsdokument: Vondel in Deutschland-Gryphius in Holland', *Michigan Germanic Studies* 4 (1978), 131–164; Guillaume van Gemert, 'Between Disregard and Political Mobilization—Vondel as a Playwright in Contemporary European Context: England, France and the German lands', in Jan Bloemendal and Franz-Willem Korsten, *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 171–198.

16 See Willi Fleming, 'Vondels Einfluss auf die Trauerspiele des Andreas Gryphius, Zugleich

probably completed in the early 1640s, Gryphius's adaptation of Vondel's 1640 *Gebroeders* constitutes his first foray into the field of drama.¹⁷ As scholars have long noticed, Vondel made an indelible mark on Gryphius own language and imagery, as turns of phrase and individual passages from the Dutch writer reappear even in Gryphius's later plays. His rendering of *Gebroeders*, meanwhile, adheres so closely to the Dutch text on a linguistic level that it often stretches the limits of comprehensibility. Despite this challenge, it was performed at least five times in the school theater in Breslau in 1652.¹⁸

The selection of this play, in particular, for translation is puzzling. *Gebroeders* comes at a transitional moment in Vondel's career, when he is giving up the conventions of Senecan tragedy and increasingly adopting classical Greek models. The importance of classical Greek poetry is evident from the dedication to the Amsterdam humanist Gerardus Vossius (1577–1649), under whose influence Vondel translated Sophocles' *Electra*, and deepened his understanding of Aristotle's *Poetics*.¹⁹ The perplexity goes even deeper since Gryphius, disregarding or perhaps unaware of this philhellenic turn, omits the dedication and inserts a prologue that draws on Seneca's *Thyestes* and *Agamemnon*.²⁰ In a scene that echoes the appearance of the ghosts of Tantalus and Thyestes at the two aforementioned Seneca plays, Gryphius commences his adaptation of Vondel, *Die Sieben Brüder oder Die Gibeoniter*, with a prefatory monologue delivered by the bloody ghost of King Saul.²¹ And much like these two figures, Saul appears on the stage to bemoan his eternal torture and introduce the curse that hangs over his house and progeny. And in a final gesture toward Senecan

eine methodologische Besinnung', *Philologus* 13 (1928), pp. 184–196. For a close consideration of the linguistic coincidences in the Vondel translation, see Henri Plard, 'Die sieben Brüder / Oder Die Gibeoniter' in Kaiser, *Die Dramen des Andreas Gryphius*, pp. 305–317.

17 The exact timeline of Gryphius's work on the play remains uncertain. It was only published after his death by his son Christian, who provides no direction in this regard.

18 Plard, 'Sieben Brüder / Oder Die Gibeoniter', p. 317.

19 See Kåre Langvik Johannessen, *Zwischen Himmel und Erde: Eine Studie über Joost van den Vondels biblische Tragödie in gattungsgeschichtlicher Perspektive* (Fredrikstad: Universitetsforlaget, 1963), pp. 114–115. See also W.A.P. Smit, *Van Pascha tot Noah. vol. 1: Van Pascha tot Leeuwendalers* (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1956), pp. 265–302.

20 In truth, he incorporates many of the elements from Vondel's dedication into Saul's monologue. For instance Vondel lists Saul's great shortcoming as his 'ongehoorzaemheid', while in Gryphius's prologue Saul says of himself that he must eternally repent for 'den ungehorsam' he committed. Similarly, Vondel blames Saul for 'meineedigheid', while Saul says in Gryphius that he is guilty of 'Meineid'. This list could be extended.

21 Reprinted in Andreas Gryphius, *Gesamtausgabe der deutschsprachigen Werke*, ed. Hugh Powell (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1966), vol. 6, pp. 71–129.

tragedy, Saul also completes his speech as the sun rises and he must flee the stage. Of course, Seneca figured centrally in the humanistic educational program and exercises a massive influence on tragic forms across Europe.²² There is no evidence in Gryphius's oeuvre that he objected to or even recognized the significance of the Dutch revival of Ancient Greek sources in Vondel. However, it is certain that he felt a strong affinity with Seneca's tragedy. In his adaptation of Vondel as well as in all of his later plays the influence of Roman tragedy is pervasive.

Gryphius's insertion of a Senecan prologue scene spoken by Saul points to a general feature in the evolution of poetic forms. The migration of a poetic form across cultural and linguistic boundaries allows for reassignment of their strategic import. After all, poetic texts are not simply spontaneous expressions, but in many cases inhabit a cultural place within a pre-established set of concerns to which they respond. A new field of circulation brings along with it new pre-existing conditions and concerns, statements and responses. To put the same point more concretely, the significance of Vondel's *Gebroeders* is determined in no small part by the changing tides of Roman and Greek influence at the time as well as the political setting of the Dutch Republic. Much of the Dutch controversy is lost on Gryphius and has even less impact on the subsequent engagements with the German text. When the play is deracinated from its native context, including the controversies and debates concerning the relationship of Dutch *Treurspel* to Ancient Greek tragedy, it assumes a new place and purpose. For example, any of the most intensely debated issues in Dutch letters at the time are Aristotelian in provenance, including the unity of plot and the necessity of *catharsis*.²³ But these controversies become flattened when transferred to the German setting and instead take on a life entirely of their own, both in the domain of written dramas and poetic treatises. Just as Gryphius here alters Vondel's play, the long lineage of poetological treatises in the seventeenth century—from Opitz to Harsdörffer to Omeis—drew on while simultaneously transforming treatises emerging from the Dutch humanist tradition, including Heinsius and Vossius as well as their Italian antecedents.²⁴

22 For the German context in particular, see Paul Stachel, *Seneca und das deutsche Renaissance-drama: Studien zur Literatur- und Stilgeschichte des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1907).

23 The developments of the concept of *catharsis* has been traced with significant erudition in Hans-Jürgen Schings, 'Consolatio Tragoediae: Zur Theorie des barocken Trauerspiels' in Reinhold Grimm (ed.), *Deutsche Dramentheorien* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 1–44.

24 An indication of this fact can be found in two landmark studies that focus particularly

When concepts like *catharsis* and entire genres like tragedy were brought into the German context, they do not remain the same, but link up with Lutheran theology as well as contemporary political debates.²⁵ As the Aristotelian provenance of concepts and the neo-classical orchestration of dramatic form fade into oblivion, *catharsis* becomes identified with the Christian concept of *consolatio* and the Aristotelian demand that the tragedy focus on a figure of middling moral stature is supplanted by an interest in moral perfection like the martyr and extreme moral corruption like the tyrant.²⁶ Or, to return to an example I gave above, the neo-classical choral passages shed their traditional shape and morph into allegorical passages of with cosmological dimensions. These sorts of changes unfold within a process of appropriation and redeployment which themselves solicit further responses and unforeseeable transformations, and it is by these means that *Trauerspiel* became 'such an unaristotelian product.'²⁷

In the case of Gryphius's *Die sieben Brüder*, the migration of form from the Dutch to the German context went hand-in-hand with the imposition of a new thematic focus. Whereas the Biblical passages upon which the play is based, 2Samuel 21, 1–14, as well as Book VII, ch. 12 of Josephus's *Antiquities of the*

on the rhetorical tradition Ludwig Fischer, *Gebundene Rede: Dichtung und Rhetorik in der literarischen Theorie des Barock in Deutschland* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968); Joachim Dyck, *Ticht-Kunst: Deutsche Barockpoetik und rhetorische Tradition* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969).

- 25 The latter issue in particular has been the topic of much research since Walter Benjamin's first attempt to link *Trauerspiel* to Carl Schmitt's theory of political sovereignty. See for instance Albrecht Koschorke, Thomas Frank, Ethel Matala de Mazza, and Susanne Lüdemann, *Der fiktive Staat: Konstruktionen des politischen Körpers in der Geschichte Europas* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2007), pp. 103–218; Armin Schäfer, 'Der Souverän, die clementia und die Aporien der Politik: Überlegungen zu Daniel Casper von Lohensteins Trauerspielen', in Erika Fischer-Lichte (ed.), *Theatralität und die Krisen der Repräsentation* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag, 2001), pp. 101–124; and Armin Schäfer, 'Die Wohltat in der Politik: Über Souveränität und Moral im barocken Trauerspiel', in Anne von der Heiden (ed.), *Per imaginem: Bildlichkeit und Souveränität* (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2005), pp. 79–99.
- 26 This is Benjamin's thesis that there is a Janus face to tragedy, which seems to me by large stretches correct. Of course, there are other models of extreme moral corruption, but the tyrant is certainly a prominent one. See Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, p. 249.
- 27 Schings, 'Consolatio Tragoediae: Zur Theorie des barocken Trauerspiels', p. 1. Although Schings makes this remark in reference to the martyr play in particular, his essay goes on to lend general plausibility to the initial and more limited claim.

Jews, identify Saul's disobedience of God as source of his punishment, the final installment of which is the hanging of seven of his male descendants, Gryphius uses the prologue to install a political frame. In his prologue, Saul appears as something other than a king who is robbed of God's good favor for his insubordination; he is a bloodthirsty tyrant. In reframing the story underlying the drama, Gryphius adduces a political purpose utterly alien to Vondel's text and its political environment. The programmatically significant lines spoken in the prologue by Saul warrant quoting:

Zum Spiegel euch / blutdürstige Tyrannen/
 Die ihr nur tödten könt / und bannen/
 Schaut / Schaut / die immer frische Wund ist trieffend blieben /
 Durch die ich mich in höchste Noth getrieben.²⁸

(A mirror for you, bloodthirsty tyrants
 Who only know to kill and banish
 Look, look, the still dripping ever-fresh wound
 Through which I drove myself to the most extreme exigency.)

Saul here suggests a purpose to his presence onstage and a lesson that can be drawn from his miserable fate. The idea that tragedy should serve as a *speculum* had made a prominent appearance in the Martin Opitz's remarks on tragedy. In the introduction to his translation of Seneca's *Trojan Women*, Opitz remarks that 'tragedy [...] is nothing more than a mirror of all those who rely on fortune alone in all their doings.' ('Dann eine Tragödie | [...] ist nichts anders als ein Spiegel derer | die in allem jhrem thun vnd lassen auff das blosser Glück fussen.').²⁹ Opitz means by this that tragedy concentrates in general on figures who fail to employ a proper moral compass to guide their actions; relying instead upon their own arbitrary passions and will, tragic figures ultimately are vulnerable to the unforeseeable accidents of a fate they do not command. Gryphius, by contrast, further limits the set of human fates reflected in his *speculum*. Saul does not address his fate to just anyone; he singles out an infamous ilk of political rulers, the tyrants, for his tragedy. Gryphius transforms the story of Saul's disobedience of God and his eventual condemnation, recounted in 1 Samuel 15–16, into an act of political misconduct. In so doing, Gryphius aims

28 Gryphius, *Gesamtausgabe der deutschsprachigen Werke*, vol. 6, p. 76.

29 See Martin Opitz, *Weltliche Poemata* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967; reprint of fourth edition from 1644), vol. 1, p. 314.

to draw out the moral dimension of political action, to show the inseparability of political and moral mandates. Tyranny, for Gryphius, is as much a vice as it is a political perversion. It is not so much that Gryphius abandons the Biblical story of Saul's rebellion against God as that he takes such rebellion against God as the proper characterization of bloodthirsty tyrant's moral failure. To be a politically transgressive tyrant is to abandon God's moral mandates. While the verses in 2 Samuel 21 had indicated that Saul's house is sullied for his massacre of the Gibeonites, against the command of God, Gryphius translates these passages into a political terminology alien to the Biblical text, firmly rooted in the central controversies of political thought in the mid-seventeenth century.

By contrast with Vondel's own emphasis in his dedication to Vossius that the play should serve a proof of God's punishment of evil-doers and a lesson in the necessity to fear God, Gryphius casts the entire play as a lesson in the ills of political malfeasance. In conceiving of Saul as a paradigmatic political tyrant, Gryphius introduces two interconnected thematic elements that prove of the essence to the *Trauerspiele* he begins publishing in 1650. Firstly, he introduces the theme of the violent excesses to which the tyrant is prone. And, secondly, he places these within an explicitly moral and eschatological framework. The emphasis on the pitfalls of a political rationality segregated from morality is at the heart of essentially all Gryphius's tragedies, from *Leo Armenius* (1650) through *Papinian* (1659). In positioning the tyrant as the enemy of morality, Gryphius inserts himself into one of the key contemporary debates in political philosophy and jurisprudence. One of the guiding concerns in political thought of the seventeenth century was whether political actions possess a distinct set of ends that could be assessed independent of a moral perspective. The key term, *Staatsräson*, was associated originally with Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532), but in the course of the seventeenth century was subject to a broad swath of different elaborations, with proponents as well as opponents.³⁰ Whereas the term 'Machiavellismus' was, with a few exceptions, used in a derogatory sense, there were systematic attempts to develop a theory of a political rationality that was compatible with religious virtue.³¹ *Trauerspiel*—and in particular Gryphius's *Trauerspiel*—inveighs against the employment

30 See the excellent survey of the historical field in Horst Dreitzel, 'Neostoizismus, Tacitismus, Staatsräson' in Friedrich Ueberweg (ed.), *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Basel: Schwabe & Co Verlag, 2001), vol. 4/1, pp. 694–714.

31 Michael Stolleis, 'Machiavellismus und Staatsräson: Ein Beitrag zu Conrings Politischem Denken', in Michael Stolleis (ed.), *Hermann Conring (1606–1681): Beiträge zum Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1983), pp. 173–199.

of a political rationality detached from moral considerations; inevitably, the reliance on political reasons alone exerts a violent and destructive force.³²

The focus on political rationality in Gryphius's prologue constituted one level within a two-tiered design. The prologue's address to tyrants is counterbalanced by very brief epilogue that generalizes the intended addressee. After the main action of the play as Vondel conceived it is complete, Gryphius calls Saul back onto the stage to say: 'Man! O reflect yourself in me; what struck me also threatens you.' ('Mensch! O spiegel dich an mir / was mich schlug / das dreuet dir.')33 The key thought here is that the significance of Saul's moral failure is relevant to a broader scope of persons than just tyrants. The inclusion of this epilogue—and its generalization of the *speculum*—fits with a model of the applicability and utility of tragedy described by Opitz:

In dem wir grosser Leute / gantzer Stätte vnd Länder eussersten Untergang zum offern schawen vnd betrachten / tragen wir zwar / wie es sich gebüret / erbarmen mit jhnen / können auch nochmals auß Wehmuth die Thränen kaum zurück halten; wir lernen aber darneben auch durch stetige Besichtigung so vielen Creutzes und Ubels das andern begegnet ist / das vnrsige / welches vns begegnet möchte / weniger fürchten und besser erdulden.

(When we often see and behold the extreme downfall of powerful people, entire cities and lands, we feel the appropriate pity for them and out of woefulness can barely hold back the tears. Simultaneously, however, we also learn through the regular viewing of so much suffering and evil born by others to have less fear and better endure our own.)³⁴

Tragedy is particularly effective in providing consolation for the inevitable trials of life because it portrays the endurance of ill fate on a large scale. The justification for the focus on members of the political elite in tragedy does not draw on traditional rhetorical standards of *decorum* or the demands of the *genus sublime*, but instead on the greater communicative scope, the greater extension of potential addresses, such figures possess. Saul's disobedience and fate are a lesson for tyrants in particular, but also for the human in general. It is Saul's fate in particular—his loss of seven sons—that stands in the

32 See Schäfer, 'Versuch über Souveränität und Moral im barocken Trauerspiel', esp. pp. 387–393.

33 See Gryphius, *Gesamtausgabe der deutschsprachigen Werke*, vol. 6, p. 129.

34 Opitz, *Weltliche Poemata*, vol. 1, p. 315.

focus of Gryphius's conception of the play's larger didactic import. This is, of course, a significant change in emphasis from Vondel's play, at the center of which stands King David and his deliberations and distress over the sacrifice of Saul's descendants. But the shift from David to Saul coheres with the double assignment of tragedy to both tyrants in particular and man in general.

The liberty Gryphius took with the Vondel template draws on a tradition in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century German drama of identifying Saul as a tyrant fitting for tragedy.³⁵ At least two tragedies that predate Gryphius—Hans Sachs's *Tragedi König Sauls mit Verfolgung Davids* (1557) and Wolfhart Spangenberg's *Saul. Ein Klegliche Tragoedia/ vom Gottlosen könige Saul/ vnd seinem schrecklichen vntergang* (1606)—counterpose David and Saul like good and evil and take Saul as the model of a vicious and tyrannical king. In Spangenberg's play, for instance, Saul develops an ultimately self-destructive jealousy of David's military success and suspects the young hero of seeking to depose him. 'Do you not aspire to the king's throne, so that you may already rule in my stead?' ('Trachtest du nicht nachs Königs Thron | An mein stat zu regieren schon?') Saul asks at the turning point of the play, the first scene of the third act.³⁶ From this moment on, Saul is launched into a downward spiral of paranoid aggression that culminates in him falling on his own sword. The tragedy establishes a direct connection between Saul's violent fear of losing political power and his abandonment of religious virtue. The speaker of the epilogue claims that Saul's actions demonstrate that a 'vengeful, envious heart, is quickly captured by the devil!' ('Wie eyn Rachgirig / Neidisch Hertz / Vom Teuffel balt wird eingenommen.')³⁷ Gryphius, too, will take Saul as doomed for his tyranny and moral corruption. In this respect, both authors writing in the German language fall in lockstep with conventional portrayals of Saul in the neo-Latin dramatic tradition.³⁸

If my emphasis on the political thrust of Gryphius's emended translation seems overstretched, consider the second use of the Vondel's template that appeared about twenty years after Gryphius undertook his. In this case, David Elias Heidenreich published a *Trauerspiel* entitled *Rache zu Gibeon oder Die Sieben Brüder aus dem Hause Sauls* in 1662, to which he appends the subtitle

35 See Van Ingen, 'Die Übersetzung als Rezeptionsdokument', pp. 152–153.

36 For a reprint of the play see Wolfhart Spangenberg, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. András Vizkelety (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 273–412. See esp. p. 337.

37 See Wolfhart Spangenberg, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, p. 411.

38 For instance: Theodorus Rhodius, *Saul* (Asselheim 1615); Michael Virdung, *Saulus* (Jena 1595); Edmund Campion, *Saulus* (written between 1574 and 1580 in Prague).

'mostly according to [or after] the Dutch of Joost van Vondel.'³⁹ Signal differences to Vondel and Gryphius are immediately evident: this play is in prose, it introduces an abundance of additional scene-divisions, and it amplifies the portrayal of violence. At the same time, the language of the play betrays the significant use Heidenreich made of Gryphius's adaptation, which he must have accessed in manuscript form.⁴⁰ I wish to isolate a single passage from the play, which indicates the peculiar balance between adherence to convention and adaptive liberty that characterizes the processes of transfer that give rise to *Trauerspiel*. For Heidenreich's play departs even further from the Dutch original, as he radicalizes Gryphius's moral-political reframing. I have in mind the final speech delivered by the captain of the royal guard, spoken 'to the audience' ['gegen das Volck']⁴¹ The terms of Gryphius's prologue, omitted from Heidenreich's play (and, of course, absent from Vondel's), reappear here at the conclusion in slightly varied form:

Spiegelt euch ihr Blut=dürstigen! Spiegelt euch ihr Tyrannen! Spiegelt euch / die ihr anfanget groß zu werden! [...] Verfluchte Tyranny! hütet euch davor / Ihr Grossen der Welt. Trifft euch nicht das Wetter / das dieses Laster ahndet / so wird es doch der nach Euch kömmt empfinden. Gott ist immittelst gerecht. Der erniedriget und erhöht. Der lasse das Haus David ewig grünen und blühen.

(See your reflection you bloodthirsty rulers! See your reflection you tyrants. See your reflection, those of you beginning to become powerful! Damned tyranny! Protect yourselves from it, you powerful men of the world. Even if the weather does not strike you that punishes this vice, those who come after you will come to feel it. God is in the meantime just. He brings down and raises. May he let the house of David eternally thrive and bloom.)⁴²

The echoes of Gryphius's text are unmistakable. The play addresses itself to tyrants, aspiring and actual, whose ruthless thirst for power leads them to disre-

39 See title page to David Elias Heidenreich, *Rache zu Gibeon oder Die Sieben Brüder aus dem Hause Sauls. Meist nach dem Holländischen Josts van Vondel* (Görlitz: Johannes Candisius 1662).

40 This has been discussed in the editor's preface to Egbert Krispyn (ed.), *Joost van den Vondel Gebroeders 1648, Andreas Gryphius Die Gibeoniter 1690, David Elias Heidenreich Die Rache zu Gibeon* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 5–69, esp. pp. 55–56.

41 Heidenreich, *Rache zu Gibeon*, p. 102.

42 See Heidenreich, *Rache zu Gibeon*, p. 102.

gard moral considerations. Whereas Gryphius calls the eternally-damned Saul onto the stage as implicit evidence of the fate that befalls tyrants, Heidenreich makes verbally explicit the providential order the play is meant to illustrate. The claim that the play demonstrates divine vengeance helps explain the most striking feature of Heidenreich's play: the extensive verbal treatment of the sacrifice of the seven descendants of Saul and the visual display of their crucifixion.⁴³ This modification is more than a testament to Heidenreich's brutal indifference to the classicizing standards of Vondel's tragedy, which dictated that such violence must take place offstage and be related only through a messenger's report. The alteration is an indication that Heidenreich, following Gryphius, took the act of divine retribution, the belated punishment of Saul's tyrannical deeds, as the real focus of the play. David's vexed deliberations whether or not to hand over the seven to sure death (Vondel's main interest) fade into the background, for Heidenreich clearly regards them as secondary to the eschatological, nearly casuistic frame. The vivid portrayal of the hangings is the visual realization of the promise voiced in the above quoted passage: even if acts of tyranny are not immediately punished, divine punishment will be visited upon a future generation. Heidenreich employs the gruesome display as vivid evidence of the inevitability of divine retribution.

Case 2: Kormart's *Maria Stuart* and Vondel's *Maria Stuart*

Extreme violence is also manifest in the second cluster of geographical and linguistic transfers I wish to discuss. The point of departure shall be the *Trauerspiel* Christophorus Kormart published in 1673 under the title *Maria Stuart Oder Gemarterte Majestät*.⁴⁴ The play professes to be 'after' or 'according to' Vondel's 1646 *Maria Stuart of Gemartelde majesteit*, but the changes it introduces penetrate to the core of the original construction. Without question, Vondel's play about the Queen of Scots, *Mary Stuart or Tortured Majesty*, is as much a statement about the injustice of beheading a sovereign as it is about his Catholic sympathies.⁴⁵ Vondel converted to Catholicism a few years before he wrote the

43 See Heidenreich, *Rache zu Gibeon*, pp. 90–94 and p. 99.

44 Christoph Kormart, *Maria Stuart oder Gemarterte Majestät* (Halle: Johann Fick Witwe und Erben, 1673).

45 See Judith Pollmann, 'Vondel's Religion' and James A. Parente, Jr. and Jan Bloemendal, 'The Humanist Tradition—Maria Stuart (1646)', in Bloemendal and Korsten, *Joost van den Vondel*, pp. 85–100 and pp. 341–358.

martyr play, and he developed a sharply asymmetrical design in order to establish the wrongfulness of the virtuous heroine's death. The play's dedication to Lord Edward, Count Palatine and Duke of Bavaria who also happened to be the great-grandson of Mary Stuart herself, compares the beheaded queen to Moses and Christ and characterizes her death as a martyrdom on behalf of her catholic faith. The play was initially published anonymously, but an error of the publisher made Vondel's name public; its offensiveness to the Calvinist authorities earned him an immediate fine.⁴⁶

As in the previous cluster of adaptations, the selection of this Vondel play for adaptation is striking. The play constitutes a surprising choice in virtue of its strong religious polemic and its focus on the English and Scottish monarchies. The topic was in many respects less readily accessible than the Biblical and ancient historical narratives that predominately stand at the center of *Trauerspiel*. But this was neither the first nor the last time that German playwrights would turn to the House of Stuart and bloody conflict within the two kingdoms of the British Isles. From among the abundance of contemporary bloody events, including the devastating conflicts of the Thirty Years' War, only the deaths of Charles and Mary Stuart became the subject of *Trauerspiel*. Two factors seem to have conspired to make this subject particularly attractive: on the one hand, the recognition of English affairs of state as possessing adequate gravity and at the same time the use of venerated, which is to say Dutch, contemporary dramatizations of the very same history. These two preconditions allow English royal history to stand alongside plays primarily populated by the venerated personalities of Hebrew, Roman, and Byzantine history.

However, German writers did not generally feel a stronger affinity to English history than to that of other European nations. Nor is it the case that Kormart's adaptation of Vondel was more than an expression of personal favor for Dutch neo-classical drama. In considering this play, we instead find ourselves in the midst of a larger itinerary of appropriations, and adaptations, of which the Kormart's *Maria Stuart* constitutes a station along the way. In the preface to his play, Kormart situates himself in a lineage founded by one of the most prominent German authors of his day, none other than Gryphius. His deployment of English royal history as the subject for *Trauerspiel* was licensed by an anterior authority: Gryphius's publication of *Ermordete Majestät oder Carolus Stuardus* (1657, revised and significantly expanded 1663). Gryphius established a pedigree, which includes Kormart as well as a number of other playwrights, who

46 See Parente, Jr. and Bloemendal, "The Humanist Tradition—Maria Stuart (1646)", pp. 341–344.

made the Stuart monarchy the subject of *Trauerspiel*. Other members of the lineage include Johannes Riemer's *Von Staats Eiffer* from 1681 and August Adolf von Haugwitz's *Schuldige Unschuld oder Maria Stuarda* from 1683. Whereas the Haugwitz play shows no signs of familiarity with the Dutch play and its German adaptation, it draws heavily on Gryphius's earlier portrayal of the House of Stuart.⁴⁷ Riemer, meanwhile, acknowledges that some lines of his play are lifted from Kormart and Vondel while making no mention of Gryphius. Nonetheless, it was Gryphius who first made the Stuart monarchy a candidate for *Trauerspiel* and who set into motion a process that brought forth adaptations and original dramas alike with the same thematic focus. This generally unacknowledged fact is particularly important because Gryphius is often treated as one of the two lone stars in seventeenth-century drama that essentially disappeared from the heavens of great literary figures until being rediscovered in the early twentieth century. In truth, though, he had a tremendous impact on seventeenth-century playmaking; similarly the success of his *Carolus Stuardus* did not concern the theory of political sovereignty (the favored lens for viewing the play in recent scholarship), but instead in the line of other Stuart plays it spawned.

I just asserted that Kormart adverts to Gryphius's tragedy on the Stuart monarchy in order to legitimize his own undertaking. The reference is, as such, unnecessary since the events depicted in Gryphius's *Trauerspiel* take place two generations later than in Kormart's; the purpose here is, rather, strategic. Citing a passage from the second prefatory monologue in the first edition of Gryphius's play, which brings the ghost of Maria Stuart onto the stage,⁴⁸ Kormart draws on an authoritative source to support the highly sympathetic portrait of Mary he will paint. In Gryphius's rendering, Maria's brief appearance in the play serves to describe her fatal misfortune and to introduce an antecedent instance of the grave injustice Charles suffers. Of the essence to both the story of Mary and Charles Stuart was the controversial issue whether a political subject can bring a monarch to trial and condemn her to death. Both Kormart and Gryphius endorse the view, expressed by the latter, that only God 'appoints and judges princes.'⁴⁹ In the background of the Vondel adaptation, then, is another

47 August Adolf von Haugwitz, *Schuldige Unschuld oder Maria Stuarda: Faksimiledruck nach der Ausgabe von 1683*, ed. Robert R. Heitner (Bern: Peter Lang, 1974).

48 For the entire monologue, see Andreas Gryphius, *Gesamtausgabe der deutschsprachigen Werke*, vol. 4, pp. 6–9. The passage was excised when Gryphius reworked the play for a second edition.

49 The passage is cited on the fourth unnumbered page in the preface to Kormart's play. The

martyr play, which aims to demonstrate the divine authority with which Mary and Charles Stuart respectively rule and, by contrast, vilify those responsible for deposing the king, especially the anti-royalist radical Puritan sects.⁵⁰

Given the decisive role it plays in shaping the later dramatizations of the Stuart monarchy, a few words on Gryphius's play are in order. His advocacy of monarchical authority, tinged though it was by his sensitivity to its violent abuses, led him to portray the beheading of Mary and Charles Stuart as the infractions of a misdirected notion of earthly justice against the superseding divine authority of absolute monarchy. The supermundane mandate of Charles's rule is dramatized according to a strict typological schema, based in no small part on the self-stylization as martyr in the image of Christ propagated in the king's *Eikon Basilike*.⁵¹ The politically tendentious character of Gryphius's *Trauerspiel*, enhanced through references to Salmasius *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I* and Philip von Zesens *Der verschmähete / doch wieder erhöhete Majestäht*, among others, is rooted within his concrete historical situation. Its dedication to Princess Elizabeth of the Palatinate, a relative of Charles Stuart himself, is an indication that the author intended his *Trauerspiel* as a mechanism for soliciting support against the revolutionary government led by Oliver Cromwell. Support for this design is provided by Gryphius in the extensive apparatus with quotations from ancient and modern sources in Latin, Italian and German, which supplies his defense of Charles with ostensibly authoritative historical information and legal doctrine. Although his aspiration to historical fidelity leads him to lend an almost convincing plausibility to the opposition

original quotation can be found in Andreas Gryphius, *Gesamtausgabe der deutschsprachigen Werke*, vol. 4, p. 8.

50 This is particularly evident in Gryphius's portrayal of the figure Hugo Peter, the ecclesiastical rabble-rouser and military leader.

51 The typological backdrop to the play has been emphasized by Albrecht Schöne, 'Ermerdete Majestäht. Oder Carolus Stuardus König von Groß Britannien', in Gerhard Kaiser (ed.), *Die Dramen des Andreas Gryphius*, pp. 117–169. With respect to Gryphius, see also Karl-Heinz Habersetzer, *Politische Typologie und dramatisches Exemplum: Studien zum historisch-ästhetischen Horizont des barocken Trauerspiels am Beispiel von Andreas Gryphius' Carolus Stuardus und Papinianus* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag, 1985), pp. 1–42. For the broader historical context, see Helmer Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere (1639–1660)*, unpublished dissertation, Leiden, 2011. See also Nigel Smith, 'Theatrum Mundi and the Politics of Rebellion in Seventeenth Century Drama', in Björn Quiring (ed.), *If Then the World a Theatre Present ...: Revisions of the Theatrum Mundi Metaphor in Early Modern England* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), pp. 199–220.

to Charles I,⁵² the formal design of the play weights the historical events in such a way as to make the monarch's beheading appear an illegal and irreligious infraction. To achieve this end, the dramaturgy of events—which is to say, the manner of presentation according to which the historical sequence unfolds—is remarkably monolithic and flat. From the opening ghost monologues to the chorus of assassinated kings to the concluding speech by the allegory of revenge, the play portrays the deposing of the king as an act that sets loose intractable and potentially interminable violence. In addition to the question of the king's divine right, the play concentrates attention squarely on questions of political stability. The source of its endangerment, as the dramatic action spells out, is the unlawful revolt against Charles. In addition to the question of the king's divine right, Gryphius focuses attention particularly on the anarchic consequences of revolt.

There is a close formal affinity between the asymmetrical design of Gryphius's *Trauerspiel*, which ensures the higher unassailability of the martyr king, and Vondel's rendering of Mary Stuart's fate. In both cases, the uneven organization of the political conflict provides the structural precondition for transmitting the play's political and religious message. One must notice this basic organizational feature of both dramas in order to grasp just how extreme Kormart's *Maria Stuart* departs from the template provided by the Dutch Vondel play. Despite the professed debts to two martyr plays, Kormart in fact creates something strikingly different from either of his forebears. Instead of rendering one political party in the play inviolable, Kormart brings the 'lamentable state of two queens [zweyer Königinnen Trauer=Stand]' onto the stage.⁵³ His portrayal of Elizabeth and Mary as both 'queens worthy of the highest renown',⁵⁴ is motivated by his dedication to 'the truth of history'⁵⁵ and avowed disfavor for polemic and bias. In contradistinction to Vondel, then, he consults 'the judgments that appeared the most veracious and judicious from both sides' and avoids 'the suspicious besmirching of such high heads.'⁵⁶ His even-handed approach 'deviates from the assignments of the distinguished Dutch poet'⁵⁷ but with the purpose of 'following the predilections of different spectators.'⁵⁸ Kor-

52 This ambiguity has been exploited in the reading of the play in Albrecht Koschorke a.o., *Der fiktive Staat*, pp. 141–150.

53 Kormart, *Maria Stuart oder Gemarterte Majestät*, p. 2 of unpaginated dedication.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

mart's deviations are, at bottom, a complete transformation of the architectural principles that shape Vondel's play, adding additional figures and disrupting the asymmetrical martyrology.

Much as in the adaptations of *Gebroeders I* discussed above, Kormart alters the thematic focus in order to accommodate the geographical and linguistic transfer. In fact, the proportions and content of Kormart's deviate so radically from Vondel's play that the Vondel template nearly vanishes. The most significant changes consist in Kormart's introduction of an expansive role for Elizabeth, a figure entirely absent from the Dutch original. On the stage, she becomes the mouthpiece of controversial political-philosophical principles. To wit, her deliberations in the play bear on the question whether the preservation of the political order provides the allowance for beheading a member of the royalty. The central issue is what moral allowances are provided by the need to secure the state and its population.⁵⁹ When Kormart inserts Elizabeth and therewith inserts extensive deliberations between the English queen and her advisors, who encourage her to behead her cousin in order to preserve her own rule and maintain political stability, Vondel's play balloons into a text of approximately four times its original length. It is particularly remarkable in light of the asymmetrical design of Vondel's martyr play that both Mary and Elizabeth are portrayed as thoroughly noble: Mary advocates a pure 'conscience' as the foundation of justice and 'the holy law',⁶⁰ whereas Elizabeth as a proponent of 'justice, moderation, wisdom, and bravery.'⁶¹ The real crux of the play, then, is the question what course of action is justified in order to preserve the 'peace of the state and security.'⁶² Again and again throughout the course of the play, Elizabeth and her advisors return to the question whether it is permissible and advisable to behead the Scottish queen in order to 'secure the state.'⁶³ Elizabeth appears in the grips of indecision for almost the entire play, even making an unsuccessful attempt to halt the execution, after she has issued the sentence.⁶⁴ By no means selfishly fixated on her own survival or clasping fearfully to the throne, Elizabeth is a noble queen undecided whether one 'must pur-

59 As Michael Foucault has shown, the notion of security was central to seventeenth-century political discourse. See Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*, transl. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2009), esp. pp. 1–86.

60 Kormart, *Maria Stuart oder Gemarterte Majestät*, p. 10 and 27.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 114–116.

chase security through the spilling of noble blood.⁶⁵ When at the end of the final act (in the ultimate un-classicizing gesture, the fourth of the play), Mary is beheaded onstage, Elizabeth is anything but a villain. Having desperately sought to rescue her cousin from death, her culpability is uncertain. Considered in terms of the formal design of the play, such obscuring of moral responsibility serves a double purpose. Most obviously, it allows both queens to emerge in a positive light. Furthermore, the conceptual consequence of the positive portrayal of Elizabeth's moral fabric positions her at some remove from the morally ambiguous notion of the security of state.

The insistence upon the interlacement of religion and politics—as well as the fatal consequences of their disentanglement—is nowhere more evident than the final employment of the Vondel template I wish to discuss: a play *Von Staats=Eifer*, published in 1681 as the fourth 'discourse' in Johannes Riemer's (1648–1714) *Der Regenten Bester Hoff=Meister Oder Lustiger Hoff=Parnassus*.⁶⁶ In its introduction, the play professes to have made use of Kormart's adaptation of Vondel in making a play that is meant to demonstrate that 'religious zeal can never be removed from the zeal of government and state [kan der Religions=Eiffer / von dem Eiffer der Regierung und des Staats nicht entfernt seyn].'⁶⁷ The additional degree of removal from Vondel's original composition is evident throughout Riemer's play. The alterations range from the inclusion of an irreverent stage fool to the excision of lengthy legal debates introduced by Kormart to an enhancement of Elizabeth's responsibility for Mary's beheading. The key issue in this play is not the religious divide between the Roman Catholic Queen of Scots and her Protestant English cousin, though that too makes an appearance in the early scenes. It is, rather, the queen's self-interested struggle for political survival. As in Kormart's rendering, Elizabeth ultimately heeds her counselors' advice that Mary must die because of her conviction that any other course of action would endanger her own life and the stability of the English kingdom. As in Kormart, Riemer characterizes Elizabeth in sympathetic terms, including the belated and hence failed attempt at a pardon. And again, the decision to behead is cast as a political decision made independent of proper moral consideration.

65 Ibid., p. 118.

66 Reprinted in Johannes Riemer, *Werke*, ed. Helmut Krause (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), vol. 2, pp. 471–519.

67 Riemer, *Werke*, vol. 2, p. 474.

Toward the International Migration of Genre

By contrast with Vondel's original play, neither Kormart nor Riemer place emphasis on sectarian religious conflict, but instead on the abandonment of religiously inflected moral considerations tout court. Both cast aspersion at actions pursued on the basis of political exigency. Absent from all the plays I have discussed is a robust meditation on the theory of political sovereignty, the very matter that since Benjamin's *Habilitationsschrift* has been taken as the hallmark of the German baroque *Trauerspiel*. When these plays thematize the prerogative of a monarch, they do so not with an eye toward 'the state of exception' or toward Jean Bodin's absolutist treatise, but instead toward the (theoretically naïve) perils of political decision-making when severed from the sphere of moral values. This has surprising consequences. For instance, concerning the historical trend described most influentially by Reinhart Koselleck in his powerfully argued book *Kritik und Krise*, one can see that these plays concentrate on the overarching trend that increasingly separates political sovereignty from morality.⁶⁸ All the plays I have touched on use the Vondel template to bring *Trauerspiel* into existence in ways that demonstrate the pitfalls of such a historical development. What is more, the condemnation of a distinct system of political action and its justification brings with it a division of moral considerations from religious ones. Against expectations, none of these plays identifies moral shortcomings with religious partisanship, as the Vondel template encourages. Even though all of the writers I have considered were Lutherans, they, unlike Vondel, do not make their plays into battlegrounds for the conflict between the Reformed and Catholic church, but instead focus on a political sphere disconnected from the teachings of the church altogether. In this respect, the religiously motivated internecine conflicts of the Thirty Years' War may be thought of as the hinge on which the political content of *Trauerspiel* turns.

There can be no doubt that Vondel became something altogether different in the German context than in the Dutch one. He was not a religiously or politically controversial figure; he was not a neo-classicist or philhellene; and he was not an author of plays that demanded faithful translation. Instead, he became a template for making *Trauerspiel*—a source for a basic storyline,

68 See Reinhart Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise: Eine Studie zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 1973), esp. pp. 11–39. See also the astute observations in Niklaus Luhmann, 'Die Ausdifferenzierung der Religion', in Niklas Luhmann, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 1993), vol. 3, pp. 259–357, esp. pp. 300–309.

a reservoir of turns of phrase, a model for dramaturgical arrangement. This template allowed for the creation of something altogether new and different once it got caught up in the ongoing project of establishing German as a poetic language. For this was anything but a project of autodidacticism. To make German poetry was to draw on external resources, antecedent models, and contemporary parallels. The still inchoate endeavor to bring forth a national literature—for Opitz's heritage is nothing less than that—was always already a project filled with deracination and appropriations. If German *Trauerspiel* became something unique and different, it did so in working with templates lifted from the broader European context.

Over recent decades, literary studies have resurrected a conceptual and terminological shift that Goethe introduced in the early decades of the nineteenth century, namely the claim that an epoch world literature is currently supplanting an epoch of national literature. As scholars have returned to Goethe's terminology as well as its elaboration and expansion by Marx, a troubling ambiguity has repeatedly reared its head. It is not always clear whether the denomination world literature refers to an epoch of critical analysis or an epoch of literary production. The most eminent Anglo-American contemporary critics such as Emily Apter, David Damrosch, Wai Chee Dimock, Franco Moretti, and Gayatri Spivak have in polemical yet often deftly argued essays and books trod on both sides of this line.⁶⁹ I mention these recent discussions because the case of *Trauerspiel* in the seventeenth century would suggest that one should perhaps retain the terms world and national literature in a relationship of interdependence. To be sure, beginning with Opitz in the seventeenth century, the project to establish a German national literature persisted as a culturally salient force. But this project itself took place within a larger forum of European vernacular literatures, from which templates like Vondel and *Treurspel* could be borrowed and, in time, transformed. The permeable boundaries of German literature should not be taken as a deficiency of the ever-belated German context, but instead as the instigating reason for the national literary project at all as well as the channels through which templates for making poetry were transmitted. German *Trauerspiel* was always already both a German and an international affair.

69 Among the many recent publications on this theme see: Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London: Verso, 2013); David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Wai Chee Dimock, 'Literature for the Planet', *PMLA* 116 (2001), 173–188; Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013); Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

One final point: the international circulation of plays that I have been tracking does not fit with an ennobled concept of literature. The adaptations of the Vondel template are not part of the formation of a literary tradition; they are not concerned with the forging of a heritage and passing down great texts. While Vondel has certainly achieved distinction as the greatest of Dutch dramatists, the adaptations I have been dealing with belong to the large masses of texts that passed into oblivion until their rediscovery in the discourse of literary scholarship. In seeing how this Dutch dramatist, who would later become a national hero, served a template for the making of *Trauerspiel* in the seventeenth century, then, we do not get a glimpse of forgotten great works. Instead, we attain a sharper sense of the concrete practice of making poetry in the German-speaking lands in the Baroque age.

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The Politics of Mobility: Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Jan Vos's *Aran en Titus* and the Poetics of Empire*

Helmer Helmers

At least five distinct plays were published and performed in seventeenth-century Europe that told the story of the Roman general Titus Andronicus whose triumphant return to Rome spells the beginning of a violent cycle of revenge that causes the empire to disintegrate. Today, of course, the dramatic material is practically exclusively known in William Shakespeare's version that was first published in the Quarto edition of 1594, and held the London stage for at least two decades.¹ Yet it was not in Shakespeare's version all early modern audiences knew the play. By 1620, when *Titus Andronicus* had already been mocked as old-fashioned by Ben Jonson,² Shakespeare's play had largely lost its appeal to London audiences.³ Exactly at that moment, a German play was published, *Eine sehr klaegliche tragoedia von Tito Andronico und der hoffertigen Kayserin* (*A Very Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus and the Haughty Empress*), in a playbook of English players who travelled the continent and had translated and adapted Shakespeare's play.⁴ This play in turn, was adapted by a Dutch associate of the English players, Adriaen van den Bergh, who published his Dutch version, *Andronicus*, in 1621.⁵ That third play is regrettably lost,

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1 I have used William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Routledge, 1996). Hereafter *TA*.

2 Ben Jonson, 'Bartholomew Fair', in *Ben Jonson*, ed. C.H. Herford and P. and E. Simpson, vol. VI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 16, ll. 106–111.

3 On the stage history of *Titus Andronicus*, see: G. Harold Metz, 'Stage History of Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 28 (1977), 154–169.

4 The German play is reprinted and translated in Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Account of English Actors in Germany and the Netherlands, and of the Plays Performed by them During the Same Period* (London: Asher & Co, 1865), pp. 161–235.

5 Ernst F. Kossmann, *Nieuwe Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Tooneel in de*

but it was followed by fourth, Jan Vos's *Aran en Titus, of wraak en weerwraak* (*Aran en Titus, or Revenge and Counter-Revenge*) which Vos wrote in Dutch for the Amsterdam theater in 1638.⁶ Finally, Titus returned to England in the Restoration, when Edward Ravenscroft published his version of the tale in 1687 as *Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia*, which had already been performed in 1678.⁷

Of these five plays, Jan Vos's version, which deviated considerably from the others, was undoubtedly the most successful in its own time. Following its first performance in Amsterdam in 1641, it became by far the most popular play in the Dutch Republic, and maybe even in Northern Europe as a whole. Performed at least 100 times in the Amsterdam theater, it continued to hold the stage well into the eighteenth century.⁸ The printed text ran through at least 34 editions (see illustration 1), and was translated into Latin (as *Aran et Titus, mutua vindicatio*, in 1658) and German (various translations).⁹ The Dutch version was also taken abroad by the famous Dutch playing company of Jan-Baptist van Fornenbergh to be performed at the courts of German and Swedish princes.¹⁰ It was in Vos's heavily adapted version, then, that most European audiences became acquainted with the Titus material. In terms of contemporary impact, *Aran en Titus* has a stronger claim to being a major landmark in seventeenth-century theatrical history than *Titus Andronicus*.

17e en 18e eeuw (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1915), p. 93; Wim Braekman, *Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: Its Relationship to the German Play of 1620 and to Jan Vos's Aran en Titus* (Gent: Blandijnberg, 1969), p. 17.

- 6 I have used Buitendijk's edition: Jan Vos, 'Aran en Titus, of Wraak en Weerwraak', in *Jan Vos: Toneelwerken*, ed. Wim J.C. Buitendijk (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), pp. 47–210. Hereafter *A&T*. All translations from Vos are my own.
- 7 Edward Ravenscroft, *Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia: Acted at the Theatre Royall, A Tragedy* (London: J. Hindmarsh, 1687).
- 8 Elise Oey-de Vita and Marja S. Geesink, *Academie en Schouwburg: Amsterdams toneel-repertoire, 1617–1665* (Amsterdam: Huis aan de drie Grachten, 1983), p. 196.
- 9 Jan Vos. *Aran et Titus, mutua vindicatio* (Tiel: Goosewyn van Duyn, 1658), translated by the Latin school of Tiel under the guidance of rector J. van Aelhuisen. The text, a faithful translation of Vos's Dutch with an additional prologue for students, can be found on: <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/Dutch/Ceneton/Facsimiles/VosAranMutua1658/> (accessed 28-11-2014); for the German translations, see: Buitendijk, 'Inleiding', in *A&T*, pp. 79–80.
- 10 For the history of Van Fornenbergh's playing company, which was much influenced by English actors, see: Ben Albach, *Langs kermessen en hoven: Ontstaan en kroniek van een Nederlands toneelgezelschap in de 17de eeuw* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1977).



FIGURE 12.1 *Jan Vos, Aran en Titus, title page (1641)*
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In terms of scholarly attention, however, Shakespeare's play of course eclipses all the others—despite the fact that *Titus Andronicus*, considered to be offensive to good taste and unworthy of the great playwright, has long been one of the least studied plays in the Shakespearean canon. Notwithstanding its unrivalled success, even Vos's play has hardly been studied, and suffered a similar faith as the much less prominent German text: often mentioned as evidence of Shakespeare's early continental afterlife, seldom read. If they were studied at all, it was to investigate their philological relationship, or to argue their inferiority to Shakespeare.¹¹ Ravenscroft's play, too, has long been condemned to such obscurity. Only quite recently it was rediscovered by Michael Dobson, whose work on Restoration adaptations has generated new interest in them as plays that should not be demeaned as 'cul-de-sacs' in literary history, but as plays that did their own cultural work, and require to be interpreted and assessed on their own terms, in their own contexts.¹² It is about time to shake off the heritage of nineteenth-century nationalism and bardolatry in the international context, too. Rather than treating the fascinating earliest Shakespeare adaptations as derivatives or even vulgarizations uninteresting in their own right, we should, as Anston Bosman has argued, start reading these plays in dialogue, as equivalent stages in a single process of cross-cultural innovation and interpretation.¹³

This article seeks to contribute to the study of that process by presenting a cultural-political reading of the early mobility of the Roman material first dramatized by Shakespeare. Focusing on the crucial intermediate case of Vos's *Aran en Titus*, I will argue that the adaptation of Shakespeare's text was deeply influenced by political concerns. Partly, as we shall see, these concerns were topical and related to specific political circumstances at the moment when Titus appeared in print or on the stage. But underlying these particularities was a more structural aspect: the heritage of Roman imperialism. At different moments in time, England, Germany and the Dutch Republic were rewriting a Roman past that was at once emblematic of imperial might and of imperial

11 For a philological comparison between Shakespeare, the German play, and Vos, see: Braekman, *Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus*. Other revenge tragedies suffered the same fate. For a similar study of the versions of Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, see: Rudolf Schoenwerth, *Die Niederländischen und Deutschen Bearbeitungen von Thomas Kyd's 'Spanish Tragedy'* (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1977).

12 Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660–1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 5 and *passim*.

13 Anston Bosman, 'Renaissance Intertheatre and the Staging of Nobody', *English Literary History* 71 (2004), 559–585; id., 'Mobility', in Henry S. Turner (ed) *Early Modern Theatricality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 493–516.

ruin. It was this ambivalence that was at the heart of the interest in the dramatic accounts of Roman decline. The states in North West Europe, laboring to perpetuate (the Holy Roman Empire) or appropriate (England and the Dutch Republic) Rome's imperial legacy, could not but confront the causes of Rome's violent destruction, if only to evade a similar fate. Just as the (translations of) histories of Sallust and Tacitus, Senecan revenge tragedies such as Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* were read and performed in the context of this European struggle with past and present Romes. The different versions of *Titus Andronicus*, and Vos's adaptation in particular, exhibit how adapters recognized, used, and developed a poetics of empire that lent itself particularly well to recontextualization, and thus, to exchange.

Translatio imperii and the Poetics of Empire

In early modern Europe, as David Armitage has claimed, 'The language of empire was common to all claims of authority, sovereignty and territory'. Empire was a complex concept: it could simply mean authority or sovereignty, but it also referred to the territory over which such authority was claimed, and denoted the rule over many dominions as well.¹⁴ Nearly always, however, also it referred to the inheritance of Roman power.¹⁵ The new aspiring monarchies and nascent nation states in early modern Europe all modeled themselves after the Roman Empire, and claimed to be its proper successor. The idea that imperial dominion was transferred in time from Troy to Rome and onwards to other European states rooted in Medieval eschatology and was understood as *translatio imperii*. This concept provided early modern historians with the expectation that a new power would arise, but it also suggested, as Heather James has pointed out, that the 'founding acts of empire turn out to contain the seeds of its destruction'.¹⁶ While describing a perceived historical phenomenon, *translatio imperii* therefore encapsulated both the hope of future imperial hegemony and anxieties about future ruin.

14 David Armitage, 'The Elizabethan Idea of Empire', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), 269–277, esp. pp. 271–272. See also: Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1975).

15 Cf. Richard Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity and Empire* (London: Routledge, 2005).

16 Heather James, 'Cultural Disintegration in *Titus Andronicus*: Mutilating Titus, Vergil and Rome', *Themes in Drama* 13 (1991), 123–140, esp. p. 123.

In early modern revenge tragedy imperial decline and *translatio imperii* were central concerns, and the flourishing of the genre therefore cannot be seen apart from the political contexts in which it was written and rewritten. Indeed, the translation from English into Dutch and German of revenge tragedies such as the *Revenger's Tragedy* and, most notably, Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, can only be understood in the light of an intense political interest in the question of which form of government was best suited to uphold the law, contain disruptive energies, and prevent power moving elsewhere. The lessons drawn from such representations of imperial collapse could evidently vary, yet there can be no doubt that Kyd's play, which dramatized the decline of the Spanish monarchy, invited its initial, late sixteenth-century, audiences to cheer the collapse it portrayed. Performed in the context of the Anglo-Dutch alliance against Spain, and energized by the animosity towards the 'universal monarchy' the Black Legend suspected Spain to build, *The Spanish Tragedy* was bound to circulate in anti-Habsburg territories. It is no coincidence that Adriaen van den Bergh made his translation-cum-adaptation of Kyd's play in 1621, when the Dutch war with Spain was about to resume after twelve years of truce. 'From one war to the next' was Van den Bergh's appropriate motto.¹⁷

Titus Andronicus can be applied to the Habsburg Empire in a similar way as the *Spanish Tragedy*. Indeed, when the English revenge blockbusters of the 1580s were so successfully rewritten for the Dutch stage in the late 1630s and early 1640s, the theme of a Habsburg imperial collapse was even more topical than it had seemed to Kyd and his audiences after the defeat of the Armada of 1588. Following a series of setbacks in the war against the Dutch, and later paralyzed by the Catalan revolt (1640–1659), Spain was showing severe signs of imperial overstretch. The contemporary Holy Roman Empire of the Austrian Habsburgs, too, had been brought to the verge of collapse by Gustavus Adolphus's spectacular military intervention of the early 1630s. Widely advertised as *Gothic* victories, the recent Swedish triumphs undoubtedly contributed to the topicality of the Gothic opposition to Rome in our Titus plays.

The destructive and violent 'civil wars' that the logic of revenge and counter-revenge had unleashed in the Habsburg Empire during the Thirty Years' War, one might argue, are implied to lead to another translation of power: to the Protestant bulwarks of England and the Dutch Republic, who increasingly

17 Ton Hoenselaars and Helmer Helmers, 'The Spanish Tragedy and Revenge Tragedy in Britain and the Low Countries', in Nicoleta Cinpoes (ed.), *Doing Kyd: Critical Essays on The Spanish Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 144–167.

competed for the imperial title. In *Titus Andronicus*, the rise of a new order is indeed associated with England. Invoking the names of both Saturn and Astraea, Shakespeare relates Rome's descent into the chaos and the violence of civil war primarily to Ovid's tale of the four ages of men and the loss of the golden age (*Metamorphoses* I, 89–150), but Lucius's succession at the end of the play seems to herald a new era of imperial justice, peace, and prosperity. Since Lucius has 'hit Virgo' in the shooting scene, Shakespeare suggests that he pulled Astraea back to earth. By portraying Lucius as the new emperor and the retriever of Astraea, Shakespeare also hints at the *translatio imperii* from Rome to England: Lucius, after all, was also the name of the first Christian king of England and thus the ultimate predecessor of the Virgin Queen commonly associated with Astraea.¹⁸

But in the case of the Titus plays, set in Rome instead of Madrid, the collapse of political order is more ambiguous than it is in Kyd's tragedy. Less associated with the enemy, classical Rome functioned as an image for the domestic political order as much as for the Habsburg empire. It is evident that all seventeenth-century Titus plays are replete with topical anxieties about the collapse of government rule and the violent anarchy that might follow it. In Shakespeare, the German play, and Ravenscroft, these anxieties focus on the royal or imperial succession. Each of these plays opens with an election battle (between Saturninus and Bassianus in Shakespeare, between the unnamed Roman Emperor and Titus in the German play). It is this imperial election that sets Rome's descent into civil war and imperial tyranny in motion. When Shakespeare's play was published in the 1590s, this scene spoke directly to public concerns about the political mayhem that might follow the death of the Queen when no successor was named. The Ovidian quote, 'Terras Astreae Reliquit', referred both to the flight of the goddess of justice as to the possible demise of the contemporary Astraea, Elizabeth, who upheld the law in England.¹⁹ Similarly, and even more pertinently, the German play's rendering of the first act alluded to the actual imperial election in the German Empire in 1619. When the play was first printed, in the 1620 playbook, the Thirty Years' War had just begun, and Ferdinand II's election as Holy Emperor had played a major role in causing it—the destruction of the Roman empire in the play was therefore uneasily

18 Yates, *Astraea*, pp. 74–76; Robert Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 62–68; Jonathan Bate, 'Introduction', in *TA*, pp. 17–18, ll. 1–122.

19 Paul Raffield, "'Terras astraee reliquit': Titus Andronicus and the Loss of Justice", in Paul Raffield and Gary Watt (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Law* (Oxford: Hart, 2008), pp. 203–220. The quote is from Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I, 150.

close to reality. Ravenscroft's adaptation, finally, was explicitly written to reflect on the Exclusion crisis of 1678, when the Whigs had sought to exclude James II from the royal succession, and continued to be read politically throughout the early eighteenth century.²⁰ Vos, as we shall see, did not address such a specific event, but his adaptation strategy shows that he, too, was deeply aware of the Roman material's political implications.

Heather James has described in *Titus Andronicus* a poetics of empire, a political aesthetics, in which *translatio imperii* occupies a central position.²¹ One important aspect of this poetics, which can be traced in all the Titus plays, relates to the idea of repetition, to the rise and fall of empire again and again in different locations. It is because of this repeated manifestation of an essentially unchanged imperial power that Stephen Greenblatt has associated *translatio imperii* with biblical typology.²² Rooted in eschatology, *translatio imperii* and the biblical account of history were indeed entangled in the early modern mind: it is, after all, the movement of worldly power from the first monarchy to the fifth that structures the fulfillment of God's plan in the New Testament. The concept, then, presupposes an idea of history that, though it ultimately progresses towards a predestined end, requires repetition of basic structures and, in the words of Foucault, time to fold back onto itself. To translate empire is therefore an inherently anachronistic enterprise: it requires a past Rome to be present in any of its successors.

With this in mind, it becomes clear that anachronism is an essential and functional part of all Titus plays. Critics have long attacked both Shakespeare and Vos for their unspecific and eclectic treatment of Roman history,²³ yet this is to misunderstand the power of renaissance and baroque uses of anachronism.²⁴ Recent Shakespeare scholars, including Jonathan Bate, Phyllis Rackin

20 Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, pp. 72–76; Andreas K.E. Mueller, 'Shakespeare's Country Opposition: Titus Andronicus in the Early Eighteenth Century', *Connotations* 15 (2005/2006), pp. 97–126.

21 Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); id., 'Cultural Disintegration', pp. 123–140.

22 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Cultural Mobility: An Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 7–16. Cf. also Moschovakis on Christian providentialism in *Titus Andronicus*: Nicholas R. Moschovakis, "Irreligious Piety" and Christian History: Persecution as Pagan Anachronism in *Titus Andronicus*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53 (2002), 460–486.

23 Buitendijk, 'Inleiding', 63–64.

24 Cf. Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010). So central was anachronism to renaissance and baroque conceptions of

and Heather James, acknowledge the play's anachronisms, but argue that they are purposeful and essential to the meaning of the play.²⁵ Shakespeare does not only 'collapse the whole of Roman history', he also uses the language of recent, post-Reformation history to update it and to make it applicable to contemporary experience. If Christian language pops up throughout the play, including not only in general references to Heaven and Hell, but also to specific sites of Reformation conflict such as the Catholic sacrament of the Eucharist, and 'a ruinous monastery',²⁶ this invites Shakespeare's audience to apply the Roman action of the play to sixteenth-century religious violence, which is suggested to be a consequence of the absence of a European empire.²⁷ It is no coincidence, therefore, that the famous Peacham drawing shows the actors dressed both in classical Roman, contemporary Spanish and Elizabethan costumes: the interweaving of various historical episodes is at the heart of the play.²⁸ Through anachronism, Shakespeare was able to 'interrogate Rome', and to transform, in Clifford Ronan's words, the 'Then [into] a Now that urgently must be dealt with'.²⁹

Past, present and future are intimately linked in this way of thinking about *translatio imperii*, and that is exactly why *Titus Andronicus* could retain its political meaning in a variety of contexts throughout the seventeenth century. But it made a difference from and to which imperial regimes the play moved, and at what moment. When Vos wrote *Aran en Titus* he maintained *translatio*

history, that one might even argue, as Raymond has done, that to use the term itself is an anachronism. See: Joad Raymond, 'Introduction: Networks, Communication, Practice', in id. (ed.), *News Networks in Seventeenth-century Britain and Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 2–3. I prefer to use the term anachronism over possible alternatives such as 'synchronism', however, because it is widely used in early modern scholarship.

25 Bate, 'Introduction', pp. 16–21; Phyllis Rackin, 'Temporality, Anachronism, and Presence in Shakespeare's Histories', *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986), 103–123; Heather James, 'Cultural disintegration'. Cf. also: Cary di Pietro and Hugh Grady, 'Presentism, Anachronism and *Titus Andronicus*', in id. (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Urgency of Now: Criticism and Theory in the 21st Century* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 9–37.

26 *TA*, 5.1.21.

27 Moschovakis, "Irreligious Piety".

28 According to June Schlueter, the Peacham illustrates the first act of the German play, but her argument is contested. See: June Schlueter, 'Rereading the Peacham Drawing', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50 (1999), 171–184; Richard Levin, 'The Longleat Manuscript and *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53 (2002), 323–340. Though important, I would argue that this debate posits too big a gap between Shakespeare and his continental adapters.

29 Cited through Moschovakis, "Irreligious Piety", p. 461.

imperii and anachronism as aesthetic and political principles, but adapted his source in such a way that it would apply to his own historical and institutional context.

Adapting Shakespeare Politically

Translatio imperii was as central a concern to Vos as it had been to Shakespeare. Throughout his adaptation, Vos accentuates the theme. By renaming Titus's grandson Askanius, Aeneas's and Lavinia's son in Roman mythology and one of the founders of the Roman race, he foregrounded the idea that power moved westwards. More subtle was Vos's introduction of the chiasmus as the central figure of style in *Aran en Titus*, because the numerous chiasms in the play ('Revenge Andronicus, Andronicus Revenge!') linguistically reflect the main political theme of rise and fall. This is further highlighted by the heightened contrast between the Goths and the Andronici, whose fortunes also relate chiasmatically. Once we start looking at *Aran en Titus* from this political perspective, many of the changes Vos made turn out to be carefully designed to update and develop Shakespeare's poetics of empire, and to render it applicable to Amsterdam. Even the excessive horror Vos has often been accused of, can be seen as serving a political function.

An essential part of Vos's poetics of empire was his effort to classicize the Shakespearean material. In his extensive comparison of *Titus Andronicus*, the German play of 1620, and *Aran en Titus*, Willem Braekman has shown that Vos enhanced the Senecanism of his possible sources in two ways.³⁰ Firstly, Vos amplified the horrific aspects by introducing various ghosts and even speaking severed heads absent in the other plays.³¹ Secondly, and even more so than Ravenscroft, Vos imposed a formal order on the seemingly chaotic action of the play. Thirdly, he added choruses at the end of each act, which antiphonically summarized and interpreted the action. Many of his interventions indicate that he consciously strove to make his play adhere to the unities of time, place, and tone, for instance by cutting Aaron's and Tamora's lovebaby and the Clown. Traditional scholarship has explained these changes by ascribing to Vos a desire to defend the Senecan-Scaligerian poetics (that had been prevalent in

30 Braekman, *Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus*, pp. 117–173.

31 Often interpreted as a ploy to enhance the horrific aspects of the play, it should be noted that by introducing these voices from the past, Vos also enhances the entangledness between past, present and future that is central to his political argument.

the Dutch Republic for decades) against the new Aristotelian poetics to which Vondel was increasingly drawn.³² In that sense, Vos might be seen to represent an antiquated poetics mocked by Jonson.

Contemporaries did not see it that way, however. They praised Vos extensively for his poetical achievement. ‘The whole of antiquity possesses no tragedy more tragic’, the prominent Amsterdam intellectual Caspar Barlaeus wrote. In strong contrast with modern critics, Barlaeus saw in Vos’s play ‘tragedy at its cruelest’ (‘het treurspel op zyn wreedst’),³³ admired its exemplary, even divine ‘grave sentences’ (‘sententiae graves sunt & densae & plane πρὸς διό-υυσον’), its ‘characters’ (‘mores’), and ‘passions’ (‘affectus’). The Dutch literary establishment followed Barlaeus’s judgment. Hooft was ‘stupefied’ (‘stupuit’), Van den Burch ‘stunned’ (‘attonitus’), and Vondel judged Vos to be a man of ‘marvelous wit’ (‘portentosi ingenii’).³⁴ Contrary to his custom, Barlaeus visited the play seven times in the Amsterdam theater, and, as his letter to Huygens indicates, did much to augment its reputation. With Barlaeus’s help, Vos was catapulted into Amsterdam’s cultural elite, securing the patronage of the Amsterdam burgomaster Huydecoper, and becoming one of the directors of the Amsterdam theater for many years. As a result Vos’s baroque style, with its deep *chiaroscuro*, its violence and high-pitched emotions, its transcendent historicity, and its reliance on an emblematic visuality, deeply influenced not only the Dutch and German genre of *treurspel* or *Trauerspiel*, but also became one of the pillars in the cultural politics of the Amsterdam elite.³⁵

Classicizing the Shakespearean material, then, was also a modernizing move, with great political implications since Vos, both his early critics and the burgomasters recognized, achieved the greatness of classical antiquity befitting an aspiring new world power. A modern empire, they knew, should be

32 Wisse A.P. Smit, *Van Pascha tot Noah. Deel 3: Koning David-spelen—Noah* (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1962), p. 593; Marijke Meijer-Drees, ‘Toneelopvattingen in beweging: Rivaliteit tussen Vos en Vondel in 1641’, *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 79 (1986), 453–460.

33 Caspar Barlaeus, ‘Op het hooghdravend Treurspel van JAN DE VOS Glazemaker’, in *A&T*, p. 107.

34 Barlaeus to Huygens, 15 December 1641, in J.A. Worp (ed.), *Briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens, 1608–1687. Deel 3: 1640–1644* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914), pp. 254–255. Also in Geeraerdt Brandt (ed.) *Barlaei epistolarum liber* (Amsterdam: Johannes Blaeu, 1667), pp. 857–859.

35 On baroque ‘Trauerspiel’, see: Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, transl. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998). On Vos’s career: Nina Geerdink, *Dichters en verdiensten: De sociale verankering van het dichterschap van Jan Vos (1610–1667)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2012). For the effect *Aran en Titus* had on Vos’s success, see esp. pp. 30–46.

like Rome in more than just its might—it should also emulate the culture of Rome. As Stephen Greenblatt has argued in *Cultural Mobility*, the idea of *translatio imperii* encouraged this appropriation of foreign aesthetics: as Rome had appropriated the culture of Greece, so its early modern heirs appropriated the culture of Rome: ‘the symbols, regalia, and other literal trappings of Roman imperial power were physically carried (...) from the ancient capital to a succession of new sites’.³⁶ By classicizing Shakespeare, Vos politically appropriated the play, and made it suitable for the New Rome Amsterdam considered itself to be.

In contrast to modern critics of Vos, seventeenth-century commentators grasped these political implications, as they were well aware of the fact that the institutionalization and classicization of the theater were part and parcel of early modern imperial claims. Eulogists of Jacob van Campen’s new Amsterdam theater emphasized that the city’s imperial power could not be complete without that quintessential classical institution. ‘Great Rome we imitate’ (‘Wy bootzen ’t groote Rome naer in ’t kleen’), Vondel wrote in a poem on the opening of Van Campen’s theater, which he associated with the Dutch victory over the Spanish at the Siege of Breda (1637). Both the Amsterdam theatre and the theater of war showed that while the Dutch were on the rise, both culturally and politically, Rome’s fame was ‘fading’ (‘hun faem verdooft’).³⁷ Like Ben Jonson, who moved seamlessly to eulogizing Britain as superior to Rome when he praised Shakespeare as the ‘soule of the age’ in the early days of the London theater,³⁸ Dutch eulogists did not hesitate to incorporate individual poets, including Vos, in this imperial discourse. As a prefatory poem in the first edition of Vos’s *Aran en Titus* exclaimed:

Wijkt Spanjen, Vrankrijk, wijkt zelf Romen, ja, wijkt Greeken,
Ik weet niet of’er wel yet grooters oyt uyt quam.
Schept moed, o nieuwe hoop van ’t magtigh Amsterdam.

(Give way, Spain and France, give way, even Rome and Greece
I don’t think a greater play ever appeared before
Take courage, O new hope of the powerful Amsterdam!)³⁹

36 Greenblatt, ‘Cultural Mobility’, pp. 7–12.

37 Joost van den Vondel, ‘Op den nieuwen schouwburg’, in id., *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, ed. Mieke B. Smits-Veldt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), p. 34.

38 Cf. James, *Shakespeare’s Troy*, p. 7.

39 Vechter, Jan Pietersz [= Joan Victorijn], ‘Op het treurspel van Jan de Vos’, in *A&T*, p. 109.

Eclipsing rivals in the present and in the past, Vos's play, according to Jan Vechter, was as much the 'echo of the old' ('der ouden wedergalm') as Amsterdam itself.⁴⁰ It was a judgment that was itself echoed in various other poems.

The suggestion of course, is that rather than Elizabethan London, republican Amsterdam would inherit not only the greatness, but also the vulnerabilities of classical Rome. From this perspective it is highly significant that among the differences between *Titus Andronicus*, the German play, Ravenscroft's adaptation and the Dutch *Aran en Titus* is Vos's omission of Shakespeare's opening succession scene. In the earlier plays, as we have seen, the succession scene rendered Roman history directly relevant to the political context in which they appeared. Considering the fact that both his possible sources retained the succession scene, Vos's replacing it with a monologue on Rome's imperial rule was evidently a deliberate choice. On the one hand, it is part of a whole set of changes to the first act designed to heighten the contrast between Aran and Titus. Vos also omits the Andronici's abduction of Lavinia and Titus's subsequent murder of his own son Mutius, which considerably complicates his character in Shakespeare's play. In doing so, Vos absolves Titus of any responsibility for the ensuing tragedy: in contrast to Shakespeare's protagonist, he neither raises a tyrant to the throne nor stains himself with the sin of infanticide. Critics such as Braekman have interpreted the heightened contrast between Aran and Titus from an aesthetic point of view, arguing that it is part of Vos's baroque poetics.⁴¹ Yet the changes also greatly affect the political meaning of the play, because they alter the causes of Rome's ensuing civil war. In Shakespeare's play the succession conflict and Titus's inflated sense of honour are important causes of the collapse of the Roman state. Vos, by omitting both, does not only show his aesthetic preferences, but also fundamentally changes the political premises of the play. The fact that Saturninus's speech on Roman greatness precedes his own tyranny indicates that he addresses the problem of the perceived conflict, which would also trouble Milton during the English Republic in the 1650s, between political greatness and liberty.⁴²

40 Vechter, 'Op het treurspel van Jan de Vos', p. 109.

41 Braekman, *Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus*, pp. 117–173.

42 Cf. David Armitage, 'Empire and Liberty: a Republican Dilemma,' in Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Republicanism, A European Heritage*, vol. 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29–46; id., 'John Milton: Poet Against Empire', in David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (eds.) *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 206–225.

Instead of Shakespeare's complex of conflicts, the first act of *Aran en Titus* highlights just one main cause of Rome's descent into violence: Saturninus's excess of passion. Because Vos also left out the projected marriage between the emperor and Lavinia, his Saturninus bears no grudge against the Andronici; he is an honourable character at first, who is subverted only because of his love for Thamera. Like Shakespeare's Saturninus, Vos's emperor is thunderstruck by Thamera's appearance, but Vos's devotes much more attention to the change that Thamera brings about in him—and to the political implications thereof. Upon seeing 'the sorceress' Thamera, Saturninus, who had been comparing Titus to Scipio and the sun in appropriately exalted alexandrines, suddenly shifts to Petrarchan language, praising her appearance in more than twenty lines. Now *she* is the sun, and he declares that he would renounce the imperial crown in order to dally with her in the pastoral fields.⁴³ If this is already disturbing, Saturninus's lustful behavior elicits ominous comments from various other characters that help the audience to interpret it. When he threatens to force Thamera into his bed, to rape her, she warns him in prophetic words: 'Woe on them who trample the holy right for lust' ('Wee hen die 't heilig recht door minlust oversteigeren').⁴⁴ Mistakenly, Saturninus considers his political authority to trump Thamera's sovereignty over her own body, her individual liberty. Whereas Thamera's following statement, 'The Prince serves the people, not the other way around', would have been met with approval by many Dutch theatergoers, Saturninus's absolutist retort ('the Prince's will is law') was rather less appealing.⁴⁵ Lustfulness in an over-powerful emperor, Vos shows, results in tyranny. In vain Titus seeks to remind the emperor of his former self, and at the end of the first act the chorus laments the 'bolts of love' that made the emperor 'rage'.⁴⁶ With his reason, law and order leave Rome.

Significantly, the Andronici function as foils to emperor's excitability. In contrast to Shakespeare's portrayal of Titus, they embody moderation and above all display reason, the traditional counterweight to the passions.⁴⁷ When Vos's Titus is provoked by Aran, he manages to control his anger with the help

43 A&T, ll. 54–87.

44 A&T, l. 122.

45 A&T, ll. 124–125.

46 A&T, ll. 247–261, 341–346.

47 On the ideal of moderation in princes, see: Ethan Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

of the rational Marcus, who lectures that fights in the Capitol are fought with laws, not swords (ll. 279–282). Titus himself, too, is able to calm the passions in others. When he pleads with Saturninus for the lives of his sons, he argues that it was his ‘reason’ that had stopped the raging rabble and ended the civil war that had turned Rome into a ‘sea of blood’ in an unspecified past (ll. 809–865). It takes the hideous crimes of rape and mutilation to unsettle the Andronici’s equanimity.

Recently, Andrew Hadfield has provocatively read Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* as a republican play, which shows that monarchy easily degraded into tyranny.⁴⁸ In my opinion, Shakespeare rather speaks to the anxieties related to the royal succession, without explicitly favouring one system of government.⁴⁹ Considering the fact that Ravenscroft used *Titus Andronicus* as an outspokenly royalist play in the context of the debate on the succession of James II in the 1670s, it is highly likely that Shakespeare responded to what Patrick Collinson has called ‘the Elizabethan Exclusion Crisis’, in which England declared itself ‘a republic which happened also to be a monarchy, or vice versa’.⁵⁰ If *Titus Andronicus* indeed resonates with the debate over the exclusion of Mary, Queen of Scots, the issue of monarchy versus republicanism seems to be besides the point. By showing the tragic consequences of Titus’s choice for primogeniture, Shakespeare dramatizes the failure of a specific *kind* or *interpretation* of monarchy. Once we read Shakespeare in dialogue with Vos, we clearly see how bland the ‘republicanism’ of the former is.

By foregrounding Saturninus’s excitability and emphasizing its tragic consequences, Vos introduced a humanist theme with pronounced republican

48 Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 154–183.

49 For an extensive discussion of the issue, and a rebuttal of Hadfield’s argument, see: Mueller, ‘Shakespeare’s Country Opposition’, pp. 106–113. See also: Quentin Taylor, ‘“To Order Well the State”: The Politics of *Titus Andronicus*’, *Interpretation* 32 (2005), 125–150.

50 Patrick Collinson, ‘The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I’, in id., *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 31–58; Patrick Collinson, ‘The Elizabethan Exclusion Crisis and the Elizabethan Polity’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 84 (1995), 51–92. Peter Lake offers an instructive parallel to the case of *Titus Andronicus* in his reading of Ben Jonson’s *Sejanus* (1604) as a Catholic response to the Protestant Elizabethan mixed monarchy: Peter Lake, ‘From Leicester his Commonwealth to Sejanus his Fall: Ben Jonson and the Politics of Roman (Catholic) Virtue’, in Ethan Shagan (ed.) *Catholics and the Protestant Nation: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 128–161.

overtones. According to later Dutch political theorists such as the De la Court brothers, a republican system of government was to be preferred above single-headed rule (as they called it) precisely because the desires of regents were controlled by peers with whom they were in constant competition. A monarchy, they argued, was susceptible to the whims and passions of the king.⁵¹ If Vos's first act already suggests such a political reading, he develops the theme in the third act, when Titus pleads for the life of his sons, and begs Saturninus to suspend his vengeance. When Saturninus refuses, this leads Titus to contrast his imperial rule to republicanism:

SATURNINUS Wy wreken zoo 't ons *lust*: wie dart'er tegen blaffen?
 TITUS Heel anders blonk oud' Room, toen d'elpebene staf
 Van 't *Burgermeesterschap* zich op het landt begaf,
 En huwden aan de spa (...)
 Toen 't *Raadhuis* en de ploeg elkander quam omhelzen
 Met onderlinge trouw.

(SATURNINUS We avenge ourselves according to *our desire*: who dares
 to bark against it?
 TITUS How different did Rome shine, when the ivory staff
 Of the *burgomasters* went into the country
 (...) when plow and *City Hall* embraced
 In mutual loyalty.)⁵²

Unlike Shakespeare, Vos *explicitly* contrasts Saturninus's unreasonable vindictiveness with a nostalgia for the Roman republican past, when humble rulers such as Cincinattus were close to the people and ruled over an harmonious state. Like De la Court he thus emphasizes the superiority of Republicanism over a single-headed, monarchical rule apt to be disturbed by an individual's passions. Moreover, Vos tempts his audience to apply the implied lesson to Amsterdam by introducing blatant anachronisms ('burgomasters' for 'consuls';

51 Wieger Velema, "‘That a Republic is Better Than a Monarchy’: Anti-monarchism in Early Modern Dutch Political Thought", in Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Republicanism: A Shared Heritage*. Volume 1: *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 9–26, esp. p. 14; Arthur Weststeijn, *Commercial Republicanism in the Dutch Golden Age: The Political Thought of Johan & Pieter de la Court* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 179, 191, 272.

52 A&T, ll. 916–920, emphases added.



FIGURE 12.2 *Artus Quellinus*, Portrait of the Amsterdam Burgomaster Andries de Graeff as Roman Consul (1661)
AMSTERDAM, RIJKSMUSEUM, BK-18305

'City Hall' for 'Forum'). Thus his play foreshadows the Amsterdam burgomasters' identification with Roman consuls in the 1650s and 1660s (see illustration 2).

Another indication of Vos's republicanism is the fact that he introduces a new character, a messenger in Titus's household named after the republican historian Tacitus. The name, emphasized when Titus calls the silent character in the fourth act (l. 1869), is highly suggestive: the go-between Tacitus in the play

cannot but remind the audience of that other, transhistorical go-between, the Tacitus who reported the decadence and violent failure of the Roman Empire to posterity. The Tacitus, moreover, who contrasted that very Roman decadence to the simple virtue of German tribes such as the Batavians, widely perceived to be the ancestors of the Dutch people (see below). If a Tacitean discourse runs through Shakespeare's play, as Jonathan Bate has suggested, Vos recognized and highlighted it, and removed the obstacles to a Tacitean reading by improving Lucius's character.⁵³

Both by contrasting the rule of Saturninus with republican Rome and by introducing the character Tacitus, Vos's *Aran en Titus* aligned itself to the republicanism developed by Hooft and Grotius. When Vos wrote his play, the kind of historical warning he presented was particularly dear to prominent members within the Amsterdam regent class, who saw themselves confronted with the increasing power and ambitions of the House of Orange. Hooft, we may remember, provided a similar mirror with his history of Florence, which he suggestively entitled *Disasters Following the Elevation of the House of Medici*. Although Hooft never made this explicit, his book showed that like Rome, the great Republic of Florence went into steep decline after being subjected by a single ruler. Although the *Disasters* would only be published in 1649, when William II threatened to upset the balance of power in the Dutch Republic, it already circulated in manuscript in Amsterdam in the late 1630s.⁵⁴ Ten years later, from 1648 onwards, Amsterdam's identification with republican Rome would be enshrined in Van Campen's neoclassical city hall, which Vos helped to decorate, and which is replete with the kind of historical parallels offered by *Aran en Titus*.⁵⁵

Aran en Titus's republicanism is as much aimed against Calvinist insurgence as it is against political opposition against the regents' sovereignty. Saturninus's sexual lust may be the most important cause of the unfolding tragedy, it is not the only passion targeted in Vos's adaptation. More so than Shakespeare, and fully in the line of Hooft and Grotius, he emphasizes that religious excitability, too, undermines the stability of the state. This is especially visible in Vos's

53 Bate, 'Introduction', p. 21. Against Bate's Tacitean reading, see: Anthony Brian Taylor, 'Lucius, the Severely Flawed Redeemer of Titus Andronicus', *Connotations* 6 (1996), 138–157.

54 Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, *Rampzaeligheden der verheffinge van den Hujze Medicis*, ed. J. de Lange (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1981); Simon Groenveld, 'Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft en de geschiedenis van zijn eigen tijd', in id., *Hooft als historieschrijver: Twee studies* (Weesp: Heureka, 1981), pp. 7–46, 93–99.

55 Cf. Eymert-Jan Goossens, *Het Amsterdamse Paleis: Schat van beitel en penseel*, pp. 88–137.

adaptation of the Alarbus scene. Whereas in Shakespeare it is Titus, the army commander, who presses to sacrifice Tamora's son Alarbus (and his sons who execute the sacrifice), Vos makes Aran the victim of the sacrifice, and introduces a *priest* who favors to burn the Moor. Aran's reply, at the end of the first act, is replete with topical overtones:

Houd op versteend gespook tot mijn verderf geschapen;
 Geveinsde tempeliers, van God vervloekte papen:
 Bloeddronke wichelaars: die, als 't uw schenzucht wil,
 Het plonderende graauw, onkondig in 't geschil
 Van kerk, en landbestier, ontslaat van al hunn' eeden:
 En t'zaamgerotte schuim der vrygevochte steeden,
 Als of 't den hemel wou, op 't heilig Raadhuis hitst;
 En 't Rijk, door tempelwrok, en moordkrakkeel gesplitst,
 Ten roof geeft aan den muil der geestelijke tijgers.

(Stop, you heart-hardened specters made for my demise
 You feigned templeers, you Papists cursed by God,
 You bloodthirsty prophesiers, who, with your sacrilegious lust
 Allow the raging rabble, ignorant of the high disputes
 In Church, and Government, to renounce their oaths;
 And incite the assembled ruffraff of the liberated cities
 Against the Holy City Hall, as if Heaven ordered it,
 The Empire, split by temple wrath and murderous discourse,
 Is thus given prey to the mouths of spiritual tigers.)⁵⁶

While Aran construes religious passion ('sacrilegious lust', 'temple wrath') as another danger to the state, Vos again allows the language to slip into an anachronistic mode. There can be little doubt that 'the liberated cities' allude to the United Provinces ('liberated' from Spain) and the preachers inciting the ignorant rabble to rise against their Holy government are an unequivocal reference to the Dutch Truce conflicts, the violent conflict between the orthodox Calvinists led by the Dutch stadholder and the State party led by Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, who was eventually 'sacrificed' to prevent a civil war. Is Vos here sneering at the fanaticism of the orthodox Calvinists (often denounced as 'Papists' by their opponents) who put the country's safety at risk by inciting the rabble to rise against its lawful government? Such a statement certainly

56 A&T, ll. 165–174.

chimes well with Vos's own political opinions. That Vos uses the villain Aran as a mouthpiece may seem to undermine the point, but this is to apply modern demands to a play that ultimately is not about character, but about the polis. Like Thamera's, Aran's villainy serves a political function: both characters expose the weakness of Rome. From that perspective, Aran's words should be taken very seriously as an indication that religious passion adds oil to the fire of Saturnine's lust, and exacerbates Rome's, and by implication Amsterdam's, vulnerability.

That Rome was destroyed by an excess of passion was in itself not an original argument. One recurring element in Hugo Grotius's comparison between the great Republics of Athens, Rome and Batavia, *Parallellon rerumpublicarum* (1602), was the cruelty and immoderation of the southern Europeans. Grotius chided those Athenians and the Romans who, 'like animals', did not 'moderate the powers of spirit and body with reason', and stressed that their inability to control their passions, will 'easily lead to violence, rebellion and war'.⁵⁷ In a range of examples Grotius highlighted the furious, vindictive temper of Roman rebels such as 'the Gracchi, Saturnine, Drusus, Lepidus, Catiline, Clodius, and, finally, Caesar'.⁵⁸ Rather than judging Roman history through the lense of republicanist or monarchic values, Grotius condemned all populist troublemakers. Recognizing the truth of Du Bellay's statement that Rome was defeated by Rome only, he isolated the source of Rome's weakness, the excess of passion, as the true danger to any state, regardless of its form of government. Seen in this context, it may be no coincidence that Shakespeare and Vos used the name of the tribune Lucius Appuleius Saturninus (to whom Grotius's enumeration is referring) for their emperor: especially in Vos he exemplified the impassioned liability to the state.⁵⁹

57 Hugo Grotius, *Parallellon rerumpublicarum liber tertius: De moribus ingenioque populorum Atheniensium, Romanorum, Batavorum*, vol. 1, ed. Johan Meerman (Haarlem: Loosjes, 1801), p. 86: 'die de krachten van ziel en ligchaam, naar de wijs der dieren, door geen reden temperen (...) ligtelijk in geweld, oproer en oorlog uitbarst'.

58 Grotius, *Parallellon Rerumpublicarum*, p. 92: 'Maar toen het onafgebroken geluk der overwinningen rust van 't oorloogen, en trotschheid met zich bracht: welke bewegingen, welke oproeren ontstonden 'er toen niet door de Gracchen, Saturninus, Drusus, Lepidus, Catilina, Clodius, en eindelijk Caesar? Welke voorbeelden zag men niet van geweld en woestheid? Die dat slechts leest (...) zal moeten toestemmen, dat de wreedheid niet verder heeft kunnen gaan. De keizerlijke heerschappij (...) overtrof evenwel die van hun allen. Ja ook heden, onder zoo veel volkeren als de aarde draagt, is dit nog het geen, daar de toorn het ligtste ontbrandt, en de wraak het hevigste eindigt. En deezen zijn dan die Romeinen, die ons woest en verschrikkelijk noemen'.

59 On the name of Saturninus, cf. Bate, 'Introduction', pp. 28–29, 93–95. Bate argues that

It was by applying the observation to a Rome detached from a specific historical situation, a transhistorical Rome one might say, that Vos was breaking new ground. The main difference between Grotius's and Vos's treatments of the passions lies in Grotius's emphasis on the contrast between the Romans and the Dutch as a *natural* contrast. Grotius emphasized that the Dutch character led them neither 'fiercely [to] pursue' revenge, nor to 'ignore her completely', which allows them to be brave in battle without being cruel.⁶⁰ Vos's text, by contrast, presents Rome in an anachronistic mode, which highlighted the similarities between Rome and Amsterdam, and the migration of empire. More so than Grotius, Vos and his characters warn his audience for the dangers that await an imperial power. The difference, then, is not only caused by a difference in genre, but also by a changed context.

When Grotius wrote his text in 1602, any Dutch imperial claim seemed ludicrous. Grotius was one of the great propagators of the Batavian myth, which stipulated that the Dutch descended from the Batavians who had successfully defended themselves against the Roman Empire. He had provided the Dutch Republic with a history of successful opposition to imperial tyranny that prefigured the Dutch Revolt against Spain.⁶¹ For Grotius, images of Roman tyranny and horrors were therefore also images of Spanish tyranny. As the Dutch Republic gained in power and wealth, however, this anti-imperial myth, based on a few lines in Tacitus, was becoming ever more difficult to align with its own imperial ambitions, and as a result, the attitude towards it became increasingly ambivalent.⁶² In Vos's time, in 1638/41, the Dutch Republic had become one of the most powerful states in Europe, and Amsterdam's claim to be the

Shakespeare probably refers to Saturn, the cannibal God of the Ovidian Iron Age as well. In Vos, the reference to Saturn was less pronounced, since Vos did not allude to Astraea and the Golden Age.

- 60 Grotius, *Parallellon Rerumpublicarum*, p. 98: 'De wraak wordt bij ons noch hevig achtervolgd, noch gansch uit het oog verlooren'.
- 61 Cf. Ivo Schöffer, 'The Batavian Myth During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in E.H. Kossmann and J.S. Bromley (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands. Papers Delivered to the Fifth Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference*, vol. 5: *Some Political Mythologies* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 78–101; Haitsma Mulier, 'De Bataafse mythe opnieuw bekeken', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis van Nederland* 111 (1996), pp. 344–376.
- 62 W.A.M. Hessing, 'Foreign Oppressor Versus Civiliser: the Batavian Myth as the Source for Contrasting Associations of Rome in Dutch historiography', in R. Hingley (ed), *Images of Rome: Perceptions of Ancient Rome in Europe and the United States in the Modern Age* (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2001), pp. 126–143. See also: Marijke Spies: 'Verbeeldingen van vrijheid: David en Mozes, Burgerhart en Bato, Brutus en Cato', *De zeventiende eeuw* 10 (1994), pp. 141–155, p. 151.

new Rome was taken very seriously. Moreover, in the intervening period the Truce Conflicts had shown that the Dutch moderation Grotius had confidently taken pride in was far from natural. As a result, the horrors of imperial Rome were increasingly also the horrors of the Dutch themselves.

Aran en Titus's republicanism, then, took part in a particularly Dutch power struggle that rooted in the Truce Conflicts and resurfaced during the disorders of 1650 and 1672. It is for this reason that Vos never embraced a principled republicanism aimed against monarchy in general. Like Vondel (who gravitated towards absolutism) and Oudaen (who gravitated towards anti-monarchism later in life) he was a great admirer of foreign monarchs such as Charles I, and like them he was not afraid to revert to absolutist slogans in order to propagate the king's cause during the English civil wars.⁶³ Rather than an argument for republicanism, Vos offers an emblem of an actually existing republican order's past and future alternatives. By turning Shakespeare's Rome into the mirror of Amsterdam, *Aran en Titus* showed the horrors that descended upon an empire disconnected from its republican past and unable to subject the church in order to support the ruling oligarchy against the political and religious forces that upset the Republic's internal passions.

The Raped Virgin

Vos's sole emphasis on the role of the monarch's passion in causing of the destructive cycle of revenge in *Aran en Titus* greatly strengthened the thematic unity of the play, because even more so than Shakespeare, Vos alerted his audiences to the correspondence between the civil war that enveloped Rome and the violent rape of Rozelyna. If Shakespeare's Lavinia has been read as an emblem of Rome's ravished and dismembered body politic,⁶⁴ Vos explicitly exposed unbridled lust as the common threat to body politic and female body, thus reinforcing the suggestion that the rape of Rozelyna, like Lucrece's, was both an aspect and a symbol of political tyranny, and perhaps also a prelude to regime change. The fact that Vos changed Lavinia's name into a Dutch

63 Cf. Helmer Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

64 See e.g. Eugene M. Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Survey* 10 (1957), 39–49; and Keira Reilly, 'Lavinia's Rape: Reading the Restoration Actress's Body in Pain in Ravenscroft's *Titus*', in James Robert Allard and Matthew R. Martin (eds), *Staging Pain, 1580–1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theater* (London: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 139–150.

name, well known from Dutch love poetry, is therefore highly significant. The change sets her apart from the other characters, who all have Roman names, and gives her a timeless, and peculiarly Dutch quality in an otherwise Roman environment. It is emphatically with her that Vos wants his Dutch audience to identify. And in the Dutch cultural-political context of the 1630s and 1640s, the rape of a Dutch virgin was saturated with meanings associated with both Dutch opposition against empire and Dutch imperial ambitions.

Vos, who had already hinted at the correspondence between civil war and rape in the dialogue between Saturninus and Thamera in the first act (cited above), further develops the motif in the second act. When Aran incites Quiro and Demetrius to rape Rozelyna, he juxtaposes Rozelyna's prosperity (lit. 'shine', *glans*) with Titus's 'shameful' ('schendig') victory against the Goths, the adverb 'schendig' carried strong connotations of rape.⁶⁵ What he suggests, then, is that Rozelyna's rape is eye for an eye for Titus's raping Gothland. Aran's ensuing plea for the brothers to engage in lawless, ungodly, and unnatural behaviour in order to unsettle Rome significantly culminates in a call to ravish the virginity of the state:

Verdelgt het heilig recht; maakt Romen tot een bloedbadt,
 Door bitse burgerkrijg, een schipbreuk voor 't gemeen;
 Schept lust in dwinglandy; pleegt bloedschandt, met de geen
 Die u ter werreld brocht; verft uw' schenzieke handen
 Met broêr en zustermoordt; ontbindt de kuissche banden
 Van Vestas maagderey.

(Destroy the holy law, change Rome into a pool of blood
 By fierce civil war, a shipwreck for the commonwealth;
 Enjoy lustful tyranny, fornicate with your mother,
 Paint red your violating hands through sororicide
 And fratricide, untie the bonds of chastity
 Of Vesta's virgin choir ...) ⁶⁶

In what appears to be a chiasmic sequence of metonymies (mirroring the numerous chiasms in the play), Aran first analogizes Gothland's rape to Rozelyna's, and then Rozelyna's to the rape of Rome. The reference to the Vestal virgins,

65 *Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal (WNT)* (Leiden: Instituut voor codicologie, 2007), 'schendig'.

66 *A&T*, ll. 372–377.

added by Vos, is essential to *Aran en Titus's* political symbolism. The Vestals, who were selected from Rome's finest, and sworn into celibacy, guarded the city's eternal fire and personified the spirit of Rome. If they were touched, legend had it, Rome's holy fire would die out and something evil would befall the state. When Titus, in the second act, prophesizes how the civil war will extinguish Rome's eternal fire, and make the Vestals 'shudder' (l. 956) he again associates their virginity with the city's well-being and harmony. By associating Rozelyna's impending rape to that of the Vestals, both Aran and Titus suggest that Rozelyna, too, is analogous to the body politic.⁶⁷ As a result, when Titus laments the demise of the 'pearl of Europe' after the rape, he might be referring to Rozelyna as well as to Rome itself.

Surely, Vos did not invent the analogy between Rozelyna's rape and Rome's civil war. Both in *Titus Andronicus* and Ovid's tale of Philomela (a king's daughter), rape also symbolized a violent intrusion of the body politic. But Vos highlighted the analogy implicit in his sources, and directed it away from Shakespeare's Virgin Queen/Astraea towards the Vestals and towards a Dutch pastoral character. In doing so, he activated the strong political associations of the raped virgin in the Dutch Republic. In the late sixteenth, and the early seventeenth centuries, the rape of the female body politic had been developed into a commonplace literary image. Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, written in the same year as Vos's play and equally concerned with the fall of a city that prefigures seventeenth-century Amsterdam, offers an instructive parallel to *Aran en Titus*.⁶⁸ Structuring his play around three rapes, Vondel constructs a mythology for Amsterdam that, like Rome's, is founded on a series of sexual violations parallel to Helen's rape, Lucrece's rape, and Mars's rape of the vestal virgin Ilia. The rape of Geeraerd van Velsen's wife, which provides the immediate occasion for Gijsbreght's war, is followed by the besiegers' rape of the Poor Clares, and, finally, by the rape of the city itself:

Het Sparen stack na Aemstels kroon.
Hoe wraeck met zwaerden en met speeren

67 Vos reinforces the analogy when he introduces another virgin emerging from amongst the violent crowd to plead for the life of Titus's son, offering her virginity to save the peace. See: *A&T*, ll. 1167–1199.

68 On the motif of rape in *Gysbreght van Aemstel* and its relation to identity formation in the Dutch revolt, see: Amanda C. Pipkin, *Rape in the Republic, 1609–1725: Formulating Dutch Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 35–82. On rape and sovereignty, see: Frans-Willem Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability: Vondel's Theatrical Explorations in the Dutch Republic* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), pp. 159–167.

De torenkroon van 't hoofd wou scheeren
 Der schoone en wijd vermaerde stad,
 En rucken door geweld van benden
 Der vesten gordel van haer lenden
 En plondren haer kleenood en schat;
 Gelijck de schender Velzens vrouwe
 En schenden d'edele en getrouwe,
 Thus [the river] Sparen envied Amstel's crown.

(O how Revenge, with spears and swords
 Sought to (...) rip the girdles of defense
 From her hips, to plunder her jewel and treasure
 And violate the honourable and loyal [virgin]
 Like the violator of Van Velsen's wife.)⁶⁹

Eventually, Amsterdam will indeed be penetrated by a 'sea-horse' filled with enemy soldiers. Thus, in Vondel, violence committed against natural and religious bodies culminates in the violation of the body politic, the personification of the Amsterdam *polis*: the city virgin.

That proud commonplace personification of Dutch cities, represented in numerous early modern poems, theatrical processions and prints celebrating local achievements and prosperity, embodied the civic commonweal all city regents pledged to further and protect. In the Dutch Republic, it was through this figure, rather than through Shakespeare's Virgin Queen, that political and sexual violation were seen as analogous, or even overlapping. As long as this Vestal-like virgin was protected, the city would thrive.

While symbolizing the body politic, the city virgin was also a deeply sexualized figure. In paintings and sculpture, she was represented as an attractive, perhaps even inviting woman, dressed in spare, translucent robes that often reveal a comely figure and one or both breasts bare. In poetry, her sexuality was exploited to the full as poets described how she willingly 'opened herself up' to benign male traders that made her body 'swell'.⁷⁰ Although slightly paradoxical, the virgin's sexuality clearly functions politically as well—the wealth,

69 Vondel, *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (ed. Smits Veldt), ll. 420–428.

70 Arie-Jan Gelderblom, 'De maagd en de mannen: Psychokritiek van de stadsuitbeelding in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw', in id., *Mannen en maagden in Hollands tuin: Interpretatieve studies van Nederlandse letterkunde 1575–1781* (Amsterdam: Thesis, 1991), pp. 78–93.



FIGURE 12.3 *Joachim Wtewael, The Dutch Virgin Trampled (ca. 1612)*
CENTRAAL MUSEUM UTRECHT, INV. NR. 20846

honor, and prosperity of the *polis*, after all, not only depend on a virulent activity through the city's openings, but also attracts foreign violators against whom the vigilant (male) protection of the lawful government and the city militia is required. If that protection falters, as happens in both *Gysbreght van Aemstel* and *Aran en Titus*, hostile penetration and mutilation was the result.

The image of the raped city virgin had a long history that deeply associated her with the Dutch struggle against Spain. Propagandistic images produced by the rebels during the Dutch Revolt, such as Hans Collaert's *Beclaghinghe der Nederlandscher verwoestinghe (Lament over the Desolation of the Netherlands, ca. 1580)* or Joachim Wtewael's dyptich *De Nederlandse maagd vertrappt (The Dutch Virgin Trampled, 1612)*, showed the allegorical personification of The Netherlands harassed and violated by real soldiers in realistic settings, thereby simultaneously alluding to the widely reported crimes that the Spanish army committed against women and Philip II's violation of Dutch privileges (see illustrations 3 and 4). Individual suffering and the suffering of the Dutch body politic are indistinguishable as the hostile intrusion of the natural body, the family and the state could thus be represented in one multivalent image. This image lent itself particularly well to Vondel's and Vos's baroque aesthetics



FIGURE 12.4 Hans Collaert, *Beclaghinghe der Nederlantscher verwoestinghe = Belgicae delaceratae lamentatio = Complaintes des desolés païs bas* (ca. 1577)
RIJKSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM, FMH 520

because it allowed for the obfuscation or even elimination of the boundaries between the symbolic, the abstract, and the real.

When Gijsbrecht and Rozelyna entered the Amsterdam stage, in the mid-seventeenth century, Amsterdam's city virgin was in the process of an iconological transformation. Having been the victim of rape during the Dutch Revolt, she increasingly became an imperial, almost Astraeon figure, a *dominatrix mundi* reigning over Amsterdam's now widely sensed Golden Age. As such, with the world on her lap, she was depicted by Geeraerd de Laresse, in 1665, and as such she was displayed on Van Campen's new City Hall, which was begun in 1648. Through the vulnerable Rozelyna, then, Vos explored the ambiguity of a well-known image, a present-day Vestal, vulnerable symbol of the might of the *polis* emphasizing that both Rome's glory and Rome's weakness extended into Republican Amsterdam.

Conclusion

When we study the movement of *Titus Andronicus* through Europe, the philological issues that have dominated the scholarship on Shakespeare's early continental afterlife will always remain intriguing. We may still speculate about the question of which version of the play inspired which, as Braekman did, and, proceeding from Braekman, we may start to wonder whether the various similarities between Vos and Ravenscroft are evidence of an Anglo-continental process of exchange coming full circle. Did Ravenscroft know that Vos's *Aran* was burned on stage, and did that cause him to modify Shakespeare's ending? Did he know that Vos had centered his play around lust and rape, and did that inspire him foreground Lavinia's rape as well? In the end, however, such questions are probably unanswerable, and certainly not the most rewarding. We know that Shakespeare circulated on the continent, and we know that his plays were far from stable in performance. This article has therefore tried to sidestep these issues, and focus not on finding the similarities, but on interpreting the differences, the changes in context and content (and consequently in meaning) between *Titus Andronicus* and its seventeenth-century spin-offs, foremost *Aran en Titus*.

Titus Andronicus, I have argued, was adapted not only because it was a blockbuster, but also, and perhaps even more fundamentally so, to do political work. Shakespeare's plays, when they started to circulate on the continent, had to navigate a political and institutional landscape that greatly affected when and where they surfaced, and which shapes they assumed. In Germany, the imperial election energized the play in 1618–1620, in Amsterdam it reflected on the city's newly claimed imperial status, in Ravenscroft's London, on the Exclusion crisis. Once we read these plays in dialogue, it becomes clear that they were not only catering to a seventeenth-century hunger for horror, as is still often presumed. Like the German play, and like Ravenscroft, Vos turned to *Titus Andronicus* also, and perhaps even more so, in response to political needs and anxieties.

Vos was alert to the political implications of Shakespeare's original, and able to develop his own poetics of empire. Once we compare this poetics to Shakespeare's, it becomes clear that Vos had a keen eye for the possibilities of the anachronistic portrayal of Roman decline into civil war. Recognizing that classical Rome extended into the present, Vos knew it his task to rewrite the Shakespearean material in such a way that it would be an Amsterdam present. In keeping with his later role as one of the overseers of Amsterdam's cultural politics, Vos catered for the city's ruling class and made Titus's failing Rome evoke the superiority of Amsterdam's republican rule. Emblematically highlighting

the weaknesses of Rome's imperial regime, *Aran en Titus* supported the city's imperial claims, and bolstered the regents in their battle against both the Prince of Orange and the Calvinist orthodoxy claiming the superiority of the church over the state.

Distancing the Shakespearean material from Elizabethan London, and analysing how playwrights like Vos interpreted and recontextualized Shakespeare, tells us much about how early moderns read Shakespeare politically, and may therefore be taken to either support or complement various of the historicist readings of Shakespeare's play mentioned in the notes above. Moreover, studying Shakespeare's plays moving through the early modern cultural-political landscape will greatly help to assess what he brought to the cultures that adapted him, and to understand the (changing) relationship between political and aesthetical regimes in early modern Europe.

Further Reading

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- Vos, Jan, *Toneelwerken*, ed. W.J.C. Buitendijk (Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975).

French Classicism in Jesuit Theater Poetics of the Eighteenth Century *

Nienke Tjoelker

A chapter on Jesuit theater poetics from the eighteenth century may seem odd in this collection about seventeenth-century baroque theater. However, despite the extensive existing body of secondary literature discussing the reception of French classicism in German vernacular literature, as well as the complicated relationship between French and German cultures, a Jesuit perspective on French classicism seems to be lacking in most accounts.¹ In this chapter, I aim to remedy this and draw a more complete picture of the literary reception of French classicist drama in eighteenth-century German countries.

In the first part of this chapter ambivalent attitudes towards French culture in the German speaking areas will be discussed. Since Johann Christoph Gottsched played a central role in the reception of French culture both in the Protestant and Catholic areas, his works form a logical starting point. From there, I will proceed to discuss the political factors in this literary process. The third part of this chapter will focus on the Jesuit reception of French classicist poetics on the school stage in the German-speaking areas. This little known

* I am grateful to Jan Bloemendal, Nigel Smith and Florian Schaffenrath for their helpful comments and suggestions.

1 Cf. for example Werner Kraus, 'Der Weg der deutschen Aufklärung nach Frankreich', in *Die französische Aufklärung im Spiegel der deutschen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1963) Schriftenreihe der Arbeitsgruppe zur Geschichte der deutschen und französischen Aufklärung, 10, pp. CXXX–CLXXXVII. Reprint in Werner Kraus, *Studien zur deutschen und französischen Aufklärung* (Berlin, 1963) Neue Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft, 16, pp. 401–454. Cf. also Catherine Julliard, *Gottsched et l'esthétique théâtrale française: La réception allemande des théories françaises* (Bern, etc.: Peter Lang, 1998); Raymond Heitz, York-Gothart Mix, Jean Mondot and Nina Birkner (eds.), *Galloghlie und Gallophobie in der Literatur und den Medien in Deutschland und in Italien im 18. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011); Reinhardt Meyer, 'Das französische Theater in Deutschland', in Matthias J. Pernerstorfer (ed.), *Schriften zur Theater- und Kulturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2012), pp. 43–66 [first published in Gerhard Sauder and Jochen Schlobach (eds.), *Aufklärungen: Frankreich und Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1985), pp. 145–165.

movement within Jesuit school drama shows the continued development of this genre in the eighteenth century, and reveals a very different aesthetics than the baroque spectacle, for which Jesuit theater has become famous.

1 French Culture in 18th century Germany: Between *Gallophobia* and *Gallophilia*

The cultural relationship between the German and French cultures was a complicated and ambivalent one: on the one hand the German elite wanted to embrace French court culture, which was dominating Europe at the time; on the other it despised and feared France. The French themselves ridiculed the Germans with the stereotype of a simple, chubby figure with no good taste.² Many learned collections of bon mots depicted the German as awkward and uncivilised, or at least as dishonorable. In the seventeenth century, the French used the expression ‘vous me prenez pour un Allemand’ when expressing the suspicion to be considered stupid.³

In Germany, French critique of its culture provoked an unsurprising reaction of outrage. Poets of the Silesian school, such as Benjamin Neukirch (1665–1729), Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (1607–1658) and Christian Friedrich Weichmann (1698–2770), called for support for the vernacular national literature, but, in contrast to the reaction in Italy, initially without much success. Nevertheless, *gallophobia* or even hatred of the French became common and deeply rooted

2 Cf. Heitz et al., *Gallophilie und Gallophobie*, p. xii; Erich Haase, ‘Zur Frage, ob ein Deutscher ein “Bel Esprit” sein kann’, *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 9 (1959), 360–375, here p. 367. On the interesting phenomenon of imagology, cf. Joep Leerssen, ‘Imagology: History and Method’, in Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 17–32. Compare the imagological contribution on the perception of Holland versus Spain and England around 1640 in Marijke Meijer-Drees, *Andere Landen, andere mensen: De beeldvorming van Holland versus Spanje en Engeland omstreeks 1650* (Den Haag: SDU, 1997) *Nederlandse cultuur in Europese context: Monografiën en studies*, 6.

3 Heitz et al., *Gallophilie und Gallophobie*, p. xii. Similarly, stereotypes were central in Italo-French literary relationships. Provoked by denigrating remarks about the artificiality of Italian literature in Dominique Bouhours’s *De la manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages de l’esprit*, several Italian replies appeared. For example, Gian Giuseppe Felice Orsi, *Considerazioni sopra un famoso libro francese, intitolato ‘La manière de bien penser’* (Bologna: Costantino Pisarri, 1703). The defense against French criticism of Italian literature became central to the activity of the *Accademia dell’Arcadia*, an Italian literary academy founded in Rome in 1690.

in the bourgeois intelligentsia (*bürgerliche Intelligenz*).⁴ Representatives of the early German nationalism were critical of the French fashion and frivolity, and journalistic literature frequently showed images of French phenomena, such as the extravagant wig fashion of the late *Ancien régime*.⁵

Despite this widespread *gallophobia*, an increasing number of French school books appeared in eighteenth-century Germany.⁶ In the final thirty years of this century, French became obligatory in most gymnasia in the German speaking areas, illustrative of the rising influence of French culture in these areas. Central to French lessons of this time was a command of a detailed regulated *Komplimentierkunst* ('art of complimenting'), which was to be achieved through learning by heart lists of phrases and expressions.⁷

The precondition for the success of French culture abroad was the blossoming of culture in France under Louis XIV (1638–1715). The king promoted art, literature and science financially, and surrounded himself by a large group of talented writers and artists, who were to become models for the whole of Europe in various genres, such as the influential painter Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), poets such as Nicolas Boileau (1636–1711) and dramatists such as Corneille, Racine and Molière. Political and diplomatic factors also played a large role in the French cultural hegemony in Europe from ca. 1650 onwards: politically France enjoyed a dominant position in Europe at the time. Also, France led the way in the development of efficient diplomacy and foreign ministry.⁸ During this period, a network of embassies and minor missions, link-

4 Werner Krauss, *Studien zur deutschen und französischen Aufklärung* (Berlin Akademie-Verlag, 1963), p. 401.

5 Reichardt Lüsebrink, *'Kauft schöne Bilder, Kupferstiche': Illustrierte Flugblätter und französisch-deutscher Kulturtransfer 1600–1830* (Mainz: Hermann Schmidt, 1996), p. 80; Heitz et al., *Gallophilie und Gallophobie*, p. xi.

6 Heitz et al., *Gallophilie und Gallophobie*, p. xiii records 38 titles for the sixteenth century, compared to 173 for the seventeenth and at least 377 for the eighteenth century.

7 Heitz et al., *Gallophilie und Gallophobie*, p. xiii, and Gerhard Sauder, 'Die französische Sprache in Deutschland in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Michel Grunwald and Jochen Schlobach (eds.), *Méditations: Aspects des relations franco-allemands du XVII^e siècle à nos jours* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992) *Contacts*, Serie 2, Gallo-Germanica, 7, pp. 97–124, esp. p. 101.

8 William Young, *International Politics and Warfare in the Age of Louis XIV and Peter the Great* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2004), p. 39, who quotes in n. 6 Matthew S. Anderson, 'Diplomacy and International Relations', in id., *Europe in the Eighteenth Century, 1713–1783*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1976), p. 201; John B. Wolf, *The Emergence of the Great Powers, 1685–1715* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 5; Camille-Georges Picavet, 'La "carrière" diplomatique en France au temps de Louis XIV (1661–1715)', *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale* 11 (1923), 383–408, esp. p. 383.

ing most of the major European capitals and many of the smaller courts, was established, with France playing a principal role.⁹ Under Louis XIV it had the most widespread system of permanent embassies in Europe, and moreover, its ambassadors enjoyed a high reputation.¹⁰

Thus, Louis's court became a model for courts all over Europe. At the Prussian court, for example, French ceremonial was adopted in 1701.¹¹ Frederick the Great (1712–1786) even hired French people for all of the culturally important positions in his court. In the 'Ritterakademien' (knight academies), schools for the German aristocracy, French was the main subject taught and the language through which all education was conducted. Also wealthy bourgeois families hired French teachers, sometimes deserters or refugees, with a dubious reputation, sometimes from members of Huguenot communities that had been in the country for longer.¹²

It is important to keep in mind in this complicated story that the German attitude towards French culture varied in different regions, among generations and social classes.¹³ As Raymond Heitz and his fellow-authors illustrate, rich merchants and specialized craftsmen in the northwestern German *Hansestädte* (Hanseatic towns), Franconia or Altbayern ('Old Bavaria') had their children trained in French, although this was highly unusual for their counterparts in the eastern Elbe region.¹⁴

Even in the opinion of one single person, the attitude towards France and its culture could differ with regard to particular aspects of it. Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766) is a good example of this phenomenon: he could be described both as a *Gallophile*, who promoted French culture in Germany, and as a *Gallophobe*, who ridiculed and despised it.

The image of Gottsched in secondary literature is often dominated by the views of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), who strongly criticized Gottsched in his 17. *Literaturbrief*. Although his intentions may not have been as serious as modern interpreters take them, his opinion on the value of Gottsched's imitation of the French cannot be misunderstood:

9 Young, *International Politics and Warfare*, p. 39.

10 Young, *International Politics and Warfare*, pp. 39–40.

11 Bernd Blaschke, 'Anleihen und Verachtung: Luise Gottscheds französischer Komödienimport als Arbeit an einem deutschen Theater', in Roman Luckscheiter and Marcel Krings (eds.), *Deutsch-französische Literaturbeziehungen* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 2007), pp. 71–85, esp. p. 72.

12 Ibid.

13 Raymond Heitz et al., *Gallophilie und Gallophobie*, p. xiv.

14 Ibid.

Es wäre zu wünschen, das sich Herr Gottsched niemals mit dem Theater vermengt hätte. Seine vermeinten Verbesserungen betreten entweder entbehrliche Kleinigkeiten, oder sind wahre Verschlimmerungen. [...] Er verstand ein wenig Französisch und fing an zu übersetzen; er ermunterte alles, was reimen und *Oui Monsieur* verstehen konnte, gleichfalls zu übersetzen; er verfertigte [...] mit Kleister und Schere seinen 'Cato'; er ließ den 'Darius', die 'Austern' und den 'Witzling', die 'Banise' und den 'Hypocondristen', ohne Kleister und Schere machen; er legte seinen Fluch auf das extemporieren; er ließ den Harlekin feierlich vom Theater vertreiben, welches selbst die größte Harlekinade war, die jemals gespielt worden; kurz er wollte nicht sowohl unser altes Theater verbessern, als der Schöpfer eines ganz neuen sein. Und was für eines neuen? Eines Französierenden; ohne zu untersuchen, ob dieses französierende Theater der deutschen Denkungsart angemessen sei, oder nicht.¹⁵

(It would be desirable, that Mr. Gottsched had never become involved with the theater. His supposed corrections concern either dispensable trifles, or are true changes for the worse. [...] He understood a little French and started to translate; he likewise encouraged everyone who could rhyme or understand "*Oui Monsieur*" to translate. With scissors and glue¹⁶ he produced [...] his 'Cato'; he had 'Darius', the 'Oysters' and the 'Joker', the 'Banise' and the 'Hypochondriacs' produced without scissors and glue; he put a curse on improvisation; he had the harlequin festively removed from the theater, which in itself was the greatest buffoonery ever performed. In short, not so much did he want to improve our old theater, as want to be the founder of a brand new theater. And what kind of a new one? A Frenchifying one, without investigating whether this Frenchifying¹⁷ theater was suitable to the German way of thinking or not.)

15 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 17. *Literaturbrief vom 16. Februar 1759*, in *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, ed. Wilfried Barner, vol. 4, *Werke 1758–1659* (Frankfurt a. M.: Gunter E. Grimm, 1997), pp. 499 f., esp. p. 499.

16 i.e. the concept of cut and paste.

17 On the term 'Frenchifying', cf. Heidi M. Schlipphacke, "Vous appellés cela trahir?": Slippery French Morals and German Bourgeois Virtues in Selected Writings by G.E. Lessing', in Aminia M. Brueggeman and Peter Schulman (eds.), *Rhine Crossings: France and Germany in Love and War* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 35–66, esp. p. 40.

In other words: according to Lessing it would have been better if Gottsched had never even tried his hand at theater, as he imitated the French theater in an unintelligent way that was unsuitable for the 'German way of thinking'. Lessing was not the only one to criticise Gottsched's slavish imitation of the French. In fact, Lessing's ruthless criticism on Gottsched's *Cato* was the conclusion of what has been called the 'Cato Controversy', a literary polemic that attacked not only *Der sterbende Cato*, but also, and especially, its author and his rationalistic poetics.¹⁸ At the time of its first appearance in 1732, however, the play had a great success. It was celebrated as the first German tragedy and appeared in at least ten editions until 1757.¹⁹

Lessing's remarks obviously only give a simplified version of Gottsched's reception of French classicism. Gottsched was no slavish imitator of its literature.

For example, in his moral weekly *Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen*, the fictive publisher 'Phyllis' refers to and denies the truth of French prejudices towards the Germans. Remarkably, however, Phyllis does not react by a general rejection of the French, but defends the Germans by stating that good taste ('der gute Geschmack') is at least as common among the Germans as among the French, who say they are superior in this respect:

Die Franzosen haben sich vor allen heutigen Völkern mit ihrem bon gout breit gemacht. Italien und Spanien ist von ihnen sehr verächtlich gehalten worden. [...] Uns Teutsche aber hat man gar mit denen Moscowitern, Finnen und Lappen in eine Classe gesetzt, und uns also mit Gewalt zu einem barbarischen Volcke machen wollen, welches sich keines guten Geschmacks anzumassen habe.

Dem ohngeachtet getraue ich mir die Ehre unserer Teutschen gegen alle unsre hochmüthige Nachbarn zu vertheidigen. Der gute Geschmack

18 Renate von Heydebrand, 'Johann Christoph Gottscheds Trauerspiel "Der sterbende Cato" und die Kritik: Analyse eines Kräftespiels', in Wolfdietrich Rasch, Hans Geulen and Klaus Haberkamm (eds.), *Rezeption und Produktion zwischen 1570 und 1730: Festschrift für Günther Weydt zum 65. Geburtstag* (Bern and München: Francke, 1972), pp. 553–569. Martin Brunkhorst, 'Die Cato-Kontroverse: Klassizistische Kritik an Addison, Deschamps und Gottsched', *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch 20* (1979), 71–87.

19 Cf. Christian Gottlob Köllner, 'Nachricht von den Schicksalen dieses sterbenden Cato in Frankreich und Deutschland', in Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Ausgewählte Werke*, vol. 2, ed. Joachim Birke (Berlin Walter de Gruyter, 1970), pp. 154–191 and pp. 168–170. This work mentions the number of 10 editions, but lists only nine in the 'Nachwort' by Joachim Birke, p. 455.

in freyen Künsten und anderen Dingen, so zum gemeinen Leben gehören, ist unter uns wo nicht häufiger, doch gewiß eben so häufig, als bey denen Frantzosen, die sich doch so klug düncken lassen, anzutreffen.²⁰

(The French have made themselves famous among the peoples of today with their bon gout. They despise Italy and Spain. [...] Us, Germans, they consider to be of the same category as Moscovites, Finns and Lapps, and they forcibly want to take us for a barbarian people, which has no good taste.

Nevertheless I dare to defend the honor of our Germans against all our haughty neighbors. Good taste in liberal arts and other things belonging to the common life is among us, if not more frequently, then at least as frequently found as among the French, who consider themselves to be so smart.)

From this quotation, Gottsched's respect for the French as the leading literary trendsetters of his time is clear, but it is also evident that he does not follow them in all aspects. Gottsched, as well as his wife Luise Adelgunde, used French culture in their attempts to promote a 'national' German culture. They were mediators of French art theory, philosophy, religion and literature/theater in four ways:²¹ firstly, an important means of this cultural transfer was translation. Secondly, they followed and promoted French models in their poetics (*Critische Dichtkunst*)²² and their weekly magazines.²³ Thirdly, literary collections such as the *Deutsche Schaubühne* revealed a clear French influence, including both translations of French plays as original plays inspired by the French tradition.²⁴

20 Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Die vernünftigen Tadelninnen*, 2 vols. (Halle and Leipzig, 1725–1726), ed. Helga Brandes (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms, 1993), here vol. 1, 1725, p. 34.

21 Helga Brandes, 'Johann Christoph und Luise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched und der deutsch-französische Aufklärungsdiskurs', in Jens Stüben (ed.), *Ostpreußen—Westpreußen—Danzig: Eine historische Literaturlandschaft* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2007) Schriften des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte des Deutschen im östlichen Europa, 30, pp. 237–258, esp. p. 238.

22 Cf. Catherine Julliard, *Gottsched et l'esthétique théâtrale française: La réception allemande des théories françaises* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998) *Convergences*, 6; Roland Krebs, *L'Idée du 'Théâtre National' dans L'Allemagne des Lumières: Théorie et Réalisations* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1985) *Wolffenbütteler Forschungen*, 28, pp. 30, 58, and 98.

23 Cf. Gabriele Ball, *Moralische Küsse: Gottsched als Zeitschriftenherausgeber und literarischer Vermittler* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2000) *Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert*, Supplementa, 7.

24 On the Gottscheds' *Deutsche Schaubühne*, cf. Heide Hollmer, *Anmut und Nutzen: Die Ori-*

Finally, the production of their own plays, following French models, was an expression of their cultural orientation.

In their translations, the Gottscheds aimed to contribute to the spread of the European Enlightenment.²⁵ These were not translations in the modern sense of the word. Instead of an exact translation, loyal to the original, the text was often significantly altered to adapt it for its new German audience. The Gottscheds tackled a number of theoretical-scholarly works, such as Fénelon's *Lettre à l'Académie*, 1716 (translated by Luise Gottsched) and Batteux's *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1746).

The Gottscheds considered the theater of French classicism, characterised by its strict rules with regard to unities of time, place and action, a suitable model for the theater in Germany.²⁶ In the preface to the second edition of the *Critische Dichtkunst* (1737) Gottsched praised Corneille and Racine, and considered them equal to Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, Julius Scaliger (1484–1558) and Nicolas Boileau (1636–1711). Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine, even though considered very different to each other during their life-time, are, in his poetics, representatives of the same 'regular' theater.²⁷ In *Die deutsche Schaubühne* (1741–1745) he argued that, since there were no exemplary German 'regular' plays yet, and the ancient examples were too unknown for the average German spectator, the stage should be enriched with French plays.²⁸ The aim,

ginaltrauerspiele in Gottsched's 'Deutscher Schaubühne' (Tübingen: NAAM, 1994) Theatron, 10.

25 Helga Brandes, 'Johann Christoph und Luise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched', p. 239.

26 For a discussion of Corneille's influence on Gottsched, cf. Jean-Marie Valentin, 'Pierre Corneille en Allemagne (xvii-xixe s.): Une fortune paradoxale', *Dix-septième siècle* 2, 243 (2009), 307–320, esp. pp. 314–315.

27 To mention but one example, according to Gottsched in the plays of both the ancient classical authors as well as Corneille and Racine, at least one character remained on the stage in the transition from one scene to another. In the conclusion of his chapter on tragedy, Gottsched concludes (*Schriften zur Literatur*, ed. Steinmetz, p. 176): 'Und soviel mag auch von der Tragödie genug sein. Wer mehr wissen will, muß die hin und her angeführten Skribenten, sonderlich auch die Vorreden lesen, so Corneille und Racine vor ihre Stücke gesetzt haben.' On Gottsched's generalisation of the principles of Racine and Corneille, cf. Theile, *Die Racine-Kritik bis 1800*, p. 93.

28 Blaschke, *Luise Gottscheds französischer Komödienimport*, p. 75 quotes Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Die Deutsche Schaubühne*, vol. 2, facsimile of the 1741–1744 print (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlerische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1972), p. 8: 'Daher habe man begonnen "unsere Bühnen mit den Stücken unserer Nachbarn zu bereichern", die sich "viel genauer nach den Regeln und Mustern der Alten gehalten, als unsere deutsche Dichter des vorigen Jahrhunderts".'

however, was to become independent of the French, and to create a national German theater with the rules of classicist theater. Gottsched stated:

Vielleicht bringen wir es in kurzem so weit, dass wir gar keiner Behülfe unserer Nachbarn mehr brauchen, sondern von lauter eigenen Arbeiten unserer Landsleute diese Sammlung werden fortsetzen können.²⁹

(Perhaps in a short while we will go such a long way, that we will not need any help from our neighbors anymore, but can continue this collection purely with the own works of our compatriots.)

As a translator of Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle's (1657–1757) *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (originally appeared 1686, Gottsched's translation appeared in 1726), Gottsched even earned the title 'der Teutschen Fontenelle' (the Fontenelle of the Germans).³⁰ Through his translation of Fontenelle's *Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes* (1688), Gottsched came into contact with the 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes', which was the main theme of the work. Gottsched's annotated translation of this work appeared in 1730 in Leipzig.³¹ In the context of the debate, Fontenelle's work was seen as the manifesto for 'anti-classicist modernists'.³² Gottsched, on the other hand, was a strong admirer of the classics, both in their original Greek and Roman form and in the form of French classicism. Nevertheless he was influenced also by Fontenelle's modernism, in the sense that he believed in the cultural possibilities of his own time. Gottsched combined elements from both the *Modernes* and the *Anciens* in this cultural transformation.³³ On the one hand he admired and imitated the *Anciens* (Boileau, La Fontaine, Racine, La Bruyère), on the other the *Modernes* (Perrault, Fontenelle, Saint-Évremond), filtering out from each what seemed important in a particular situation.³⁴

29 Gottsched, *Die Deutsche Schaubühne*, vol. 2, p. 42.

30 Ibid., p. 243; Günther Gawlick, 'Gottsched als Vermittler der französische[n] Aufklärung', in W. Martens, *Zentren der Aufklärung III: Leipzig: Aufklärung und Bürgerlichkeit* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1990) *Wolfenbütteler Studien zur Aufklärung*, 17, pp. 179–204, esp. p. 182.

31 Bernhard von Fontenelle, *Abhandlung der Frage, vom Vorzuge der Alten oder Neuern im Absehen auf Künste und Wissenschaften* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1730), pp. 256–294.

32 Ibid., p. 243, referring to Werner Krauss, *Aufklärung III*, Chapter: 'Der Weg der deutschen Aufklärung nach Frankreich während des 18. Jahrhunderts', pp. 100–117, here p. 116.

33 Brandes, *Johann Christoph & Luise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched*, p. 244.

34 Ibid.

Gottsched, therefore, pleaded with nuance for the adoption of French models, if he considered them suitable for the advancement of German literature in the tradition of the ancient classics. In poetry, on the other hand, he considered French lyrical poets of less value than their German counterparts, since the French language, in his view, was less suitable for expressing the diversity of ancient metrics, than the German language.³⁵

Luise Gottsched was also a critical follower of French culture. Despite numerous translations of French works, her works reveal a strong resentment against the French. Her comedy *Die Hausfranzösin*, for example, even though perfectly following the French classicist rules of poetics, has a number of *gallophobe* themes and motives.³⁶ To mention just one example of her attitude in this work, French cuisine is ridiculed and abused. The sick servant 'Sotenville' ('the fool in town') is served spiced pigeon manure, which pleases his French taste, but causes colic afterwards. Apart from that, 'Luischen', one of the daughters of the family, criticizes the French cuisine for being unnatural, wrong and unhygienic. Also the story itself is obviously discussing the two extreme attitudes towards France: a German family is divided into a *gallophobe* camp and a *gallophile* camp when the son, with the speaking name 'Franz', proposes to join his French teacher on a visit to France. He is the *gallophile* in the family, together with his little sister 'Hannchen'. His uncle 'Wahrmund' ('Speaker of the truth') and patriotic sister 'Luischen' (sharing her name with the author, Luise Gottsched) are strongly against this plan, since the French teacher, the *Hausfranzösin*, along with her servant Sotenville (who turns out to be her father and a criminal on a wanted poster), aim to rob the family. Overall, an anti-French sentiment dominates the play, while at the same time the rules of the French classicism are followed in its form.

The Gottsched's rationalist French-inspired poetics should be seen in the context of Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) ideas that developed in Protestant Germany. A rationalist tendency, which was later called 'Neology', flourished between about 1740 and the end of the century.³⁷ Reason was the central concept for the Neologians, and even though they did not reject revelation or the divinity of Christ, they viewed everything that did not conform to reason with suspicion. French classicist poetics, which gave strict regulations with

35 Meier, *Plus Ultra! Johann Christoph Gottscheds gallophobe Gallophilie*, pp. 195–205.

36 This discussion of Luise Gottsched's *Die Hausfranzösin* is based on Blaschke.

37 Joachim Whaley, 'Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish *Aufklärung*', in id., *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol. 11: *The peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648–1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 470–484, esp. p. 471.

regard to the unities of place, time and action, and did away with unnecessary ornamentation, fitted well with these rationalistic ideas.

2 Roman Catholic *Aufklärung*: Rationalism and Educational Reforms

In the previous paragraph, I have elucidated Gottsched's French-inspired poetics, inspired by Enlightenment ideas. In Catholic German-speaking areas, the Enlightenment had a different impact.³⁸ Traditional, Counter-reformation Catholicism continued to play an important role in its society, along with its characteristic traditions, such as the Marian cult. The cult of the Eucharist, which celebrated the most important distinction between Catholicism and Protestantism, became increasingly popular in the eighteenth century.³⁹ Therefore, it may seem surprising that eighteenth-century Jesuits took the Protestant Gottsched as their model and imitated his French-inspired classicist poetics.

To explain this, two developments within Catholic Europe should be considered.⁴⁰ Firstly, a more simple, austere piety was promoted by the Italian reformer Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750). As we will see later in this chapter, Muratori proved to be extremely influential in the German-speaking areas.

Secondly, Protestant scholars and writers, such as Gottsched, increasingly presented themselves as superior to their Catholic counterparts. Self-criticism among the Catholics became more common, and the main initiatives for reform came from educated laymen, of Catholic rulers and certain religious

38 On the Catholic Enlightenment in the German speaking area (*Aufklärung*), cf. Bernhard Plonger, 'Was ist Katholische Aufklärung?', in Elisabeth Kovács (ed.), *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1979), pp. 11–56.

39 Whaley, 'Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish *Aufklärung*', p. 477.

40 Ibid. Whaley also mentions two other developments: Jansenism and the educational reforms surrounding Christian Freiherr von Wolff. Jansenism promoted a more simple, austere, unadorned piety. Of course, this cannot have been a direct factor in the case of the Jesuits, as they were the opponents of the Jansenists. The reform of Catholic universities that Friedrich Karl von Schönbrunn (1674–1746) had begun at Würzburg in the 1720s became more widely accepted by Catholic scholars from the 1740s. They enthusiastically embraced the ideas with regard to higher education of Christian Freiherr von Wolff (1679–1754), who argued for a complete and self-sufficient educational system instead of the existing Neo-Scholastic Jesuit teaching.

orders (such as the Benedictines). The Jesuits were the main targets of these reformers, who considered them conservative and encouraging superstition and excess.⁴¹ From the late seventeenth century, they were increasingly under attack for the lack of functionality of their theater. Already during the reign of Leopold I (1640–1705), the Austrian nobility asked the Jesuits to focus their education more on topics of practical use for the future professional life of their students, but at this time the Jesuits still enjoyed the full support of Leopold. When the nobility's request was ignored, it founded its own schools, exclusively for children of the nobility: the *Ritterakademien*.⁴² The first of these in Austria was founded in 1682 in Vienna. The curriculum in these schools included law, history, geography, modern languages (French, Italian and Spanish), mathematics, physics, religion and sports, and it became a model for the *curricula* in Austrian gymnasia.

It was also in the interest of the government to have a useful and disciplined youth to their disposal. A learned one, such as that educated by the Jesuits, which moreover began to include more and more children of lower social ranks, was much less so. Therefore, as early as 1668, in spite of resistance from the religious orders, the government actively promoted a stricter (social) selection for entry to the gymnasium.⁴³ Almost sixty years later, in 1734, the imperial government in Vienna warned the Jesuits in Graz, that not just any untalented boy of low social rank be admitted, but that he should serve the common good in a more suitable manner:

... dass nicht jeder von gemeinem Stand herkommende und nicht wohl talentirte Knab ad studia zugelassen, sondern vielmehr zu seinem eigenen und des Publici besserem Nutzem zu was anderem nach seiner Fähigkeit angewendet werde.⁴⁴

41 Whaley, 'Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish *Aufklärung*', p. 479.

42 Gerald Grimm, *Die Schulreform Maria Theresias 1747–1775: Das österreichische Gymnasium zwischen Standesschule und allgemeinbildender Lehranstalt im Spannungsfeld von Ordensschulwesen, thesianischem Reformabsolutismus und Aufklärungspädagogik* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), p. 257.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 258–259.

44 Resolution of the government dated 26. May, 1734. It is quoted in Franz von Krones, *Geschichte der Karl Franzens-Universität in Graz: Festgabe zur Feier ihres dreihundertjährigen Bestandes* (Graz: Verlag der Karl-Franzens-Universität, 1886), p. 60; and again by Grimm, *Die Schulreform Maria-Theresias 1747–1775*, p. 259.

(... that not every low-born and not very talented boy should be admitted to study, but rather that he should be employed, for his own good and for the common good, for something else, suited to his capability.)

For the Jesuits however, government reforms did not materialize until 1735, when the first attempts of a reform of the gymnasia were made in the *Studienordnung* of Emperor Charles VI (1685–1740). These were still very mild measures, since the Jesuits had already shown goodwill by their introduction of a chair of universal history at the university of Vienna in 1729.⁴⁵

Defeats in the war of the Austrian Succession (1740–1744) and the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) in Catholic Austria created a feeling of inferiority in comparison with Protestant Prussia and were an incentive to reform in Austria. Maria Theresa (1717–1780), who had come to power in 1740, drastically reformed the state system. The administration of the state was reformed, dividing its tasks over a state chancellery, a state council and the *Directorium in publicis et cameralibus*, charged with the management of internal affairs.⁴⁶ Other reforms included the introduction of district commissions, the creation of a general land register and the establishment of a military academy in Vienna.⁴⁷ Further, she appointed Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz (1711–1794), an aristocrat with reformist and Enlightenment ideas, as her new state chancellor.⁴⁸ Educational reforms, which were aimed at creating patriotic citizens who were useful to the state, brought important changes to the school curriculum, introducing new, enlightened ideas to the Austrian pupils, new subjects (such as French and History) and, by abolishing Jesuit censorship, making available previously banned books.⁴⁹ Frederick the Great served as an example in these reforms,⁵⁰ in the sense that Maria Theresa aimed for the Habsburg Empire to keep up with Prussia's reforms. Although Maria Theresa was deeply religious and did not follow a complete theoretical program of Enlightenment ideas, she and

45 Grimm, *Die Schulreform Maria-Theresias 1747–1775*, p. 262.

46 For a short summary of Maria Theresa's reforms, cf. Balács Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček (eds), *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945): Texts and Commentaries*, vol. 1: *Late Enlightenment: Emergence of the Modern 'National Idea'* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 128. Cf. also the standard work on Maria Theresa: Alfred A. Ritter von Arneth, *Geschichte Maria Theresias*, 10 vols. (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1863–1879).

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., p. 58.

her advisers were strongly influenced by the ideas of the Enlightened Absolutism (*Aufgeklärter Absolutismus*).⁵¹

Rationality, uniformity, utility and functionality were central concepts in both her state reforms and in her educational policy. The prominent role in Jesuit education of school theater, characterized by its spectacle and entertainment, which the Jesuits had developed since the early existence of the order, did not fit this idea of a general education. The emphasis in Jesuit education on learning Latin and performing in spectacular school drama took away precious time from the cultivation of other skills which could be useful for the state, such as language skills (French, German), historical and geographical knowledge, and other qualities such as patriotism. An emphasis on the moral function of theater and a strict application of the rules of the French classicism, on the other hand, corresponded better to it, and became an (unsuccessful) attempt of some influential Jesuits to defend and continue the practice of school theater. The fact that Maria Theresa was strongly influenced by French court culture must have been a factor too in their modifications to Jesuit school theater.

In 1759, Maria Theresa would appoint Giovanni Battista de Gaspari, a former student of the previously mentioned Italian theologian and historian Lodovico Antonio Muratori,⁵² as *director scholarum humaniorum*. In the following years he implemented a systematic reform in the educational system in Austria.⁵³ In the 1760s, this meant a complete prohibition of the use of theater in the schools.⁵⁴ In 1764 he presented his *Instructio pro scholis humanioribus*, in which he emphasized the general educational function of the gymnasium.⁵⁵ Education should serve the common good. His curriculum officially replaced the

51 Ibid.

52 On Muratori and his conception of 'enlightened christianity', cf. Grimm, *Die Schulreform Maria Theresias 1747–1775*, pp. 195–205.

53 Ibid., pp. 298–318.

54 Ellen Hastaba, "Jesuitenspiele" in Innsbruck (1562–1773); in Kurt Drexel and Monika Fink (eds.), *Musikgeschichte Tirols*, vol. 11: *Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2004) Schlern-Schriften, 322, pp. 375–413; Stefan Tilg, 'Die Entwicklung des Jesuitendramas vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert: Eine Fallstudie am Beispiel Innsbruck', in Reinhold Gleis and Robert Seidel (eds.), *Das lateinische Drama der Frühen Neuzeit: Exemplarische Einsichten in Praxis und Theorie* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008), pp. 183–200.

55 The Latin text and a German translation of the *Instructio pro Scholis humanioribus* is published in Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens: Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, 3 vols. (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1984), pp. 467–482.

Ratio studiorum of the Jesuits in all Austrian gymnasia and introduced new subjects such as Greek, German, history and geography.

3 Theory, Politics and Aesthetics: Jesuit Classicist Poetics in the German Speaking Areas (Friz, Neumayr, Weitenauer)

From the point of view of government reform, therefore, the attempt of the Jesuits to save their school drama using French classicist rules is understandable. Also, French classicism as such was not 'new' for the Jesuits in the eighteenth century. Pierre Corneille (1606–1684), one of the most important representatives of this movement, was closely linked to the Jesuit tradition of theater, even in his lifetime.⁵⁶ Corneille himself, being a Jesuit *alumnus*, was strongly influenced by contemporary Jesuit poetics in his theater practice.⁵⁷ He was a pupil of 'La Flèche' (Rouen) and Pont-à-Mousson, where he enjoyed an education from the best Jesuit teachers of his time. He was in contact with famous Jesuits such as Nicolas Caussin and Louis Cellot, and, up to the end of his life, with Claude Delidél, Charles De la Rue and Gabriel Le Jay.⁵⁸ Corneille's interpretation of the tragedy in which *the sublime* was central, rather than a morality based on verisimilitude, was very similar to the Jesuit theater. It relied on an 'esthetic catharsis', meaning, a catharsis based on admiration and pathos.⁵⁹

Corneille himself became exemplary for the Jesuits in the late seventeenth century, when the French Jesuit Joseph Jouvancy included Corneille in a list of his most important models, next to Aristotle, Horace and Abbé H. D' Aubignac, in what became a standard guide and method for classical studies at Jesuit colleges all over Europe, *De ratione discendi et docendi*.⁶⁰ At first sight, therefore,

56 Valentin, 'La diffusion de Corneille en Allemagne', pp. 171–199. Cf. also Jean-Marie Valentin (ed.), *Pierre Corneille et l'Allemagne: L'oeuvre dramatique de Pierre Corneille dans le monde germanique (XVIIe–XIXe siècles)* (Paris: Desjonquères, 2007); id., 'Pierre Corneille en Allemagne (xvii-xixe s.): Une fortune paradoxale', *Dix-septième siècle* 2, 243 (2009), 307–320; André Stegmann, *L'Héroïsme cornélien, genèse et signification*, part II: *L'Europe intellectuelle et le théâtre (1580–1650): Signification de l'héroïsme cornélien* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1968); Marc Fumaroli, *Héros et orateurs: Rhétorique et dramaturgie cornéliennes* (Genève: Droz, 1996² [1990¹]), pp. 63–208.

57 Cf. Anne-Élisabeth Spica, 'Corneille et les poétiques jésuites: Une dramaturgie comparée', in Myriam Dufour-Maitre (ed.), *Pratiques de Corneille* (Rouen and Du Havre: Presses Universitaires, 2012), pp. 371–385.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 372.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 379.

60 Joseph Juventius, *De ratione discendi et docendi* (Paris: Fratres Barbou, 1725), p. 74. Cf. also

this seems not at all unusual: Corneille, considering his relationship to the Jesuits, was an acceptable model for the order. At a closer look, however, imitation of Corneille signals a completely new Jesuit poetics. Although the traditional baroque appreciation given to music, dance and elaborate stage sets is still present in his poetics, Jouvancy considered respect for the three unities important. This meant that the action should be complete and logical, with one action proceeding from the other and consisting of a beginning, middle and end. On these grounds Seneca's tragedies were rejected.⁶¹ The same rule counted for space and time, in which no incredible jumps should occur. Corneille had discussed these rules in his *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique* (1660), which he published as a preface to the three volumes of his collected works, and in the *Examens*, published in the same collection of his works. The *Discours* took the form of a didactic exposition and commentary on Aristotle. In the *Examens*, Corneille analyzed his plays critically testing them on the rules set in the *Discours*, revealing that even he himself in practice failed to follow them consistently.⁶² These rules, which therefore should be considered general rules of the genre of drama in the tradition of French classicism, rather than rules which Corneille respected himself in his plays, were to become the main aspect of imitation in a completely new Jesuit theater poetics in the eighteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, Corneille was often mentioned alongside his life-long rival Jean Racine (1639–1699), who may not seem like a logical choice as a model for the Jesuits. Especially because of his treatment of love in his plays, the French Jesuit Father Charles Porée (1675–1741) had criticized Racine for the lack of morals in his plays in a speech delivered in the Collège Louis-le-Grand in 1733.⁶³ However, in a rationalist vein of poetics among the Jesuits in the German speaking areas, of which the *Epistola de Tragaediis* by the Austrian Jesuit Andreas Friz (1711–1790) is an early example, Jean Racine, Pierre Corneille (1606–1684), Molière, Pietro Metastasio and Granelli all feature as models, with Jean Racine taking a central position.⁶⁴ For the German Jesuits Franz Neumayr

Rudolf Rieks, *Drei lateinische Tragiker des Grand Siècle* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1989), pp. 12–13.

61 Juvenius, *De ratione discendi et docendi*, p. 74.

62 On Corneille's *Examens*, cf. David Maskell, 'Corneille's *Examens* Examined: The Case of Horace', *French Studies* 51 (1997), 267–280.

63 Charles Porée, *Theatrum sitne vel esse possit schola informandis moribus idonea*, ed. with French transl. (Paris: Joannes Baptista Coignard, 1733), pp. 30–31.

64 Cf. the edition and extensive introduction in Nienke Tjoelker (ed.), *Andreas Friz's Letter on Tragedies (ca. 1741–1744): An Eighteenth-century Contribution to Theatre poetics* (Leiden

(1697–1775) and Ignaz Weitenauer (1709–1783) both Corneille and Racine were also very important.⁶⁵

As discussed above, the Jesuits had different problems to address in the eighteenth century than their fellow members a century earlier. In the sixteenth century, they had taken up the theater in a Counter-Reformation context. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their theater became an extremely successful, socially important phenomenon all over Europe.⁶⁶ School pupils and university students regularly performed comedies, tragedies and other types of plays, drawing a large percentage of a city's inhabitants to the schools, either as participants or spectators. Spectacle and entertainment were the famous characteristics of this theater: things that, by the eighteenth century according to Andreas Friz, on the other hand, were precisely better left out of a play: all types of ornaments outside of the action of a play should be condemned, and the focus should be fully on the action of a play. Friz's ideas on theater are included in a manuscript, now held at the university library of Graz. This manuscript is a collection of theoretical works on theater and examples of good plays, written or translated by Friz between 1741 and 1744. The first part of the manuscript (f. 1^r–74^v) is devoted to an analysis of eleven tragedies by Racine: *La Thebayde ou Les Frères Ennemis*, *Alexandre Le Grand*, *Andromaque*, *Britannicus*, *Bérénice*, *Bajazet*, *Mithridate*, *Iphigénie*, *Phèdre*, *Esther* and *Athalie*.⁶⁷ In it, Friz presented the plays as models for Jesuit playwrights. Qualities that he admired particularly are the use of passions to evoke hate of vice and love of virtue and the construction of a principal action according to the unities of time, place and action. The way in which characters, events or other aspects of a play contribute to its moral function is also discussed.

and New York: Brill, 2014), *Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, 4. On Weitenauer, cf. Edith Kellner, *Ignaz Weitenauers Ars Poetica und Tragodiae Autumnales* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Innsbruck, 1958).

- 65 On Neumayr's poetics, cf. Hermann Wiegand, 'Späte Jesuitenpoetik: Die *Idea Poeseos* von Franz Neumayr SJ (1697–1765)', in Beate Hintzen and Roswitha Simons (eds.), *Norm und Poesie: Zur expliziten und impliziten Poetik in der lateinischen Literatur der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013) Frühe Neuzeit, 178, pp. 111–124.
- 66 For a short introduction to Jesuit drama with bibliography, cf. Ruprecht Wimmer's lemma 'Jesuitendrama', in Georg Braungart a.o. (eds.), *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, 2 (Berlin, etc.: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 196–199. On the first two centuries of Jesuit theater, cf. Jean-Marie Valentin, *Le théâtre des Jésuites dans les pays de langue allemande (1554–1680): Salut des âmes et ordre des cités*, 3 vols. (Bern-Frankfurt-Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1978).
- 67 Cf. the short introduction to these analyses and a complete Latin edition in Tjoelker, *Andreas Friz's Letter on Tragedies*, pp. 173–282.

Folios 76r to 166v contain a section entitled *Opera Metastasio*. In this section are the Latin translations of three librettos by Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782): *Themistocles*, *Titus* and *Cyrus*.⁶⁸ The third section is entitled *Opera Granellii* and contains Latin translations of two plays by Giovanni Granelli (1703–1770): *Sedecias* (169^r–188^r) and *Manasses* (188^v–212^r). Folios 212^v–220^r contain Friz's translation of *Giuseppe riconosciuto* (1733) by Pietro Metastasio, with the title *Joseph, a fratribus suis adoratus et agnitus*. *Giuseppe riconosciuto* is an *oratorio libretto* (religious drama) that Metastasio wrote while at the Habsburg court in Vienna. The inclusion of these plays is illustrative of Friz's proximity to the court. His father, Adrian von Friz, was court harbinger (*Hofffourier*) of Archduke Charles, who had been proclaimed King Charles III in 1705.⁶⁹ Andreas Karl Josef von Friz (Andreas Friz) was born in Barcelona, at the time of Charles's court. In the following years, the Friz family returned to Vienna, where Andreas's brother Edmund, who also became a Jesuit, was born in 1714. His sister Elisabeth von Friz (born 1718) was as close to the government as a woman could be in those days: she was a personal assistant and confidante of Maria Theresa.⁷⁰

The final part of the manuscript (222^r–315^v) has the title *Opera R.P. Andreae Friz e s.J.* and contains Friz's *Epistola de Tragediis* as well as four plays by Friz: *Alexis*, *Salomon*, *Psychis* and *Codrus*. His letter on tragedies is a theater poetics, which urges Jesuit playwrights to apply the rules of French classicism very strictly: the three unities should be respected and no distracting and immoral interludes should be included. This emphasis on rules and regularity strongly resembles Gottsched's interpretation of the French classicism. In fact, it is likely that Friz was directly inspired by Gottsched's *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst*.⁷¹ In a passage concerning the three unities, for example, Friz's words are an almost literal translation of Gottsched's words.⁷² Friz's poetics could be criticized in the same way as Gottsched's was: it could result in boring plays. Friz discussed this possible response already in his poetics, stating that

68 Mareike Einfalt, Ludwig Fladerer and Ulrike Syrou, 'Beschreibung der Handschrift 938', p. 4, in *Die Antikerezeption an der Grazer Universität*, <http://gams.uni-graz.at/archive/get/o:arj-07A-14/sdef:TEL/get>.

69 Louis von Frizberg, 'Andreas von Friz: Der letzte Wiener Jesuitendramatiker', *Alemania* 5 (1931), 43–101, esp. p. 43.

70 Louis von Frizberg, *Elisabeth von Friz: Ein Liebling der Kaiserin Maria Theresia* (Vienna: privately printed, 1954).

71 Cf. Bernhard Weybora, 'Die *Epistula de tragoediis* von Andreas Friz' (unpublished dissertation University of Graz, 1940), pp. 95–99.

72 Compare Gottsched, *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1730), p. 575 and Friz, *Epistola de Tragediis*, fol. 227v.

if the actors acted well, followed the rules of rhetorics and the play were easily understandable, it would still be entertaining for the audience.

Around the same time, in 1741 in Augsburg, another Jesuit, Anton Claus (1691–1654) published a collection of tragedies.⁷³ They appeared in a second edition in 1753 in Augsburg-Würzburg. Translations were published in Polish (Vilnae 1751) and German (Augsburg 1776). The theater exercises that he wrote for school use were published in Ingolstadt, Augsburg and Innsbruck in 1750.⁷⁴ Most of his plays were performed in Innsbruck, where he worked between 1730 and 1735. In the introduction to the edition of his tragedies, Corneille is put on the same level as the ancient sources, and called the ‘prince of the tragic poets’, following the example of the French Jesuit Charles de la Rue (1643–1725).⁷⁵ De

73 On Anton Claus, cf. Valentin, ‘La diffusion de Corneille en Allemagne au XVIII^e siècle’, p. 179, who refers to the most important works on Claus in general: Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la compagnie de Jésus* (Brussels: Oscar Schepens; Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1890–1932), vol. II (1891), pp. 1204–1205; Herbert Gerl, *Catalogus generalis Provinciae Germaniae Superioris et Bavariae Societatis Jesu 1556–1773* (Munich: unpublished catalogue, 1968), p. 64; Nikolaus Scheid, *Das Lateinische Jesuitendrama im Deutschen Sprachgebiet* (Freiburg: Herder, 1930), p. 26; Willi Flemming, *Geschichte des Jesuitentheaters in den Ländern Deutscher Zunge* (Berlin Gesellschaft für Theaterwissenschaft, 1923) Schriften der Gesellschaft für Theaterwissenschaft, 32, p. 14; Stefan Tilg, ‘Theater’, in Martin Korenjak, Florian Schaffner, Lav Subaric and Karlheinz Töchterle (eds.), *Tyrolis Latina: Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur in Tirol*, vol. 2. *Von der Gründung der Universität Innsbruck bis heute* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar: Böhlau, 2012), pp. 661–700, esp. pp. 672–675. On his life, cf. Ms. XVII 2/52; VI 3; XI 26/2; VI 18 in the archives of the Jesuits, Ignatius-Haus, Munich. Valentin’s information on Claus is based further on the information found in the archives held at the Hauptstaatsarchiv of Munich: Jesuitica, *Catalogi personarum*.

74 Anton Claus, *Exercitationes theatrales authore P. Antonio Claus s.J. Sacerdote* (Ingolstadt-Augsburg: F.X. Crätz and Th. Summer, 1750) and *Exercitationes theatrales a s.J. magistris inferiorum classium dirigente P. Antonio Claus, eiusdem Societatis in Episcopali et Academico Gymnasio dilingano exhibitae* (Augsburg and Innsbruck: J. Wolff, 1755). Cf. the forthcoming edition of his *Publius Cornelius Scipio sui Victor*: Simon Wirthensohn (ed.), *Anton Claus s.J.: Publius Cornelius Scipio sui victor (1741)* ed., intr., transl. and notes (Freiburg in Breisgau: Rombach, in print). Unfortunately I was unable to access this edition during the preparation of this article.

75 Claus, ‘Praefatio ad lectorem’, p. 4: ‘Antiquiorum enim vestigia, non tamen regulas, deserere ausus Petrum Cornelium, quem Tragicorum Principem Ruaeus noster, assentiente litterato orbe, appellat, sequi conatus sum, etsi non passibus aequis.’ (‘For I, daring to abandon the traces of the older poets, but not their rules, tried to follow Pierre Corneille, but not with equal steps’). On Charles de la Rue, cf. Valentin, ‘La diffusion de Corneille en Allemagne au XVIII^e siècle’, p. 180, n. 33; Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la compagnie de Jésus*, vol. VII (1896), pp. 290–307.

la Rue had a successful career as a professor of rhetoric at the Louis-le-Grand college, and as a preacher. He died in Paris at 1725. Two of De la Rue's plays, *Cyrus* and *Lysimachus* were published in Ingolstadt in 1722. They served as important mediators of French literature in Germany. Like Corneille, Claus introduced his plays in this edition with a short commentary on the unities of action, time and place in his plays, the characters of the heroes, intended as practical tips for future playwrights:

Subiungo singulis Tragoediis quasdam observationes, in eorum potissimum gratiam, quos idem, qui me diu exercuit, Theatralis labor exspectat.⁷⁶

(I attach some observations to all the tragedies separately, to the greatest regard of those, whom the same labor of theater awaits, which trained me for a long time.)

Like Friz, there is a strong emphasis on the rules for dramatic structure, which in their view guarantee the moral effectiveness. It should be noted that the editions of plays by Claus as well as Friz enjoyed a great success and therefore represent by no means a marginal phenomenon among the German Jesuits.

Ten years later, in 1751, the Bavarian Franz Neumayr (1697–1775), also mentions the French classicists prominently, including Racine along with Pierre and Thomas Corneille, the French Jesuits De la Rue and Porée,⁷⁷ the Italian Metastasio, Gottsched as the German vernacular model, and Anton Claus, for the Latin, in his list of contemporary models for the genre of tragedy:

Princeps habetur Cornelius senior et junior, quibus proxime accedit Racine, Ruaeus, uti et Poyre Galli, Metastasio Italus, Gottsched et Clausius, ille germanus, hic latinus.⁷⁸

(Corneille senior is considered the prince, as well as Corneille junior. They are followed closely by the French Racine, De la Rue and Porée, the Italian Metastasio, and Gottsched and Claus, the former German, the latter Latin.)

⁷⁶ Claus, 'Praefatio ad lectorem', p. 5.

⁷⁷ On Porée, cf. Rieks, *Drei lateinische Tragiker des Grand Siècle*, pp. 43–57.

⁷⁸ Franz Neumayr, *Idea poeseos*, p. 173. Cf. Frank Pohle, *Glaube und Beredsamkeit: Katholisches Schultheater in Jülich-Berg, Ravenstein und Aachen (1601–1817)* (Münster: Rhema, 2010), p. 301, n. 334; Valentin, 'La diffusion de Corneille en Allemagne au XVIII^e siècle', p. 187.

Neumayr was a contemporary of Friz and his first play appeared on stage in 1731 at Munich.⁷⁹ His *Idea poeseos* is a handbook for those who had to discuss poetics with their students.⁸⁰ It illustrates the same turn to classicism as Claus and Friz.⁸¹ Similar to Friz, Neumayr emphasizes the moral usefulness of literature:

Finem porro quia diximus in eo consistere, ut delectando prosis (omnis enim ars ex sua essentia subordinatur Politiae, cujus est bono publico invigilare, atque ne quis in noxiis aut inutilibus laboribus occupetur, cavere ...) ⁸²

(Further, we have indicated that the end [of drama] consists in this: the usefulness through pleasing (for each art is in essence subordinated to the state, whose duty it is to guard the common good, and to be careful, that one is not occupied with harmful or useless things ...))

Also the connection between education, the art of theater and creating good citizens, who contribute to the common good of a state becomes clear in this quotation. Respect for the structural rules of the French classicism, which meant the play contained as little distraction from its moral message as possible, is the condition for this effect. However, in order to please the audience's taste for spectacle, Neumayr combined regular classical structure with baroque interludes in his plays.⁸³

Another six years later, in 1757, Ignaz Weitenauer published his commentary on Horace's *Ars poetica*.⁸⁴ Like the other Jesuits discussed, Weitenauer

79 On Franz Neumayr, cf. P.Th. van der Veldt s.J., *Franz Neumayr SJ (1697–1765): Leben und Werk eines spätbarocken geistlichen Autors* (Amsterdam-Maarssen: APA-Holland University Press, 1992); Hans Gumbel, *Franz Neumayr: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des lateinischen Dramas im 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Rheinische Verlagsanstalt und Buchdruckerei, 1938); Valentin, 'La diffusion de Corneille en Allemagne au XVIII^e siècle', p. 184; Wiegand, 'Späte Jesuitenpoetik'.

80 Van der Veldt, *Franz Neumayr SJ*, p. 84.

81 Ibid., pp. 86–87; Valentin, 'La diffusion de Corneille en Allemagne au XVIII^e siècle', pp. 184–190.

82 Neumayr, *Idea poeseos*, 'Praefatio', p. 2.

83 Van der Veldt, *Franz Neumayr SJ*, p. 86; Volker Janning, *Der Chor im neulateinischen Drama: Formen und Funktionen* (Münster: Rhema, 2005), pp. 70–72.

84 On the life of Weitenauer, cf. Edith Kellner, *Ignaz Weitenauers Ars Poetica und Tragoediae Autumnales* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Innsbruck, 1958), pp. 1–4; Jean-Marie Valentin, *Répertoire chronologique Le théâtre des Jésuites dans les pays de langue*

attributed great importance to the structural aspect of a play: the three unities, which in his view should be observed religiously.⁸⁵ Corneille, Racine and Molière, are very important in Weitenauer's poetics. Corneille, unsurprisingly, is the most important of the three, as he emphasizes repeatedly.⁸⁶ Racine also features prominently in Weitenauer's poetics, although he is criticized for the representation of *intempestivos amores* and the Aristotelian rule that the heroes should not be excessively burdened.⁸⁷ Overall however, his concept of theater is more similar to Racine's practice, which a rather strict interpretation of the structural rules, than Corneille's. For comedy, he recommends Molière, who is praised for his lifelike representations of real people.⁸⁸ Apart from these three famous authors, Weitenauer repeatedly praises Voltaire, but only in cases where Voltaire follows the rules.

The connection between politics and aesthetics, which I tried to illuminate in 18th century classicist Jesuit theater, to a certain extent applies to Jesuit theater and politics in other places and at other times too. Decisions about the esthetics of Jesuit theater were always taken with the political situation of the time in mind. To mention but one other example, Joseph Simons (alias Emmanuel Lobb, 1594–1671), similarly to Andreas Friz, enjoyed a position closely connected to the court, in his case the English Stuart court.⁸⁹ He is even said to have been instrumental in the conversion of the future James II

allemande: Répertoire chronologique des pièces représentées et des documents conservés (1555–1773), vol. 1: *Première partie 1555–1728*; vol. 2: *Deuxième partie 1729–1773* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann Verlag, 1983–1984) Hiersemanns Bibliographische Handbücher, 111, 1 et 2, vol. 2, p. 1128.

- 85 Weitenauer, *Q. Horatii Flacci Ars Poetica, ad omne genus eloquentiae, ligatae, solutae, etiam sacrae, accommodata, et exemplis plurimis illustrata* (Augsburg-Freiburg i.Br.: Wagner, 1757), pp. 25–27.
- 86 Weitenauer, *Ars Poetica*, pp. 25, 80, 104. Cf. Kellner, *Ignaz Weitenauers Ars Poetica und Tragoediae Autumnales*, pp. 108–109.
- 87 Weitenauer, *Ars Poetica*, p. 159; Kellner, *Ignaz Weitenauers Ars Poetica und Tragoediae Autumnales*, pp. 109–110.
- 88 Weitenauer, *Ars Poetica*, p. 161: 'Qui docte ac vere imitari voluerit, eum respicere iubet homines ipsos, eorumque cogitandi, loquendi, agendi modum in rem suam convertere. Sic veras voces et poeta, et orator depromet. Sic theatrum comicum Joannes Baptista Molierius implevit characteribus personarum eorumque copia et novitate Graecos Romanosque post se reliquit. Solitus enim erat, ubicunque esset, tacitus ac paene morosus dicta hominum et mores veluti ex insidiis observare et apud se expendere. Inde vero, quae idonea sibi decerpserat, in opportunitatem proximam conferebat.'
- 89 Alison Shell, 'Autodidacticism in English Jesuit Drama: The Writings and Career of Joseph Simons', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 3 (2000), 34–56.

to Catholicism in the late 1670s and early 1680s.⁹⁰ His writings as playwright, even though produced at an earlier stage of his career, should be considered in this context too.⁹¹ The resemblance of Theoctistus's court constancy in his Theoctistus to Simons's own is no coincidence.

Conclusions

In the reception of French classicist poetics discussed in this chapter, aesthetics meets politics in educational reform policy. The complicated attitude towards France in eighteenth century German-speaking areas has been described by two extremes: *gallophobia* and *gallophilia*. On the one hand, France had a bad reputation among many Germans. Its cuisine, literature and arrogant attitude towards neighboring countries were frequently criticized by German bourgeois intelligentsia. On the other, France's dominant position in Europe at the time and its cultural blossoming, surrounding the court of Louis XIV, made an enormous impact on the rest of Europe in many respects. To name a few, education, art, architecture and literature saw a lasting French influence in most areas of Europe.

The ambivalent attitude of Germans towards France can be illustrated by the writings of Johann Christoph and Luise Adelgunde Gottsched, which should be seen in the context of Enlightenment ideas developing in the Protestant German-speaking areas. Although a clear *gallophobe* tendency can be identified in their works, the couple primarily used French models in their attempts of creating a new German vernacular literature. They felt that French classicist theater and literature was superior to the existing vernacular literature in the German-speaking areas and aimed to create their own 'national' literature, following French models.

The Catholic German-speaking countries were influenced by the Enlightenment differently from the Protestant areas, but also here French classicism came into play. In the case of Austria, Jesuit attempts to reform the order's school theater, using the same French classicist models as Gottsched, can be directly linked to Maria Theresa's reform absolutism. The aim of her educational reforms was to create citizens who supported the common good, citizens who served the state. Spectacular baroque school theater, which took an important place in the Jesuit school curriculum at the time, in her view took away

90 Ibid., p. 46.

91 Ibid., p. 47.

valuable time from more useful activities, such as learning French, German, geography and history. The performance of Latin plays and participation in spectacles with a great deal of musical entertainment and dance was not considered beneficial to the state. The emphasis on structural rules and utility, which was an important aspect of a new type of Jesuit theater, promoted by prominent Jesuits such as Andreas Friz, who was closely connected to Maria Theresa's court, fitted much better in her reform program. This theater imitated French classicism and is associated with the reception of Corneille and Racine by Gottsched in the Protestant *Aufklärung*. Undoubtedly, similar political and intellectual developments should be considered as important factors in Neumayr's and Weitenauer's application of the same classicist precepts.

Naturally, one can only speculate in how far this adaptation to theater poetics was applied in practice. Probably, the reality of school theater was not as dry and serious as the type of theater for which Andreas Friz argued. Even though some editions of his plays have survived, these give us revised versions, intended for a reading audience, which may not contain all the elements, such as musical interludes or ballet intermezzi, that were present in the actual performance of the play. Franz Neumayr refers to the reality of theater, when he explicitly allowed certain baroque aspects, such as choral interludes, to be used in combination with the rules of French classicism, in order to satisfy the audience's taste for spectacle.⁹²

Further Reading

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Scenario of Terror: Royal Violence and the Origins of Russian Tragic Drama*

Kirill Ospovat

Tragedy as a literary genre and theatrical form was introduced to Russia around 1750 by the ‘Russian Racine’, Aleksandr Sumarokov (1717–1777), a poet, dramatist, and stage director active at the courts of Empresses Elizabeth (r. 1741–1761) and Catherine II (r. 1762–1796). In Petersburg, as in other European capitals, theatrical performances at court were a central element of what Richard Wortman in his standard study of Russian political symbolism defines as ‘an ongoing theater of power.’¹ Since the late 1730s, and especially after the ascension of Elizabeth in 1741, Western-type court theater gradually set foot in Russia, as foreign (French, Italian, and German) companies were hired or invited to perform at court.² This was the background for the emergence of Russian-language theater officially established under Sumarokov’s directorate by a royal decree of 1756. As David M. Lang remarks, ‘In establishing the St Petersburg theater, Sumarokov and his collaborators Volkov and Dmitrievsky had to contend with a task even more formidable than that which had confronted Gottsched in Germany twenty years earlier. The only means of ensuring the continued patronage of the Empress Elisabeth, whose encouragement and financial support

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1 Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 3–4.

2 On Sumarokov see Marcus Levitt, ‘Sumarokov: Life and Works’, in Marcus Levitt, *Early Modern Russian Letters: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009), 6–21, and other essays in this volume. On the early history of Russian court theater, see V.N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, *Teatr v Rossii pri imperatritse Elizavete Petrovne* (Saint-Petersburg: Giperion, 2003); F.G. Volkov *i russkii teatr ego vremeni. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1953); L.M. Starikova (ed.), *Teatral’naia zhizn’ Rossii v epokhu ... Elizavety Petrovny ... Dokumental’naia khronika*, Vol. 2/1 (Moscow: Nauka, 2003); Vol. 2/2, (Moscow: Nauka, 2005); Vol. 3/1 (Moscow: Nauka, 2011).

were indispensable, was to compose dramas in Russian which could compare favourably with those acted by the rival Italian and French troupes'.³

Tragedy was the central genre of Russian-language court theater and Sumarokov's dramatic oeuvre. V.N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross stresses that throughout the eighteenth century, Russian tragedy was both poorly performed and poorly received outside the capitals, where it was 'cultivated by the Russian aristocracy', a limited social group centered around the court and more adequately identifiable as the 'court society', or the political class of servitors. He concludes that Russian classicist tragedy was specifically tailored to negotiate 'the problematic relationship between the aristocracy and the monarchy'.⁴ Aligning this argument with current discussions of the intrinsic affinity between tragedy and monarchy in early modern Europe, my paper will explore the ways in which this perspective allows for a new approach to eighteenth-century Russian drama on the one hand, and the Russian autocracy, on the other. Focusing on Russia's first classicist tragedy, Aleksandr Sumarokov's *Khorev* (1747), I will examine its deeply ambiguous representation of monarchy,

3 David M. Lang, 'Sumarokov's *Hamlet*: A Misjudged Russian Tragedy of the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Language Review* 43 (1948), 67–72, esp. p. 69. The first attempt to import Western tragedy into Russia was undertaken in 1672 by Elizabeth's grandfather, Tsar Aleksei, who ordered the Moscow Protestant pastor Johann Gottfried Gregorii to prepare a stage version of the Book of Esther. The ensuing play, *Artakserksovo deistvo* (*The Comedy of Artaxerxes*), extant both in the German original and Russian stage version, is a typical *Trauerspiel* centered around the figure of the king, or *tsar*, as biblical rulers were known in Russia. This play inaugurated a tradition of Russian-language dramatic texts, political and religious in matter, which served as scripts for sporadic amateur performances at court or in Latin schools, in the absence of an established practice of neo-Latin drama. In the early eighteenth century the corpus of dramatic texts in Russian was amplified by translations of plays from the repertory of the German wandering troupes, among them Andreas Gryphius's *Papinian* und Lohenstein's *Sophonisbe*. This tradition provides an important and underestimated background for Sumarokov's classicist reform which aimed to supplant it.

4 V.N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, 'Politicheskie idei russkoi klassitsisticheskoi tragedii', in *O teatre. Sbornik statei* (Leningrad; Moscow: Iskusstvo 1940), pp. 107–109; G.A. Gukovskii, *Russkaia literatura XVIII veka* [Moscow: Gos. uchebno-pedagogicheskogo izd-vo, 1939], Moscow 1998, p. 135. For a valuable discussion of the political and historical underpinnings of Sumarokov's tragedies see E.A. Kasatkina, 'Sumarokovskaia tragediia 40-kh—nachala 50-kh godov XVIII veka', *Uchenye zapiski Tomskogo pedagogicheskogo instituta* XIII (1955), 213–261. On the 'political dialogue' between eighteenth-century Russian rulers and the elites, reflected in the literary production of the time, including plays, see Cynthia H. Whittaker, *Russian Monarchy: Eighteenth-Century Rulers and Writers in Political Dialogue*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, 2003).

shaped by the fundamental tensions inherent both in absolutist concepts of sovereignty and in tragedy as a genre of court theater which evoked grief in order to celebrate the status quo.

Poetry, History, Allegory

In his famous study of early modern tragic drama (*Trauerspiel*) Walter Benjamin concludes that

Historical life, as it was conceived at that time, is its content, its true object. In this it is different from [ancient] tragedy. For the object of the latter is not history but myth, and the tragic stature of the *dramatis personae* does not derive from rank—the absolute monarchy—but from the pre-historic epoch of their existence—the past age of heroes. For Opitz (...) it is (...) the confirmation of princely virtues, the depiction of princely vices, the insight into diplomacy and the manipulation of all the political schemes, which makes the monarch the main character in the *Trauerspiel*. The sovereign, the principal exponent of history, almost serves as its incarnation. (...) The image of the setting or, more precisely, of the court, becomes the key to historical understanding. For the court is the setting *par excellence*.⁵

Sumarokov's dramatic poetics (contemporaneous to the beginnings of Russian secular historiography) depended on a similar appropriation of the 'tragic' fascination for 'the past age of heroes' by absolutist political imagination. Most of his tragedies, long recognized as political in substance and always set in royal residences populated by 'tsars, princes and magnates',⁶ treat historical, or mythistorical, subjects from Russia's past. *Khorev*, in particular, builds upon a historical legend. According to ancient chronicles, the medieval Russian capital Kiev was founded by Kii, who ruled there as the oldest of three brothers, among them Khorev. Except for the foundation of Kiev and a military raid on Byzantium (characteristic for the first generations of historical Russian rulers), no details of the brothers' actions are reported. Using this scarce data as his starting point, Sumarokov devised a complex dramatic plot.

5 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, transl. by John Osborne (London and New York: Verso, 1985), pp. 62, 92.

6 Gukovskii, *Russkaia literatura XVIII veka*, p. 135.

In his version, Kii had conquered Kiev from its previous ruler, Zavlokh, whose infant daughter, Osnelda, was captured and grew up in Kiev as a prisoner of war. Sixteen years later, Zavlokh is back at Kiev's walls demanding nothing but the release Osnelda. She is passionately loved by Khorev, Kii's much younger brother and heir, and reciprocates his feelings. Together the lovers forge a plan to arrange their marriage which would end all hostilities and reunite the nation. Kii's counselor Stalverkh, having got wind of the young couple's secret accord but not knowing its exact purpose, relates to Kii his suspicion of a conspiracy possibly planned by the popular Khorev to overthrow the elderly ruler with the help of Zavlokh and his troops. Kii is enraged with Stalverkh's report of his secret dealings and sends Khorev into battle with Zavlokh to restore his hitherto unblemished 'glory'. Osnelda receives a letter from Zavlokh forbidding her marriage to Khorev, and burns it on the spot in desperation. Having learned of the secret correspondence, Kii summons Osnelda, accuses her of political conspiracy, and sentences her to death by poison. Khorev returns triumphant, bringing Zavlokh as his prisoner. Finally convinced in his innocence, Kii tries to repeal Osnelda's death sentence, but it is too late. Stalverkh off stage and Khorev on stage commit suicide, while Kii and Zavlokh regret their cruelty towards the young lovers.⁷

It might seem a paradox that for the first time introducing to Russia a markedly 'foreign' literary form—a French-type five-act neoclassical tragedy, strictly observing the notorious unities and written in German-sounding alexandrine metric couplets of iambic hexameter, a meter almost non-existent in Russia before Sumarokov—he chose national history for his subject, in an apparent contradiction to the canonical pattern of French classicist tragedy that Sumarokov wished to import to Russia. Apparently, Sumarokov's dramatic experiments were informed by an aesthetic which mapped visions of sovereignty onto the national historical lore, producing a dramatic idiom which could easily oscillate between historicist distance and topical allusion, narra-

7 Scholarship on *Khorev* refers without exception to the abridged and revised version of play published by Sumarokov in 1768 and reproduced in the posthumous *Polnoe sobranie vseh sochinenii* and in all subsequent printings. This is also the text translated by Richard and Raymond Fortune in Sumarokov's *Selected Tragedies* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1970). I will refer to the original 1747 version: Aleksandr Sumarokov, *Khorev. Tragediia* (Saint-Petersburg: Pri Akademii nauk, 1747), citing the page number in parenthesis. When possible I will use the Fortunes' English text with necessary emendations, also citing the page numbers.

tives of progress and reenactments of the monarchy's primeval violence. With its ambiguous referentiality, history provided a suitable discursive cast for the unspeakable horrors of the state of exception which lay at the origins of tragic drama and monarchy itself.⁸

The relationship between drama and national history was addressed, among others, by Pierre Brumoy, a leading authority on ancient theater and an influential representative of the French classicist criticism which dominated literary thinking in eighteenth-century Russia. In his comparison of ancient Greek and contemporary French tragedy, attached to his widely read *Théâtre des Grecs* (1730) he complained that, while both the Greeks and the French took dramatic subjects from history or 'popular traditions, which are living annals', the French tragedy

borrows its materials from abroad; and very seldom takes them from the history of our own country. (...) As to the antiquity of our monarchy, the grandeur of our most remarkable events, and the exploits of our heroes, they are subjects that give us pleasure in history: they are naturally interesting to us from the love we bear to our native country: but whether it is that our vanity startles at seeing truths in pure theatrical pieces, assume the appearances of fables (...) we are not easily reconciled to domestic themes upon our theatre.

The Greeks, on the contrary, drew upon 'history or the fables of their own country' which 'were to them inexhaustible, nay, their only funds', so that 'there is not a city, a festival, nor a monument among the Grecians, which was not celebrated by one or more theatrical entertainments.'⁹

Brumoy's influential remarks provide an important background for some of the subsequent attempts to adapt episodes from national history for the uses of tragedy: as if to make up for the deficiencies he described, the original patriotic functions of the genre could be revived and adapted to the monarchical

8 On tragic drama and the state of exception see Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, transl. by George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1985); Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*; Louis Marin, 'Théâtralité et pouvoir: Magie, machination, machine: *Médée* de Corneille', in id., *Politiques de la représentation* (Paris: Editions Kimé, 2005), pp. 275–285; Samuel Weber, 'Taking Exception to Decision: Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt', *Diacritics* 22, 3/4, (Autumn–Winter, 1992), 5–18.

9 *The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy* (London: Mess. Millar a.o., 1759), vol. 1, pp. ciii–civ; cf. Pierre Brumoy, *Théâtre des Grecs*, vol. 1 (Paris: Lottin, 1785), pp. 183–185. [I found a first edition 1732].

sentiment of modern polities. The German dramatist Johann Elias Schlegel (1719–1749) published in the 1740s two ‘national’ tragedies: *Hermann* (1743), and *Canut* (1746). *Canut*, which only preceded Sumarokov’s dramatic debut by a year, provides a striking parallel to his experiments in tragedy, as it was written in Denmark in a conscious effort to inaugurate a local ‘national’ theater under court patronage. The play focuses on a medieval king whose considerable military and political achievement made him a ready national paragon for successful royal rule.

Sumarokov’s dramatizations of early Russian history follow a similar pattern. Bringing to the stage a legendary forefather and giving him the anachronistic title of ‘the prince of Russia’ (‘kniaz’ Rossiskii’, 4), he constructs his drama as a medium for the commemoration of a national past identified with royal history, ‘the antiquity of our monarchy’. Similar to the Greeks who composed their tragedies in celebration of national events and sites, Sumarokov chooses as his setting the ancient capital associated with the beginnings of a unified Russian monarchy and its adoption of Christianity.

The festive resonance of this choice must have been evident in 1747. Three years earlier, in 1744, a year and a half after her ascent to the throne, Empress Elizabeth undertook a trip to Kiev, obviously laden with political symbolism as the ensuing ceremonial events and official publications duly reveal. One of the principal sites visited by the Empress was the Kievan Academy, a church-run institution of classical learning whose cultural importance far outgrew the confines of what was by then a depopulated provincial town. Sermons delivered by the Academy’s teachers (and later published in Petersburg, the actual imperial center) outlined the continuous tradition of royal power that linked Elizabeth to the medieval rulers of Kiev, and pageantry was employed to convey a similar message. As one source reports,

The Kievan academy with the help of imported and locally designed machinery presented the Empress with various curious shows for her pleasure; among other things, out of the city came a grave old man of the most ancient age, magnificently decorated and invested with a crown and staff, represented by a young student. His chariot was a divine phaeton driven by a pair of poetic winged steeds named Pegasus, chosen from robust students. The old man signified the ancient founder and prince of Kiev, Kii. He met the Empress on the bank of Dnepr, at the end of the bridge, welcomed her with a solemn speech and, calling her his heiress, invited into the city as his dominion, and surrendered it and the whole Russian people to her gracious protection. During the banquets prepared for the Empress by the estates and the people of Little Russia with the

most vivid sentiments of genuine zeal and boundless joy, the Empress said once amidst innumerable people: 'I wish, oh Lord, you would love me as much in the heavenly kingdom as I love this well-minded and gentle people!'¹⁰

Kievan students staged a royalist version of national memory, using theatrics to revive the vital link between the current political order and its original point of constitution. Sumarokov's *Khorev*, conceived both as a work of literature worthy to be printed and enter the emerging national canon and as a script for court productions, did not only adopt the central figure of Kii but developed and explored the symbolic and poetic effects aimed for by the ceremonial performance.

The figure of Kii, however naïvely schematic it might appear both in the masque and in the tragedy, points towards a set of issues fundamental for early modern dramatic treatments of history. Aristotelian doctrine—readily available to Sumarokov in André Dacier's annotated translation of the *Poetics* into French, and to the Kievan scholars in Feofan Prokopovich's *De arte poetica* (ca. 1705)—framed the discussion of dramatic plot by a seemingly clear-cut but in fact complex distinction between 'poetry' and 'history' as fiction and non-fiction: 'an Historian writes what did happen, and a Poet what might, or ought to have come to pass (...) Poetry (...) treats of general, and History relates only particular things.'¹¹ This distinction is immediately complicated in Aristotle's argument by an ambiguous notion of the 'received legends' ('known Fables', in eighteenth-century English), which serve as possible sources for tragic plots and, more importantly, provide a paradigm of oscillation between truth and fiction. The classical scholar Brumoy draws on Aristotelian language when he refuses to distinguish between the two in his definition of the national memory of the Greeks as 'history or the fables of their own country'.

The bulk of actual historical lore available to a dramatist, whether ancient or modern, is not confined by the strict Aristotelian definition of 'history' but equally pertains to 'poetry'. This was acknowledged in the emerging Russian historiography (a discourse quite relevant for Sumarokov, as his own historical essays confirm). Vasilii Tatishchev, who was circulating the first manuscript

10 'Istoriia Russov', *Chteniia v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*, 1846, № 4, otd. 2, p. 244.

11 *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*: Translated from the Original Greek ... Together with Mr. D'Acier's notes from the French (London: D. Browne and W. Turner, 1705), pp. 137–138; *La Poétique d'Aristote* traduite en françois avec des remarques critiques ... par André Dacier (Paris, 1692, repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1976), pp. 131–133.

copies of his *History of Russia*, a monumental compilation of Russian medieval chronicles, around the same time as Sumarokov was writing his first historical dramas, faithfully reproduced medieval origin legends but flouted at the evident falsehoods propagated by the annalistic tradition, sarcastically comparing early chroniclers to classical epic authors, standard examples of poetic fiction. One of the evident cases in point was the story of Kii, reported by Tatishchev and immediately denounced in a separate note as fictitious.¹² The producers of the Kievan masque, professionally versed in classical idiom, conveyed a similar message by entrusting Kii's chariot to 'a pair of poetic winged steeds named Pegasus'.

If history is itself 'poetry', then tragedy as defined by Aristotle provides a paradigm for its proper reading. In Dacier's terms, Aristotle suggests a poetics of tragedy which is 'neither Historical nor Particular, but General and Allegorical'. Indeed, the interpretation of Aristotle outlined here clearly resonates with Benjamin's important conclusion that in early modern drama 'a series of types such as is formed by king, courtier, and fool, has an allegorical significance.'¹³ This is precisely the function that Kii, in fact nothing more than a name, could easily assume both in the masque and the tragedy. Far from disturbing the logic of festive representation with historical particulars, he served as an allegory of royal power and monarchical political order. It was the allegorical generalization behind the name that resonated with Elizabeth's enthusiastic protestations of mutual love between her and her subjects during the Kievan festivities, and, later, with the voice of Sumarokov's Kii (II, 1): 'Vladychestvo moe liubov'iu utverzhdeno' (18; 'My sov'reignty in love stands steadfast without challenge', 54). Consequently, Sumarokov's play represents what Rüdiger Campe calls 'the theater of institution', a dramatic analysis of the monarchy's archetypal features.¹⁴

12 V.N. Tatishchev, 'Istoriia rossiiskaia', in id., *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Ladomir, 1995), 30; vol. 4, (Moscow: Ladomir 1994), pp. 110, 391.

13 Aristotle's *Art of Poetry*, pp. 146–147; *La Poétique d'Aristote*, p. 141; Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 19; Jane K. Brown, *The Persistence of Allegory: Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

14 Rüdiger Campe, 'Theater der Institution: Gryphius' Trauerspiele *Leo Armenius*, *Catharina von Georgien*, *Carolus Stuardus* und *Papinianus*', in R. Galle, R. Behrens (eds.), *Konfigurationen der Macht in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Heidelberg: Winter 2000), pp. 257–287.

The Tragedy of Suspicion

Set in ancient Kiev and featuring Kii as its royal protagonist, *Khorev* is a ‘tragedy of origins’ in John D. Lyons’s terms, a conceptually charged representation of the monarchy’s foundational structures.¹⁵ Ilya Serman has suggested that Sumarokov’s depiction of his characters was dependent on the prevalent conceptualizations of historical developments in general and the primeval origins of royal power in particular.¹⁶ Indeed, Russia’s history—centered around Riurik, the medieval founder of the Russian state, and his progeny who ruled Russia for seven hundred years—was the history of an unquestionably absolute monarchy. A mid-eighteenth-century memoirist who generally focused on contemporary court politics and military operations, made a short digression to report that ‘the government of Russia was always despotic’ and that ‘the respect felt by the Russian people for the descendants of the first Grand Duke Riurik was so high that they were far from any thoughts of even the slightest rebellion until his race lasted, and no one probably ever thought that Russia could be ruled otherwise than by a despotic ruler.’¹⁷ Tatishchev, both in the *History of Russia* and in the pamphlet against aristocratic limitations on monarchy, used accounts of ancient Russian history to corroborate his unconditional support for absolute royal rule and viewed them as an antidote against such ‘harmful’ books as Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, and others, which had led some ‘perfidious magnates’ to unleash the ‘Leviathan’ of aristocratic faction in 1730.¹⁸ As Tatishchev’s line of reasoning demonstrates, historical knowledge evoked to support the absolutist dogma implied and perpetuated the possibility of dissent and revolt it was meant to contain. This was recognized by the authorities: as Evgenii Anisimov shows, any public reference to Russia’s past rulers or historical events could be interpreted as sedition by the secret police. Among the crimes imputed to Artemii Volynskii in 1740 was the fact that he and his companions used to read chronicles and history works and to draw parallels between political situations past and present.¹⁹

15 John D. Lyons, *The Tragedy of Origins: Pierre Corneille and Historical Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

16 I.Z. Serman, *Russkii klassitsizm: Poeziya, Drama, Satira* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972), pp. 122sq.

17 *Perevoroty i voiny* (Moscow: Fond Sergeia Dubova, 1997), pp. 268–269.

18 Tatishchev, ‘Istoriia rossiiskaia’, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, v. 1, pp. 86–89, 359, 362, 368; id., ‘Proizvol’noe i soglasnoe rassuzhdenie i mnenie sobravshegosia shliakhetstva russkogo o pravlenii gosudarstvennom’, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, v. 8 (Moskva: Ladomir) 1996, p. 148.

19 E.V. Anisimov, *Dyba i knut. Politicheskii sysk i russkoe obshchestvo v XVIII veke* (Moskva:

Sumarokov's representation of Russian history was shaped by similar issues. Besieged in Kiev by a contender he had once himself ousted by force and questioning the loyalty of his subjects including his own brother, Sumarokov's Kii finds himself in a position characteristic of medieval Russian politics and dynastic chronicles. At the same time his position allows for a theoretical inquiry into the foundations and stability of royal rule, an issue central both for political practice and readings of history in mid-eighteenth-century Russia. If the play's exposition in the first act is dominated by Khorev's and Osnelda's pastoral musings, the second act introduces us to the sinister world of court politics. It opens with a scene of council between Kii and his 'first boyar' Stalverkh who questions the honesty of Zavlokh's promise to withdraw from Kiev once he receives Osnelda, and warns Kii against his own subjects (11, 1): 'Bregisia, gosudar', nechaiannykh izmen' (19; 'Beware, my prince, before unlooked-for treachery', 53). Kii at first seems unwilling to share this fears:

Что может, рассуди, изменник учинить?
 Народ бесчисленный удобно ль возмутить,
 В котором множество мне сердцем покоренно?
 Владычество мое любовью утверждено,
 Меня мои раби непринужденно чтят,
 Мне верности давно их внутренну явят.

18

(Consider and reflect; what can the traitor do?
 Can he cause to rebel a nation numberless,
 Whose hearts unto my rule with faithfulness are humbled?
 My sov'reignty in love stands steadfast without challenge.
 My followers are true and give me their respect.
 Through many years they showed to me their inner selves.)

54

Kii's speech, however, suggests a situation much less serene than it claims and than parallels with court pageantry would seem to imply. In April 1742, soon after Elizabeth's ascension to the throne as a result of a palace revolution, the French diplomat and the Empress's close confidant Jacques-Joachim Trotti, marquis de La Chétardie had to assure his superiors in Paris that 'la

Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1999), pp. 58–62; Aleksei Tolochko, *Istoriia Rossiiskaia* 'Vasiliiia Tatishcheva, (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2005).

force de ses droits et l'amour de ses peuples la rassurent au point d'envisager l'avenir avec autant de tranquillité que si elle était montée sur le trône sans révolution' ('the force of her rights and the love of her peoples reassure her so much that she can look forward with so much tranquility as if she had ascended the throne without a revolution').²⁰ Chétardie's wording is characteristic of the political language evoked to make sense of the complex and shifting political circumstances in Petersburg, the language of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.²¹

As Tatishchev's remarks indicate, Machiavelli's work was already well known in Russia, and could be directly associated with the dangers of revolt. Focusing on practical techniques of empowerment, *The Prince* acknowledged and even endorsed the possibility of acquiring supreme authority through conquest and usurpation but provided the contenders for power with clear-sighted advice:

I say then, that it is a much easier matter to support an hereditary State, which has been long accustomed to obey the family of a Prince that reigns over it, than such a one as has been newly acquired (...) But in the government of a Principality newly-acquired, many difficulties occur. (...) as most men are ready enough to change their rulers, in expectation of bettering their condition, such a persuasion induces them to take up arms against their Governors (...) The most effectual preservative then against conspiracies, is not to be hated and despised by the people (...).²²

In his account of Elizabeth's coup Chétardie revives—while attempting to obliterate—Machiavelli's distinction between the two types of domination, old and new; a similar attempt frames the position of Kii, who is simultaneously an 'old' ruler (he has reigned over Kiev for sixteen years) and a 'new' one (he had conquered it by force). Machiavelli's description of the popular craving for upheavals fostered by frequent changes of power seemed to provide an optimal explanation for the Russian tumults of 1740–1741, with Elizabeth overthrowing Anna Leopoldovna only a year after Anna herself had in a similar fashion seized power from the omnipotent regent Johann Biron with the help of the influen-

20 *Sbornik Imperatorskago Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, vol. 100 (Saint-Petersburg 1897), 148.

21 On the reception of Machiavelli in eighteenth-century Russia, see a very informative source study: M.A. Iusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii: Moral' i politika na protiazhenii piati stoletii*, (Moscow: Institut vseobshchei Istorii RAN, 1998), pp. 77–186.

22 *The Works of Nicholas Machiavel ... Newly Translated ... by Ellis Farnsworth*, vol. 1 (London: Thomas Davies et al., 1762), pp. 513–514, 516, 638.

tial general Burchard von Münnich. It was said that Münnich deserved to be punished if only 'for having first shown a dangerous example of overthrowing princes and raising them to the throne with a company of grenadiers'.²³ Frederick II, an informed if biased observer and an attentive reader of Machiavelli, commented in his *Histoire de mon temps* on Russian court politics of the time:

Such enterprises, which would appear rash in other governments, may sometimes be accomplished in Russia. The national spirit is inclined to revolt. The Russians, in common with other people, are dissatisfied with the present and hope better from the future.²⁴

A Machiavellian vision of popular instincts fundamentally challenged the conception of Russians as a people particularly devoted to its despotic monarchs, suggested by conventional readings of national history. This tension, negotiated in Tatishchev's juxtaposition of his loyalist historiography to the seditious Machiavelli, is again reenacted in Kii's lines quoted above: entangled in a rhetorical figure, he wishes to assert the fidelity of his subjects but ends up questioning it. Confronted with Stalverkh's allegations against Khorev, he attempts to dismiss them but cannot help admitting that the need to question appearances is inherent in the position of a ruler (II, 1):

Сталверх! Ты верен мне, но дело таково
Восходит выше сил понятия моего.
Кому на свете сем вдруг верити возможно? [...]
Хочу равно и ложь и истину внимать
И слепо никого не буду осуждать.
Мятусь, и лютого злодея видя в горе.
Князь—кормщик корабля, власть княжеская—море,
Где ветры, камни, мель препятствуют судам,
Желающим пристать к покойным берегам.
Но часто кажутся и облаки горами,
Летая вдалеке по небу над водами,
Которых кормщику не должно обегать;
Но горы ль то иль нет, искусством разбирать.

²³ *Perevoroty i voiny*, p. 477.

²⁴ Frederick II, 'History of my Own Times', in *Posthumous Works of Frederic II King of Prussia*, transl. from the French by Thomas Holcroft, vol. 1 (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1789), p. 170.

Хоть все б вещали мне, там горы, мели тамо,
 Когда не вижу сам, плыву без страха прямо.

20–21

(You have been true to me, Stalverkh, but such a thing
 Beyond my understanding far exceeds the bounds.
 Who dwells upon the earth whose word can now be trusted?
 If I could but believe both falsehood and the truth
 That I might not be forced dishearted to condemn! [...]
 I am perplexed to see in grief even a villain.
 The prince pilots the ship; his power is the ocean,
 Where winds and rocks and shoals obstruct the passing boats,
 Whose only goal is this: to reach a tranquil shore.
 But sometimes even clouds appear to us as mountains,
 Drifting through distant skies above the churning waters,
 Which he, the helmsman, must discern to guide his ship,
 Distinguishing with skill the mountain from the cloud.
 And though the world should shout: 'There lie the rock and shallows!'
 If I discern them not, I sail on fearing nothing.)

55–56

In Levitt's words, '[i]n *Khorev* (...) seeing correctly or being blinded by appearances—whether intentionally or not—emerges as one of the fundamental problems of being a good ruler'.²⁵ As it was customary for early modern drama, Sumarokov's construction of tragic plot and characters resonated with what Benjamin describes as Machiavellian political anthropology, produced and disseminated across Europe by innumerable treatises, avidly read and oftentimes translated in early eighteenth-century Russia.²⁶ Among the works which have survived in these never published and barely studied manuscript translations is Diego de Saavedra Fajardo's emblematic treatise *Idea de un príncipe político*

25 Levitt, *The Visual Dominant in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), 95–96.

26 On 'political anthropology' at the core of early modern tragedy, see Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 100; Alain Viala, 'Pénil, conseil et secret d'État dans les tragédies romaines de Racine: Racine et Machiavel', *Littératures classiques* 26 (1996), 91–113. On early eighteenth-century Russian translations of European political literature, see M.A. Iusim, *Makiavelli v Rossii*. On the spread and development of Machiavellian politics of 'reason of state' see Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Koehler, 1963) (= Friedrich Meinecke, *Werke*, Bd. 1).

cristiano (1640) widely known in Europe and rendered into Russian on the personal orders of Elizabeth's father, the reforming tsar Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725). One of Saavedra Fajardo's emblems, instructing the ruler to 'think always he may be deceived', shows a boat stern (*korma*, the position of Sumarokov's 'pilot' or 'helmsman', *kormschik*) and explains that a prince should not

be too positive in his opinions, but believe that he may easily be deceiv'd in his Judgment, either through Affection, or Passion, or false Information, or Flattery, and Insinuation ... because few things are really what they appear, especially in Policy, which is nowadays nothing but the art of cheating, or not being cheated; wherefore they ought to be viewed in different lights, and a Prince ought carefully to consider and weigh them not slightly to pass them over, least he should give credit to appearances and groundless stories ... How often have Waves of Envy and Jealousy been interpos'd between the Eyes of the Prince, and the Minister's actions, making those appear crooked and disloyal which are drawn by the rule of Justice and his Service. Thus Virtue suffers, the Prince loses a good Minister, and Malice triumphs in its Practices; which that he may practically know, and not suffer Innocence to be wrong'd, I will here set down the most usual.²⁷

Discourse of this kind was immediately relevant for post-Petrine court politics. The fall of Artemii Volynskii was precipitated by a letter he wrote in 1739 to Empress Anna, masking an attempt to discredit his enemies at court as a generalized analysis of 'which ruses and stratagems are employed at your royal courts, and what all this secretive and shameless politics is about':

To conceive as much as possible harmful intrigues against the conscientious, to smear and discredit all their good deeds in order to bereave them of enthusiasm and service zeal. To instill doubt into sovereigns so that they would not believe anyone and all would be tainted with suspicion and would seem unworthy of favor; and sometimes suggest danger on occasions which can be appropriately seen as trifles, exaggerating them ... and then to recommend oneself to remedy or appease the said occasion, as if no one else could be trusted or at least no one has enough wisdom to overcome the supposed difficulties. In truth, however, the design of those

²⁷ Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, *Royal Politician Represented in One Hundred Emblems* (London: Matt. Gillyflower and Luke Meredith, 1700), vol. 1, pp. 319–320, 322.

politicians or, to put it simply, cheats is to acquire favor with the sovereign through the said means, and to show their supposedly superior and true loyalty and zeal, even if there is nothing to worry about. Through this dishonest conduct a sovereign can be brought to such a state of mind that he eventually would be deceived (however wise he is) and would think that all of it is true what they tell and report him, and will be compelled to yield and on all occasions to follow the advice of the said politician, thinking: 'who else would I believe if no one else has either loyalty or zeal' ...²⁸

Khorev's tragic plot is shaped by this sinister vision of courtly ways. Sumarokov's long-time opponent Vasilii Trediakovskii noted in his lengthy and insightful discussion of the dramatist's oeuvre that *Khorev* has two main plotlines: the love story, and 'Kii's suspicion of a supposed conspiracy between Khorev and Osnelda'.²⁹ This suspicion, based on malicious exaggeration, is provoked by Stalverkh in the course of what might be seen as a courtly intrigue against a powerful general and a member of the royal family: Khorev complains to Kii that someone 'prezhnei milosti tvoei menia lishil' ('has deprived me of your former favor', II, 2, p. 25). Kii is well aware of the dangerous powers of envy outlined by Saavedra and Volynskii (he even voices the possibility that the charges are 'a deception' designed by the guards 'to ruin the innocent Khorev', IV, 3, p. 52) and is bent on resisting them, but eventually succumbs to a malicious reading of Khorev's intentions. Once admitted, the assumption that no one 'can now be trusted' undermines Kii's belief that his true subjects 'showed to me their inner selves', and erases the very possibility of recognizing true loyalty and distinguishing it from pretense.

In Benjamin's terms, Stalverkh incorporates the type of the intriguer who possesses 'a mastery of the workings of politics' based on anthropological insights and 'corresponds to an ideal which was first outlined by Machiavelli and which was energetically elaborated in the creative and theoretical literature of the seventeenth century'. In tragic drama, this intriguer is 'the organizer of the plot':

In all circumstances it was necessary for the intriguer to assume a dominating position in the economy of the drama. For according to the theory

28 RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, № 195, l. 8–90b.

29 V.K. Trediakovskii, 'Pis'mo, v kotorom soderzhitsia rassuzhdenie o stikhotvorenii, ponyne na svet izdannom ... pisannoe ot priiatelia k priiateliu', in A.M. Ranchin and V.L. Korovin (eds.), *Kritika XVIII veka*, (Moscow: Olimp, 2002), pp. 29–108, here p. 100.

of Scaliger, which in this respect harmonized with the interests of the baroque and was accepted by it, the real purpose of the drama was to communicate knowledge of the life of the soul, in the observation of which the intriguer is without equal.³⁰

Duplicating the theatricality of the play itself, Stalverkh exposes Kii and the play's audience to a 'political anthropology' which views political practice as self-interested playacting. It is thanks to this anthropology that Stalverkh's hypothetical representation of the supposed conspiracy, which dangerously departs from truth, can achieve 'probability' prescribed for tragic plots by Aristotelian theory. As the true author of the *plot*—in the double sense of a political conspiracy and a set of fictional events—which makes *Khorev* a tragedy, Stalverkh follows a procedure similar to the one suggested in the *Poetics* for dramatic compositions. Dacier expressly derived the Aristotelian requirements for the 'probability or necessity' of represented action from the secretiveness of courtly politics, the *arcana imperii*:

a prodigious number of things happen every day, of which we know not the causes, especially those which concern Monarchs, which are properly the Subjects of Tragedy. Now a Poet is obliged to explain all the Causes of the Incidents which enter into the Composition of the Subject; and 'tis just to let him be Master of his Matter, so it should not be required of him to speak things as they are, but as they may, provided he follows either Necessity of Probability; for nothing more can be required of him.³¹

Just as a tragedian—like Sumarokov himself—is invited to inscribe the received plots, in fact fragmented accounts of political events, into a hypothetical set of probable motivations, the denunciator Stalverkh uses an overheard conversation between Osnelda and Khorev, indeed replete with dangerous ambiguities ('Befriend Zavlokh'—'I will raise to the throne your royal blood again ... having once obtained this land's possession'), to construct a narrative of a conspiracy in progress which can be accepted as plausible by courtly audiences both in Kiev of the dramatic legend and eighteenth-century Petersburg.

In the political idiom of Saavedra's treatise and Volynskii's letter narratives of this kind are dismissed as malicious lies of evil councilors. While Sumarokov's Stalverkh seems to illustrate this logic, a closer look at his actions suggests a

30 Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, pp. 95, 98–99.

31 Aristotle's *Art of Poetry*, p. 141; cf. *La Poétique d'Aristote*, p. 135.

less straightforward—and even more disturbing—view of royally sponsored repression. Identifying Stalverkh with the type of the intriguer, Trediakovskii ridicules him for the lack of appropriate slyness:

Stalverkh ... is nothing but a very foolish slanderer. What cunning intriguer ... would smear someone who holds all the power in his hands when it is both impossible to harm him in any way and very probable that he can immediately take revenge when he finds out? And has ever slander stayed in secret?³²

In fact, however, nowhere in the play do we find an unambiguous proof of Stalverkh's malicious intent. His final suicide ('Half-maddened with remorse ... remembering Osnelda') might be construed as a sign of his secret passion for the captive princess, which would explain his wish to prevent a peace agreement with Zavlokh and to smear Khorev, but it could also be seen simply as a symptom of remorse for the death of an innocent victim. The uncertainty regarding Stalverkh's personal motives fits well with his position of a subordinate character, a function rather than a personality. Even more overtly than others, 'Stalverkh, the first boyar of Kiev' is an allegory: his high rank forms the substance of his name, *stal-verkh*, almost precisely translated as 'upstart' and emphasizing his debt to service hierarchies rather than royal status or extraction enjoyed by the play's other principal characters. As an allegory, Stalverkh—who has an unblemished service record ('You have been true to me, Stalverkh')—is able to incorporate at once 'the two faces of the courtier: the intriguer, as the evil genius of their despots, and the faithful servant'.³³ Whether or not his actions are driven by malice is not important: what matters is his mode of operation imbedded in the absolutist structure of power.

E.A. Kasatkina has identified Stalverkh's denunciation of Khorev as the principal motor of the play's tragic plot and linked it to the political trials of the 1730s and 1740s and the common practice of 'unverified denunciation'.³⁴ Indeed, political trials—alongside triumphal theatrical festivities—in largely overseen ways shaped the 'scenario of power' enacted during the first years of Elizabeth's rule. The allegations raised against Khorev by Stalverkh must have reminded Russian audiences of the hasty trial over the charismatic and popular Field Marshal Münnich, presided by the empress in early 1742, in the first months

32 Trediakovskii, 'Pis'mo ... ot priiatelia k priiateliu', pp. 98–99.

33 Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 98.

34 Kasatkina, 'Sumarokovskaia tragediia 40-kh—nachala 50-kh godov XVIII veka', p. 216.

after her ascension. Along with other high-ranking officials of the previous reign Münnich was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death, commuted to exile. This was followed in 1743 by the trial over Natalia Lopukhina and several other courtiers charged with political conspiracy allegedly driven by resentment in the wake of the previous trial. In these notorious trials as well as in the records of more trivial cases of seditious gossip constantly investigated and persecuted by the Secret Chancery the horror scenario of a political conspiracy surfaced time and again.

In Stalverkh's version of events Khorev, in order to overthrow Kii, conspired with a foreign ruler, Zavlokh, and simultaneously attempted to incite local troops to treason and revolt. Similarly, in the early 1740s there was constant gossip that Elizabeth's overthrown predecessor Anna Leopoldovna might be restored to power both by disenchanted Petersburg guards and by the armed forces of her royal relatives, the kings of Prussia and Denmark and the Empress Queen Maria Theresa.³⁵ The official narratives behind the two trials concluded by public acts of punishment on the scaffold and publicized through special royal manifestoes were as problematic as Stalverkh's. One memoirist claims that Münnich and his fellow defendants 'could easily have disproved these accusations, had their defense been listened to; but their condemnation was determined on'. Reflecting upon Lopukhina's trial another informed memoirist concludes that 'however we approach this case, we must admit that there was no apparent conspiracy'.³⁶

While the highly publicized political trials were little more than 'legal fictions', invented stories whose effect on their audiences overshadowed the fragility of their truth claim, Sumarokov centered his dramatic fiction around a full-scale political trial over Osnelda, closely linked to Elizabethan judicial practice. The notorious system of political surveillance and persecution known as *slovo i delo gosudarevo* (literally, 'sovereign's word and deed') was designed to bring any cases of possible lese-majesty to the attention of the Secret Chancery and the sovereign. While recognizing the dangers of slander and threatening slanderers with the worst punishments, royal decrees time and again pro-

35 M.I. Semevskii, 'N.F. Lopukhina', *Russkaia starina*, 11 (1874), 9–10; M.I. Semevskii, 'Tainaia kantseliariia v 1741–1761 gg.', *Russkaia starina*, 12 (1875), 533–537. For a wealth of similar material, and for the following discussion of judicial practices, see two recent monographs: Anisimov, *Dyba i knut*; Elena Nikulina and Igor Kurukin, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' tainoi kantseliarii XVIII veka* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2008).

36 Christoph Hermann von Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs of Russia from the Year 1727 to 1744* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), p. 330; *Perevoroty i voiny*, p. 487.

claimed political denunciations a sacred duty of any subject and servitor. Among the offences imputed to Volynskii after he sent his letter to Empress Anna was his equivocal manner of speech: censuring his enemies at court without naming them, he was either smearing the innocent or concealing crimes which he was obliged to openly denounce.

Against this background Stalverkh's denunciation seems a natural course of action for a high-standing official. The prosecution of Lopukhina was initiated by Elizabeth's confidant and personal surgeon Lestocq, who brought the supposed conspiracy to the empress's attention and arranged her personal meeting with an informer, inciting her to quick persecution.³⁷ Similarly, Stalverkh reported the conversation between Khorev and Osnelda to Kii and confirmed his testimony with that of a 'captive' who had served as a messenger between Osnelda and Zavlokh; as a reward for incriminating the princess Kii set him free. Stalverkh thus triggered a formal legal inquiry personally presided by the prince, as was often the case in eighteenth-century Russia. In cases of lese-majesty and treason, suspicion, *podozrenie*, was recognized as sufficient grounds for persecution, revealing, as Evgenii Anisimov puts it, 'the sovereign's unlimited right to punish and pardon', 'the sovereign will of the autocrat as the ultimate source of law'.³⁸ Petzold, a Saxon representative in Petersburg, gave the following account of Lopukhina's trial conducted under Elizabeth's royal supervision:

After their arrest the accused had voluntarily admitted everything that they knew. But since those utterances did not extend beyond ... general displeasure with the empress's way of life and a wish to see the restoration of the previous government ... [the prosecutors], basing on the assumption of a certainly existing conspiracy, were not satisfied with this, and asked first the young Lopukhin whether he knew of other accomplices and planned assaults. The empress was present personally, and ignored all the wailing and begging at her feet ... Lopukhina and Bestuzheva, as they were raised on the beams with their arms broken insisted most movingly that they could be torn to pieces but will never slander themselves or admit more than they know or have done.³⁹

37 Semevskii, 'N.F. Lopukhina', p. 6.

38 Anisimov, *Dyba i knut*, p. 52.

39 *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, vol. 6 (Saint-Petersburg 1870), pp. 497–498.

After Kii recognizes the legal implications of Stalverkh's report (II,1)—'dnes' nad bratom mne byt' sudieiu dolzhno' (20, 'Today I will have to be the judge over my brother')—he deals with Osnelda in a scene (IV, 7) which represents nothing less than a royal interrogation, and in significant points resembles Lopukhina's trial. Osnelda, now a prisoner rather than a captive, is brought to the stage in irons. Kii confronts her with the false charge of conspiracy and treason, based on witness testimony, and attempts to extort a confession of guilt, acknowledged in the Petrine judicial code, the *Kratkoe izobrazhenie protsessov ili sudebnykh tiazheb* of 1716, as 'the best testimony in the world'. Osnelda, frightened that Khorev might 'remain under suspicion', 'v podozrenii ostanetsia', admits to their mutual love and to their correspondence with Zavlokh but persistently denies any thought of treason, resorting to the only proof of innocence she can produce: the oath ('Klianusia vsem chto est', chto ia ne litsemeriu') which, according to Petrine law, could suffice for a requital. Kii counters this defense by demanding to see Zavlokh's letter that she has already burned; in legal terms it would have been qualified as written proof, 'pismennoe svidetel'stvo'. Moreover, he produces a charge she cannot refute: she said something inappropriate about his royal person, an evident case of lese-majesty, specifically identified in Peter's 1716 *Artikul voinskii* and other legal acts as a crime punishable by death. Osnelda has to admit to it, and Kii, who is generally aware of the advantages of clemency in a 'just trial' ('Shchedrota khvalitsia na pravednom sude') feels compelled in this case to fulfill his 'duty', passing a death sentence upon Osnelda: 'Umri, obmanshchitsa!' ('You die, deceitful wretch!' 56–63; transl. 74–78).⁴⁰

Kii's conviction of Osnelda, his most important royal act and the play's primary *peripeteia*, at once a *coup de théâtre* and a *coup d'état*, represents a point where theatrical representation, more specifically the dramatic idiom of tragic drama, is alone capable of providing insight into the workings of absolutist power. Benjamin has established that the fundamental affinity between tragic drama and political theory was rooted in the vision of sovereignty 'which takes as its example the special case in which dictatorial powers are unfolded'. This vision, famously revived and explored by Carl Schmitt and later Louis Marin, was developed in Machiavelli's wake by seventeenth-century political thinkers such as Gabriel Naudé and Cardinal Richelieu, whose works were read

40 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii s 1649 g.*, ([Saint-Petersburg], 1830) vol. 5, pp. 394, 400 sqq., 325 (№ 3006). On policies encouraging denunciations see Elena Nikulina and Igor Kurukin, *Povsednevnaia zhizn'*, pp. 158–175; on laws regarding lese-majesty and treason, and personal royal involvement in the persecution, see Anisimov, *Dyba i knut*, pp. 50–57, 95–123.

and translated in eighteenth-century Russia, and revolved around the notion of *coup d'état*, which had a broader meaning than today's usage would suggest and often referred to violent persecution of the enemies of the state and crown. Consequently, Benjamin continues, '[t]he drama makes a special point of endowing the ruler with the gesture of executive power [die Geste der Vollstreckung], and having him take part in the action with the words and behavior of a tyrant even where the situation does not require it'. On the other hand, drama constantly shows the prince to be 'almost incapable of making a decision', thus revealing a fundamental 'antithesis between the power of the ruler and his capacity to rule.'⁴¹

Addressing in his intricate, almost self-contradictory defense of autocracy the major threats inherent in monarchy, Tatishchev admitted the inevitable deficiency of a single ruler who would be at best 'wise, just, mild and diligent' but not 'free from faults', or worse, 'would give free reign to his passions', which would inevitably lead to 'unjust violence and ruin of the innocent'. Similarly problematic is the institution of councilors ('sovetniki') or favorites ('vremen-shchiki') created to correct the flaws of monarchy but itself easily abused by someone who 'out of envy inflicts ruin on others ... especially persons of distinction and merit'. Finally, 'the evil and impious' can usurp the royally sanctioned powers of the secret police designed 'for the safety of the monarch' and invested with the right to inflict torture and death 'for a single carelessly uttered word'.⁴² All these issues are reenacted in the catastrophe of Sumarokov's play: judicial abuse brought about by deceitful council highlights the troubling incapacity of the solitary ruler. In the play's finale Kii himself recognizes the self-destructive implications of his injustice and in a fit of a remorse pledges the victorious Khorev to 'cast me from the throne' (84), thus calling for the palace revolution anticipated by Stalverkh.

A monarch's tragic failure must not take the form of Hamletian inaction, emphasized in most readings of Benjamin, but may also emerge as its opposite—decisive action. Any royal act risks missing the elusive middle ground between the only seemingly opposed vices of weakness and excessive force, upsetting the precarious balance prescribed by Machiavelli. The new prince:

ought to be slow in giving credit to reports, not overhasty in his proceedings, and to beware of frightening himself with phantoms of his own rais-

41 Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, pp. 69–71.

42 Tatishchev, 'Proizvol'noe i soglasnoe rassuzhdenie ... o pravlenii gosudarstvennom', in id., *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 8, pp. 149.

ing; tempering his mercy with prudence in such a manner, that too much confidence may not put him off his guard, nor causeless jealousies make him insupportable.⁴³

In a well-intended but futile pursuit of this golden mean Kii is trapped in constant chaotic oscillation between the extremes, as Trediakovskii reveals in his assessment of the character:

As for Kii, his indifference is quite awkward: the Author represents him as good-tempered at one moment and as ill-tempered at the next; at one moment he is a kind man, at the other extremely wicked. This Kii resembles a weather vane: wherever the wind blows, he turns in the same direction. In short, the Author's Kii is a perfect hypochondriac, or a kind of madman.⁴⁴

Trediakovskii's analysis resonates both with Benjamin's discussion of murderous insanity as 'characteristic of the idea of the tyrant' in early modern drama,⁴⁵ and with historical experiences of monarchy in eighteenth-century Russia. Volynskii, for example, argued in 1740 that while Empress Anna ought to judge with 'mercy and terror' ('nadobno ei sud s grozoiu i s milostiiu imet'), she in fact 'sometimes becomes angry I do not even know for what reason', and generally 'there is nothing worse in a state than inconstancy, and in sovereigns, secrecy'.⁴⁶ In 1730 Empress Anna excused her past disfavor for the Spanish ambassador Duke of Liria by explaining to him 'that is was such a critical time that she did not know who is her friend or enemy, and was compelled to believe everything some people said about me and others.'⁴⁷ Unlimited and unwarranted trust of some and mistrust of others, as well as the inconstancy of both enacted in Anna's very speech act, instead of debilitating the monarchy propelled it to regular acts of repression. It is in the Machiavellian idiom of court politics that we find an answer to the rhetorical question which the critic A. Gruzintsov asked to outline the tragic effects of Sumarokov's play and, specifically, the sentencing of Osnelda as one of *Khorev's* truly tragic scenes:

43 *The Works of Nicholas Machiavel*, 625.

44 Trediakovskii, 'Pis'mo ... pisanoe ot priiatelia k priiateliu', p. 98.

45 Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 69.

46 'Zapiska o Volynskom', *Chteniia v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*, 1858, otd. 2, p. 149.

47 *Zapiski diuka Liriiskago i Bervikskago vo vremia prebyvaniia ego pri imperatorskom rossijskom dvore ...* (Saint-Petersburg 1845), p. 111.

what I do not understand is why Kii is so credulous; why is he so cruel that he ordered to poison Osnelda, who did him no harm, before the battle was over? and, what is even more unjust, he showed himself a tyrant through Osnelda's death without any reliable proof of his brother's treason (...) Does not this barbaric act appall all spectators? Does not Kii's action make him vicious in the eyes of the world?⁴⁸

False charges brought against the main characters drive *Khorev's* plot, putting into question the legal procedures which seem to corroborate them, and, finally revealed as little more than 'legal fiction', provide a nucleus for the tragic fiction which is Sumarokov's play. Indeed, the affinity between *Khorev* and the judicial practice of Elizabethan Russia is not a matter of incidental topical allusion, but rather a symptom of the fundamental issues inherent in tragedy as a genre. Aristotle's definition of a tragic catastrophe hinges on the problematization of guilt and retribution: since pity is aroused 'by the Misfortunes of those who are like ourselves' and fear 'from the Miseries of those who deserve better Luck', the best tragic character is someone 'who is become miserable, by some involuntary fault' and not as a result of 'a Remarkable Crime'.⁴⁹ The tragic effect is shaped by the mysteries of (in)justice, the discrepancy between crime and punishment.

Theater of Compassion

Sumarokov's dramatization of Osnelda's demise for court performances could have resonated with the spectacular finale of Lopukhina's trial, the public punishment of convicts on a scaffold—designated in official sources as 'theater' ('teatr')—in August 1743.⁵⁰ This event made such an impression on the Russian public that the French astronomer Chappe D'Auteroche who visited Petersburg eighteen years later, in 1761–1762, was able to give a vivid and detailed description of it in his travelogue:

Young, lovely, admired and sought after at court, of which place was the life and spirit; instead of the number of admirers her beauty usually drew after her, she then saw herself surrounded only by executioners (...) she

48 A. Gruzintsov, 'Ekzamen 'Khoreva'', *Novosti literatury*, 4 (1802), pp. 157–158.

49 *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, pp. 186–187.

50 Semevskii, 'N.F. Lopukhina', pp. 193; for contemporary accounts of the trial, see Semevskii, 'N.F. Lopukhina. 1699–1763. Epizod iz eia zhizni', *Russkii vestnik*, 29 (1860), kn. 17.

turned pale, and burst into tears: her clothes were soon after stripped off, and in a few moments she was quite naked to the waist, exposed to the eager looks of a vast concourse of people profoundly silent (...) in a few moments all the skin of her back was cut away in small strips, most of which remained hanging to the shift. Her tongue was cut out immediately after, and she was directly banished into Siberia.⁵¹

Chappe's account is invested with literary appeal achieved, one might argue, with means akin to those employed by Sumarokov. If in *Khorev* the royal prosecution of a *jeune première* becomes a source of aesthetic pleasure, Chappe's punishment scene reveals the workings of this standard yet paradoxical reaction: the audience of the execution, replacing the multitudes of Lopukhina's earlier 'admirers', takes erotic satisfaction in her nudity, submission and physical suffering. This pleasure, conveyed from the immediate eye witnesses to Chappe's readers, does not, however, imply a straightforward approval of the judicial procedure behind the punishment. Appealing to the conflicted sensibility of the audience, it molds a fascination for suffering with a compassion for the victim reminiscent of Aristotelian tragic 'pity'. In Racinian tragedy, as Roland Barthes remarks, 'disrobing' of the female self, including 'tears whose erotic power is so familiar', 'is always ... an attempt to compel pity (sometimes carried out to the point of sadistic provocation).'⁵² In Sumarokov, a mixture of compassion and desire permeates *Khorev*'s heavily eroticized, almost necrophilic, complaint after Osnelda's death (v, 4):

Толь малодушным быть хоть мужу и не должно,
 Но мысли горькия преодолеть не можно:
 Оsnельда во слезах пред очи предстает,
 Которыя она о мне при смерти льет.
 Воображаются мне все ея заразы ...
 И представляются мне все утехи те,
 Которых ожидал в драгой я красоте.

(Although a man must not be fainthearted,
 I cannot overcome bitter thoughts.

51 Chappe D' Autoche, *A Journey Into Siberia: Made by Order of the King of France* (London 1770), pp. 338–339. For a recent critical edition of Chappe's original, see id., *Voyage en Sibérie: fait par ordre du roi en 1761*, Édition critique par Michel Mervaud (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 447–449.

52 Roland Barthes, *On Racine*, transl. by Richard Howard (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p. 15.

Osnelda comes to me, and she weeps,
 Tears shed remembering our love even in death.
 All her charms come back, as in a gentle daydream ...
 And all the joys we sought, and all the joys we planned,
 Which I expected from the beloved's beauty.)

85

As Zavlokh immediately makes clear, Khorev's grief provides a pattern for a public emotional response to Osnelda's demise:

Ты сделала, о дочь! хотя упал наш трон,
 И победителям и побежденным стон.
 И если в аде глас Хоревов дух твой тронет,
 Ликуй что по тебе Герой великий стонет,
 Уж не почтет тебя невольницею ад,
 Заплачет по тебе с Хоревом весь сей град.

75

(Although our throne is lost, O daughter, you have brought
 Conquered and conqueror past limits of despair.
 And if into the depths a prince's sobs may reach you,
 Rejoice! a hero weeps for that he truly loved you.
 The dusky lands you tread will judge you freed at last,
 For all the city mourns your loss with Prince Khorev.)

85

In the play's conclusion, Zavlokh's lines provide a blueprint for the emotional effects of tragedy itself, and *Khorev* in particular, as they outline the function that 'tragic' compassion is meant to assume both in Sumarokov's *Kiev* and at Elizabeth's court. Among its audiences Osnelda's death sets in motion a pattern of eroticized collective sensibility shared by the whole polity ('grad'). A fictionalized reenactment of political trials in the form of courtly entertainments certainly confirms Stephen Greenblatt's view that 'a dread bound up with the fate of particular situated individuals' was evoked in early modern drama (as well as in 'public maiming and executions' and royal pardons) because the ruling elites 'believed that a measure of insecurity and fear was a necessary, healthy element in the shaping of proper loyalties'.⁵³ At the same time the medium of historical

53 Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Re-*

drama produced a double distance—chronological and aesthetic—between stage action and the setting of its performance. While Osnelda's demise as the crux of tragic action stands for primeval brutality of the past, the emotional reaction it is calculated to produce in the audience is the opposite, one of mild compassion. Displacing the old emotional forms of domination, this mood (at least in Sumarokov's *Kiev*) expresses itself in public weeping and assumes a political function: it forges a novel emotional bond between ruler and subjects, 'conquered and conqueror'. Breaking with the 'masculine' and 'historical' hard-heartedness styled as virtue, compassion for suffering emerges as a full-fledged 'aesthetic ideology', a new emotional paradigm of political coherence.⁵⁴

This restoration of the political order depends on a reassessment of the royal role, fulfilled in *Khorev*'s last scenes but prepared from the beginning of the play. If the execution of Osnelda is, according to Gruzintsov, a barbarian act which appalls 'all spectators' and presents Kii as 'vicious in the eyes of all the world', this perspective is not alien to Sumarokov's tragedy and its original context. In his discussion of the origins of government Tatishchev distinguished between two types of domination: the power of a conqueror ('preodoletel' ili khishchnik') who subdues his enemies with violence, and that of a 'true lord' ('suschii gospodin') who establishes his rule 'on the right of charity, like a father over his children', or on 'a voluntary compact'.⁵⁵ Accordingly, the young Khorev, speaking for the polity his future spectators inhabit, lectures the old warrior Kii on virtuous rule and condemns 'brutishness under the guise of courage' which culminates in the lack of empathy at the sight of those in misery ('Nepopechitel'ny zria bednykh v gor'kom plache'—II, 2, l. 23). In a speech to Stalverkh Kii himself professes compassion (II, 1): 'Smushchaisia, kak zriu ia i zlodeev v gore' (20, 'I am perplexed to see in grief even a villain', 55).

The compassionate royal gaze directed at the miserable and guilty, emphasized in Sumarokov's play, was institutionalized by court theater centered on tragedies. Assessing Sumarokov's achievement decades later, Nikolai Karamzin wrote that his tragedies were designed to 'draw tears from the eyes of the sensible Elizabeth'.⁵⁶ Indeed, Elizabeth—the first Russian monarch to make productions of tragedies a regular element of courtly life—made mournful compassion into an element of her royal role. After the death of her overthrown

naissance England (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 133–138.

54 On 'aesthetic ideology' and eighteenth-century absolutism, see Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 19.

55 Tatishchev, 'Istoriia rossiiskaia', in id., *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, pp. 359–370, here p. 360.

56 N.M. Karamzin, *Sochineniia* (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1984), vol. 2, p. 112.

rival Anna Leopoldovna in 1746 she had the corpse brought to Petersburg and, according to a semi-official account, displayed ‘a greatness of spirit, exalted by the signs of humanity and compassion at the thought of the inconstancy of worldly things (...) when she wept at the funeral’.⁵⁷ Building on political and poetic visions of pity, Kii’s final fit of compassion for Osnelda models the theatrical sensibility of the royal spectator—a new facet of Elizabeth’s ambivalent ‘scenario of power’.

In his preface to Aristotle, Dacier recounts the well-known anecdote about Alexander of Pherae, a Greek tyrant who had to leave a performance of a tragedy because ‘he was ashamed to be seen to weep, at the Misfortunes of Hecuba and Polyxena, when he daily imbrued his Hands in the Blood of his Citizens; he was afraid that his Heart should be truly mollify’d, that the Spirit of Tyranny would now leave the possession of his Breast’.⁵⁸ Conversely, in Elizabethan Russia royal encouragement of national tragedy and court theater developed after the cessation of political trials (Lopukhina’s was the last). Tragic theater affirmed the empress’s new role as a compassionate ruler and re-enhanced her bond with her subjects through collective experiences of pity, while simultaneously upholding and reviving in public imagination the threats of royal terror.

Conclusion

In his recent discussion of Sumarokov’s tragedies and their political resonances, Marcus Levitt maintains that ‘Soviet attempts to read Russian classicist tragedy as politically oppositionist are misdirected; autocracy generally serves as the political context and not the target of Russian classicist tragedy’.⁵⁹ Indeed, Sumarokov vehemently insisted that his tragedies were written for the court rather than for private audiences, and already *Khorev* manifested the pervasive dependence of Russian tragedy as a cultural form on the institutional and symbolic resources of court theater.⁶⁰ As I have noted in the beginning of this essay, Russian tragedy emerged as a paradox, a court entertainment

57 *Portrait naturel de l’Imperatrice de Russie Glorieusement Régnante ...* (Hambourg: s.d.), p. 6.

58 Aristotle’s *Art of Poetry*, Preface.

59 Levitt, *The Visual Dominant in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, p. 118.

60 *Pis’ma russkikh pisatelei xviii veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980), 176. On Sumarokov’s dependence on court patronage as a primary factor of social advancement see Levitt, ‘The Illegal Staging of Sumarokov’s *Sinav i Truvor* in 1770 and the Problem of Authorial Status in Eighteenth-Century Russia’, in id., *Early Modern Russian Letters*, pp. 190–217, 205–213.

which revealed—under royal sponsorship and close supervision—the most horrifying aspects of the political order. Sumarokov’s dramatic reenactments of royal spectacular injustice stood in an evident contradiction to the ubiquitous ‘scenario of rejoicing’ which, as Wortman has amply demonstrated, informed most official celebrations of Russian monarchy. I would argue, however, that instead of subverting the ‘scenario of power’ suggested by conventional panegyric forms (represented in this case by the Kievan masque) tragedy enhanced its sway by extending its emotional scope.

Along with the *opera seria*, tragedy belonged to an aesthetic of courtly ceremony and entertainment gradually adopted in Russia alongside other features of Western-type courts since the 1730s. This link was made clear in the very first essays on theater printed in Russian, which appeared in 1733–1738 in Russia’s only journal, published by the court-sponsored Academy of Sciences. A lengthy 1738 essay on the history of the opera contained a detailed description of fetes held at different European courts since the Renaissance and praised the ‘illustrious courts accustomed to magnificence, great luxury and solid view of things’, among them the Russian court with its first opera productions, as primary spaces of cultural development.⁶¹ An earlier piece of the series, a 1733 essay on spoken drama, specifically addressed the paradox of the theatrical success of tragedies, ‘which rather induce the spectators to grief than to joy’. Describing the genre with a literal translation of the German term ‘Trauerspiel’, ‘mournful play’—‘pechal’naia igra’—the essay explained its prominence through a proto-Nietzschean analogy with the European-type music recently imported to Russia and also associated with the culture of the court: Tragedy is similar to musical dissonance, which, though itself unpleasant to the ear, in skillful combination with the pleasant consonances provides for more ‘delight and admiration’ than the consonances alone.⁶²

Sumarokov interweaves this emotional palette, which adds grief to the Aristotelian pity and fear, into his dramatic fabric. Having learned that Osnelda reciprocates his feelings but apprehensive of her departure with Zavlokh, Khorev exclaims (I, 3):

О час! приятный час! но час и купно люты.
Какими я могу назвать твои минуты?

61 L.M. Starikova, ed., *Teatral’naia zhizn’ Rossii v epokhu Anny Ioannovny* (Moskva: Nauka, 1995), 532–557, 560.

62 ‘O pozorishchnykh igrakh, ili komediakh i tragediakh’, in L.M. Starikova, ed., *Teatral’naia zhizn’ Rossii v epokhu Anny Ioannovny* (Moskva: Nauka, 1995), p. 518.

Безщастными почеть? мне много щастья в них.
За щастливы приять? что зляй минут мне сих!

14

(Sweet hour and cruel! You are to me both cruel and gentle!
What accents can define these moment of our lifetime?
Call them unhappy? Still much happiness they bring.
Shall we say happy? Ah! What hours have brought more grief?)

51

If Khorev's joy derives from his love for Osnelda, his grief stems from the recognition of Zavlokh's austere patriarchal authority which binds Osnelda and is unlikely to cede to the lovers' tender feelings. As A.N. Robinson has shown, the dynamic of emotional oscillation between joy and grief was central to Russian political drama since its beginnings in the seventeenth century, and was firmly associated with the dangerous unpredictability of royal will.⁶³ This dynamic both stood for a subject's anxiety in the face of power, and underlay an aesthetic of representation suited to broadcast and affirm the ambiguous image of domination incorporated by Sumarokov's royal fathers, Zavlokh and Kii, conscientious monarchs and infanticidal tyrants.

It is this ambiguity of authority which defined the fundamental affinity of autocracy and tragedy as its reenactment. As Benjamin demonstrates, kingship was simultaneously associated with 'the ideal of complete stabilization (...) continuity of the community, flourishing in feats of arms and the sciences', and with the opposing 'idea of catastrophe', the state of emergency which 'positively demands the completion of the image of the sovereign, as tyrant.'⁶⁴ Similarly, Greenblatt concludes in his discussion of Shakespearean stagings of kingship that

the enhancement of royal power is not only a matter of the deferral of doubt: the very doubts that Shakespeare raises serve not to rob the king of his charisma but to heighten it, precisely as they heighten the theatrical interest of the play; the unequivocal, unambiguous celebrations of royal power with which the period abounds have no theatrical force (...) Within this theatrical setting, there is a notable insistence upon the paradoxes,

63 O.A. Derzhavina, A.S. Demin, and A.N. Robinson, 'Rukopisnaia dramaturgiia i teatral'naia zhizn' pervoi poloviny XVIII v.', in *P'esny liubitelskikh teatrov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), p. 95.

64 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, pp. 65–66, 69.

ambiguities, and tensions of authority, but this apparent production of subversion is (...) the very condition of power.⁶⁵

The 'tragic' oscillation between joy and grief apparently functioned as a poetic device designed to domesticate the collective experience of anxiety in its various emotional forms, integrating it into an affirmative ceremonial aesthetic.⁶⁶ In Shakespeare's *Hamlet* King Claudius is introduced as he delivers a ceremonial speech asserting his recent succession to his deceased brother's throne and marriage to Gertrude 'With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage, | In equal scale weighing delight and dole.' This pattern of public sensibility is evidently meant to contain the 'private' political resentment of the likes of Hamlet, which takes the form of 'obstinate condolment' of the late king.⁶⁷ If in Shakespeare this pattern of quasi-ritual containment is discredited together with the king and his 'rotten' realm, it was still upheld by eighteenth-century court tragedy and Sumarokov in particular. In *Gamlet* (1748), his second tragedy loosely yet manifestly modeled on *Hamlet*, it is voiced by a sympathetic figure, Ophelia's confidant Flemina who consoles her mistress after she learned of her father's crimes by elaborating on the benefits of misfortune:

Приятней солнца свет, когда пройдет ненастье,
И слаще сладка жизнь, когда пройдет несчастье.
Кто знает для чего случаи таковы (...)

(More brightly shines the sun after foul weather passes,
And life seems sweeter in the wake of our misfortune.
Who knows the purposes of happenings like this?)⁶⁸

Flemina turns out to be right: Sumarokov's Prince is able to re-conquer his throne and can hope to marry Ophelia after she performs the proper 'mour-

65 Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 63–65.

66 Jörg Jochen Berns, Thomas Rahn, eds. *Zeremoniell als höfische Ästhetik im Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995).

67 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by G.R. Hibbard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 154–155, 160 (The Oxford Shakespeare); Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 300. I owe this reference to Susanne Wofford.

68 A.P. Sumarokov, *Polnoe sobranie vsekh sochinenii* (Moskva: V universitetskoi tipografii, 1787), vol. 3, p. 98; A.P. Sumarokov, *Selected Tragedies*, p. 118.

ning duties' (to quote Shakespeare) for her criminal father. Fashioning political calamities, 'happenings like this', as Aristotelian *peripeteia* ('Peripetie is a change of one fortune into another'⁶⁹), tragedy offered its spectators an emotional framework for, and an aesthetised perspective on their very real experiences of anxiety and repression. Grief and misfortune are reinterpreted as a necessary source of royal triumph, produced—as visions of sovereignty rooted in the state of exception imply—in a cyclic scenario of eternal renovation. Accordingly, in royal drama the ceremonially affirmed emotional dynamic of grief and joy is refashioned as a source of aesthetic pleasure, just as it sets off and re-enhances the ostensible harmony of political cosmos.

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69 Aristotle's *Art of Poetry*, 162.

Index

- Abbas I 112
Adams, John 1
 The Death of Klinghoffer 1
admiratio, admiration 36, 212, 305, 312, 313,
 387, 425
Adorno, Theodor 295
Aelhuysen, J. van 345n
 Aran et Titus 345
Aeschylus 1, 4, 44, 126n, 157, 212, 294
Aesthetics *passim*
affects, emotions, passions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 26,
 30, 31–32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 69, 89, 90, 170,
 175, 205, 207, 222, 233, 271, 272, 273, 302,
 304, 314, 354, 411
Affekt, *see* affects
agency 13, 14, 114, 236, 257, 279, 288, 292
akrasia 7, 26, 37, 221–238
Alabaster, William 34, 241, 256–257, 258
 Roxana 34, 256–257
Albert v of Bavaria 155n
Albrecht 155, 167
Aldobrandini 184, 202
Alexander of Pherae 424
Alexander the Great 209, 210
Althusius, Johannes 51, 66
Amalia van Solms 36, 61–63, 64
ambiguity 46, 48, 59, 118, 302, 308, 342, 370,
 426
Ambrose 254, 255
Amsterdam 13, 19, 20, 21, 33n, 48, 57–58, 59,
 60, 67, 82, 104, 106, 107, 109, 113, 121, 123,
 127, 128, 129, 162, 353, 356, 360, 361, 364,
 367, 368, 370, 371
 Athenaeum illustre 43
 City Hall 15, 57
 miracle of 130
 Nederduytsche Akademie 22
 New Church 103
 Schouwburg 16, 17, 20n, 22, 37, 105, 325,
 345, 354, 355
 tuchthuis 45, 49, 67
anachronism 32, 36, 351, 352–353, 359
anagnorisis or recognition 110, 167, 224
Ancien régime 375
Anna Leopoldovna 408, 415, 424
Anne Boleyn 148, 177, 178n
Antichrist 99, 112, 188, 190, 203, 204
anti-climax 127
Antigone 2, 12
Antitrinitarianism 12, 194
Apollonius of Tyana 187–192, 197, 204, 213,
 214, 215
arcana imperii 413
Arianism 165, 194, 206
Aristotle 4, 14, 172, 207, 208, 209, 210, 222,
 224, 234, 241, 380, 387, 388, 404, 405,
 420, 424
 The Nicomachean Ethics 222, 223,
 224
 Poetics 4, 24, 35, 154, 205, 221, 223, 225,
 260n, 303, 304, 305, 315, 326
Armada, Spanish 136, 244, 349
Arminian, Arminianism 45, 49, 66, 82, 106,
 107, 110, 111
Asclepius 188, 189
Aubignac, L' Abbé d' 304, 387
 Pratique du théâtre 304
audience 1, 2, 5, 9, 25, 32, 138, 265, 267
 boys 139, 166
 expectation 92, 251, 396
 judgment 13, 35, 201, 216, 258, 297, 305,
 308, 313
 reading 396
 response 13, 36, 43, 76, 105, 117, 121, 165,
 207, 288, 297, 301, 304, 312, 349, 423
 rhetorical 56
 seated 295, 297, 302
 spectator 7, 25, 35, 77, 98, 116, 206,
 210, 223, 241, 247, 254, 258, 263, 268,
 284, 289–293, 295–297, 300–302,
 304, 311, 313–315, 380, 389, 423, 424,
 428
 standing 295, 297, 300, 302, 313
 students 141, 166, 174n, 252, 253, 254
Aufklärung *see* Enlightenment
Augustine, St. 189, 243, 244, 255
 De civitate Dei 243
 Epistulae 189n
 Augustinians 154, 155, 161
Augustus 5, 53, 190, 306
Austrian Succession 385
authorial propriety 323

- authority 5, 11, 12, 15, 16, 36, 38, 53, 60, 81, 82,
 86, 87, 89, 91, 94, 96, 97, 99, 100, 113, 129,
 136, 138, 143, 145, 147, 150, 157, 175, 183,
 280, 288, 289–290, 319, 325, 337, 348,
 408, 426–427
 Ayrer, Jacob 159

 Bach, Johann Sebastian 28
 Baillencourt, Franciscus de 152, 156
 Bale, John 14, 135, 242
 King Johan 242
 Barberini, Francesco 207
 Barlaeus, Caspar 43, 45, 68, 81, 354
 baroque or barroco 27
 Baronio, Caesare 189, 194, 204, 213, 214
 Annales ecclesiastici 186n, 189, 194
 Martyrologium Romanum 213n
 baroque 7, 25, 26, 27–35, 36, 37, 48, 57, 58n,
 59, 69, 74, 106, 153, 200–205, 212, 215–
 216, 256, 260, 263, 280, 300, 303n, 320,
 351, 356, 395
 Bartholomew Day, St. 136
 Batavian myth, Batavianism 55, 57, 60, 82,
 83, 118, 361, 364
 Batteux, Charles 380
 Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe
 380
 Becket, Thomas 137, 143–144, 145, 146, 150,
 156, 179
 Beckett, Samuel 294
 Bellarmine, Robert 194, 203, 204
 Bembo, Pietro 286
 Benedictines 384
 Benjamin, Walter 28–29, 62, 123, 179, 212,
 319–320, 328, 341, 400, 405, 410, 412–413,
 417, 418, 419, 426
 Bergh, Adriaen van den 344, 349
 Andronicus 344
 Berwick, Edward 189, 190n
 Bidermann, Jacob 159
 Belisarius 160n
bienséance 35, 304
 Billard, Claude 294
 La Mort de Henry le Grand 294
 Biron, Johann 408
 Boccacini, Traiano 261n
 Ragguagli di Parnasso 261n
 Bodin, Jean 46, 47, 51, 341
 Lex six livres de la République 47

 Boethius 165, 166, 167
 Bohemia 15, 156, 167, 169, 176, 177
 Boileau, Nicolas 305, 375, 380, 381
 Art poétique 305
 Boleslaus II 156
 Borromini, Francesco 28
 Bourbon dynasty 299
 bourgeois
 intelligentsia 375, 395
 public sphere 289, 291
 society 271, 275, 290
 Boxhornius, Marcus Zuerius 55
 Brandt, Geeraardt 61, 116, 354n
 Barlaei epistulae 354n
 ‘Het leven van Joost van den Vondel’ 61n
 Brecht, Berthold 258, 312
 Breda, Siege of 121, 355
 Breslau 326
 Brightman, Thomas 194, 203n, 204
 Brumoy, Pierre 402, 404
 Théâtre des Grecs 402
 Bryskett, Lodowick 234
 Bucer, Martin 242, 247–248
 De Regno Christi 247, 248n
 Buchanan, George 3, 342n
 Bullinger, Heinrich 6
 Lucretia 6
 Burg, van der 68

 Calaminus, Georg 160
 Rudolphottocarus 160n
 Calderón de la Barca, Pedro 19, 21, 29, 266
 Gustos y disgustos 266
 La vida es sueño 19
 Caligula 61
 Calvin, John 242, 243, 244
 Calvinism, Calvinist 13, 66, 89, 113, 114,
 119, 204, 228, 243, 335, 361, 362, 372
 Cambridge 139, 241, 244, 247, 249, 250, 256
 Camden, William 140n
 Campen, Jacob van 15, 57, 355, 361, 370
 Campion, Edmund 146, 241, 244, 245, 253–
 255
 Ambrosia 254–255
 De iuvene academico 253
 Rationes decem 244
 Saulus 332n
 Caracalla 187
 Carolus, Joannes 177

- Casaubon, Isaac 81
 Casparius, Caspar 161, 162n
 Castelvetro, Ludovico 205–206
 Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta
 206n
 Castiglione, Baldassare 275–276, 282, 283,
 284
 Il libro del cortegiano 275, 286, 287n
catastrophe 104, 128, 305, 306, 418, 420,
 426
 Catherine of Alexandria, St. 160
 Catharine of Aragon 178
 Catharine II 398
catharsis 4, 110, 305, 327, 328, 387
 Catherine 141, 148
 Catherine, St. 103
 Caussin, Nicolas 12, 164, 165, 168, 387
 Hermenigildus 12, 165
 Theodoricus 12, 164n, 165
 Cecil, William 250, 258
 Cellot, Louis 387
Centuriae Magdeburgenses 194, 203
 Cerinthus 190, 191, 192, 193, 204
 Charles 143, 145
 Charles I 33, 335, 336, 337, 338, 365
 Charles II 96
 Charles III 390
 Charles of Anjou 174
 Charles V 114
 Charles VI 385
 Charles VIII 159
 Chettle, Henry 138
chiaroscuro 32, 34, 256, 354
 Chrétien des Croix, Nicolas 297
 Christian II of Anhalt 114
 Christine de Lorraine 260
 Cicero 88, 173, 243
 Cicognini, Giacinto Andrea 7, 13, 33, 260–
 293
 L'Admira 262
 Glamori di Alessandro Magno e di Rossane
 262
 Il Celio 265
 Il Don Gastone di Moncada 260–293
 Le gelosie fortunate del principe Rodrigo
 262
 Giasone 262
 L'innocente giustificato 262
 La Mariene 262
 La moglie di quattro mariti 262
 L'Oronthea 262
 Il Principe giardiniero 262
 La vita è un sogno 33, 262
 Il tradimento per l'onore 262, 264n
 Cicognini, Jacopo 260n
 circumstances 2, 15, 178, 313
 versus fate 313
 classicism, classicist *passim*
 Claudius 61, 62, 63
 Claus, Anton 391–392, 393
 Exercitationes theatrales 391n
 Clement VIII 184, 202
Codex Etruscus 3, 6
 Collaert, Hans 369, 370
 Beclaghinghe der Nederlandscher verwoest-
 inghe 369, 370
 College Louis-le-Grand 388, 392
 Comedy 3, 16, 21, 43, 158, 178n, 223, 234, 240,
 241, 242, 267n, 382, 394
commedia dell'arte 18, 19n, 262, 268
 compassion 36, 92n, 141, 305, 311, 312, 313,
 315, 420–424
 confessionalization 33, 99, 104, 109, 111, 112n,
 130, 165, 200
 Conrad IV 185
 Conradin of Hohenstaufen 156, 174, 175,
 179
consolatio, consolation 146, 315, 328, 331
 Constantine the Great 107, 156, 164, 214
Constitutio Criminalis Carolina 67
 Contzen, Adam 170, 171, 172
 Politica 171
conversos 10
 Corneille, Thomas 392
 Corneille, Pierre 20, 36, 153, 303, 305, 306,
 307, 308, 312, 313, 315, 375, 380, 387, 388,
 391, 394, 396
 Le Cid 308
 Cinna 306
 Examens 388
 Héraclius 20
 Horace 310n
 Trois discours sur le poème dramatique
 388
corpus mysticum 8
 Cosimo III de' Medici 264
 Council of Nicea 107, 193
 Council of Trent 193, 206

- Counter-Reformation 9, 28, 29, 30, 34, 155,
156, 162, 163, 167, 169, 177, 183, 186, 200,
383, 389
- Counter-Remonstrants 45, 49, 54, 55, 64–67
- coup d'état* 307, 417, 418
- coup de théâtre* 268, 306, 417
- Cranmer, Thomas 135, 140, 149
- Crashaw, Richard 30
- Cresacre, Anne 139
- Criminal ordinance* 54
- Cromwell, Oliver 140, 141, 149, 337
- cruelty 35, 166, 176, 208, 209, 210, 238, 294–
311, 363
- D' Aubignac, Abbe H. 304, 387
- D' Auteroche, Chappe 420
A Journey Into Siberia 421n
- D' Ors, Eugenio 29, 201n
- Dacier, André 205, 206, 404, 405, 413, 424
La Poétique d'Aristote 205n, 404
- Dagon 75–81, 84, 91–101
- damnatio memoriae*, policy of oblivion 61,
299
- debate *see* discussion
- De la Court 108, 358, 359
- De la Rue, Charles 387, 391, 392
- deception or *simulatio* 136, 171n, 172, 176,
282n, 309, 412
theatrical 284
- decorum* 35, 211, 304, 331
- Dekker, Thomas 138
- Deleuze, Gilles 26, 30, 200, 201, 215, 216
- Delidél, Claude 199, 387
La Théologie des Saints 199n
- Delrio, Martin Antonio 183–184
Syntagma tragoediae latinae 183–184,
208n
- dénouement* 123, 256, 306, 312
- Digesta* 52
- Dio Cassius 186n
History of Rome 186n
- Diomedes 4
- Directorium in publicis et cameralibus* 385
- discussion 5n, 23n, 35, 37, 47, 65, 124, 157,
162, 172, 266, 290, 291, 301, 358
- dissimulation 240, 242, 267, 281–289
- distanciation* or *Verfremdungseffekt* 312
- divertissement* 312
- Dmitrievsky 398
- dominatrix mundi* 370
- dominium* 45–49, 52, 53, 56, 65, 66, 67, 73, 74
- Domitian 186, 190, 191, 197, 204, 211
- Domitilla, St. 213, 214
- Donati, Alessandro 185, 205, 206–207, 210,
213
Ars poetica 185, 207n, 212n
Pirimalus 185
Suevia 185
- Donatus, Aelius 4, 158
Commentum Terenti 158
- Dordt, Synod of 45, 54, 55, 66, 82
- Douai 10, 136, 161
- drama
Elizabethan 296
humanist 4, 159, 162
- dramata sacra* 83
- dramaturgy 242, 289, 314, 315, 338
- dream 30, 32–33, 106, 255
- Dutch Republic 45, 46, 47, 49, 55, 56, 60, 64,
67–68, 73, 74, 82, 112, 118, 120, 327, 345,
347, 361, 364
- Dutch Revolt 9, 113, 155, 162, 169, 364, 369,
370
- Duym, Jacob 15n, 162
Het moordadich stuck van Balthasar Gerard
15n
- Edict of Nantes* 298
- Edward of the Palatine 335
- Edward v 251, 252, 255
- Edward VI 135, 136, 247
- Edwards, Richard 242
Palamon and Arcite 242
- Eikon Basilike* 337
- Eine sehr klaegliche tragoedia von Tito
Andronico und der hoffertigen Kayserin*
344
- Elias, Norbert 26, 271–274, 275, 277, 279, 281
- Elizabeth of the Palatinate 337
- Elizabeth I 12, 26, 83, 135, 136, 143, 145, 150,
242, 245, 250, 257, 280
- emotions *see* affects
- enactment 104, 223, 303
- England 7, 14, 47, 48, 54, 55, 96, 111, 118, 135,
136, 137, 143, 145, 150, 161, 225, 241, 244,
345, 347, 348, 350, 358
- Enlightenment or *Aufklärung* 291, 380, 382,
383, 385, 395

- Epiphanius of Salamis 192
Panarion 192n
- Episcopius, Simon 108
- Erasmus, Desiderius 3, 138, 139, 228
Nux 139
- Eucharist 104, 109, 125, 126, 130, 194, 196, 197,
 211, 216, 352, 383
- Euripides 1, 4, 35, 44, 82, 157, 159, 183, 230, 315
Cretenses 210
Heracleidae 207
Hippolytus 210
- Eusebius of Caesarea 188, 189
Annales ecclesiastici/Ecclesiastical History
 186n, 188
- Eustachius, St. 156, 160, 163, 167
- execution 9, 12, 33, 36, 139, 142, 166, 174, 179,
 266, 280, 300–301, 339, 421
- Ezzelino III da Romano 14, 159
- Fabricius, Andreas 75, 155
Samson 75
Fabula 75, 77, 78, 89, 84, 97, 98, 101, 241, 246
- Fanson, Nicolas de 167
- farce 3, 64
- fascination 1, 32, 33, 35, 36, 48, 74, 117, 177,
 300, 311, 314, 315, 400, 421
- fate 1, 2, 124, 268, 310, 313, 334
- Fausta 160n, 164
- fear 1, 186, 205, 207, 209, 223, 237, 249, 274,
 298, 330, 425
- felix culpa* 3
- Fénelon 380
Lettre à l'Académie 380
- Ferdinand II 172, 177, 264, 350
- Ferdinand III 155
- Ferdinand of Tyrol 167
- Filmer, Robert 51, 56, 66
Patriarcha 56
- finality 15, 305
- Fisher, John 137, 141, 146, 147, 148, 149
- Flacius Illyricus, Matthias 194
- Flavianus, Virius Nichomachus 189
- Flavius Clemens 184, 190, 211, 212
- Flavius Julius Crispus 156
- Florence 264, 265, 361
- Floris V 106
- Fontenelle, Bernard Le Bovier de 381
Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes
 381
- Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* 381
- Fonteny, Jacques de 294
Cléophon 294
- form 28, 31, 32, 34, 35, 183, 296, 381, 398, 401,
 424
- dramatic 6, 328
- fantastic 32
- narrative 221
- neoclassical 16
- tragic 2, 6
- tragicomic 267
- Fornenberg, Jan-Baptiste van 19, 345
- Foxe, John 14, 135, 242
Acts and Monuments 135
Christus triumphans 242
- Frederick Henry 59, 60, 61, 62, 63
- Frederick II Hohenstaufen 185, 409
- Frederick of Bohemia and the Palatinate 15,
 177
- Frederick the Great 376, 385
- freedom 4, 46, 47, 48, 54, 74, 88, 90, 96, 209,
 227, 243, 276n, 315
- Frischlin, Nicodemus 159
- Friz, Adrian von 390
- Friz, Andreas 388–394, 396
 dramas 390
Epistola de Tragaediis 390
Joseph, a fratribus suis adoratus et agnitus
 390
- Friz, Edmund 390
- Friz, Elizabeth von 390
- Fulvius Valens 191
- Fürstenspiegel*, mirror for princes 9, 25, 176n,
 329
- Fyne, Paschier de 108
- Gager, William 241, 242, 245, 248, 249, 256
Meleager 241, 245, 248–249, 250
- Gallonio, Antonio 213
gallophilia 374–383, 395
gallophobia 374–383, 395
- Galluzzi, Tarquinio 185, 205, 207, 208, 209,
 210
Rinovazione dell'antica tragedia 206n
Virgilianae vindicationes 209n, 212n
- Garnier, Robert 160, 161n, 294, 303
Antigone 294
Cornélie 294
Hippolyte 294

- Les Juives* 294
Marc Antoine 294
La Troade 294
 Gaspari, Giovanni Battista de 386
 genre, generic categories 4, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 18,
 24, 157, 227, 230, 238, 263, 267, 294, 300,
 305, 315, 319, 320, 321, 325, 341, 349, 374,
 398, 399, 402, 420, 425
 Gentili, Alberico 14, 85n
genus sublime 331
 German Lands, Germany 7, 16, 18, 19, 21, 112,
 320, 347, 371, 374–396
 Gibbon, Edward 190
 Giraldi, Giovan Battista 268
 gods 2, 93, 199
Golden Legend 135
 Gosson, Stephen 242, 246, 247, 251
The Schoole of Abuse 246
 Gottsched, Johann Christoph 373, 376–382,
 383, 392, 395
Die deutsche Schaubühne 379, 380,
 381n
Der sterbende Cato 378
Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst 379,
 380, 390
Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen 379n
 Gottsched, Luise 379–380, 382, 395
Die Hausfranzösin 382
grâce suffisante / gratia sufficiens 313n, 314n
 Gracián, Baltasar 272
Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia 272
 Granelli, Giovanni 388, 390
 Graz 163n, 384, 389
 Grevius, Johannes 45–49, 52, 56, 66, 67,
 68
Tribunal reformatum 46–49, 52, 73
 Gricke, Claude de 20
Heraklius 20
Liefde sonder sien verweckt 20
 Groot, Hugo *see* Grotius
 Grotius, Hugo 9n, 13, 36, 48, 55, 60, 67, 75–
 101, 106, 107, 109, 110, 111, 126, 361, 363,
 364
Adamus exul 82
De Antiquitate 60n, 83
Christus patiens 110
De imperio 81, 84, 87, 98
De iure belli ac pacis 81, 84–91, 95
Parallellon rerumpublicarum 363, 364n
Rivetiani Apologetici discussio 84, 99, 109
Sophompaneas 82, 110, 154n
 Gryphius, Andreas 12, 29, 112, 153, 320,
 336
Ermordete Majestät 335, 336, 337, 338
Leo Armenius 324, 330
Papinianus 330, 399
Die sieben Brüder 112, 325–334
Weltliche Poemata 329n, 331n
 Guarini, Giambattista 267, 292n
Compendio 267n
Il pastor fido 267
 Guarini, Guarino 28
 Guillén de Castro 20, 266
 Gunpowder Plot 136
 Gustavus Adolphus 114, 349
 Gyge, Margaret 139
 gymnasium 5, 160, 178, 375, 384–385, 386,
 387
 Habermas, Jürgen 21n, 26, 37, 280, 289–291
 Habsburg, House of 11, 15, 118, 155, 159, 169,
 174, 176, 179, 349
 Austrian 177n, 349, 350, 385, 390
 Spanish 176, 177n
 Hals, Frans 322
hamartia 29, 205, 223, 224, 227
 Hardy, Alexandre 297, 299n
 Harpsfield, Nicholas 136, 139, 140n, 149
The life and death of Sr Thomas Moore
 139n
Treatise of Marriage 149
 Harsdörffer, Georg Philipp 327, 374
 Haugwitz, August Adolf von 336
Schuldige Unschuld 336
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 294, 300
 Heidenreich, David Elias 3323, 333, 334
Rache zu Gibeon 332, 333n, 334n
 Heinsius, Daniel 15n, 35, 83, 322, 327
Auriacus 154n, 161, 162
De tragoediae constitutione 35, 154n
 Henry, son of Henry II 143–146
 Henry II 137, 143, 145, 156
 Henry III, King of France 294
 Henry IV, King of France 294, 298
 Henry V 235
 Henry VII 5
 Henry VIII 135–142, 143, 147, 148, 149, 150, 177,
 178

- heresy, heretics 12, 135, 136, 147, 150, 165, 166, 168, 171, 178, 201, 202
- Hermann the German *see* Hermannus Alemannus
- Hermannus Alemannus 4
- Hermenigildus, St. 156, 165, 168, 206
- Herodotus 159
- Heywood, Thomas 138
- Hierocles, Sossianus 187, 188
- Hiroshima 295
- history
- Biblical 294
 - classical 49
 - recent 9, 14, 33, 35, 161, 295–299, 300
 - oriental 35
 - as subject of drama 10n, 106, 250
- Hobbes, Thomas 16, 47, 48, 51
- Leviathan* 9n, 406
- Hogendorp, Gijbrecht van 15n, 162
- Holocaust 296
- Holonius, Gregorius 163
- Lambertias* 163n
- Holy Roman Empire 176, 348, 349
- Homer 208, 229
- Odyssey* 229, 234n
- Hooft, Pieter Cornelisz. 13, 60, 68, 82, 107n, 110n, 130, 131n, 153, 161, 354, 361
- Baeto* 60n, 83n
 - Geeraerd van Velsen* 106
 - Rampzaeligheden der verheffinge van den Hujze Medicis* 361n
- Horace 212, 253, 380, 387
- Ars poetica* 4, 212, 393
 - Carmen saeculare* 190
- horror 15, 35, 43, 66, 103, 109, 113, 207, 256, 295, 297, 299, 300, 301, 305, 315, 353, 365, 371
- Huguenots 121, 136, 197, 376
- humanism, humanist 3, 4, 5, 57, 75, 81, 83, 155–160, 162, 178–179, 294, 303, 322, 327
- humores* 32
- Humphrey, Lawrence 13, 239–241, 244–245, 246, 247–248, 250, 251, 253–259
- De fermento vitando* 239n, 244
 - Iesuitismus* 244
- Huydecoper, Balthasar 354
- Huygens, Constantijn 18, 44, 57
- hypocrisy 140, 282, 283
- Ignatius of Antioch 149, 194
- Ignatius of Loyola, St. 183n, 185
- Exercitia spiritualia* 186n, 187n
- IJ 59, 117
- imitatio Christi* 211
- imperium* 74, 80, 81, 82, 83, 91, 94, 97, 99–101, 128
- Indians 183, 295
- Ingegneri, Angelo 281n, 282n
- Instructio pro scholis humanioribus* 386
- instruction 10, 11, 13, 157, 158, 161, 165, 169, 173, 177, 178, 179, 229
- Interbellum 29
- Iraq 1
- Irenaeus 191–192, 193, 194
- Adversus haereses* 191
- irenicism 80, 82, 84, 99, 100, 107, 110, 111
- Isabella 155, 167, 169
- Isidore of Seville 6
- Islam 1, 10, 112
- Islamitic State 1, 30
- Italy 8, 11, 30, 164, 174, 264, 283, 374
- ius gentium* 80–86, 88, 90, 91, 97, 98, 100, 101
- James I 10, 111, 136, 143, 151
- James II 351, 358, 394
- James VI 10
- Jansenism 314n, 383n
- Jeanin, Pierre 110
- Jeanne d'Arc 156, 179
- Jerusalem 92, 121, 123, 186, 214
- Jesuits 5, 7, 12, 14, 16, 25, 34, 99, 112, 137, 139, 148, 154, 155, 159, 163–166, 172, 182–216, 243, 245–246, 313n, 314n, 373–396
- Jodelle, Étienne 294, 303
- Cléopâtre captive* 294
 - Didon se sacrifiant* 294
- John the Baptist 149
- John the Evangelist, St. 190, 191–192, 193, 197, 203, 204, 214
- Jonctys, Daniel 73
- Jonson, Ben 234, 344, 354, 355
- The Alchemist* 234
 - 'Bartholomew Fair' 344n
 - Sejanus* 358n
- Josephus, Flavius 75, 328
- Antiquitates Iudaicae* 75, 328
- Jouvancy, Joseph 387, 388
- De ratione discendi et docendi* 387

- Julia Domna 187
 Justice, Divine 153, 156, 166, 179, 215
 Justinian 52n, 160n
 Justin Martyr 194

katharsis see catharsis
 Kaunitz, Wenzel Anton von 385
 Kiev 400–401, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 413, 422
 Knüpfer, Nicolaus 62, 63
 Koningh, Abraham de 75, 162
 Simsons Treur-spel 75n
 Kormart, Christophorus 12, 29
 Maria Stuart 334–340
 Kuhlmann, Quirinus 16
Kunst drama 319
 Kyd, Thomas 296, 349
 Spanish Tragedy 347n, 348, 349, 350

 La Bruyère 381
 La Fontaine 381
 Lactantius 188
 Lairese, Geeraerd de 370
 Lambert, St. 156
 Latin America 295
 Latimer 135
 Laurentius, D. 117
 law
 evangelical 90
 natural 66, 85n, 86, 90, 91, 98
 retaliation/retribution 89, 91, 96, 106, 114, 298, 334, 420
 Roman 46, 53, 54, 66
 Le Brun, Charles 375
 Le Jay, Gabriel 387
 Legge, Thomas 241, 246, 250, 255
 Richardus Tertius 246, 250–252, 254, 256
 Leopold I 384
 Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim 376, 378
 17. *Literaturbrief* 376
 Levellers 51
Leven is maer Droom, Het 33
libido dominandi 270, 303, 311
libido sentiendi 303, 311
 Linz 160
 Lipsius, Justus 170–172, 173, 201
 De militia Romana 201
 Monita et exempla politica 173
 Politica 170, 171n, 172n

 Lobb, Emmanuel 394
 Locher, Jacob 159
 Historia de rege Franciae 159
 Tragoedia de Thurcis et Suldano 159
 Locke, John 51, 56
 Lohenstein, Daniel Casper von 29, 320, 324
 Sophonisbe 324, 399n
 London 19, 255, 356, 371, 372
 theater 13, 344, 355
 Tower 135
 Loots, Johannes Chrysostomus 155
 Lope de Vega 21, 266
 La corona merecida 266
 Louis XIII 302, 307
 Louis XIV 271n, 375, 376, 395
 Louvain 173
 Collegium Winckelianum 152
 Collège de Porc 155
 University 152, 155
 Lovato de' Lovati 3
 Low Countries 17–22, 35, 50, 54, 156, 161, 165, 169, 171, 176
 Lucan 190, 198
 Pharsalia 190, 198
 Luther, Martin 146, 202, 203, 228
 Lutheranism 29, 75, 194, 202, 203, 228, 328, 341

 Machiavelli, Niccolò 9, 16, 65, 170, 282, 283, 408, 409, 412
 Machiavellianism 55, 173, 282, 330, 410
 Il principe 282, 330, 406, 408
 Maecenas, Gaius 5
 Magdeburg, Sack of 113–114, 116
 Manutius, Aldus 189
 Marck, William de la, Count of Lumey 118, 121
 Maria Theresa 385–386, 390, 395, 396, 415
 Mariana, Juan de 170
 De rege et regis institutione 170
 Marino, Giambattista 291n
 Adone 291n
 Marlowe, Christopher 37, 235
 Doctor Faustus 37, 235
 Marsilius of Padua 52, 65
 Defensor Pacis 52, 65
 Martinitz, Georg Adam, Count of 166, 167
 Martinitz, Jaroslav Bořita of 167

- martyr, martyrdom 5, 7, 10, 12, 37, 116, 125,
 126, 127, 135–151, 160, 162, 163, 175, 179,
 184, 205–215, 297, 301, 335
 martyrology 135, 339
 Mary 103, 127, 186, 190
 Mary Stuart 12, 33, 83, 136, 150, 239, 253, 280,
 335–338, 340, 358
 Massinger, Philip 111
 The Renegado 111
 master 47, 48, 52, 53, 56
 Mattheson, Johann 31
 Der vollkommende Kapellmeister 31
 Matthias 167
 Maurits 45, 55, 65–67, 121
 Maximianus 156
 Maximilian of Bavaria 171
 Maximilian I 103, 159
 melancholy 9, 33, 178, 250
 memory 120, 121, 297, 300, 404
 Merle, Matthieu 121
 Messalina 36, 61, 62, 64
 messenger's speech 101, 105, 124, 126, 146,
 199, 212, 334
metanoia 110
 Metastasio, Pietro 388, 390
 Giuseppe riconosciuto 390, 392
 migration
 of empire 364
 of genre 341–343
 Milton, John 9n, 51, 356
 Paradise Lost 235
 Samson Agonistes 75
mise en abîme 103
 moderation 90, 110, 112, 168, 176, 339, 357,
 365
 Molière 315, 375, 388, 394
 Mommaert, Jan 20n, 33
 Montaigne, Michel Eyquem de 27, 196, 295
 Essais 27
 Monteverdi, Claudio 28
 Montgaillard, Bernardus de 167
 morality 5, 11, 159, 180, 223, 255, 330, 341,
 387
 morality play 4, 14, 16, 8, 139
 More, John 139, 142
 More, Thomas 5, 137, 138–139, 146, 156, 177,
 178, 179
 Utopia 11
 Moscow 16, 399n
 Munday, Anthony 138, 150n
 The Englishe Romayne Lyfe 150n
 Münnich, Burchard von 409, 414, 415
 Muratori, Ludovico Antonio 383, 386
 Musius, Cornelius 118
 Mussato, Albertino 3, 4, 5, 158, 159
 Ecerinis 3, 14, 15
 mythology 12, 35

 nationalism 118, 347
 Naudé, Gabriel 417
 necromancy 190
 Nempaeus, Hieronymus 152
 neo-classicism 34
 Neology 382
 Nero 148, 203, 204
 Netherlands, Spanish 10
 Neukirch, Benjamin 374
 Neumayr, Franz 388, 392, 393, 396, 398
 Idea poeseos 392n, 393
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 30, 294, 300
 Normandy 297

 Oath of Allegiance 136
 Oath of Succession 136
 Odonellus, Albertus Hugonus 174n
 Oldenbarnevelt, Johan van 36, 65, 66, 67, 82,
 107n, 109, 362
 Opitz, Martin 322, 327, 329, 331, 342, 400
 Weltliche Poemata 331
 Opmeer, Petrus 118
 Historia martyrum Batavicornum 118
oratorio libretto 390
 Orta, Garcia da 27
 Colloquios dos Simples e drogas da India
 27
 orthodoxy 66, 82, 165, 166, 168, 171, 244, 362,
 372
 Ottokar 156, 176
 Oudaen, Joachim 10n, 365
 Haagsche Broeder-moort 10n
 Ovid 231, 248, 253, 350, 367
 Metamorphoses 231, 245, 248n, 350
 Oxford 14, 135, 239, 242, 245, 249, 254
 Christ Church 242, 245, 247
 St. Mary's Church 239

 Padbrue, Thymen Cornelisz. 109
 Padua 5

- palimpsest, theatrical 202
- Pallavicino, Pietro Sforza 206
Ermenegildo martire 206, 207n
- paradox 30, 32, 33, 66, 178, 179, 213, 214, 240, 369, 401, 424
- Pareus, David 8, 204
A Commentary upon the Divine Revelation 8, 192n, 204n
- Parliamentarians 54, 55
- parricide, *parricidium* 53, 54, 315
- passions *see* affects
- pater familias*, father 47, 50, 52, 54, 55, 64
- pathos* 216, 387
- Paul (apostle) 87, 95, 227
- Paul (pope) 148
- Pauw, Reinier 67
- Pels, Andries 17
- Pepin of Herstal 163
- performance 4, 13, 14, 25, 63, 96, 104, 105, 117, 120, 125, 137, 146, 147, 158, 182, 202, 209, 241, 243, 244, 245, 253, 263, 264, 274–281, 287, 289, 299, 315, 371, 396, 398, 404
- peripeteia* 306, 313, 417, 428
- Perrault 381
- persona* 240, 276, 283, 400
- personage 158
- Peter the Great 264n, 411
- Petersburg 398, 403, 408, 413, 420
- Philip II 49, 54, 369
- Philip IV 281n
- Philip of Macedon 209
- Philistines 76, 77, 81, 91, 92, 96, 97, 101
- Philostratus 186n, 187, 188
Life of Apollonius 186n, 187, 188n, 189, 212, 214
- Phrynicus 208, 210
Capture of Miletus 209
- Piccolomini, Alessandro 207
- Pickelhering/Peeckelhaeringh 321, 322
- Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni 189
- Pio Rossi, Don 276, 287, 290n
Convito morale 276n, 287n
- pity 186, 205, 207, 209, 223, 233, 268, 301, 305, 311, 314, 315, 331, 420, 421, 424, 425
- Plakkaat van Verlatinghe 49, 51
- Plato 24
 (Ps. Plato) *Minos* 208
Protagoras 222
- playhouse 263, 264, 270, 292, 303
- Plemp, Cornelisz. Thymansz. 109
- Plemp, Cornelis Gijbsbertsz. 123
- Plutarch 208
Life of Theseus 208
- poetics of empire 348–353, 371
- Pole, Reginald 136, 140n
- polis* 363, 368, 369, 370
- politics *passim*
- Polnoe sobranie vsekh sochinenii* 401
- Polycarp 149
- Polyneices 2
- Porée, Charles 388, 392
Theatrum sitne vel esse possit schola informandis moribus idonea 388n
- Postlapsarian 227, 228, 229
- power *passim*
- Prague 19, 136, 163n, 167
 Clementinum 254
- Prince, Samuel de 45n, 49
- Prokopovich, Feofan 404
De arte poetica 404
- propaganda 55, 140, 148, 204
- proselytization 12, 183
- prosopopoeia* 92, 103, 116
- protagonist 1, 9, 15, 29, 33, 112, 138, 160, 166, 222, 223, 224, 226, 314, 356, 406
- providence 12, 83, 100, 114, 167, 308, 313, 314
- prudence, *prudencia* 11, 158, 168, 171n, 173, 174–180, 209, 307, 419
- prudencia see* prudence
- Prussia 376, 385, 415
- Prynne, William 182
Histrio-mastix 182
- public sphere 23n, 26, 38, 289–291
- punishment 11, 45, 55, 67, 84, 85, 88, 89, 95, 114, 147, 161, 206, 224, 251, 256, 297, 301, 329, 334, 415, 420
- Puritans 13, 14, 182, 239, 242, 243, 246, 337
- Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* 381
- Quintilian 92, 173
Institutio oratoria 92n
- Racine, Jean 36, 304, 305, 306, 310–312, 313, 314, 315, 375, 380, 388, 389, 392
Bajazet 305
Bérénice 310, 312
Britannicus 310–312
Phèdre 304

- Rainolds, John 242, 243
Th'Overthrow of Stage Playes 242, 243
- Raleigh, Walter 229
- Rancière, Jacques 22–26
- Ratallerus, Georgius 158–159
- Ratio studiorum* 137, 183, 243, 387
- Ravenscroft, Edward 345, 353, 371
Titus Andronicus 345, 347, 350, 351, 356, 358
- Realpolitik* 83, 100, 251
- reason 6, 7, 9, 34, 66, 85, 89, 99, 363, 382
- recognition *see anagnorisis*
- rederijkers, rhetoricians 75, 117, 162
- reenactment 34, 167, 295–299, 402, 422, 425, 426
- Reformation 9, 12, 34, 64, 118, 123, 135, 143, 146, 201, 204, 242, 244, 352
- Regicide 294
- Rembrandt 34, 35, 105
- Remonstrant 45, 49, 55, 106, 107, 108
- representation 12, 24, 26, 36, 37, 113, 117, 118, 120, 153, 156, 159, 176n, 177, 178, 183, 186–200, 216, 244, 262, 269, 275, 280, 283, 296, 297, 302, 349, 394, 399, 405, 406, 417
- respublica literarum* 321
- revenge or *vindicatio, ultio* 1, 2, 7, 22, 72, 81, 84–91, 96, 97, 99, 106, 190, 202, 215, 230, 296, 338, 344, 348, 349, 365
- Revenger's Tragedy* 349
- Rey* 324
- rhetoric 15, 32, 92, 123, 126, 247, 252, 253–259, 331, 391
- Rhodius, Theodorus 75, 332n
Saul 332n
Simson 75
- Ribera, Francisco 203
- Richelieu 23, 302, 307, 417
- Ridley 135
- Riener, Johannes 336, 340, 341
Der Regenten Bester Hoff=Meister 340
Von Staats Eiffer 336
- Rinuccino, Alemano 189
- Ritterakademie* 376, 384
- Rivet, André 99, 100
- Robortello, Francesco 4
- Rodriguez, Emmanuel 155
- Roffensis* 147–150
- romance 163, 187, 229, 230, 231, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238
- Rome
Accademia dell'Arcadia 374
Collegio Romano 183, 184, 185, 205, 206, 212, 214
 English College 135–150
- Roper, Margaret 139
- Roper, William 139
- Rotrou, Jean de 20
La Bélisaire 20, 303
- Roulerius, Adrianus 161
Maria Stuarta 161
- Rudolf I 156, 160, 176, 179
- Rudolf II 254
- rulership 10, 26
- Russia 7, 16, 31, 264n, 398–428
- Saavedra Fajardo, Diego de 410–411, 412, 413
Idea de un príncipe político cristiano 410
- Sachs, Hans 75, 159, 332
Tragedi König Sauls 332
Tragedia der Richter Simson 75
- Saint-Évremond 381
- Salius, Panagius 161
Nassovius 161
- Salmasius, Claudius 337
Defensio Regia pro Carolo I 337
- Samson 75–102
- Sander, Nicholas 140n
De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani 140n
- Sarpi, Paolo 283
- Sassenus, Petrus 152
- Saturninus, Lucius Appuleius 69, 350, 356, 358, 363, 366
- Saul 61, 160, 326–327, 329–332
- Scaffold 141, 142, 178, 294–315, 415, 420
- Scaliger, Julius Caesar 353, 380, 413
- Schlegel, Johann Elias 403
Canut 403
Hermann 403
- Schmalkaldic League 114
- Schönbrunn, Friedrich Karl von 383n
- school drama 152, 160n, 374, 386, 387
- Schottenius, Henricus 159
- Scribanius, Carolus 172
Politico-Christianus 172
- Scudéry, Georges de 303
- Sechel, George 196

- security 106, 166, 171, 339, 340
Selectæ Patrum Societatis Jesu Tragoediae
 182n, 185n
 Seneca, Lucius Annaeus 2, 3, 15, 16, 32, 35,
 77, 92, 157, 158, 159, 162, 183, 202, 215, 253,
 256, 296, 310, 315, 326, 327, 348, 388
 Agamemnon 326
 De clementia 307
 Hippolytus 164
 Hercules Oetaeus 12, 207
 Medea 190
 (Ps. Sen.) *Octavia* 159
 Oedipus 198
 Thyestes 326
 Troades 329
senex 11, 165, 166, 168, 174, 249, 250
sententia 165, 251, 354
 Shakespeare, William 10, 11, 12, 15, 25, 69,
 112, 113, 138, 153, 225, 234–238, 294, 321,
 344–372, 426
 Hamlet 10, 11, 25, 29, 427
 Henry IV, Part 2 235n
 Macbeth 226, 235–238
 The Merchant of Venice 80n, 221n
 Titus Andronicus 8n, 69, 296, 344–372
 The Winter's Tale 238
 Shaw, George Bernard 258
 Shaw, Ralph 252, 255
 Sidney, Philip 6, 242, 246n
 Apology for Poetry 6n
Siglo de Oro 261, 266
 Silesian School, Second 29, 320, 374
 Silius, Gaius 62, 63
 Simon Magus 203
simulatio *see* deception
Sir Thomas More 137, 138, 150
 skepticism 9
 slavery 46–48, 91
societas gentium 83
 Socinus, Faustus 194
 Socrates 208, 221, 222, 223
 Sophocles 1, 4, 12, 25, 35, 44, 159, 210, 245n,
 315
 Antigone 25
 Electra 4, 326
 Southwell 146
 Sovereign, sovereignty 6, 7, 16, 36, 37, 47–48,
 51, 55, 66, 67, 83, 86–87, 97, 99, 105n,
 129n, 144, 228, 235, 261–264, 269, 274,
 277, 280–281, 283, 287, 289, 293, 302,
 303, 307–308, 309, 310, 312, 334, 336, 341,
 348, 357, 367, 400, 401, 412, 416
 Spain 10, 148, 169, 176, 265, 349, 364, 369, 379
 Spangenberg, Wolfhart 332
 Saul 332
 spectator *see* audience
speculum/Spiegel, *see also Fürstenspiegel*
 253, 329, 331
 Spenser, Edmund 226–234, 235
 The Faerie Queene 226–234
 Spinola, Ambrogio 169, 177
 Spinoza, Spinozism 9, 16
sprezzatura 276n, 282, 283n
 St. Omer 136, 137
Staatsräson, ragion di stato, reason of state
 262, 330, 410
 Stapleton 139, 149
 Vita Thomae mori 139n, 149
 Stefonio, Bernardino 7, 159, 164, 183, 184–216
 Crispus 160n, 164, 184
 Flavia 7, 184–216
 Santa Symphorosa 184
 Stoicism 9
 Strasbourg 75, 247
 Academy 159, 178
 strolling players 18, 36
Studienordnung 385
 Sturm, Johannes 242
 Suárez, Francisco 170
 Suetonius 186n
 Life of Domitian 186n
 Sumarokov, Aleksandr 7, 16, 25, 398–428
 Khorev 25, 399–428
 Polnoe sobranie vsekh 401n, 417n, 427
 Symmachus 165, 166, 167
 Syria 1, 187

 Tacitus 55, 348, 360, 361, 364
 Taille, Jean de la 160, 161n
 Tatishchev, Vasilii 404, 405, 406, 408, 409,
 418, 421
 History of Russia 405n, 406, 423n
 terror 1, 3, 15, 209, 268, 305, 314, 315, 419, 424
 Tesselschade, Maria 109
 Thamera 69, 357, 366
 The Hague 15
 theater metaphor 289
theatrum mundi 285n

- theology
 and drama 3, 8, 243
 political 8, 9, 38, 101
 Thomas Aquinas 66, 313n
Thomas Cantuariensis 137, 143–147, 150
Thomas Morus 137–143, 148, 149, 150
 Tiber 58, 59
 Tiberius 187
 Tilney, Edmund 137
 Tirso de Molina 266
 Cómo han de ser los amigos 266
 tolerance 86, 112, 171
 torture 7, 9, 45–49, 52–56, 66–68, 73, 74, 118,
 123, 135, 186, 196, 211, 256, 326, 418
 Tournour, Cyril 296
 tradition 11, 12, 48, 83, 117, 157–168, 173, 303,
 319, 322, 332, 343, 387, 399n
 classical 4, 382
tragedia di lieto fine 268
 tragedy *passim*
 tragicomedy, tragi-comédie 3, 21, 162, 267,
 302, 306, 315
 transformation 8, 147, 157–168, 228, 272, 325,
 328, 339, 381
translatio imperii 59, 348–353, 355
 transubstantiation 194, 197
Trauerarbeit 104
Trauerspiel 1, 12, 29, 37, 62, 112, 123, 128, 179,
 212, 319–343, 354, 399n, 400, 425
 Trissino, Gian Giorgio 3
 Sophonisba 3
 Trotti, Jacques-Joachim 407
 Troy 33n, 106, 123, 131, 348
 Truce, Twelve Years' 163, 169, 349
 truth 7, 12, 14, 24, 101, 239–259, 282, 338, 404,
 413
 Tucci, Stefano 183
 Christus iudex 183
 tyrannicide 170, 172, 180, 209
 tyranny, tyrant 6, 7, 13, 15, 37, 49, 50, 94, 100,
 178, 205–215, 248–253, 266, 269, 270,
 282, 303, 304, 330, 350, 357, 358, 364,
 365, 424
ultio see revenge
 unities of time, action and place 1, 35, 36, 69,
 304, 327, 353, 380, 383, 389, 390, 401
 university 5, 10, 14, 152, 155, 182, 241–259, 261,
 322, 383n, 385
 Valladolid 10
 Venice 261
 Accademia degli Incogniti 261, 263n
 Verardi, Carlo 159
 Historia Baetica 159
Verfremdungseffekt see *distanciation*
 verisimilitude 300, 304, 387
veritas 241, 246, 258
 vernacular language(s) 1, 4, 11, 19, 25, 37, 38,
 153, 154, 157, 160, 161, 162n, 234, 242, 320,
 321, 342, 373, 374, 392, 395
vernünftigen Tadlerinnen, Die 378
 Vernulaeus, Nicolaus 10, 11, 15, 152–180
 Conradinus 174–175
 Fritlandus 151n
 Gorcomiensis 162, 167
 Henricus octavus 177
 Hermenigildus 164–165, 168
 Institutiones morales 169–170
 Institutiones oeconomicae 170n
 Institutiones politicae 157, 158, 168, 170n,
 171n, 172–173, 175, 176n, 178n
 Jeanne d'Arc 153n
 Lambertus 162, 163
 Ottocarus 154n, 168, 176, 177, 178n, 179
 Theodoricus 25, 164, 165–166, 167–168,
 174
 Virtutes augustissimae gentis Austriacae
 169n
 Verstegan, Richard 123
 Theatrum crudelitatum hereticorum nostri
 temporis 123
 Vespasian 190, 191, 207, 210
 Victorinus 192
 Vienna 155, 160, 163n, 182, 384, 385, 390
vindicatio see revenge
 violence 1, 2, 7, 9, 16, 34, 43, 45, 69, 87,
 118, 123, 127, 148, 158, 208, 231, 271,
 275, 296, 303, 333, 334, 352, 354, 398–
 428
 Virdung, Michael 332n
 Saulus 332n
 Virgil 106
 Aeneid 33n, 106, 129, 198
 Visscher, Claes Jansz. 117
 Vitoria, Francisco de 170
 Volkov 398
 Volynskii, Artemii 400, 411, 412, 413,
 416

- Vondel, Joost van den
Batavische gebroeders 60n, 82n, 83
Constantiniad 108
Gebroeders 61, 112, 325–334
Grotius' Testament 84, 100n, 110
Gysbreght van Aemstel 15, 25, 33, 82, 103–131, 367, 369
Jeptha 82, 83
Joseph in Dothan 110
Joseph in Egypten 110
'Klaghte' 103
'Kruisberg' 104n, 116
Maeghden 109
'Maeghdeburgh's Liickoffer' 114, 115n, 127n
Maria Stuart 83, 334–340
Noah 82
Palamedes 36, 109
Peter en Pauwels 109
'Roskam' 109
Samson 75–101
Silius en Messalina 51, 62
Zungchin 82
- Vos, Jan 13, 15, 35, 36, 43, 344
Aran en Titus 43, 68, 73, 344–371
- Vossius, Gerardus Johannes 81, 83, 107, 126, 326, 327, 330
Poeticae institutiones 35
- vraisemblance* 35
- Wachtendorf, Petrus 117
- Wallenstein 156
- Walsingham 149
- War, Eighty Years' 155
- War, Seven Years' 385
- War, Thirty Years' 12, 15, 113, 150, 166, 167, 335, 341, 349, 350
- Wars of Religion 9, 197, 300
- Wars of the Roses 295
- Webster, John 221, 256, 296
The Duchess of Malfi 221
- Weichmann, Christian Friedrich 374
- Weisbach, Werner 28
- Weitenauer, Ignaz 387, 389, 393, 394, 396
- Wickevort, Joachim de 111
- will, free 207, 224, 228, 313n, 314n
- William II 55, 361
- William III 55
- William of Moerbeke 4
- William of Orange 161, 162
- Witt, Johan de 74
- Wolff, Christian Freiherr von 383n
- Wölfflin, Heinrich 28, 200, 216
- Wtewael, Joachim 369
De Nederlandse maagd vertrapt 369
- Wunstius, Marcus Andreas 75
Samson 75
- Xavier, Francis 185
- Zesen, Philip von 337
Der verschmähete / doch wieder erhöhete Majestäht 337
- Zevecotius, Jacobus 161
Het beleg van Leyden 161
Het ontzet van Leyden 161
- Ziegler, Hieronymus 75, 159, 160n
Cyrus maior 160n
Samson 75