Title
Productive Polemics: The Interplay Between Early Modern Anti-theatricalism and Drama

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Productive Polemics: Patterns of Interplay between Early Modern Anti-theatricalism and Drama

By

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Abstract

This study leverages three separate yet overlapping polemical debates over the licentiousness of public drama in early modern Europe to demonstrate patterns of productive interplay between anti-theatricalists and the theater industries that arose during the 16th and 17th centuries in England France, and Spain. Previous studies have demonstrated how early modern debates over the existence of public theater spaces deeply impacted contemporary drama, both because dramatists often participated in heated arguments over theater's illicit qualities and because anti-theatrical logic eventually worked its way into the plots and characters of all three regions. As will be shown, however, the impact of these disputes was rarely one-sided. Despite the logic of antagonism inherent to its polarizing viewpoints on performance, early modern anti-theatricalism often displays a variety of rhetorical, stylistic, and generic patterns driven by trends in contemporary drama. Some anti-theatricalists co-opt the theatrical concentration on visual and aural stimulation, attempting to captivate audiences through imaginative descriptions and fictional scenarios that approximate the sensory experience of spectatorship. Others pull techniques and strategies from contemporary dramatic practice. Tracing the diverse maneuvers from writers on both sides as a result of their productive polemical interplay reveals the common ground between writers of all kinds of calibers and styles, creating an analytical lens that allows us to see how arguments over drama informed the futures of both performance and polemics, as well as how such controversies helped form the unique attributes that helped characterize the early modern period.

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Introduction: The Productive Interplay of Antagonism

Polemical writing is often very performative. It has to be, as its popularity depends on its ability to turn the somewhat dull aspirations of dialectic and written controversy into an entrancing spectacle to be consumed by discerning reading audiences. It relies on the dramatization of opposition, on casting its participants as the protagonists and antagonists in a "stage[d] unequal battle between a polemical self and the polemical target vis-à-vis an anticipated audience" (Dorschel 683). Polemics inscribe moments of dispute into hyper-idealized plots, giving them more significance through the narratives they are overlaid onto than the argument at hand might warrant.

An interesting corollary to the performative nature of polemical writing is that it often looks to hold equitable debate separate. Polemical treatises, in other words, tend to present straw man arguments when voicing the side of the opposition, leaning "towards the monologic" rather than towards a true portrayal of equal rhetorical exchange (Dorschel 683). Phantom antagonists are invited on stage only as silent contributors, as characters with no lines and no agency who will be quickly overwhelmed once the action begins. The resulting drama of debate presents itself in a split narrative with competing interpretive viewpoints; both sides claim to be the hero, but each holds to narratives that are mutually exclusive from one another.

The irony is that the staged projections of separation, domination, and rhetorical superiority played out in written polemical debates do not often reflect the reality of the relationships between the opposing parties. Many polemical treatises that aim to silence opposition through a sense of surety and a hardened, unwavering stance on a given topic are also dependent on a robust tradition of productive interplay with the opposing side. In fact, in many cases polemical writing develops through moments of rhetorical, generic, aesthetic, and stylistic interaction rather than an absolutist

sense of separation between opposing viewpoints. It often participates in patterns of productive interplay and syncretism, a trend that complicates how the implicit antagonism of debate is understood in modern scholarship and that challenges logic of opposition at the foundation of polemical writing.

The question therefore arises that if the interactions between opposite sides in polemical debates are common, are they traceable? Are they predictable? Can we gauge how contributors in each controversy might affect one another throughout the process of polemical debate? Can we measure some level of the effects between parties? Moreover, do different types of interaction create varying outcomes or have diverse ripple effects? How might the specific interplay between polemical opposites affect the possibility for evolution and change for both sides in their respective futures?

This study leverages questions like these and an understanding of the necessary interaction between antagonistic forces in polemical debates to analyze a selection of controversies involving public drama in Western Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries. It sets anti-theatrical treatises written by English, French, and Spanish polemicists next to the contemporary works of well-known dramatists and dramatic theorists in each theater culture, highlighting a series of undeniable likenesses between those who wrote for the stage and those who felt compelled to attack public drama during the period that saw productions from renowned dramatists like Lope de Vega, William Shakespeare, Jean Racine, and Molière. As I will show, anti-theatricalism and drama in Western Europe during this period display a variety of moments of productive interplay. From the professional and often commercial attitudes of all writers involved to shared rhetorical strategies that permeate both polemics and drama, both sides will be shown to have engaged in an equitable exchange of ideas revolving around writing and rhetoric. Moreover, both played important roles

in shaping the future of drama and polemics in early modern Europe. Drama itself often contains characteristics taken directly from anti-theatrical sentiment, and polemics themselves often became overtly dramatic in a variety of ways. Studying these controversies through the lens of their moments of productive interplay captures the process of rhetorical maneuvering and strategizing that occurs at a point of mutual conversance between polemical adversaries. Moreover, it highlights the importance of complementary or oppositional positioning as well as cooperative, syncretic movement of polemical participants depending on the context of their interaction, underscoring important points of overlap and mutual understanding between two groups of writers often thought of in entirely different lights.

England, Spain, and France are fitting examples for this study of polemical interplay between drama and anti-theatricalism, as all three of these regions saw the resurgence of popular drama during the 16th and 17th centuries. While 15th century European drama consisted mostly of religious mystery plays, reprisals of classical drama in university settings, and one-act farces put on by travelling theater troupes, by the end of the 16th century England, France, and Spain had all developed professional theater industries and permanent edifices dedicated to public drama. All three were home to complex, unique dramatic traditions with individualized systems of aesthetics, poetics, and style that evolved continually throughout the early modern period, eventually providing opportunities for some of the most renowned authors in western literature.

More to the point of this study, the dramatic resurgences in all three regions were met with significant opposition from a variety of groups concerned with the evolution of public entertainment. Officials from cities with large theater audiences including London, Madrid, and Paris anxiously worried over the logistics of crowded theater spaces and the mixing of social classes, with each making numerous attempts to control or censor drama as it became a staple of

public entertainment. Somewhat disconnected from the municipal or logistical concerns of local or state governments, dramatic theorists engaged in sometimes heated debates over how to properly produce public facing drama in contemporary settings. Many of the most studied pieces of polemics come from these controversies, with theorists arguing over questions of genre, style, and the adherence to classical traditions like the Aristotelian unities. In yet another form of controversy, religious moralists in all three regions showed concern with the implications of drama's rising popularity, labelling public performances as schools of sin dedicated to the devil while they debate whether acting was evil by nature. Such diverse interests were reflected by the variety of positions held by early modern anti-theatricalists and dramatic theorists, with printed complaints coming from a wide array of positions and careers, including theologians, university professors, instructors of grammar, actors, dramatists, popular writers, and political activists, just to name a few.

But while studies of these polemicists have been valuable to scholars interested in drama, polemics, or early modern writing in general, their literary production is often scoffed at when compared to that of the most beloved authors from the period. The celebrated dramatists of the 16th and 17th centuries are lauded as heroes for having produced the pieces of poetic brilliance that would go on to influence western literature and culture for centuries, but writers like Stephen Gosson, William Rankins, William Prynne, José de Jesús María, Pedro de Ribadeneira, and Pierre Nicole are often depicted in scholarship as the adversaries of the great authors of the early modern period.[1] They are seen through the polemical lens placed on dramatic controversy by drama, cast

[1] For studies of English anti-theatricalists in this light, see Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (1974); Bradbrook, *The Rise of the Common Player* (1979); Hilliard, "Stephen Gosson and the Elizabethan Distrust of the Effects of Drama" (1979); Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (1985); Riggs, *Ben Jonson: a Life* (1989); Mann, *The Elizabethan Player* (1991); Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (1994); Butler, "The Condition of the Theaters in 1642" (2004); Clare, "Theater and Commonwealth" (2004); Gieskes, "Honesty and Vulgar Praise" (2005); Hill, *Anthony Munday and Civic Culture* (2009); Ghosh, "Ben Jonson and His Reader" (2013); and Fallon, *Paper Monsters: Persona and Literary Culture in*

as antagonists and obstacles in the heroes' journey of early modern performance. Written off as overzealous and radicalized, the prospect of their villainy overrides opportunities for careful study of their individual pressures, goals, and socio-historical contexts, resulting in an unavoidable sense of opposition as well as gap between anti-theatricalist writing and that of the authors and dramatists we still study in undergraduate classrooms today.

The numerous points of overlap between anti-theatricalists themselves, regardless of their culture of origin, has not helped their negative depictions in scholarship. Many engage in processes of citation, allusion, and blatant plagiarism to produce their treatises and pieces of drama. Polemicists involved in debates over public theaters in all three regions are often deeply familiar with the relevant contemporary and historical sources that discuss issues caused by popular drama, and they tend to recycle the arguments and rhetorical maneuvers from classical sources and church fathers in their own material. Almost all pieces of anti-theatricalism from the period label drama as insidious, for example, linking theater to the devil and actors to dangerous, vagabonds. Many writers portray performance as a contagious disease or anxiously worry over drama's ability to incite women to mischief. Many, too, gesture to scripture, especially *Deuteronomy,* where the biblical invective against crossdressing is used to berate theater troupes for their use of boys to play female parts, as was the case in England, or for women who take on the disguise of a young

Elizabethan England (2019). For similar studies of Spanish anti-theatricalists, see Kurtz, "The 'Agricultura Cristiana' of Juan de Pineda" (1986); Heise, "Transvestism and the Stage Controversy in Spain and England, 1580-1680" (1992); Kluge, "A Hermaphrodite? Lope de Vega and the Controversy of Tragicomedy" (2007); Braun, "Baroque Constitution and Hybrid Political Language" (2008); Parolin, "Access and Contestation: Women's Performance in Early Modern England, Italy, France, and Spain" (2012); Tigner, "The Spanish Actress's Art" (2012); and Boyle, *Unruly Women* (2014). For scholarship on French anti-theatricalism, see Hall, "Racine, Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, and the 'Querelle des "Imaginaires'" (1960) ; Hartle, "Symmetry and Irony in Racine's *Andromaque*" (1971); Battesti and Chauvet, *Tout Racine* (1999); Declercq and Rossellini, *Jean Racine 1699-1999* (2003); Forestier, *Jean Racine* (2006); Call, "Comedic Wars, Serious Moralists" (2016); Cavaillé, "'Repaître Nos Yeux de Ces Vains Spectacles"' (2016); Hammond, "'Quel funeste poison?'" (2016); Harris and Prest, "Editors' Preface: Guilty Pleasures" (2016); Semk, "Bossuet's Ticklish Subjects" (2017); and Wilton-Godberfforde, "Unmasking Falsehood" (2017).

gentleman in Continental drama. Some writers, like French moralist Pierre Nicole and English preacher Stephen Gosson, actively incite the participation of the reader in trying to convince their audiences of the truths produced by their treatises. Others, like Spain's Marco Antonio de Camos and England's Philip Stubbes, develop fictional dialogues to prove their points, many of which feature stock, straw-man apologists who are quickly overrun by anti-theatricalist logic and who eventually acknowledge the illicit nature of stage plays. Almost every critic with a published anti-theatrical treatise during the 16th and 17th centuries takes issue with theaters playing on Sabbath days, arguing that crowds should not be forced to choose between Church services or petty, frivolous amusements. Perhaps the most obvious and most impactful overlap comes in the natural inclination towards citation, as every writer covered in the chapters below will pull from the same small selection of Biblical commentators or Greek and Latin writers including Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Seneca, Cicero, Tertullian, Augustine, Salvian, and Thomas Aquinas. Anthony Munday, one of the English anti-theatrical writers to be covered in the first chapter, provides a good example: his *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* (1580) copies not one but two anti-theatrical texts to demonstrate his familiarity with anti-theatrical debates in early modern England and lend prestige to his own allegations of illicit behavior.

As a result, a large portion of academic treatments of the relationships between early modern anti-theatricalism and drama are one-sided, addressing the many controversies that arose in terms of how polemics affected contemporary performance. Many of these studies focus on the impact anti-theatrical sentiment had on individual playwrights. Ian Burrows,[2] Ranjan Ghosh,[3] Timothy Murray,[4] and George Rowe Jr.[5] all link Ben Jonson to arguments lobbed against popular

[2] Burrows, "Overhearing: Printing Parentheses and Reading Power in Ben Jonson's Sejanus" (2017).
[3] Ghosh, "Ben Jonson and His Reader: An Aesthetics of Antagonism" (2013).
[4] Murray, "From Foul Sheets to Legitimate Model" (1983)
[5] Rowe, "Ben Jonson's Quarrel with Audience and Its Renaissance Context" (1984).

drama, pointing to an intricate system of influence and convergence between one of the more renowned writers in English theaters and contemporary polemicists. Amy Wygant's study of Jean Racine's final tragedy examines the threat of poison in *Phèdre* as a mark of Racine's anxiety over the role of drama in society, tying the trope to his quarrel with Pierre Nicole years earlier.[6] Michael Call's work on Molière's *L'école des femmes* presents yet another helpful lens,[7] placing *L'école des femmes* and anti-theatrical criticism into conversation with contemporary dramatic theory, showcasing Molière's genius by pointing to his ability to write against the grain in developing his personal style of comedy.

E.K. Chambers' multi-volume work, *The Elizabethan Stage*, sets the foundation for the drama-centered approach with respect to English drama more generally, presenting anti-theatricalists as having "widespread ethical and religious tendencies," that looked to diminish the "literary vitality" of English drama (94). Chambers reads anti-theatricalism in England as a cohesive social movement, depicting critics and the theater community as two independent homogenous groups set in opposition to one another. Chambers' influence is wide reaching, and groundbreaking pieces by M.C. Bradbrook,[8] Jonas Barish,[9] and David Mann[10] all follow his lead in placing anti-theatrical polemics into a single category as they analyze the effects of polemical debate on Elizabethan and Jacobean performance. Numerous other studies of the controversy surrounding London's theater industry have built on the idea of a powerful ethical element in English anti-theatricalism, and innovative scholarship has widened the scope of focus by pressing into the individual context of polemical interactions to parse out the details of each treatise and its

[6] Wygant, "Medea, Poison, and the Epistemology of Error in Phèdre" (2000).
[7] Call, Michael. "Comedic Wars, Serious Moralists" (2016).
[8] Bradbrook, *The Rise of the Common Player* (1979).
[9] Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (1985).
[10] Mann, *The Elizabethan Player* (1991).

impact. Jennifer L. Airey's analysis of two plays from the 1660's by William Wycherly, *The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer,* is a helpful example, as it demonstrates the reach of even the earliest pieces of polemic in London and the odd power of anti-theatrical logic.[11] Her study showcases two thinly veiled apologies still looking to address arguments made by polemicists seven decades earlier, proving both that the claims made against London's theater had merit and that such worth was not enough to stop the momentum of the popular form of entertainment.

Widely speaking, Spanish theater scholarship demonstrates a similar focus on the *Comedia nueva* in its coverage of polemical debate with respect to performance. Spanish moralists' pronounced anxieties over gender have informed a substantial portion of this analysis, with many scholars leveraging anti-theatrical rhetoric to demonstrate a pattern of social disruption in performance. These connections linking women, anti-theatrical concerns, and Spanish theater have made Spain a valuable model for comparison with other contemporary theater cultures, and fruitful examinations if the specific issues involving women and drama have come from the works of Ursula K. Heise,[12] Sofie Kluge,[13] Natasha Korda,[14] Clare McManus,[15] Peter Parolin,[16] and James Stokes.[17] With respect to Spanish theater itself, Melveena McKendrick's numerous studies on the impact of women in Golden Age theater set important precedents,[18] but numerous other scholars have added to the discussion. Amy L. Tigner's analysis of Tirso de Molina's *El vergonzoso en*

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[11] Airey, "'For Fear of Learning New Language'" (2007).
[12] Heise, "Transvestism and the Stage Controversy in Spain and England, 1580-1680" (1992).
[13] Kluge, "A Hermaphrodite? Lope de Vega and the Controversy of Tragicomedy" (2007).
[14] Korda, *Labors Lost* (2011); and "Sex, Starch-Houses, and Poking Sticks" (2010).
[15] McManus, "Early Modern Women's Performance" (2007); and "Women and English Renaissance Drama" (2007).
[16] Parolin, "Access and Contestation" (2012).
[17] Stokes, "Women and Performance in Medieval and Early Modern Suffolk" (2012).
[18] McKendrick, *Woman and Society* (1974); *Identities in Crisis* (2002); "Breaking the Silence" (2004); "The *Bandolera* of Golden Age Drama" (1969); and "The '*mujer esquiva*'" (1972).

palacio[19] demonstrates how a thorough understanding of how polemicists' concerns over lascivious female displays in the *corrales* reveals an anxiety over the "disruption of patriarchal norms," highlighted by female performers, "since actresses often dressed, acted, and spoke as men, engaged in extemporaneous speech, and because female audiences responded loudly and insistently in the theater" (Tigner 167). Margaret Boyle[20] and Emilie L. Bergmann's[21] readings of Luis Vélez de Guevara's *La serrana de la Vera* similarly show the dramatist's implicit anti-theatricalism, with Bergmann's analysis of the main character, Gila, underlining his opposition to powerful, rule-breaking women, and Boyle's emphasis on the dramatist's casting of Jusepa Vaca leading to evidence of his rhetorical overlap with many contemporary moralists.

Studies of the impact of anti-theatricalism on drama also permeate French theater scholarship. John D. Lyons steps into analysis of how discussions over dramatic theory in 17th century France were driven by complaints against classical drama found in both anti-theatrical documents and treatises over how to stage plays properly during the period.[22] Joseph Harris and Julia Prest's introduction to their collection of studies on the subject[23] sets a foundation for the many studies of polemical interactions between drama and criticism that follow, highlighting anti-theatrical concerns like visual allure, pleasure without instruction, and the immorality of scenes being witnessed by the public as informing dramatic theory and practice in 17th century France. Logan Connors has also adopted this approach, using anti-theatrical arguments about the danger of watching a performance to inspect the ties between critique, dramatic theory, and audiences' psychological experiences in French theaters.[24]

[19] Tigner, "The Spanish Actress's Art" (2012).
[20] Boyle, "Women's Exemplary Violence" (2014).
[21] Bergmann, "Folklore as Queer" (2019).
[22] Lyons, "The Barbarous Ancients" (1995).
[23] Harris and Prest, "Guilty Pleasures: Theater, Piety, and Immorality in Seventeenth-Century France" (2016).
[24] Connors, Pierre Nicole, Jean-Baptiste Dubos, and the Psychological Experience of Theatrical Performance in Early Modern France" (2017).

Importantly, however, ideas of overarching anti-theatrical convergence can be misleading. Spanish anti-theatricalist Juan de Pineda's readings of St. Augustine's *Confessions* and Horace's *Ars Poetica* leads him to rail against the lack of didactic, ethically positive material in Spanish *corrales* at the end of the 16th century. A similar reading informs contemporary English writer Stephen Gosson's treatise, *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579), yet the two could not have been more different in terms of their aims, their individual life situations, or the pressures placed on them by the ever-evolving literary trends of their region. Tracing out their overlapping rhetorical roots in light of these differences therefore constitutes only a very slim lens through which to view these two writers. Their points of likeness communicate very little in terms of how Spanish drama functioned as a site of social disruption, how tragedy was received by audiences at the Globe, or how both writers each gained a level of popularity through their participation in debates over the licentiousness of popular drama.

On top of this, the various points of productive interplay between polemical writers, playwrights, and dramatic theorists in these three early modern cultures do not always signal patterns of convergence. Pierre Nicole, for example, one of the writers central to the third chapter's focus on French anti-theatricalism, will be shown taking a stance opposite his polemical rival, Jean Racine, in which he counters Racine's authorial posturing by presenting his own carefully constructed image of authorship to his audience. Nicole's calm, scholarly tone in the *Traité de la Comédie* (1667) complements Racine's comic depiction of him in an earlier polemical document, presenting a defense designed specifically to push against the strategy employed by the young dramatist. While Racine and Nicole were certainly conversant with one another, their relationship can hardly be considered convergent. Their interaction had measurable effects on each in their later careers, but their relationship afterwards tended towards separation rather than unification.

Nicole looked to capitalize through taking un-occupied conceptual territory rather than fighting Racine for position on his own terms. Understanding why their engagement with one another can be considered productive for both calls for a methodology that allows for the weight of their interaction that does not force a label of syncretism upon it.

The inherent complexities of polemical interactions like those found in Nicole and Racine's *querelle* have led some scholars to approach anti-theatricalist debates with a more positivistic sense of impact. Kent Lehnof[25] and Efterpi Mitsi[26] provide two examples, with both pushing away from questions revolving around how theatrical polemics shaped drama in their works. Both scholars analyze the works of Stephen Gosson, arguing that his use of nautical imagery and classical allusion connects him to the theaters in England in a way that underlines a strong sense of overlap between all professional writers during the period, not just dramatists. Harald E. Braun's study of Juan de Mariana[27] similarly re-focuses the spotlight on polemicists, reading the literary elements in the famous Spanish theologian's polemical writing as indications of his aims at proving his own erudite authorship. Juan de Mariana's work, according to Braun, represented more than just a treatise arguing against the presence of public drama in Spain's metropolitan centers. The author is read as having developed his writing with an aim for entertaining his readers as much to provide a compelling argument against Spanish *comedias*. Numerous other works on French anti-theatricalists Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, Pierre Nicole, and Bernard Lamy from Christopher Semk,[28] Fabien Cavaillé,[29] and Emilia Wilton-Godberfforde[30] respectively provide similar links

[25] Lehnhof, "Ships That Do Not Sail" (2014).
[26] Mitsi, "Myth and Metamorphosis in Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse" (2011).
[27] Braun, "Baroque Constitution and Hybrid Political Language" (2008).
[28] Semk, "Boussuet's Ticklish Subjects" (2017).
[29] Cavaillé, "'Repaître Nos Yeux de Ces Vains Spectacles'" (2016).
[30] Wilton-Godberfforde, "Unmasking Falsehood, the Theatrical Pattern of Revelation in Nicole and Lamy" (2017).

between poetics and polemics, with each demonstrating that the interaction between anti-theatricalists and drama created a two-way system of influence and impact.

This study takes the interactive, two-way flow of impact and influence between drama and anti-theatricalism as its starting point, acknowledging that the controversies surrounding public drama developed through patterns of interaction between anti-theatricalists and those individuals directly connected to dramatic traditions in each region. The first chapter begins this study by demonstrating how the origins of printed opposition to public drama in late 16th and 17th century England can be traced to the efforts of two professional writers whose efforts in London's performative industries complicates any purely antagonistic reading of the debate over London's theaters. The two men in question, Stephen Gosson and Anthony Munday, catalyzed the anti-theatricalist print movement in late 16th century London, with Gosson's *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579), *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), and Munday's *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* (1580) serving as three of the most impactful printed treatises in the history of English anti-theatricalism. Their works jumpstarted debates over what kinds of material should be put in front of audiences, how much of a role public theater played in the waning morals of London's increasingly commercialized society, and whether performance sparked sinful, socially transgressive behavior. As a result, almost every piece produced afterwards that discusses the illicit nature of theater spaces during the 16th and 17th century can be traced back to the two men

Neither man, however, began his career with the intention of gaining acclaim through publishing anti-theatrical tracts, and neither would have defined his success based on the impact of his anti-theatricalism. In fact, the impetus behind Gosson and Munday's first printed works came largely from London's city officials, whose commissioning of their treatises betrays their relatively passive position in debates surrounding public theaters and performance. Stephen

Gosson's trajectory towards radicalism, as well as his eventual turn to an absolutist stance against acting in his third treatise, shows how the momentum his arguments picked up was not necessarily a long-term goal for the young professional. Gosson, like many writers from the period, looked to earn a living with his rhetorical skills in any way he could, and his professional attitude landed him in direct opposition to London's theater spaces at an early point in his career. Similarly, Anthony Munday was less interested in the closure of the theaters than his treatise would have readers believe. His long career designing performative processions for the city of London and his intensely commercial attitude towards writing indicates a very different set of personal goals than those he presents in *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait.*

As I will show, the later influence Gosson and Munday's treatises would have on both anti-theatricalism and drama reveal an ongoing productive interplay between anti-theatrical sentiment and drama itself throughout the first half of the 17th century. Not only were London's anti-theatrical debates of the late 1500's and early 1600's at times incredibly dramatic, but drama from the same period capitalized on the complaints, arguments, and allegations against public spectacles that littered the many anti-theatrical treatises of the early modern period. Gosson and Munday's professional approach to writing, combined with the evolving categories linked to composition and authorship in England, meant that both writers would have significant influence on polemics drama up through the eventual closure of London's public theaters with the onset of the English Civil War. Passages from their treatises can be found not only in the writing of well-known polemicists like Philip Stubbes, John Rainolds, Thomas Heywood, and William Prynne, but also in several performative pieces and pro-theater documents from well into the 1630's, including the works of well-known dramatists like Thomas Kyd and Ben Jonson. Their significant impact on both drama and anti-theatricalism serves as a microcosm for how the productive interplay between

the two sides points to the importance of understanding the input of all professional writers during the early modern period.

The second chapter continues to highlight the productive interplay between early modern anti-theatricalists and drama by tracing out specific patterns of rhetorical overlap between Spanish moralists and contemporary *comedias.* This chapter begins by demonstrating the underlying concentration on visual and aural impact in the pieces of drama performed at Spanish *corrales,* citing three popular plays from renowned authors Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón, and Luis Velez de Guevara as examples. Spanish *comedias* in the late 1500's and early 1600's had moved away from a Thomistic sense of entertainment, exchanging an underlying emphasis on instruction for a concentration pure enjoyment and emotional stimulation through visual and verbal appeal. My analysis of Lope, Calderón, and Vélez de Guevara's dramatizations highlights two distinct strategies used to leverage visual and verbal appeal. Lope's piece depicts a main character that, despite her mastery of traditionally masculine tasks, retains a desire to find a male counterpart. His creative use of dialogue and blocking sets the women of his play apart, and the visual allure of the female characters combines with their linguistic superiority to give them color and depth as much as to dull any sense of distinction between the three main male characters. Vélez's play presents a much more controversial figure at its center, not only because of the boisterous, profane, and rude details of his heroine, Gila, but also because of his casting of a well-known, controversial actress named Jusepa Vaca. Vaca's beauty was renowned in *corrales* throughout the period, and Vélez de Guevara's choice to have such a visually captivating figure perform the transgressive central role in his *comedia* represents an altogether separate form of visual and verbal captivation than is adopted by Lope. Calderón, for his part, utilizes verbal appeal and linguistic prowess in his main character, Julia, to impress upon his audiences the allure of the *bandolera* figure. All three

showcase a concentration on sensory stimulation deeply dependent on influencing audiences through their eyes and ears.

The increased concentration on sights and sounds within the *corrales* heavily influenced the path polemical writers took in arguing for the closure of public theater spaces, and the selections of Spanish anti-theatricalism analyzed in this chapter will be shown to have capitalized on striking imagery and well-constructed turns of phrase not unlike those of the most popular *comedias* themselves. They present the dangers of public theater through imaginative scenes of sin and despair linked to the *corrales*, tapping into the same rhetorical strategies as their performative adversaries while arguing for the eradication of contemporary dramatic performances in public spaces.

What is odd, however, is that legislation involving the *corrales* does not seem to reflect the anxieties presented by anti-theatricalist attitudes towards drama. Tracing out patterns of legislation in one of Spain's dramatic centers during a period that coincided with some of the highest water marks of Spanish drama reveals a relatively unchanging set of restrictions on the city's *corrales* from their first iterations in the 1570's up through the 1640's, with little change to the laws regarding censorship, regulation, or logistics that can be tied directly to anti-theatrical publishing. The resulting gap reveals a complex situation in which the concentration on visual and verbal stimulation is present in both genres, but only demonstrably helpful in one of the two.

For the purposes of this study, such a gap points to a situation in which the interplay between drama and anti-theatricalism in Spain was productive in a unique way. As I will show, Spain's moralists seem to have picked up dramatic tendencies for similar reasons as their performative adversaries, displaying a keen interest in captivating their readers as much as persuading them. This forces us to re-evaluate the criteria for success within Spanish anti-theatrical

treatises, whose dramatic tendencies point towards a level of significance directly tied to entertainment and attraction rather than efficacy. Spanish anti-theatricalism, in other words, aimed at producing literary works for readers perhaps as much as it aimed at proving the malignance of contemporary performance.

The third and final chapter examines the written interactions between French anti-theatricalist Pierre Nicole and popular dramatist Jean Racine during a well-known anti-theatrical debate called the *querelle des imaginaires.* The feud, carried out between 1664 and 1665, began when Pierre Nicole produced a series of ten letters titled *Les Imaginaires, Ou Lettres Sur L'Hérésie Imaginaire,* as a defense against allegations of heresy aimed at a group of scholars and theologians residing at a small abbey outside of Paris, Port-Royal de Champs. The collision of the *Imaginaires* with major figures in the dramatic sphere began when Jean Desmarèts de Saint-Sorlin, a veteran member and founder of the *Académie française* responded to Nicole's *Imaginaires,* highlighting all the issues inherent to his claims of imagined heresy. Desmarèts de Saint Sorlin was not only a prominent writer and intellectual during the reign of Louis XIV, but he was also closely tied to Cardinal Mazarin and the Duke of Richelieu, arguably two of the more important figures in the literary scene in France during the 17th century. The controversy came as Nicole penned his retort to Desmarèts in 1665 in another series of eight letters titled *Les Visionnaires,* where he personally attacked the renowned writer, explicitly deriding him for his connections to poetry and drama. His attacks labelled Desmarèts, as well as all poets and dramatists like him, as *empoisonneurs publics,* public poisoners who should be ashamed of their efforts in composing vile forms of fictitious, illicit entertainment for the public, and he would famously go on to claim that all such individuals should consider themselves spiritual murderers whose actions tainted the purity of audiences and readers.

This attack on Desmarets shifted the scope and scale of the debate originally intended by Nicole, bringing on a wide range of anti-theatrical doctrines and apologies for the theater in response. One of those defenses, a letter written by renowned playwright and former student of Pierre Nicole, Jean Racine titled the *Lettre à l'Auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"* (1666), lampooned Nicole for his attacks on Desmarèts, speaking out against Nicole for both his blatantly personal assault on actors and dramatists as well as for the explicitly violent language displayed in the *Visionnaires.* Taken as just one more event in a wide-ranging battle between moralists, dramatists, and early modern French society's evolving concerns over ethical entertainment, Racine's *Lettre* has often been read as proof of his intricate involvement in the war of words that erupted around performance during this period.[31] Additionally, Racine's response came at a crucial moment in the dramatist's career, appearing in print just after his first big hit, *Alexandre le grand* (1665). As a result, the *Lettre* has been read as an important checkpoint in his rise to prominence.

Pushing back against this reading, I argue that the dispute between Nicole and Racine reflects a pattern of productive interplay between the two through a shared performance that stages their conflict for a reading audience. Evidence for this comes in many forms, one of which is that both the texts written just after the *querelle* retain their respective authors' original points, with the authors doubling down on their respective positions regarding the licentiousness of performance. While this pattern could simply reflect an impasse in the debate between the two authors and the inability of the two to reach a compromise, it also points to a non-serious attitude in aiming to reach that resolution. Their purpose is not to defeat the logic of the other writer's argument, as the

[31] For studies that approach the *querelle* from this viewpoint, see Hall, "Racine, Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, and the 'Querelle des "Imaginaires'" (1960); Hartle, "Symmetry and Irony in Racine's *Andromaque*" (1971); Cavaillé, "'Repaître Nos Yeux de Ces Vains Spectacles"' (2016); Hammond, "'Quel funeste poison?'" (2016); and Harris and Prest, "Editors' Preface: Guilty Pleasures" (2016).

dispute it is not simply a debate. While argumentation certainly plays a role in the statements made by both men, a more positivistic understanding highlights the fact that both also cultivate public interest through the narrative of controversy produced by their writing.

Because breadth of readership during this period in French history often translated to a trajectory into the upper ranks of 17th century French intellectual circles, any listener or reader interested in the *querelle des Imaginaires* was beneficial to both Racine and Nicole, regardless of that individual's feelings on the licentiousness of French theater. Both texts represent marketing ploys on the part of each author, an opportunity to demonstrate rhetorical prowess and to provide a higher chance of gaining popularity in a society enthralled by showmanship. The interaction between both authors thereby reflects a complex system of learning and adapting while within a debate, with both sides inverting or recycling ideas from the other to make their next point. Both dip into similar wells of dramatic and rhetorical strategies to perform their role as critics in the ongoing *querelle du théâtre*, with both demonstrating strategies linked to declamation, the character of the author, and emotional response. These overlapping characteristics bridge the gap between critique and performance, creating a conversation, or dialectic, of criticism. Moreover, examining the seemingly symbiotic relationship between the two writers produces a sense of the shared patterns of theatricality demonstrated by Nicole and Racine in their work.

Viewed in this light, Racine's *Lettre* reflects a conscious effort to perform the role of the author, controlling his image by performing the character of Racine in a non-serious and uncomplicated fashion. Tracing out the opposite effects, those that Racine might have had on Nicole's text, also gives a more accurate view of the way anti-theatricalist tracts are rooted in staged performance, rather than serving as a separate, oppositional, equal forces. Nicole's status as one of the more vehement voices of French anti-theatricalism is often tied to his *Traité,* a work

that would go on to affect later critics and dramatists alike in later decades. This chapter looks to show that the *Traité* is in fact deeply indebted to Racine's work as a dramatist, drawing on the experience gained by his former pupil in crafting and putting on two of his most famous plays, *Alexandre le Grand* and *Andromaque.* The corollary is that all anti-theatricalism might be open to analysis of its theatrical, and literary roots, creating an opportunity to re-orient our conceptions of the relationships between those that worked on-stage and those that tried to eradicate those very stages from society altogether.

This study, of course, is not the first to engage in the methodology I have described above. Similar cases of productive polemical interplay have been analyzed across a range of academic fields and disciplines, with many studies emphasizing patterns of conversance, communication, and overlap that cross polemical, rhetorical, and generic divides. Sharon Weisser and Naly Thaler[32] acknowledge the conversance of polemical debates in antiquity, highlighting how the competing philosophies and bifurcation of philosophical schools of thoughts in the Hellenistic period "created a dynamic process of negotiation," that "consolidate[ed] one school's identity vis à vis the others" (Weisser and Naly 7). Citing one example among many, they point to the decades-long dispute between Stoics and Academics in the 3rd century BCE as being "so central to the consolidation of their respective epistemologies," that "Carneades is reported to have claimed that if 'Chrysippus had not existed, neither would I'" (Weisser and Naly 7). David Loewenstein's study of the polemics of 17th century English Puritanism[33] leverages the productive interplay of polemical argumentation in a slightly different manner, demonstrating that post-Revolutionary Puritans dealt with the inherent "contradictions and inconsistencies" of pre-war rhetoric by recycling some of its elements. Loewenstein reads John Milton as a node between two distinct periods of religious

[32] Weisser and Thaler, *Strategies of Polemics in Greek and Roman Philosophy* (2016).
[33] Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton* (2001).

polemics, arguing in the later parts of his study that Milton's "Political and religious radicalism" in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* represented a hybrid construction of polemical rhetoric that "emphasize[d] intersections between radical Puritan politics and spirituality during both the Revolution and the Restoration, thereby suggesting greater continuities between pre- and post-1660 radical Puritan politics, polemics, and poetry" (Loewenstein 2).

Polemical convergence is also integral to Serge D. Elie's 2004 article analyzing patterns in anthropological studies of gender roles in Islamic nations in and around the Arabian Peninsula.[34] The piece argues that much of the work done by modern anthropologists has resulted in patterns of harmful "Essentialization" of the female communities in these regions that takes away from our ability to study their concerns on an individual level (Elie 143). As Elie lays out, the "process of discursive colonization," (143) through which both Western and Eastern scholarship attempts to pin down the opposition's stereotypical depictions of women and their roles in society, often comes at the expense of studying the everyday issues plaguing the diverse sets of female communities in their individual contexts. The two poles attempt to confront and defeat the narratives produced by each other, but the result is a complex overlap of ideas and strategies with little difference in overall outcome for the women in question. Similar studies can be traced out of numerous other pieces of polemical writing, from 20th century political manifestos from Canada and the northern United States,[35] discussions of the polemical debates around American influence on female populations in Weimar Germany,[36] to debates over Hegel's role in the works of Georges Bataille and Jacques Derrida,[37] and various other fields of scholarship.

[34] Elie, "The Harem Syndrome" (2004).
[35] See Hasenbank and Ua "Canadian Manifestos" (2017).
[36] See Wipplinger, "Syncopating the Mass Ornament" (2017).
[37] See Potestà and Anderson, "When Negativity Runs the Risk of Meaning" (2015).

What the specific polemical interactions analyzed below will highlight is that early modern anti-theatricalists often had more in common with the prominent authors of the period than their villainous portrayal in the history of theater scholarship communicates. These polemical writers participated in complex, often symbiotic interchanges of information and personnel with the burgeoning performance industries in each region. Anti-theatrical writers were often educated at the same schools as our most beloved authors, they grew up studying the same church fathers, pieces of scripture, and classical sources common to the humanist educational systems that thrived in all three cultures. Perhaps more importantly, they approached the task of writing and the role of authorship in similar fashions, producing their treatises in the same print economies that appeared and gained momentum during 16th century in Europe. They were made up of a diverse set of individuals whose historical contexts affected their writing in the same ways as the most renowned dramatists and prose writers of the period. Some anti-theatricalists instructed future dramatists of note, providing foundational training in rhetoric that can be traced into the most popular tragedies and comedies of the early modern period. Some really were religious polemicists or conservative-leaning moralists, but some of those individuals went on to become renowned dramatists and pageant writers in later life, blurring the line between support and opposition to popular drama. Many were performers themselves before publishing works against public stages, and still others, in a more extreme subset, never sat for a full-length performance from the era despite the vehemence with which they argue against the entertainments of their time. Just as the most hated figures of early modern European theater were realized by the skilled, innocent men and women who played them on stage, so too were anti-theatricalists driven by a complex set of socio-historical contexts that separates them from their perceived villainy. Their personal interests, literary skills, and professional aspirations complicate the stories of their antagonism, and tracing

out the interplay between dramatists and anti-theatricalists helps levels the difference between writers labelled as either literary geniuses or popularist journeymen. Knowing the individual details behind each anti-theatricalist's aims, pressures, and styles provides productive insight into the complex web of interaction between theaters, actors, polemicists, and dramatists in all three traditions, giving a better sense of the relationships between early modern writers in all situations.

Chapter 1: Unexpected Origins: The Lasting Impacts of Stephen Gosson and Anthony Munday

This first chapter begins the study of polemical interplay between anti-theatricalists and drama by looking into how the professionalization of writing in England during the late 16th and early 17th century contributed to the rise of anti-theatricalism itself. This is in part because, by the 1570's, the term "writer" meant something substantially different than it did only a few decades earlier. In the early part of Elizabeth I's reign, almost all literary writing during the period could be considered what Richard Helgerson calls "amateur" (Helgerson 193). Helgerson's term "amateur" does not reflect a sense of the skill of these writers, but rather the acceptable level of time and effort one might spend on literary composition in early modern English society. In this period there were almost no careers in writing, but rather a small, select group of individuals whose compositions either depended on patronage from elites, or who were members of the aristocracy themselves. Writing was considered a process of individual exploration, emotional expression, or historical study, and while it was seen as having some individual benefits, it was valued only when placed in proper proportion to one's other activities (Helgerson 193).

Early 16th century poet Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) serves as an example of the type of amateur authorship common to the period. An important figure in British literature, Wyatt is most often remembered for his work translating the Petrarchan sonnet tradition into English poetics, among other things. Even though much of his historical significance comes from his connections to poetry and literature, however, Wyatt was not seen by his contemporaries as a poet. He spent his working hours as an ambassador and diplomat for Henry VIII, even becoming so critical to the implementation of the monarch's foreign policy as to be sent with the Earl of Bedford John Russel

on the trip to petition the Pope for the annulment of the King's marriage to Catherine of Aragon (Chisholm).

Sir Phillip Sidney (1554-1586) demonstrates a similar trend: Sidney is celebrated for his prose fiction and poetry today, having authored *The Arcadia*, the first sonnet sequence in English, *Astrophel and Stella,* as well as one of the classics of literary theory from the period, the *Defense of Poesy*. Like Wyatt, though he never earned his living as a writer. Not only was his composition kept separate from his role as a landed aristocrat, state bureaucrat and soldier, but Phillip Sidney was the son of Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy of Ireland, and Lady Mary Dudley, daughter of the powerful Duke of Northumberland and a lady in waiting to Elizabeth I. His income, social status, and his day-to-day public life had little to do with his work as a writer. Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618) represents another example among Sidney's contemporaries: global explorer, courtier, and rumored lover of Queen Elizabeth, Raleigh is justly famous for both his worldly exploits and his poetry. He used his pen to write powerful love poetry for Elizabeth, flattering the queen to establish a personal connection on top of his political ones, yet he never would have considered himself a professional writer. As these three examples show, writers from earlier in the 16th century produced their works in their spare time, taking care not to be seen as depending on their compositions for economic gain. Their roles as author might add substance to their reputations, even enhance their political connections—but they did not contribute to their livelihoods in any important way.

By the late 1500's however, a combination of factors led to a change in circumstances for writers. The evolving print culture brought about by increasing availability of the materials needed for a large-scale print industry in London created an opportunity for productive, professional writing. That same availability of published material helped improve literacy rates, creating an educated middle-class and opening opportunities for journeyman writers to make a living

producing English translations, scriptural or social commentaries, and a wide assortment of pamphlet literature. The burgeoning theater business in London, resulting in many purpose-built performance spaces, added opportunities to write for the city's new stages. Writing became an industry rather than a pastime, providing England's working class with new opportunities for financial and social success.

Samuel Fallon points to Robert Greene (1558-1592) as one of the first English professional writers, authoring more than two dozen prose works published between 1583 and 1592,[38] along with the variety of romances, plays, and pamphlets also bearing the writer's name. Greene was born to a middle-class family most likely in Norwich, the son of either a saddler or a shoemaker, who attained his education at Cambridge only because of available financial support (Newcomb). Likewise, Thomas Kyd (1558-1594), a playwright whose *Spanish Tragedy* influenced later revenge dramas such as *Hamlet* and *The Duchess of Malfi,* came from relatively humble origins. The son of a scrivener, Kyd, like his father, spent much of his life providing himself an income with his pen, writing for the stage until his death. In fact, many Elizabethan and Jacobean authors share middle-class origins. Thomas Nashe (1567-1601), an accomplished pamphleteer and pageant writer, came from a family of curates. Christopher Marlowe, the author of *Tamburlaine* and *Doctor Faustus*, one of the more influential dramatists of the late 16th century, was the son of a shoemaker. Thomas Dekker, another well-known dramatist, clearly came from a somewhat poor background, as we have no records relating to his childhood other than the fact that his Latin translations point to some training in grammar school. Even Shakespeare himself was the son of a Stratford glove maker who also served as a local magistrate; making good through his writing, Shakespeare was able to purchase a coat of arms for his family in his retirement. Writing was thus no longer simply

[38] Fallon, *Paper Monsters: Persona and Literary Culture in Elizabethan England* (2019).

a luxurious hobby for the aristocracy by the later decades of the 16th century. Amateur poets who wrote to entertain themselves, make emotional or political connections, and test their literary acumen still existed, but their presence coincided with the new group of professional writers whose livelihood depended wholly on their writing. While the cultivation of London's print industry in the 16th century is often seen as a major influence of the rise of professional drama (Gieskes 76), it is only a piece of the wider professionalization of writing taking place in England throughout 16th century (Gieskes 76).

Understanding professionalization in the context of the productive interplay between anti-theatricalism and drama is critical in two ways. First, it allows for a broadening of the characterization of early modern English anti-theatricalists in current scholarship. Anti-theatricalism has often been depicted as the result of a progressively more zealous Puritan population in and around London during the 16th and 17th centuries, with scholars grouping moderately moralistic writers like Stephen Gosson, Anthony Munday, Philip Stubbes, and Henry Crosse with much more vehement opposition of the kind demonstrated by William Prynne in the 1630's. Renowned English theater scholar M.C. Bradbrook's pathbreaking work from the 1960's provides an example of this trend,[39] plotting all anti-theatrical writers into an easily manageable, chronological narrative. Bradbrook overwrites the individual contexts of each polemicist studied, smoothing over difference and variance to produce a sense of a seamless, interconnected group of writers all concerned with eliminating stage plays from London for religious reasons. Seen through this lens, English anti-theatricalism takes the form of both a moral and a socio-political movement. It is initiated by the sermons preached by John Northbrook and John Stockwood in the late 1570's, sees its first printed pamphlets with Stephen Gosson in 1579, and is continued by Anthony

[39] Bradbrook, *Rise of the Common Player* (1979).

Munday, who picks up the torch with *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* in 1580. Gosson doubles down on his own arguments later that same year in *Plays Confuted in Five Actions,* and the next checkpoint is Philip Stubbes' *Anatomie of Abuses* in 1583, before William Rankins *The Mirrour of Monsters* in 1587, Henry Crosse's *Vertues' Commonwealth* in 1603, and the anonymous I.G. in 1615 with the *Refutation of the Apologie for Actors.* All theater criticism is then bookended and summed up in William Prynne's overheated *Histriomastix* in 1633, before the eventual close of the public theaters in London in the early 1640's at the start of the Civil War.

While Bradbrook's grouping and others like it allow us to see wider trends in the argumentation produced by English anti-theatricalists, understanding these writers through the lens of professional writing means acknowledging that many of the authors of anti-theatrical texts were writers first and anti-theatricalists second. Their writing may demonstrate connections with other polemicists, but the individual pressures on each and the details behind their successes or failures as professional writers ironically place them more in line with the dramatists they attacked than with a homogenous pool of zealous moralists. Professional attitudes like those taken by many of London's successful dramatists can be found in many of the authors who published anti-theatrical tracts from the 1580's through the closure of the theaters in 1642.

Stephen Gosson and Anthony Munday, the two anti-theatricalists at the center of this chapter, fit this model especially. Gosson's professionalism would lead him to a career at the pulpit, while Anthony Munday developed into one of the more productive creators of London's many civic pageants in the early 1600's, outdoor dramatic processions that celebrated the sovereign, the city itself, or newly appointed magistrates, and that involved the public at large. Munday was one of many well-known writers called upon to produce narratives such pageants (Bergeron 3), writing for London's city celebrations for four decades after his anti-theatrical

treatise was published in 1580. Just like many of the dramatists who made a living producing the plots that appeared on stage, Gosson and Munday capitalized on professional opportunities offered to them, beginning their careers as best they could given their individual circumstances. Like Dekker, Kyd, Shakespeare, Nashe, and many others, they produced writing that paid, whether from pre-arranged commissions or from a piece becoming popular with the public. Their place in the history of English anti-theatricalist writing cannot be understood without breaking down the logic of antagonism at the heart of their polemical treatises, a process that reveals the rhetorical conversance of writers from a wide variety of genres and styles.

Second, while their anti-theatrical tracts were most certainly the result of a serious interaction with the anxieties of London's city officials over the power of public stages, neither Gosson's nor Munday's tracts should be treated as a direct reflection of their personal attitudes towards stage plays and public theaters. Their aims at authorial acclaim overrode their individual outlooks, just as the push to captivate audiences outweighed the need to present a true and honest depiction of contemporary dramatic practice. The aim of producing and retaining a readership often meant valuing entertainment over candid expression of opinion, and the professional writers employed to produce anti-theatrical treatises leveraged a wide variety of captivating strategies readers to keep readers coming back for more. Gosson and Munday attempted to "[render] the emergent institution of the theater intelligible," in their treatises, but they did not necessarily "provide 'objective' accounts or descriptions of how the Renaissance public theaters functioned" (Howard 22).

As such, we will consider the two anti-theatricalists at the center of this study as professionals first and moralists second, arguing that English anti-theatricalism sprang from the disparate commercial interests of two young writers, both of whom used the opportunity to provide

themselves with a better social and financial situation in the years following their polemical treatises. This trend is very much in keeping with the professional attitudes of many kinds of writers during the 16th and 17th centuries, proving a general rhetorical conversance that levels the interpretive filed and allows us to consider names like Gosson and Munday next to more renowned ones like Jonson, Kyd, Shakespeare, and many others.

Paid Positions I: Stephen Gosson and Commissioning *The Schoole of Abuse*

Stephen Gosson, the son of a jointer and grocer, was born in Canterbury in 1554. From age fourteen to eighteen, he studied at the local cathedral school, after which he received financial support to attend Oxford's Corpus Christi College. His education at Oxford was cut short by the end of that aid, resulting in his early exit from university without completing his degree. After a few years struggling as a poet and a dramatist in London's competitive literary scene, he took a commission to write *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579), a tract that became one of the most influential texts in English anti-theatricalism. This piece marked Gosson's first taste of authorial success, and shortly after he took on a position as a tutor with a wealthy family outside of London, continuing his polemical writing with *An Apology for the Schoole of Abuse* (1579) and *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582). These anti-theatrical treatises would later help him gain acclaim as a rhetorician and orator. William Ringler's foundational study on Gosson aptly summarizes the wide reach of Gosson's pamphlets in the late 16th and early 17th century:

> Gosson's writing continued for more than fifty years to influence other opponents of the stage by providing them with arguments and illustrative materials. In 1580, the year after Gosson entered the controversy, Anglo-phile Eutheo (i.e. Anthony Munday) in his *Second*

> *and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters* praised *The Schoole of Abuse* as "the first blast" against the stage and repeated some of its arguments. Three years later Philip Stubbes drew fully a third of his essay against the theater, printed in his *Anatomy of Abuses,* word for word from *Playes Confuted.* Even in the early seventeenth century Gosson's pamphlets continued to be influential. Henry Crosse, whose *Vertues Commonwealth* appeared in 1603, devoted about a dozen pages of his book (fols. P2-Q3v) to an attack on the stage. […] An even more obvious case of borrowing is found in I.G.'s *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615), a line by line reply to the treatise that Thomas Heywood had issues three years previously. I.G. repeats Gosson's criticism of playwrights' tampering with historical truth in arranging their plots, and devoted the last part of his book (pp. 54-66) to an orderly discussion of the efficient, material, formal, and final causes of plays- the topics under which Plays Confuted was organized. (125-126)

Gosson's three treatises have often been linked to a substantial shift, and even radicalization, of English anti-theatricalism during the late 16th century. London's cultural identity had been heavily shaped over the previous century by its increased industry and commerce, and many were concerned with the drop in commercial production that came with the rise in theater attendance. Because the open-air public playhouses had no way to artificially light their stages, shows were often staged during daylight hours. Since religious proscriptions also prevented performances on Sundays, acting troupes held their biggest shows on working days. This presented an issue for many trades within the city, who in turn made moves behind the scenes to try to rein in the playhouses: "For a London artisan or his apprentice to attend the theater, therefore, meant that he had to take a full half-day off from work," (Ringler 79).

Even in the face of this growing opposition to theatrical performance, up to 1577 city officials' response was "merely regulatory, not repressive": for instance, 1574's licensing act was designed to protect audiences who attended performances (Ringler 78). One of the limits to municipal control was the theaters' location beyond the city limits, which placed them outside of the jurisdiction of London's officials and necessitated the partnership of the royal government in controlling the theaters:

> Though the Mayor and Aldermen had authority within the city itself, they could not effectively combat the players without the aid of the Queen's Privy Council, because the theaters were outside the city limits and so did not come within the city's jurisdiction, and because the royal government could circumvent the city ordinances by issuing special patents to companies of actors, or by bringing pressure upon the city authorities to give permission for playing. The only way the Mayor and Aldermen could effectively implement their legislation was to gain the assistance of the royal government, and the only way they could gain this assistance was to prove that the conditions they wished to remedy were dangerous and that public opinion desired their remedy. The best way, therefore, to control the theaters was to arouse public opinion against them. (Ringler 78)

This meant that by the end of the 1570's, the move to print was an obvious next step in fomenting public angst against public theaters. London's burgeoning print industry had developed to the point where publishing short, cheap pamphlets had become an effective means of reaching large portions of the local population, and the Mayor, Aldermen, as well as members of the Privy Council like Sir Francis Walsingham and William Cecil had already taken similar approaches to molding public

opinion by paying university professors and public preachers to adjust their lectures to support or oppose a handful of municipal issues (Ringler 26). Taking advantage of the closure of theaters caused by an outbreak of plague in 1579, the city's officials looked to re-vamp their attempts to shift public opinion through short, politically charged pamphlets. They hired Gosson to write *The School of Abuse,* the first printed anti-theatrical pamphlet of its kind. The piece's double printing alone would have marked a powerful outside influence, as few authors, let alone a poor, near starving young Gosson, would have had the capital to commission two print houses at once for a single text. On top of this, the initial order totaled around three thousand copies, somewhere around six times an ordinary print order as recorded in the Stationer's Register from the period (Ringler 26). Gosson provided a believable front for city officials who wanted to establish more control over playhouses, but who needed a figurehead to express their concerns, and anti-theatrical tracts after *The Schoole of Abuse* began to appear more often in written form than ever before, demonstrating some success on the part of the city's new strategy.

Gosson's later role in the radicalization of English anti-theatricalism also depends largely on a shift in the way actors were accounted for before and after Gosson's contributions. Before Gosson, anti-theatrical rhetoric often looked past acting itself as a source of controversy. Even though actors were by no means relished in 16th century English society, most of the earliest opposition to the presence of London's dramatic performances argued that well intentioned plays were not to be persecuted, as performance in and of itself was not the target of critique, but rather the contemporary practice of performance. The problem, in other words, lay in the lack of well-intentioned dramatists or players to be found in theaters at the time, an idea that allowed for the benefits of drama while still criticizing contemporary shows for their illicit material and the general debauchery of the crowds in attendance. Gosson's final treatise, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions,*

is often seen as having changed this dynamic, arguing that every performance was illicit, and that acting in and of itself was a diabolical profession that depended on idolatry and deceit. Such arguments do not appear in his first two treatises, and his eventual change in strategy would ripple across the polemical sub-genre, providing material for almost every anti-theatrical writer in England for the next six decades.[40]

Tracing Gosson's rhetorical and aesthetic strategies over his three anti-theatrical pieces in succession, however, reveals that his later claims about acting were not the result of a personal development towards radical views on public entertainment. Instead, Gosson's move to condemn all representation reflects the shifting circumstances of the polemical stage upon which Gosson found himself reprising the role of an anti-theatrical writer on three separate occasions. Beginning his polemical career through necessity rather than personal desire, *The Schoole of Abuse* represents Gosson's audition to the fast-paced world of early modern English publishing. Once he had established his professional status, his next two treatises, *An Apology for the Schoole of Abuse* and *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*, looked to defend the sense of authorship he had worked to cultivate. Through all three of Gosson's anti-theatrical treatises he presents himself as a skilled, university-trained rhetorician who steps into the role of the polemicist with professional ambitions, and who left behind anti-theatrical writing once he had reached some level of success. The illicit portrait of public performance he paints throughout his three publications forms a type of stage for Gosson, a space for him to prove his rhetorical athleticism in front of prospective patrons.

The relationship between Gosson and London's officials in 1579 that produced *The Schoole of Abuse,* for example, was not only good for the Mayor and Aldermen of London. It was also a godsend for the young Gosson, who had recently failed to acquire a scholarship that would

[40] Ideas from *Plays Confuted* can be found in the works of Phillip Stubbes, William Rankin, John Rainolds, Henry Crosse, John Greene, and William Prynne, among others.

have allowed him to finish his bachelor's degree at Oxford. He had lived for a time on the small amount of money he could scrape together through writing dedicatory poems and epistles to fill the front pages of other writers' works, but such a lifestyle was not sustainable. He wanted to make a career as a writer, but his first experiences in London had left him with bleak prospects:

> There were few other opportunities for making a livelihood open to him. His father had given him an education instead of a trade, so that practically all he was fitted for, outside the court, was a position as tutor in some private family or a place in the Church. But to get places such as these required a patron, special influence of some sort, and even then a long period of waiting until a position was offered. Lacking that, his only resource was his pen. (Ringler 18)

The Schoole of Abuse was Gosson's first legitimate opportunity to get his name out into the public eye, and the commission gave him a chance to escape the financial hardship he found himself in immediately after leaving Oxford. In this sense, *The Schoole of Abuse* can be read as Gosson's dissertation, his attempt to prove his worth as a writer according to terms with which he was already quite familiar. One measure of this was his use of classical rhetorical strategies, through which Gosson demonstrates his university training in his familiarity with writers like Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, Terence, Sallust, and Quintilian. Arthur F. Kinney's work on Gosson[41] links the young man's structural choices with his training at Oxford under John Rainolds:

[41] Kinney, "Stephen Gosson's Art of Argumentation in the Schoole of Abuse" (1967).

> Even in outline it is evident that Gosson is subjoining in his attack the three types of Aristotelian argument he had learned from Rainolds. *The Schoole of Abuse* is, then, (1) an epideictic argument: in the text Gosson censures certain practices and forms of art and sport in and around London and urges all citizens to adopt similar attitudes; (2) a forensic argument: in a letter to Sir Richard Pipe, Lord Mayor, Gosson condemns past laxity and recommends specific legislation; (3) a deliberative argument: in the letter to the Gentlewomen Citizens of London, Gosson warns of future danger and urges voluntary self-control for protection. All three types of argument serve the Aristotelian ends of rhetoric, to teach, delight, and persuade. (43-44)

Kinney's article goes on to demonstrate how Gosson checks off all the rhetorical boxes for a classically inspired disputation, first noting how he displays an apt hand at the "seven-fold form" of the genre:

> The pamphlet opens with a pleasant anecdote or *exordium*, a reference to the Syracusans and Pindar; it continues with the occasion for argument or *narratio*, that poets mix gall with honey; the thesis or *propositio*, that art and sport mislead and entice but may be controlled by the laws of a commonwealth and the use of reason; a statement of the issues or causes, the *partitio*, showing that piping begins a chain of occurrences which ends in damnation (A6V-A7); the proof, or *confirmatio*, examining each issue in turn; the refutation or *reprehensio*, which notes the conclusion, or *peroratio*, combining an exhortation (E3V) with a short apologia (E5). (44)

He then highlights Gosson's coverage of the four Aristotelian causes interwoven into the euphuistic prose (Kinney 46). Through such an impressive display, Gosson shows both his knowledge of classical authors and his rhetorical ability. He properly leverages his knowledge of argumentative principles in his first publication, proving to the reading public that he is a proficient, highly employable writer.

Gosson's self-promotion in *The Schoole of Abuse* continues in his choice of style, favoring a performative and elaborate writing style he had learned from one of his instructors of rhetoric, John Rainolds (Ringler 12). The style, later termed Euphuism by Thomas Nashe and John Marston (Kesson 180) was meant to dazzle readers with its endless use of literary tropes like alliteration, allegory, antithesis, isocolon, paramoion, parison, repetition, and polyptoton. Euphuism emphasized a writer's ability to string together these elements of style, along with scriptural and classical knowledge and folklore, into complex patterns of ever-evolving prose. More than this, it concentrated on developing a balanced sense of its technical flourishes, producing a steady rhythm from its numerous variations. It's complexity and high level of detail made it immediately popular among academics and erudite readers in late 16th century English society, and Gosson's adoption of the style reflects both his individual writing prowess and his understanding of how to get his professional writing career started.

His aptitude for Euphuism is clear in *The Schoole of Abuse* which, true to its aspirations, revels in balance, alliteration, and antithesis. Gosson's first words, for example, present a plethora of allusions to classical mythology in a hyperbolic demonstration of the power of antithesis. He describes "The Syracusans," as having lavish meals, with "such varietie of dishes in theyr banquets, that when they were sette, and their boordes furnished, they were many times in doubt, which they shoulde tooth first, or taste last" (Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* 4). The pleasantness

of the first image is followed by a barrage of stylistic flourishes and a concentration on rhetorical frivolity:

> And in my opinion the world giueth euery writer so large a field to walke in, that before he set penne to the booke, he shall find him selfe feasted at Syracusa, vncertaine where to begin, or when to end. This caused Pindarus to question with his Muse, whether he were better with his art to discifer the life of ye Nimp[h]e Melia, or Cadmus encounter with the Dragon, or the warres of Hercules, at the walles of Thebes, or Bacchus cuppes, or Venus iugling. Hee sawe so man turninges layde open to his feete, that hee knewe not which way to bende his pace. (Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* 4)

However, this pleasantry is quickly mired in controversy in the next paragraph, where Gosson paints such a variety of options in a negative light:

> Therefore as I cannot but commende his wisedome, which in banqueting feedes most vpon that, that doth nourish best; so must I disprayse his methode in writing, which following the course of amarous Poets, dwelleth longest in those pointes, that profite least; and like a wanton whelpe, leaueth the game, to runne riot. (Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* 4)

Gosson's praise of the Syracusans' delightful presentation of food becomes tainted by his denouncement of publications that "profit least," and the proverbial advice against consuming "too many sweets" condemns such lavishness as public spectacles. His layered literary devices are aided by the cascading rhythm of the sentence "Like a wanton whelpe, leaveth the game, to runne

riot" (Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* 4), forcing the gratifying feeling of sitting down to a rich table overladen with food to transform into a feeling of regret at a lack of personal integrity. His antithetical manueveing would have been identifiable to the experienced readers he targeted as prospective patrons, as would his Euphuistic dexterity. He then looks to spark more delight through alliteration, piling onto the negative image of theaters while replacing the layered sensation of desire with a repetitive disruption caused by an inability to choose the food, or in Gosson's metaphor, the entertainment, that is the most nourishing:

> The Scarabe flies ouer many a sweete flower, and lightes in a cowshard; It is the custome of the flye to leaue the sound places of the Horse, and suck at the Botch; The nature of Colloquintida, to draw the worst humours too it selfe; The maner of swine, to forsake the fayre fieldes, and wallow in the myre. (4)

The repetitive *S* sounds are impressive, both because of the number of occurrences over the compound sentence he constructs here, but also because of the linguistic deviation he includes. Spread throughout the words he selects, the *S* sounds play a variety of roles in the rhythm of the sentence: words like "Scarabe" and "sweet" command immediate attention, but Gosson is not heavy handed with the consonant, producing a soft, almost imperceptible sound in "lightes" and "places", as well as the slightly more powerful "horse" and "cowshard." The balance and variety highlights Gosson's creativity as much as it demonstrates his proficiency in the styles of Euphuism.

Gosson continues to show off by layering literary tropes throughout *The Schoole of Abuse.* Each image is unraveled in layer after layer of colorful depiction, to the point of delaying a steady presentation of the wider claim for the piece. His message is communicated clearly enough

(choosing the theater as entertainment is akin to choosing, like these animals, the least nourishing of available fare), but so too is his concentration on building the best version of these metaphors to showcase his personal style. His overly stylistic writing builds to a fervor somewhat disconnected from its content, refraining from providing a clear statement of his argument against theaters until midway through the second paragraph. Even here Gosson prefers style over substance, providing another series of images in a display of rhetorical ability:

> I must confesse that Poets are the whetstones of wit, notwithstanding that wit is dearly bought : where hony and gall are mixed, it will be hard to seuer the one from the other[.] The deceitfull Phisition giueth sweete Syrropes to make his poyson goe downe the smoother: The Iuggler casteth a myst to worke the closer: The Syrens song is the Saylers wrack: The Fowlers whistle, the birdes death: The wholesome bayte, the fishes bane: The Harpies haue Virgins faces, and vultures Talentes: Hyena speakes like a friend, and deuoures like a Foe: The calmest Seas hide dangerous Rockes: the Woolf iettes in Weathers felles[…]. (Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* 4)

He saunters skillfully through the first few lines, opening with an alliterative bit of genius in "Whetstones of wit," before pivoting on the significance of *wit*. Moving on, he dangles a bit of interest at the idea of something "dearly bought," before rambling away about a folkloric pronouncement of foundational "truth" involving honey and gall. The idea of a badly negotiated purchase does eventually hit home, but even this is meant to captivate interest rather than openly argue the case against public playhouses. The layering of allusions and images makes his prose is

a bit tricky to comprehend, but the mesmerizing ebb and flow of his phrasing is pleasant and altogether inviting to the interested reader who does not mind a bit of mental exercise.

Gosson's Euphuism would have scored highly among the *literati* he appealed to in his dedications for *The Schoole of Abuse*, and his move to make use of the popular style underlines the performative nature of the task he faced at the time. He steps into the role of the critic, deftly arguing from the anti-theatrical, hyperbolically moralistic side of the argument. His polemical stance, however, is more of a means than an end, as his strongest emphasis is placed on constructing a delightful and identifiable style rather than proving the arguments over public spectacles throughout. Importantly, too, Gosson's first pamphlet does not take a firm stance against acting in all contexts. His point involves contemporary performances of all kinds, which he argues had strayed from their earlier, more benign iterations:

> In *The Schoole of Abuse* [Gosson] did not confine himself to attacking the stage alone. His essay grew under his hands until it became, like Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses,* an invective against most of the social evils of his time. Excluding the prefatory and concluding epistles, as originally printed *The Schoole of Abuse* contained seventy-three pages. Of these, twelve were devoted to an attack on poetry, eight to music, twenty-eight to plays, and the rest were taken up with miscellaneous reflections, and criticisms of "Fencers, Dycers, Dauncers, Tumblers, Carders, and Bowlers." His criticisms typified the attitude of the member of the Elizabethan middle class, who considered the three cardinal virtues to be honesty, industry, and thrift. (Ringler 29)

His first pamphlet is more a reflection of some of the more common arguments against contemporary forms of entertainment, lumping together arguments posed by other rhetoricians worried about London's ability to keep up its day-to-day operations.

A careful analysis of the details of Gosson's second anti-theatrical text, *An Apology of the Schoole of Abuse* (1579), shows that the young writer continued to think about his authorship as he composed further anti-theatrical tracts. This second piece can also be used to undermine a sense of his increasing opposition to public theaters in London, as the work aims to protect the newborn image of his authorship more than it reflects a more focused attempt to prevent public access to dramatic productions. Gosson's second pamphlet was published as an appendix to another euphuistic work, *The Ephemerides of Phialo* (1579), a piece he was composing when *The Schoole of Abuse* was commissioned. Gosson had learned from contacts in London that another Elizabethan pamphleteer and playwright, Thomas Lodge, was penning a rebuttal to *The Schoole of Abuse*, a piece titled *A Reply to Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse, in Defense of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays* (1579). Gosson's quick response with *An Apology* was meant to anticipate Lodge's possible lines of argumentation (Ringler 72). The young author's sense of conduct in a debate format was rooted in his university experience, where proper rhetorical training involved both written and oral disputations to grammatical and logical problems issued by the faculty (Ringler 16). Importantly, the side taken by the student being examined often had little to do with their personal beliefs. The style of university polemics taught to Gosson during his years as a student would have necessitated that each person adopts a side in a given controversy, as the ability to argue either side of a given topic had been a piece of the study of rhetoric since at least Aristotle (Donahoe 316).

As such, Gosson's approach to his argumentation shifted only slightly in the short period between the *Schoole of Abuse* and *An Apology*. While still performative, *An Apology* deliberately

interacts more with the argument at hand even as it retains some of the euphuistic strategies from *The Schoole of Abuse*. The slight shift in concentration can be attributed to Gosson's sense of needing to head off the claims made by his opposition more than it can be shown to demonstrate a radical progression towards the arguments he will use two years later in *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*, and the result is a balanced and practical treatise that attempts to cultivate further patronage and defend his original stance. Gosson's second treatise thereby demonstrates another performance by the young author, with Gosson once again stepping into the role of an anti-theatricalist to retain his sense of ethos as a rhetorician. His continued stance against public playhouses shows that he understands himself as playing the role opposite to his opponent.

His opening paragraph, for example, gives readers a clear statement of the task at hand, but those details are thoroughly mixed with euphuistic tendencies:

> It is the property of honey, though it be sweet, to torment those parts of the body that are infected, and such as are troubled with the King's evil never taste it but they judge it to be gall.1 Therefore I wish them all that feel me sharp to consider whether it be to those that are sound, or to such as I find do nourish filth. My School of Abuse hath met with some enemies because it correcteth unthrifty scholars; Demosthenes' orations smelled of lamp oil, because his candle burned brightest when thieves were busiest. They that are grieved are poets, pipers, and players: the first think that I banish poetry, wherein they dream; the second judge that I condemn music, wherein they dote; the last proclaim that I forbid recreation in man, wherein you may see they are stark blind. He that readeth with advice the book which I wrote shall perceive that I touch but the abuses of all these. (Gosson, *Apology of the Schoole of Abuse* L2r-L2V)

Clear statements like "My *Schoole of Abuse* hath met with some enemies," and "Therefore I wish them all that feel me sharp to consider whether it be to those that are sound, or to such as I find do nourish filth," lay out Gosson's earlier critiques in much more straightforward manner than the metaphor of a "Whetstone of wit" might. The ratio of metaphorical and stylistic language to argumentation shifts, with Gosson giving only one stylistic maneuver to every two pieces of argumentation or direct analysis: the quick analog about honey leads directly into two statements about the blowback caused by his *Schoole of Abuse*, and the only other euphuistic tinge to the paragraph is in his allusion to the Greek rhetorician Demosthenes. This writing stands in stark contrast to the filled-to-the-brim style of euphuism prevalent in *The Schoole of Abuse*.

An Apology is hardly devoid of the literary devices or rhetorical strategies that were a trademark of his earlier work, however. At times, the short addendum to *The Ephemerides of Phialo* works into a stylistic fervor equal to that of the first pamphlet or the romance it is attached to. The apostrophe that closes the end of his second paragraph serves as an example:

> A thief is a shrewd member in a commonwealth; he empties our bags by force, these ransack our purses by permission; he spoileth us secretly, these rifle us openly; he gets the upper hand by blows, these by merry jests; he sucks our blood, these our manners; he wounds our body, these our soul. O God, O men, O heaven, O earth, O times, O manners, O miserable days! He suffereth for his offense, these strut without punishment under our noses; and like unto a consuming fire, are nourished still with our decay. (Gosson, *Apology* L8r)

The repetitive "O God, O men, O heaven," is wonderfully performative, but whereas *The Schoole of Abuse* might have transitioned from this point into another three of four more turns of stylistic maneuvering, Gosson reigns in his verbosity, closing off the thought a sentence later. This trend continues through the conclusion of the short piece, with Gosson focusing much more on defending his previous arguments, and therefore on communicating clearly with the reader, rather than unashamedly using argumentation as a stage for his euphuistic abilities. The concluding paragraph provides just enough allegorical and analogical information to underscore the foundational point about acting, complementing the claims he makes with style and elegance:

> It is a great folly in us to seek to live in those places that are healthy to the body, not fly from those that are hurtful to the soul; and as hard a matter for him to be cured, that knoweth not the grief wherewith he is troubled. Seneca's wife had a she-fool called Harpastes, which though she was suddenly stricken blind, could not be persuaded that she had lost her sight, but judged the house to be somewhat dark. In my opinion our players are as bad as she: though they do not perceive their own abuses, yet will they not say they have lost their eyes, but that their lips hang in their light, or else they are overspread with a cloud; and worse than those that confess themselves blind, for they will yield themselves to be led; these, had rather lie in the channel than lean to a guide. (Gosson, *Apology* M2)

For Gosson, this section is almost succinct. The folksy knowledge communicated in the first sentence flows well into an allusion to Seneca's anecdotes of his life at home, and both work well to introduce the idea of voluntary blindness involved in the presence of stage plays. Gosson refrains from burying the argument under a mountain of euphuism, but neither are style and personal flair

thrown to the wayside. Moreover, these shifts do not reflect a discernible attempt to further the arguments Gosson first made against public performance. While *An Apology* is measurably more serious in terms of re-stating the claims from *The Schoole of Abuse,* the piece remains nonchalant in its playful dance with antithesis, alliteration, and use of metaphor. Gosson turns down the volume on his euphuism to provide more clarity surrounding his arguments against the theaters, as well as to anticipate Lodge's critiques, but there is still a healthy dose of stylistic acrobatics throughout.

In his third antitheatrical tract, however, Gosson's attitude seems to change dramatically. *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), the much harsher reproach of public performances that appeared three years after *The Schoole of Abuse*, is specifically constructed to communicate and emphasize the illicit nature of performance in a manner distinct from Gosson's earlier attempts. It adopts a straightforward style in lieu of the Euphuism that fills his earlier treatises, elevating the seriousness of his tone and simplifying his stylistic flourishes while modifying the arguments against the theater to a much more radical tenor. Gone are the elaborate flourishes and layers so prevalent in both earlier pieces, replaced in many cases by pointed criticism and clear analysis of the trends in public performances:

> In *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), Gosson altered the terms of his attack on the stage to a striking degree. Whereas *The School of Abuse* argued, in playful and literary language, that drama needed to be improved and regulated, *Plays Confuted* insists in stern academic prose that the very form is corrupt, and that there is no alternative but to abolish it completely. Gosson also entirely drops the interests in poetry and music that were an integral part of his earlier writings, to focus on plays alone. (Pollard 84)

He begins relatively early on with the argument for which he is most remembered and most often cited, that "Stage playes are the doctrine and invention of the Devil" (Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* B4v), and therefore must be banned because their roots are evil. A more specific wording of this claim is repeated as he addresses Lodge's criticism in *A Response to The Schoole of Abuse*:

> Thomas Lodge, in that patched pamphlet of his wherein he taketh upon him the defense of plays, little perceiving how lustily the chips fly in his face whilst he heweth out timber to make the frame, confesseth openly that plays were consecrated by the heathens to the honor of their gods, which in deed is true, yet serveth it better to overthrow them than establish them: for whatsoever was consecrated to the honor of heathen gods was consecrated to idolatry; stage plays, by his own confession, were consecrated to the honor of heathen gods, therefore consecrated to idolatry. Being consecrated to idolatry, they are not of God; if they proceed not from God, they are the doctrine and inventions of the devil. (Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Five Actions* B4v)

Gosson emphasizes the connections among plays, idolatry, and the Devil by contrasting theatrical performance with the godly character of public worship:

> I hope that no Christian will be so shameless to say that the doctrine and invention of the devil is to be suffered in that commonwealth where the glad tidings of grace is truly

> preached. For to maintain the doctrine and invention of the devil is a kind of apostasy and falling from the Lord. (B4r)

The underlying argument has clearly changed: no longer are stage-plays a contemporary issue of everyday practice- they are now described as being connected to evil at their very core. Substance takes center stage over style in *Plays Confuted*, with Gosson concentrating his readers' attentions on the matter at hand. Even when he does bare his euphuistic roots, the rhetorical tropes and literary devices add depth to his arguments rather than simply showcasing his skill. An example can be taken from his First Action, an invective against the Efficient Cause of drama[42] through its codification by Satan himself:

> The godly perceive how lamentable and damnable a case we stand in; lamentable, because we are so besotted with these delights, so blinded with the love and drunken with the sweetness of these vanities, that greedily we flock together, and with our brainsick assemblies, not unlike to the Trojans, hail in the horse whose mischief hath been discovered by the prophets of the Lord, and whose bowels have been many times gaged with the sword of his truth: damnable, because we profess Christ, and set up the doctrine of the devil; we hold with the hare and run with the hound, heaping up judgment upon our souls by this hypocrisy. (Gosson, *Playes Confutes in Five Actions* B5r)

A few stylistic techniques are put on display in this selection. Importantly, though, the aesthetic maneuvers of *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* always function to clarify the case for Gosson's

[42] See Ringler, 86-87.

audience. Piecing out the "lamentable" from the "damnable" creates a sense of urgency as well as one of suspense, drawing his readers in by hinting at what has pushed society over the edge into the "damnable" rather than simply the "lamentable". The rhythm produced by the parallel structure also balances in the claims across the divide, resulting in a neat, orderly critique that is informational and that presents a steady rhythm. The trajectory from a "besotted" and "blind" public to a vain population who's "greedy" flocking renders them equal to those that greeted the Trojan Horse shows the danger inherent to a relaxed attitude about public playhouses. The folkloric "We hold with the hare and run with the hound," has a similar effect, layering colloquial symbolism over the characters of Satan and God to better express the earlier claim of damnable offenses. Even the imagery of Lodge inadvertently struck in the face by wood chips helps set the scene for Gosson's portrayal of the controversy.

Gosson's newfound concentration on direct argumentation continues throughout the piece. His *2nd Action* concentrates on a misreading of Cicero by Thomas Lodge, where he underlines his adversary's tendency to "Father […] words upon Tully that never spake them," (C5r) before promising to "rip up" every argument Lodge made in his response to *The Schoole of Abuse.* The *3rd Action* states outright that "Whatsoever he be that looketh narrowly into our stage plays, or considereth how and which way they are represented, shall find more filthiness in them than players dream of," going on to cite *Deuteronomy*'s prohibition of cross dressing as a mark of drama's abominable status in the eyes of God (E3v). In the *4th Action* Gosson links drama directly to the devil, claiming that "The poets that write plays, and they that present them upon the stage, study to make our affections overflow, whereby they draw the bridle from that part of the mind that should ever be curbed, from running on ahead: which is manifest treason to our souls, and delivereth them captive to the devil" (F1v). Taken altogether, the straightforward rhetoric in *Plays*

Confuted in Five Actions seems to portray a situation in which Gosson's tolerance towards stage-plays has waned over the course of the three-year span. The author seems to become more conservative throughout, more set in his beliefs over the illicit nature of stage-plays, and more adamant about their diabolical roots.

Gosson's apparent turn towards a more radical anti-theatricalism in his third anti-theatrical pamphlet, however, cannot be fully attributed to his own shifting beliefs. In fact, it has much more to do with Gosson's awareness of other written works, both in favor and in opposition to drama. One of the biggest influences in this regard was a man named Anthony Munday, another writer commissioned by the city of London, who had recently published his anti-theatrical piece, *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* (1580), in which he pushed past the limits of criticism established by Gosson's first two treatises, becoming the first English anti-theatrical writer to attack performance itself:

> The "Third Blast" shows that a new phase of the controversy was beginning. Formerly, those who attacked the stage were willing to admit that plays were commendable if properly used and contented themselves with pointing out the social inconveniences caused by commercial performances. But Munday asserted that the drama was evil in principle and was flatly prohibited by the word of God. (Ringler 72)

Munday alleged that acting was a form of lying two years before Gosson's *Plays Confuted,* and while Munday's *Second and Third Blast of Retrait* was not met with the same type of animosity, nor the same volume of written responses as *The Schoole of Abuse*, it absolutely affected the approach Gosson could take in his *Plays Confuted in Five Actions.* Munday's claims push past

ideas of misuse, alleging that actors foster mischief, shamelessness, and impudence. Not only are the troupes of his own time full of sinners, liars, tricksters, and criminals, but the very training received in apprenticing to these troupes translates to an education in transgression. Munday's emphasis on the wickedness of allowing children to participate in such a trade proves a good example:

> As I have had a saying to these versifying playmakers, so must I likewise deal with shameless enactors. When I see by them young boys, inclining of themselves unto wickedness, trained up in filthy speeches, unnatural and unseemly gestures, to be brought up by these schoolmasters in bawdry and in idleness, I cannot choose but with tears and grief of heart lament. O with what delight can the father behold his son bereft of shamefastness and trained up to impudency! How prone are they of themselves, and apt to receive instruction of their lewd teachers, which are the schoolmasters of sin in the school of abuse! What do they teach them, I pray you, but to foster mischief in their youth, that it may always abide in them, and in their age bring them sooner unto hell? (Munday 110-111)

Gosson, with his own career ever at the forefront of his mind, would have been well-aware of Munday's contribution, and he would have understood the new avenues of argumentation Munday had opened by stretching the critique of the playhouses to include acting as a principle. Because of this, his turn towards a serious, academic, and overtly confrontational style in *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* can be understood as a mark of a conscious decision made to protect and improve the image of his authorship. No longer pressed into writing to gain favor among the London elites,

he was free to work on *Plays Confuted* on his own terms, taking ample time to perfect his prose and compose the piece with years of careful study. That he would have spent time updating himself on the recent publishing with respect to the arguments for and against the theater is a given, especially with the efforts he is purported to have spent studying classical sources to make his Aristotelian-style argument. Because of Munday's move to break new rhetorical ground, he could not have logically used the same types of arguments in 1582 as he had a few years prior. He needed to work from the new ground Munday had covered, prompting the shift in emphasis for *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*, as well as its more conservative use of euphuism. In some sense, too, Gosson's work pushes Munday's claims to their fullest extent, taking on the point Munday brings up and giving it the full weight of a scholarly disputation. If almost all the major anti-theatricalist writers and thinkers of the next fifty years were influenced by Gosson, the specifics of his argument are indebted to the very author who first made his name copying Gosson's points from the start. In an interestingly convoluted turn of events, Anthony Munday, perhaps the most insincere polemicist of his time, provides an important foundation for later opposition to build from for the next half-century.

Paid Positions II: Anthony Munday's *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* (1580)

Gosson was not the only popularist writer who stepped into anti-theatrical debates for commercial reasons. The other early anti-theatrical writer already mentioned, Anthony Munday, provides another example of how polemics and professional writing were intricately tied together during the late 16th century and beyond. As such, Aside from his influences on Gosson's writing in *Plays Confuted in Five Actions,* Anthony Munday is important to this study because he further highlights the sense of a conversance between professional writers during the period. His

professional approach to composition and publishing also undermines any sense of a purely antagonistic relationship between moralists and the stage.

Munday was a London native whose more than thirty-year career in the theater industry involved a wide variety of roles and responsibilities. Ever the pen for hire because of his willingness to write from almost any angle, Anthony Munday is one of the few 16th century writers to be commissioned by almost all the important powers linked to the city and performance: he was hired by the Church, the local magistrates, both Elizabeth I and James I, and the public theaters at varying times in his career, for different tasks and various reasons. He began as an actor in the late 1570's after leaving an apprenticeship in a print shop. Later, he became a writer for the Rose Theater, his name appearing in collaboration with Shakespeare, Thomas Dekker, and a handful of other top tier dramatists with published plays dated to the 1590's. By the 1610's he was on the short list of pageant writers for the city, where he often doubled as a member of the Draper's Guild, selling the cloth necessary for the pageants and collecting a writer's fee at the same time. Interestingly, Munday also found employment on the side of the opposition when it came to public playhouses, serving as one of the local magistrates in the *Isle of Dogs* scandal involving Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson in 1597.

His antitheatrical treatise, *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait,* is often used as a cornerstone in the discussion of early modern theater criticism. Appearing just after Gosson was commissioned to write *The Schoole of Abuse* in 1579, Munday's *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* was the follow-up effort to Gosson's initial statement of the issue over public playhouses. Importantly, too, the author of *A Second and Third Blast* actively attempts to link his text to Gosson's, first by referring to *The Schoole of Abuse* as the "First Blast," and then by copying Gosson's arguments for a large portion of his own invective in the "Third Blast." This was not a

new move for Munday, as almost every one of the pieces he wrote during his lifetime links itself to other contemporary texts. The connections he retroactively drew to *The Schoole of Abuse* had powerful effects. For one, they amplified Gosson's voice and helped codify anti-theatricalism as its own literary movement within London. His allusions and quotations made it seem as if both writers were arguing from the same point of view, creating the illusion of a school of theater critics opposed to the school of abuse represented by the theater. Many scholars have hypothesized that Munday was paid for his contribution as Gosson had been, and, while there is little evidence for this view, it is not unreasonable to imagine the Mayor, Aldermen, or Privy Council members hedging their bets by giving Munday a commission as well as Gosson. Regardless, Munday's piggybacking on Gosson's work started a trend, with most anti-theatrical tracts for the next fifty years citing arguments from one another and building a common rhetorical pool into which all polemics could dip their hand. Through what today would be considered blatant plagiarism, Munday's text effectively created an opportunity for anti-theatricalists to emerge as an identifiable group.

Much of his efforts can be traced back to Munday's lifelong efforts to be recognized as a successful citizen in early modern London. Tracey Hill's description of Munday touches on his mindset as a reflection of London's commercial backbone during the period: "One can regard Munday as a kind of salesman exploiting his versatile talents in as many fora as possible and thus as symptomatic of his moment and milieu" (45). The salesman identity is crucial to understanding Munday, who marketed himself as a poet, a translator, a dramatist, a city pageant writer, and a moralist at different stages of his career. Often criticized for his "offensive presumptuousness" (Hill 45) in writing across such a variety of genres, Munday was very aware of the importance of creating an image of his authorship through his published works. He had a knack for self-

fashioning in print: almost every piece he published has allusions to his other works, each pressing readers to go buy the others while introducing or concluding the one at hand. Works such as *Mirrour of Mutabilitie (1579), Zelauto (1580)* and *Palmerin d'Oliva (1588)* all promote other publications written or translated by Munday, each including some kind of "Therefore you should buy it the sooner" statement (Hill 45-47), regardless of the lack of overlap or connection between each specific work.

Munday's tendency not only to promote his own work but also to capitalize on the popularity of others is clear in his antitheatrical work. *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait,* opens with the note from "Anglo-phile Eutheo" to the reader indicating that the "First blast" and "Second Blast" are taken to be Stephen Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse* and his own translation of Salvian of Marseilles' *De Gubarnatore Dei* from the fifth century CE. Munday's contribution, the "Third Blast," pulls ideas and arguments from both texts and reprints the older work, placing it before his own. In this way he profits from both the ideas and prowess of the earlier writers, all the while linking himself to the arguments presented in Gosson's work. Intelligently, Munday links himself to "true" critics, implicitly proving his standing while simultaneously suggesting that his ideas, thoughts, and arguments stem from a common source of scholarship.

Such tendencies highlight a strategy of portraying himself as a writer in a variety of ways. One of his later pieces, *Orlando Amareso,* provides some insight into his approach, with Munday's text promising from the title page a sequel to *Orlando Furioso.* His work, Munday claims, will help conclude the older, more famous text, setting himself up as the successor to Ariosto (Hill 48). His *Mirrour of Mutabilitie* (1579) similarly references William Rankin's *Mirrour of Monsters,* adopting its title structure to suggest a connection between the two that does not really exist. The pseudonym "Anglo-phile Eutheo" from *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait,* picks up this trend in

a slightly different fashion, directing attention away from Munday-the-dramatist and substituting him for an anonymous critic whose only concern is the danger presented by theaters. It also provides more of an *ethos* for the reader to pick up on by referencing the author's ability to understand and utilize ancient Greek and Latin arguments against performance. Clearly someone named "Anglo-phile Eutheo" is well versed in such texts, and as such will be a useful guide when making connections between the past and the present: "For in all ages the most excellent men for learning have condemned them by the force of eloquence, and power of Gods worde (as I am to proue upon anie good occasion offered)" (Munday Aiir). Finally, the name takes a feigned apologetic approach to authorship that became common during Munday's time. The "author", as is related by the narrator, does not want to publish his low-quality work, but must because of the need of the public:

> Loth was the Autor, I must needs confesse, to haue his worke published, not because he would not haue plaies openlie reproued, which from his hart he wisheth were most straightlie for|bidden, but through a too base conceipt of his owne worke, thinking that some grounded Diuine were more fit to dehort from so prophane an exercise, than he, whose profession (if so I maie saie) is otherwise. (Munday 101)

Munday plays a game with his readers here, feigning a duty on the part of the author that is imposed by the narrator, who prefaces the text with a claim that it is essential to the future of the city. That the "narrator" and the "author" are the same person is left unsaid, further distancing Munday from his multiple roles within the text while implicitly demonstrating the "Author's" devotion to London's well-being. Tracey Hill notes how Munday's multivalent authorship appears in other

examples of his work as well. *The Mirrour of Mutabilitie* contains two or three versions of its "Author," each playing a slightly different part:

> There is the 'Anthony Munday' celebrated in seven separate verses at the beginning of the text, who expresses grand sentiments of praise and gratitude to Oxford, his patron, […] but there is also 'the *Author'* never fully identified and always referred to in the third person, who has conversations with biblical figures in the text. This second 'Author' has Munday-like features- he disclaims his writing skill, […] for instance- but he is also provided with a range of authorial options in a series of prose sections, all of which are headed 'The Author,' implying some kind of marginal status between actual author and contributing character. 'The Author' is at times enjoined by those he encounters to publish their sorry history […], or he is given the opportunity to comment piously on the failings and just deserts of figures such as Herod and Judas. (Hill 51)

Such multiplicity showcases Munday's ability to step into various roles as an author while it demonstrates his usefulness to modern scholarship in demonstrating some of the challenges to a writer in 16th and 17th century London's economy. Because of this, *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* can be read as at least in part performative, with Munday merely stepping into one more authorial role and performing it with vigor. Reading Munday sincerely is complicated by the commercial nature of his "authorship."

Munday's approach to writing made him an adversary of many well-known contemporary dramatists, so much so that Munday was often caricatured by comic representations in their works. As Hill describes of John Middleton, for example,

> It is widely believed that Middleton's pageants contained jibes directed directly at Munday […]. In his 1613 Lord Mayor's Show for the Grocers, *The Triumphs of Truth,* Middleton (demonstrating little gratitude for the assistance of his sometime collaborator, despite the fact that he himself was then a novice at pageant writing) claims on the title page that he had had to improve on the original text' as it was written by Munday. (Hill 77)

Other writers followed suit. Thomas Nashe's complaints targeted Munday's tendency to bounce between genres and his 'hack' writing in general. Many of Nashe's works, including the epistle *To the Gentlemen Students of Both Universities* (1589), *Pierce Penilesse* (1592), and *Lenten Stuffe* (1599), place their concerns over "The kind of talentless workaday publication that was allegedly dominating the literary profession" (Hill 73). Nashe's condemnations of Munday as a "True ignorant and a poor chronicler," (Hill 73) reflect his opinion of commercial success as a measure of authorial accomplishment, depicting authors who would write anything to earn a paycheck as lowly and base influences on literature. This feeling was shared by Ben Jonson in *The Case is Altered* (1609), where Munday, "Despite their years working alongside one another at the Rose, […] is wheeled on to be mocked by Jonson […] in the guise of Antonio Balladino, whom the play calls the 'pageant poet to the City of Milan'" (Hill 75). Jonson's mockery portrays Munday as an author to be hired only in dire straits, someone resorted to when no one else is available. Similar cases appear in works from individuals such as John Marston and Robert Greene. *Farewell to Follie* (1591) and *Histrio*-Mastix (1599) both target Munday, each poking at his pretensions as a writer who sold himself as a dramatist, translator, pamphleteer, and civil servant. As negatively as he is portrayed in contemporary works, the fact that each of these individuals spent the time to

indite Munday suggests that he was in some way a threat to them in the competition for city commissions. They knew Munday had more solid connections throughout the city than many, and they could count on having to compete against him often.

Added to this is the fact that Munday's biggest contributions to London's performative milieu came as an author of city pageants. Pageantry and monarchical power were strongly linked in the 16th century, and under Elizabeth I processions and city celebrations were elaborate affairs that celebrated the monarch through the space of the city. In Munday's later years, however, King James' lack of affinity for these shows meant that city pageants, while still retaining their elaborate nature, became more of a celebration of the city itself. Munday was able to shift his tones and themes to accommodate the styles of both monarchs, but he had substantially more success in the Jacobean era of theater and pageantry. Pageants like *The Triumphes of re-united Britania* (1605) capitalized on topical themes of unification in the years following James' ascension, while shows like *Metropolis Coronata* (1615) and *Monuments of Honour* (1624) projected Munday's ever present admiration of his home city and the people in it. In contrast to his often-criticized life as a dramatist, Munday's popularity as a pageant writer is uneclipsed by any other author of the time. His chameleonic writing and his ability to attract all kinds of readerships had a large effect here, and the very traits he was often mocked for by others proved invaluable to Munday in the long run.

Munday's performative adaptability reveals an insurmountable distance between his own personal beliefs and the arguments he poses in his anti-theatrical pamphlet. Moreover, with much of his career involving performance on some level Munday's status as both a renowned pageant writer and foundational anti-theatricalist points to his intensely professional attitude towards writing. It also sheds light on the foundations of English anti-theatrical treatises, undermining a

reading of both Munday's and Gosson's text as sincere, religiously based critiques. At the very least the anti-theatrical tracts of both were not simply direct reflections of the views of these two individuals. Neither author acted completely on his own accord in writing the pamphlets they published, and both can be read as writers for hire more than revolutionary moralists.

A Measurable Influence I: Anti-theatrical Impact

Yet both authors would be instrumental to the evolution of polemical writing concentrating on London's theater industry. While the decade before *The Schoole of Abuse* and *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* was marked by a lack of direct action from city officials, the 1580's saw the Mayor and Aldermen following up on their efforts to eradicate the theaters through formal attacks on public spectacles:

> On April 12th, 1580, The Lord Mayor wrote to the Lord Chancellor, pointed out that commercial dramatic performances corrupted the youth of the city, gave occasion for disorders, and endangered public health in the time of plague, and asked that "the said playes and tumblers be wholy stayed and forbidden as ungoldye and perilous, as well at those places nere our liberties as within the jurisdiction of this Cittie." (Ringler 79)

Even though the city had commissioned the first printed pieces of anti-theatricalist writing, the arguments used by Gosson and Munday and the momentum they developed left a distinct impression on the attitudes not only of other moralists and polemical writers but even of the civic authorities themselves. When the Mayor and Aldermen finally attempted to put a stop to public performances on their own in 1582, the same year that Gosson published *Plays Confuted in Five*

Actions, the language of the legislation took up his views on actors and their reliance on deceit, determining plays to be "wholly prohibited as ungodly" (Ringler 79). Although the request was ignored by the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Bromley, both the direct nature of the proposition and the language of ungodliness show the impact Gosson and Munday had. And while London's theaters were in no real danger of being shut down by anti-theatrical sentiments during the 16th century, the allegations raised by Munday and Gosson, as well as the deep distrust of acting found in their documents, were formally stamped into discussions over the licentiousness of public performances. As late at 1642, when the theaters were shut down due to the unrest that would turn into civil war, the language of sin and deceit serves as a backdrop for the decision to close the theaters:

> Whereas the distressed Estate of Ireland, steeped in her own Blood, and the distracted Estate of England, threatened with a Cloud of Blood by a Civil War, call[s] for all possible Means to appease and avert the Wrath of God, appearing in these Judgements; among which, Fasting and Prayer, having been often tried to be very effectual, having been lately and are still enjoined; and whereas Public Sports do not well agree with Public Calamities, nor Public Stage-plays with the Seasons of Humiliation, this being an Exercise of sad and pious Solemnity, and the other being Spectacles of Pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious Mirth and Levity: It is therefore thought fit, and Ordained, by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, That, while these sad causes and set Times of Humiliation do continue, Public Stage Plays shall cease, and be forborn, instead of which are recommended to the People of this Land the profitable and seasonable considerations of Repentance, Reconciliation, and Peace with God, which probably may produce outward

> Peace and Prosperity, and bring again Times of Joy and Gladness to these Nations. (*Order for Stage-plays to Cease, September 1642*)

The ban on stage plays reveals a rhetorical strategy deeply rooted in the arguments from both Gosson and Munday. While the document does not explicitly allege the "Wrath of God" as a direct result of divine judgment that finds actors to be fundamentally evil, the themes of sin, lasciviousness, and diabolical pleasantries echo the criticisms launched by Munday's *Second and Third Blast* and Gosson's *Plays Confuted.* The order concentrates on illicit behavior, acknowledging that theaters were places for criminal behavior by claiming that times of "Public Calamities" called for the abandonment of public performance. The very mention of these themes means that the order's rhetoric is steeped in the same performative vocabulary first demonstrated by Munday and Gosson, showing that the strategies used by both authors stuck in the minds of anti-theatrical writers and thinkers over the next five decades. Whether unknowingly or not, their pamphlets cut a path for the rhetoric of English anti-theatricalism.

Munday and Gosson's rhetoric, purposefully or not, would also go on affect the way some dramatists presented actors and acting in later years. By the late 1590's and early 1600's, the public theaters had become a staple of London's entertainment industry. There were seven public playhouses operating in and around London by 1604, not to mention the handful of private establishments like the Blackfriars that catered to more discerning audiences. Even though Gosson and Munday's treatises did not effectively stem the wave of performance that coincided with the end of the 16th century, the idea that acting was criminal, deceptive, and altogether untrustworthy permeated the many theater spaces of the city. A unique example comes in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587). The play, which takes place directly after a dispute between Portugal and

Spain, depicts a series of tragic scenarios affecting the Spanish royal family, as well as the Marshall of Spain, a character named Hieronimo. After realizing that Lorenzo, the Duke of Castille's son, and Balthasar, the Viceroy of Portugal's son, have murdered his own son and his wife, Hieronimo enlists the help of his son's former lover, Bel Imperia, to take revenge. He convinces the two murderers to play characters in a masque to be given before the King of Spain, with Bel Imperia acting as the female role and Hieronimo taking the lead. The plot of the masque closes with a confrontation between the three male characters, supposedly over Bel Imperia's character, and in that moment Hieronimo brutally murders both Lorenzo and Balthasar, having switched prop knives for real ones. *The Spanish Tragedy* closes with Bel Imperia committing suicide on the very same stage, before Hieronimo bites out his own tongue to spite a bewildered audience of aristocrats and royalty, refusing them an explanation for his actions.

The frame narrative for the play, too, taps into a pattern of layered metatheatrical significance. The prologue presents a sad, recently deceased Spanish soldier named Andrea being comforted by a female character called Revenge. She promises Andrea that he may watch the lives of his murderers play out, pointing to Lorenzo and Balthasar, who are responsible for his tragic end. Revenge's closing lines for the prologue, "Here sit we down to see the mystery/ And serve for Chorus in this tragedy," (Kyd 1.1) are explicitly theatrical, casting them, as well as the audience, as counsellors in the action to follow. The two characters' position outside of events compounds the significance Kyd places on voyeurism and performance in the final scenes, once again pushing at the barrier between reality and the stage and opening the question of whether actors are dangerous, criminal entities.

More than just a hyperbolic depiction of savagery in Spain's royal family, Hieronimo's troubling demise materializes a similar sense of the danger posed by acting first underlined in

Munday's *Second Blast.* In switching to real knives, Hieronimo does more than stab the men who killed his son. He also pierces the barrier between the fictional masque and the very real sense of justice he gets from punishing Lorenzo and Balthasar. His actions threaten to do the same to the space between the stage occupied by the men and boys acting out Kyd's plot and the Elizabethan audiences in attendance during its many performances. Kyd's complex framing of witnessing and watching in *The Spanish Tragedy* plays with the ambiguous threat posed by actors, creating much of the play's significance through an interaction with ideas of performance, deception, and violence that was sure to connect with audiences' antitheatrical prejudices, showing Kyd to be cognizant of the aura of the playhouses in the minds of the public. While those in attendance were likely not in total agreement with the push for censorship coming from the Mayor and Aldermen, many might have believed in at least some of the diabolical "ungodliness" first alleged by anti-theatricalist pamphlets and witnessed on the stage.

Another example of the interplay between drama and moralism can be seen in some pieces of apologetic writing and performance that utilized the theories first published by Gosson and Munday. The anonymous *Play of Playes* (1580), for example, was a comedy written to address the complaints made by the two professional writers at the center of this chapter. The meta-theatrical performance was one of the first responses to *The Schoole of Abuse* in 1579, and it acknowledged the faults of contemporary stage practices alleged by Gosson, promising its audiences to do better in the future. In attempting to explain away the issues with performance, metaphors, and poetry, however, *The Play of Playes* implicitly accepts the argument that contemporary acting is equal to lying, and that it needed special consideration so as not to be seen as sinful. It fulfilled an impulse to make excuses for the small detriments brought about by public playhouses and to rationalize an accepted level of criminal behavior as a fair trade-off for the benefits of sublime powers of poetry.

While this approach certainly was adopted by many who saw theaters as benign, regardless of inherent faults, it reveals an attitude not far removed from Gosson's or Munday's texts, looking to compromise on the issue by taking it as a given that some of the critiques of acting and public playhouses had merit.

Thomas Heywood's *An Apology for Actors* (1612), published three decades later, takes a similar approach by re-producing the arguments made by Philip Sidney in his *Defense of Poesy* (1595). Sidney's famous piece was known to have been a response, at least in part, to Gosson's dedications in *The Schoole of Abuse* and *The Ephemerides of Phialo.* His hatred for Gosson, as well as for the young author's stance on poetry, is clear in the portrait of the art he paints in his work, where he highlights the instructive and delightful qualities of poetry. Heywood picks up on these sentiments, alleging that acting, as a form of poetry, also created better societies because it provided individuals with materialized images of those figures from legend that inspire the most virtuous qualities in mankind. Contemporary drama, for Heywood, was better than even the best poetry, because it emphasized a present, moving likeness of such figures:

> A description is only a shadow received by the ear, but not perceived by the eye; so, lively portraiture is merely a form seen by the eye, but can neither show action, passion, motion, or any other gesture, to move the spirits of the beholder to admiration. But to see a soldier shaped like a soldier, walk, speak, act like a soldier; to see a Hector all besmeared in blood, trampling upon the bulks of kings; a Troilus returning from the field in the sight of his father Priam, as if man and horse even from the steed's rough fetlocks to the plume in the champion's helmet had been together plunged into a purple ocean; to see a Pompey ride in triumph, then a Caesar conquer that Pompey; laboring Hannibal alive, hewing his passage

> through the Alps; to see as, I have seen, Hercules in his own shape hunting the boar, knocking down the bull, taming the hart, fighting with Hydra, murdering Geryon, slaughtering Diomedes, wounding the Stimphalides, killing the Centaurs, pashing the lion, squeezing the dragon, dragging Cerberus in chains, and lastly, on his high pyramids writing oh, these were sights to make an Alexander. (Heywood B3V)

Public performances and dramatic spectacles were essential if the English were to make Alexanders out of their populous, a delightful proposition in many seventeenth century minds. Such an argument worked well for Sidney, whose *Defense of Poesy* was expertly composed and underlined the heroic side of fiction through its connections to celebrated Greek epic poets. It also did not hurt that Philip Sidney was a renowned figure of the English aristocracy and a well-known writer. Heywood's career in the public theaters was not as impressive, perhaps resulting in such arguments falling a bit flat. More importantly, as wonderful as his vision of performance is, the reality was that a majority of London's dramatic performances did not feature such virtuous or noble characters, nor did they always present the most positive side of humanity. And while Heywood's *Apology* is a far cry from agreeing openly with Gosson or Munday that acting is inherently sinful, his attempt to avoid contemporary theater in his defense of London's playhouses betrays an implicit agreement with the negative sentiments of many regarding contemporary acting troupes. It allows for a challenge to their activities on the grounds that they do not live up to the standards set by earlier versions of drama or poetry from the classical world. This underlying assumption means that Heywood's *Apology* is at least rhetorically indebted to the arguments first written down in *The Schoole of Abuse* in 1579, carrying with it the essence of alleged licentiousness and spending a substantial amount of effort to keep it hidden.

Heywood's timing was odd, in that it had been over a decade since the last antitheatrical treatise had been published. Some believe that this marks the *Apology for Actors* as having been written much earlier when the arguments and citations within would have been more current in an ongoing discussion. Regardless, when it was published in 1612 Heywood's long-winded support of the public theaters seems to have been unsolicited. This meant that in some respects it had to attempt to stand up on its own merit. A rebuttal came a few years later, when John Greene's answer to Heywood, *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615), overwhelmed the claims made by the earlier piece, targeting the implicit acknowledgement of transgression within while emphasizing how commonplace illicit behavior had become on public stages (Pollard 255-6). Their disagreement, when somewhat over-simplified, is over how much of that illicit behavior can be tolerated before it becomes problematic to the morals and ethics of society. For Greene, at least in his *Refutation,* that amount is very little to none; for Heywood, the magic of dramatic fiction is too valuable to be tainted by such specific concerns, and the benefit of having such performances much outweighs whatever detriments the playhouses bring to London's audiences. Even with their antagonistic relationship, however, Greene and Heywood both agreed that some trends in London's public playhouses pushed at the boundaries of acceptable behavior. That both rely on similar concepts about acting, drama, and the danger of representation shows that their opposition contained within it a foundational conversance and productive interplay, complicating the sense of difference conveyed by the confrontational nature of their writing.

The arguments against acting first published by Gosson and Munday are subtly present in all four of these examples, but each case presents a slight variation on the way such attitudes form a foundation for the larger structure of the piece. Some take ideas first put forth by Gosson and Munday as a starting point for a rebuttal: *The Play of Plays* humbly agrees with some of the

criticisms of contemporary theater launched by Gosson, placating its audiences with comic relief and a promise to shift those trends that have been identified as problematic. That such shifts do not seem to have occurred means that *The Play of Plays* was probably also somewhat sarcastic in its repudiation of trends in the theater industry, but Gosson's and Munday's rhetoric remains foundational to the comedy's make-up all the same. Its audience needed to understand the context for the jokes and humor on display, leaving it ironically indebted to the two writers' works even as it attempted to push in the opposite direction. Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors* demonstrates a different sense of the interplay prompted by Gosson and Munday's writing, implicitly accepting some of the premises of their early treatises against the theater while struggling to defend the benefits of the stage. His *Apology* also finds its roots in the ideas presented in *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* and *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait,* and his eventual defeat by John Greene is derived from the common ground shared by the two men. Such baseline prejudices against actors and the public playhouses also can be seen working in favor of performance, as is shown in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy.* Kyd's violent play was a hit for over two decades, with Henslowe's diary showing a broad and frequent scattering of performances during the period between 1590 and 1599. The play hangs on the inherent threat of the conceits performed on-stage translating into lies and deceptions outside of the public theaters, and its metatheatrical significance operates through a similar vein of skepticism as is produced in *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* and *Plays Confuted in Five Actions.* Differing from each other in form, genre, style, and attitude, these examples still share a deep sense of overlap, demonstrating both the power of Gosson's and Munday's rhetoric and the unpredictable nature of the interplay between drama and anti-theatricalism.

A Measured Effect II: Jonson and His Attitudes toward the Stage

Yet another measure of the complex interplay between drama and anti-theatricalism shows how Gosson and Munday's first forays into anti-theatrical writing also played a role in the evolution of London's theater industry. Ben Jonson (1572-1637) became one of the most renowned dramatists of English Renaissance theater over the course of his career. His earliest plays, such as *Every Man in his Humour* (1598), *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599), *Sejanus* (1603), and *Volpone* (1605-6) were performed by the same troupe that put-on Shakespeare's plays, and his later successes like *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) provided the prevailing mold for a popular form of theater later termed city-comedies, which kept their popularity for the next three decades. It is somewhat surprising, then, to locate anti-theatricalist rhetoric echoing that of Gosson and Munday in some of his publications. Because Jonson displayed a lifelong antagonism toward playwrights, players, and theatrical audiences in ways similar to those of Gosson and Munday, however, we can look at the dramatist as an example of the way anti-theatrical sentiments from the 1580's reappear in works from individuals closely linked to English drama well into the 17th century.

To understand Jonson's pugnacious attitude toward the theatre, it is necessary to grasp the implications of his laureate aspirations. Unlike the examples shown above, Jonson's use of anti-theatricalist rhetoric does not come from any direct interaction with dramatic theory or from participating in discussions over the licentiousness of public spectacles, but rather from records of his views of his fellow playwrights, of actors, and of audiences for London's public theaters. Reviewed earlier in terms of Stephen Gosson and Anthony Munday's professional status, Jonson is an example of another of Helgerson's classifications of writers in early modern England, the "laureate" class (193). Attempting to push past the professional class of writers represented by

Gosson and Munday, writers like Jonson imagined their writing as having a more important role to play in English society than simply to entertain or to sell pamphlets. Whereas professionals wrote for a living, producing their plays and treatises with the hopes of maintaining their social status and living conditions, Helgerson describes the laureate class as aiming higher: "For the laureate, poetry was itself a means of making a contribution to the order and improvement of the state" (Helgerson 200-201). Ben Jonson did not simply want to be a successful writer among similarly skilled peers, but to ascend above everyone else. He wanted to be an ambassador for English Poetry itself; like Homer, Virgil, and Dante before him, he wanted to be his nation's Poet. However, Jonson's laureate aspirations faced many challenges, the biggest of which was that there was neither a titular or nor a substantive sense of laureate status in Elizabethan or Jacobean England. There simply was no category of writer thought of in such a way. The closest an English author had come to laureate status in Jonson's era had been Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), and even this elevation was the result of his own careful self-fashioning (Helgerson 193) more than it reflected a title bestowed on him by English society. Jonson attempted to cut a new path for himself as he looked to rise above the unruly rabble of professional writers publishing in London during the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

Unfortunately, Jonson's ambitions converged with his confrontational nature to form a life rife with conflict. Despite expending a substantial effort throughout his life to "encourage the reading public to view him as a model of even-tempered rationality," he has been described as a "drunken, swaggering […] sponge", a "notorious reprobate and public nuisance", and a man who "gained his livelihood by writing libelous plays and [who] routinely attacked his friends behind their backs," (Riggs 1). By the end of his career, he had been imprisoned three times, committed at least one murder, had gotten into heated arguments with numerous other dramatists, and had

initiated a series of adulterous affairs with married women, fathering several illegitimate children (Riggs 52).

Jonson's acute acerbity outside of the theater formed much of his outlook on the actors who performed his plays and the audiences that received them, leading him to take what David Riggs describes as a "highly unorthodox" (65) approach to publishing his plays. Believing that contemporary drama was overly concerned with pleasing audiences at the expense of producing quality pieces of performance, a trend that resulted in actors often improvising lines and scenes based on expectations of audience response, Jonson pushed more than any other English playwright to preserve "the superiority of the printed text '*As It Was First Composed'*" (Riggs 65). Jonson's decision to have *Every Man out of his Humour* printed soon after its debut, rather than sell it to the playing company who performed it, demonstrates his anxieties over controlling the image of his authorship:

> Elizabethan playwrights normally transferred exclusive control over their manuscripts to the acting companies that purchased them. Although neither the writers nor the actors were entitled to take out copyrights […], the acting companies had a strong vested interest in keeping their playhouse manuscripts out of print. As long as the actors retained sole possession of the author's manuscript, anyone who wanted to see the play performed or to become familiar with its contents, had to come to their playhouse. Once a sizeable number of theatergoers had read a play, its novelty, and hence its commercial value to the players, was drastically reduced. […] When Jonson sold his copy of *Every Man Out of His Humour* to [publisher] Holme within a year of its successful debut, he was claiming, in effect, that

the author continued to own his work after the players had purchased a copy of it. (Riggs 64-5)

Effectively erasing the performative significance of the play, Jonson's move to have *EMOHH* printed placed him in his own authorial spotlight. It attempted to portray him as a part of a higher class of writer than his professional rivals. And while he earned much more with his marketing scheme than he might have simply having leased his manuscript out to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the move demonstrated more than anything Jonson's tendency toward self-promotion and his competitiveness with the other members of the theater industry, a trend that would reappear throughout his decades-long career.

Jonson's work towards his laureate ambitions is evident in later publications as well. His 1605 printing of *Sejanus* has often been a focal point for studies of Jonson's particular engagement with his dramatic texts as they move from the stage to print.[43] *Sejanus* depicts the downfall of the favorite of a Roman emperor, a man named Lucius Sejanus, as a result of his Machiavellian political maneuvering. The play, a rare tragedy for Jonson, was not well received when it was first performed for a variety of reasons, and Jonson was accused of Catholic leanings because of some of its elements, the second of many dealings with authorities as a result of his dramatic production. Jonson's defense was that the actors misrepresented his intended plot, leading the audience to do the same. Jonson's complaint of nefarious, untrustworthy performers recycles ideas first seen in Munday's and Gosson's treatises into a complaint about actors' infidelity to the original

[43] See for example Murray, "From Foul Sheets to Legitimate Model: Antitheater, Text, Ben Jonson" (1983); Fish, "Authors-Readers: Jonson's Community of the Same" (1984); Rowe, "Ben Jonson's Quarrel with Audience and Its Renaissance Context" (1984); Ghosh, "Ben Jonson and His Reader: An Aesthetics of Antagonism" (2013); Burrows, "Overhearing: Printing Parentheses and Reading Power in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*" (2017); and Fallon, *Paper Monsters: Persona and Literary Culture in Elizabethan England* (2019).

manuscript. Jonson attempted to make up for this infidelity by including fastidious notes for the character of Sejanus in the printed quarto version in 1605, in theory eliminating all possibility for a reading of the character that might be problematic. Ian Burrows underscores the extent to which the dramatist's input affected the printed text:

> The margins of the quarto are crowded with Latin historical notes, their number and particularity such that, as Herford and Simpson remarked, they would likely have 'imposed a severe test upon a printer' (in the case of the 1605 quarto). Other textual apparatus include a number of commendatory verses, a note to the readers, and the expository argument to the play. In sum these features are often taken — as they are by Kidnie — to be 'indicative of the manner in which Jonson engaged with the play when reworking it for print publication'; an engagement which Emma Buckley finds aiming to address 'the disastrous reception afforded Sejanus' first public performance at the Globe in 1604' along with 'the charges brought against [Jonson] of "popery and treason" as a result of the play'. And, in keeping with Kidnie's view of the book and its being constructed as 'a finished literary masterpiece', Buckley describes Jonson's work with Eld as an effort 'to create a protective carapace for the play in the form of a buttressing array of Latin notes, complemented by an "Address to the Reader"' in order 'to steer interpretation pre-emptively'. (101)

Jonson's 1607 publication of *Volpone*, with its famous dedication to the "Most Noble and Equal Sisters," the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, continues the trend of using the medium of print to control the meanings of his stage texts—and at the same time it demonstrates how the ideas presented by Gosson and Munday in the late 1570's and early 1580's are echoed in Jonson's

views of audiences. Jonson presents a view of literary writing reminiscent of Sidney's *Defense of Poesy:*

> For, if men will impartially, and not asquint, look toward the offices and function of a poet, they will easily conclude to themselves the impossibility of any man's being the good poet, without first being a good man. He that is said to be able to inform young men to all good disciplines, inflame grown men to all great virtues, keep old men in their best and supreme state, or, as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the interpreter and arbiter of nature, a teacher of things divine no less than human, a master in manners; and can alone, or with a few, effect the business of mankind: this, I take him, is no subject for pride and ignorance to exercise their railing rhetoric upon. (Jonson, *Volpone,* "To the Most Noble and Equal Sisters")

Poets, in this positive vision from Jonson, create to instruct. They inscribe virtues on the souls of their readers or audiences, forming a connection among representation, truth, and morality that can improve society. While this seems pleasant enough, the caveat that follows challenges such a positive outlook:

> But it will here be hastily answered, that the writers of these days are other things; that not only their manners, but their natures, are inverted, and nothing remaining with them of the dignity of poet, but the abused name, which every scribe usurps; that now, especially in dramatic, or, as they term it, stage-poetry, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy, all license of offence to God and man is practised. I dare not deny a great part of this, and am

> sorry I dare not, because in some men's abortive features (and would they had never boasted the light) it is over-true. (Jonson, *Volpone,* "To the Most Noble and Equal Sisters")

Echoes of Gosson's *The Schoole of Abuse* ring out clearly, with Jonson repeating the most common argument from the early polemical pamphlet, that the problems of public playhouses issue from current practice rather than theater in general. Jonson goes on to ridicule the activities of other playwrights with vivid and violent language, much like that of Gosson:

> The increase of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the stage, in all their miscelline interludes, what learned or liberal soul doth not already abhor? where nothing but the filth of the time is uttered, and with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of solecisms, such dearth of sense, so bold prolepses, so racked metaphors, with brothelry, able to violate the ear of a pagan, and blasphemy, to turn the blood of a Christian to water. (Jonson, *Volpone,* "To the Most Noble and Equal Sisters")

Words like "abhor" and "uttered filth" might as well have come from Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, while the alleged "violation of the ear" repeats one of the most common phrases in English anti-theatricalism more generally. Importantly, Jonson is not using these claims to argue that all contemporary theater should be banned, but to distinguish his own worth in relationship to all the other playwrights working for London's stages. He differentiates himself from others by claiming to reform drama to regain its classical position of respect and cultural importance. Jonson presents himself alone as a savior, elevating playwriting into Sidneyan moral poetry, while he views almost every other contemporary dramatist as a hack, a fraud, and as culpable in the waning morals in the

populations of London. His pursuit of laureate status rings out clearly, as Jonson concentrates only on his own contributions as playwright, ignoring the call to defend acting or actors from allegations of fomenting public unrest. In this way, he solves the "Gordian Knot" referenced by Gosson in his *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (B1v), providing a solution to the dangers of public performance without resorting to claiming that all acting was derived from the Devil. He may not have gone so far as to link acting directly to sin or unethical behavior, a move that would have been odd for someone so deeply entrenched in public performance, but he still demonstrates a deep mistrust for the deceptions of the stage that contributes to his self-fashioning campaign.

Jonson's distrust of actors' ability to recognize good writing and audiences' abilities to understand it without his own careful direction eventually became an element of his drama itself. This is perhaps most prominent in the preface to his 1614 comedy, *Bartholomew Faire,* a city comedy featuring one of London's most popular open-air cloth markets historically located in Smithfield, an area just outside of the city itself. Jonson's play uses the marketplace as a backdrop, with the humorous plot evolving from a series of interactions between the slovenly merchant class and the aristocratic patrons that come to attend the fair. Jonson's views of his audiences come out clearly in the two metatheatrical moments of the play, the first of which comes as a preface, or "induction" to the action (Jonson, *Bartholomew Faire* 180*)*. After a brief complaint from the "Stage keeper," about the lack of traditional romance, bawdy humor, and stage acrobatics in the piece, a character named Bookholder enters to berate him for addressing the audience. After the Stage Keeper is unceremoniously kicked off the stage, the Bookholder asks another character, Scrivener, to read out the details of a contract supposedly agreed upon by the audience for the upcoming performance. It is this contract that points towards Jonson's relationship with his audiences: the idea of holding audiences to a materialized contractual agreement itself points to an

anxiety over popular interpretation or reception, and the detailed stipulations target some of the more prominent trends in misinterpretation, a mark of the discord the dramatist felt for his spectators. Even as the contract begins there seems to be an underlying anxiety over the need to keep unruly audiences seated and attentive for the entirety of the performance:

> Book: […] Read Scribe; give me the counterpane
>
> Scriv: […] It is covenanted and agreed, by and between the parties aforesaid, and the said spectators and hearers, as well the curious and envious, as the favouring and judicious, as also the grounded judgments and understandings, do for themselves severally covenant and agree to remain in the places their money or friends have put them in, with patience, for the space of two hours and an half, and somewhat more. In which time the author promiseth to present them by us, with a new sufficient play, called Bartholomew Fair, merry, and as full of noise, as sport: made to delight all, and to offend none; provided they have either the wit or the honesty to think well of themselves. (Jonson, *Bartholomew Faire* 181)

Also a large concern for the Bookholder and Scrivener is the tendency of audiences to critique above their pay grade. The very first stipulation after the opening terms is that a person's critique needs to match his or her ticket price.

> It shall be lawful for any man to judge his sixpen'worth, his twelvepen'worth, so to his eighteen-pence, two shillings, half a crown, to the value of his place; provided always his place get not above his wit. And if he pay for half a dozen, he may censure for all them

> too, so that he will undertake that they shall be silent. He shall put in for censures here, as they do for lots at the lottery: marry, if he drop but six-pence at the door, and will censure a crown's-worth, it is thought there is no conscience or justice in that. (Jonson, *Bartholomew Faire* 181)

The "If you did not pay, you have no standing" attitude is meant to be humorous, but its humor derives as much from the truth of such trends as from the ridiculousness of having to sign a contractual agreement before attending a performance. It should be hyperbolic to ridicule such behavior, yet the implication is that such individuals do exist and had been detrimental to Jonson' career in the past. His history of incarceration because of his written performances adds another layer to these allegations.[44]

Exasperated by what he considered to be a lack of refinement in current popular taste, the preface to *Bartholomew Faire* sets the tone for the audience in both serious and comedic terms. The combination allows Jonson to address the inconsistencies of interpretation, driving audiences towards a more cultivated understanding of contemporary drama. The list of terms read by the Scrivener continues, turning next to the instability of interpretation and judgement by audiences. Looking to address the issue of some spectators changing their opinions of plays indiscriminately, the contract stipulates that any one person "be fixed and settled in his censure that what he approves or not approves to-day, he will do the same to-morrow; and if to-morrow, the next day, and so the next week, if need be" (Jonson, *Bartholomew Faire* 181). Changing the opinions of other spectators by persuading them to interpret the performance in a certain way, along with miscellaneous concerns like not expecting "The sword and buckler age of Smithfield," and

[44] See Riggs 122.

refraining from trying to see political figures in every character presented on stage (Jonson, *Bartholomew Faire* 182), are also banned in the agreement. While each of these points can be read individually as examples of comedic, harmless bantering with a tongue-in-cheek attitude, they add up to portray the extreme discomfort Jonson felt in presenting his plays to his audiences. They are constructed on a foundational understanding of spectatorship as disruptive to the make-up of a particular character, theme, or scene, and they aim to target the distortion natural to uneducated criticism and uncultivated viewership.

Their satirical sting also demonstrates the contentious relationship that seems to have developed from Jonson's discomfort with his audiences, one that is brought center stage for a second time in *Bartholomew Faire* during a puppet show scene the play's final moments. In a twist from the criticisms of the contract in the preface that highlighted the poorer patrons in public theaters, the interaction between Bartholomew Cokes, Zeal-of-the-land Busy, and Leatherhead's puppets targets pretentious, aristocratic viewers whose tendency was to interrupt dramatic performances and interject themselves into the ongoing drama. In this case the metatheatrical moment comes when Cokes, an esquire whose ridiculousness has left him poor and naked throughout the action of the play, cannot stop interrupting the action of a small puppet show being put on by one of the merchants. Too involved in the action of the very small drama going on in front of him, Cokes cannot refrain from speaking to the puppet-characters as if their lives were taking place right in front of him. His misunderstanding of fiction is somewhat handled by the puppeteer, Leatherhead, but Cokes' input makes him a character in the performance as much as his seat makes him a part of the audience. At times Leatherhead even warns Cokes of not speaking too loudly, lest the puppets know he is eavesdropping. The arrival of Zeal-of-the-land Busy compounds the metatheatrical significance, dissolving the separation between the stage and the

audience entirely. He bursts into the pavilion midway through the show to argue about the licentiousness of performance, accusing everyone of idolatry for having witnessed the drama. His anti-theatricalism is comically hyperbolic and meant to underline his radical religious zealousness more than it is meant to provide an accurate depiction of arguments against the theater. More interestingly, and more humorously, he meets his most talented opposition in the form of one of the puppets being controlled by Leatherhead, the puppet version of Dionysus. Their conversation quickly devolves into childish bickering, with Cokes adding warnings to Busy and generally taking the side of the arguments produced by the puppet-Dionysus. The positions of audience members and "actors" are muddled to the point of non-existence, and by the end of the puppet show even the puppeteer, Leatherhead, begins to converse with puppet-Dionysus as if he were not making all the sounds and movements for the small carved figure. Readers of the second part of Cervantes' masterpiece will connect the scene in *Bartholomew Faire* to Don Quixote's inability to allow the action of Maestro Pedro's own puppet show to continue. Much like the knight from La Mancha, Busy, Cokes, and Leatherhead, along with everyone else in the theater, forget their place in the audience and threaten to ruin the drama by piercing the barrier between the real world and the fictional one.

The dissolution of barriers between audiences and actors in *Bartholomew Faire* is meant to be understood in its comical context. Much like in the earlier case with the Scrivener's contract, it is an overblown portrayal of the catastrophe that can be caused by unruly audience participation, taking what might have been a common enough occurrence in early modern English theaters and amplifying it to an extreme. In some sense, while the move showcases disruption as comedic, it also reveals the foundational distrust Jonson had for anyone other than himself in presenting his dramas. No one in *Bartholomew Faire* is a trustworthy conduit for communicating the drama of

the puppet show or the play it nests within. The Stage-Keeper's critiques at the outset initiate the sense of doubt that runs throughout, a feeling compounded as much by the need for a contract between author and audience as by the absence of that author during the presentation of its terms. By the time Leatherhead throws his position as the director for the puppet show to the wayside and the fourth wall has been broken once again, the fallibility of drama has been proven and underscored numerous times. In this sense, Jonson's *Bartholomew Faire* is constructed from his career of discomfort in giving actors and audiences the opportunity to perform or interpret his work. Its materials, its characters, and much of its humor springs from that distaste, ironically entertaining the very individuals who it purportedly targets in its own vicious critiques. And while Jonson's mistrust does not solely target the actors performing his plays, his contempt for them springs from the same rhetorical well first dug by Munday and Gosson over three decades earlier.

Jonas Barish, laying the foundation of studies of English anti-theatricalism, dedicated an entire chapter of *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* to Ben Jonson's antagonistic relationship with his audiences and actors. Barish writes that Jonson,

> Despite a lifetime of writing for the stage, never arrived at a comfortable *modus viviendi* with his audiences. His feelings toward them ranged from gingerly to stormy, and by the time he had been at the job of pleasing them for a few years, he had formed some devastating conclusions. (Barish 133).

While Barish's text is a bit outdated in terms of its allegations of Puritanism, his work provides a crucial understanding of Jonson through his analysis of the author's prefaces and depictions of performance in plays like *Bartholomew Faire.* Critics contemporary to Barish such as Martin

Butler,[45] George Rowe,[46] Ian Burrows,[47] Jennifer Brady,[48] and Timothy Murray[49] all have used similar notions of Jonson's oppositional attitude as a starting point for their work. More recent studies have focused on the dramatist's acid attitudes with respect to others judging or interpreting his writing: Stanley Fish has analyzed Jonson's deep discomfort as a poet dependent on patronage, forced to seek the favor of his social superiors for sustenance and even his very identity (Fish 27), while Joseph Loewenstein details the impressive and authoritative persona Jonson cultivated in attempting to control the publishing of his written works,[50] and Lynn S. Meskill underlines a similar idea in representations of audiences in his comedies.[51] Adding further nuance to the discussion, James Mardock takes up the question of whether Jonson's attitudes were inherently anti-theatrical,[52] as does Mark Bland.[53] These works analyze how Jonson's disapproval of others would have functioned in the context of his career, a topic that has remained important to Jonsonian scholarship even today

Conclusion: Abusing the Term "Schools"

The group formed over the course of this study has little in the way of common denominators that might be used to better define an *anti-theatrical* movement. While the writers analyzed above overlap with one another in varying aspects of their anti-theatricality, each represents a unique example of the interaction between polemics and drama. Stephen Gosson, like

[45] Butler, "The Condition of the Theaters in 1642" (2004).
[46] Rowe, "Ben Jonson's Quarrel with Audience and Its Renaissance Context" (1984).
[47] Burrows, "Overhearing: Printing Parentheses and Reading Power in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus"* (2017).
[48] Brady, "'Beware the Poet'" (1983).
[49] Murray, "From Foul Sheets to Legitimate Model" (1983).
[50] Loewenstein *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (2001).
[51] Meskill, *Ben Jonson and Envy* (2009).
[52] Mardock, *Our Scene is London* (2008).
[53] Bland, "Ben Jonson and the Legacies of the Past" (2004).

Anthony Munday, would write many different pieces over the course of his lengthy career. In fact, Gosson left behind anti-theatrical concerns as soon as he was able. While he is most known for *The Schoole of Abuse (1579)* and *Plays Confuted in Five Actions (1582),* he went on to publish a wide selection of other short works, including an anti-Catholic sermon he had preached at Paul's Cross titled *The Trumpet of War (1598)* and a playful pamphlet called *Pleasant Quippes for an Upstart Gentlewoman (1595).* None of his later writing reflects the dour animosity of *Plays Confuted,* nor do they present any anti-theatrical sentiments or thoughts on other forms of public entertainment. His lack of attention later in life to the controversy that launched his career underscores his opportunism as a professional writer, but both Gosson's and Munday's professional trajectories point to the unpredictable, complex contexts that developed as a result of competition for careers in writing. Far from the purely antagonistic relationship often attributed to anti-theatricalism, Gosson and Munday show a deep conversance with drama and a reliance on it to help keep themselves afloat financially.

If we expand the scope of writing connected to anti-theatricalism by including Kyd, Heywood, and the *Play of Playes,* the productive interplay between anti-theatricalist ideas and drama becomes even more wide-ranging. Drama itself took on the rhetoric of anti-theatrical writing, creating a new, third style that synthesized dramatic writing with its most virulent criticism. Apologetic material connected to public drama, in a similar fashion, adopted some of the characteristic traits of anti-theatrical writing from the period, while Ben Jonson's particular relationship with drama, acting, and spectators lends its own complexity to the wider portrait being painted by this chapter. His career was deeply dependent on both performance and anti-theatrical sentiments, especially those first published by Gosson and Munday. Placing his angst-ridden

relationship with acting troupes and audiences in a category with these writers, along with many others, only increases the scale of complexity.

The intricate web of influences and contexts surrounding this particular facet of polemical writing demonstrates how English anti-theatricalism was not a collective movement in the traditional sense. Their relationships to one another provide no definitive sense of how the mistrust of acting translated into identifiable, repeatable patterns in outlooks on acting, drama, and public playhouses for the citizens of the city, nor for dramatists, actors, university writers, or municipal officials. A career dramatist could hate his audiences and his acting troupes; a wily pageant writer and citizen-draper could step into the role of a radical anti-theatricalist to help boost his status; and a green writer fresh out of Oxford could unknowingly spark a lengthy debate about the licentiousness of fictional portrayals on stage that would last for decades. The specific contexts and historical details of each serve as examples, not of the presence of any patterned, identifiable set of characteristics, but of the seemingly random and infinite possibilities produced by the conversance between professional writers.

At the same time, none of these individual patterns of complexity undermines the presence of a movement during the late 16th and early 17th centuries that one could call *anti-theatricalism.* Just as each anti-theatricalist's personal situation cannot be ignored in any study of how those sentiments affected theaters, the presence and impact of anti-theatricalism is not and has never been in doubt. Gosson and Munday may have accidentally catalyzed a movement in London's print sphere that built momentum over the next five decades, but the accidental nature of the origins of their anti-theatricalism did not prevent the coalescence of a common anti-theatrical rhetoric. The movement that came out of *The Schoole of Abuse* and *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* is divisible into its individual pieces, each constructed for its own use and purpose, yet the entirety

of the rhetorical influence this movement had cannot to be boiled down to one foundational idea or historical moment. Once created, it developed its own momentum and range, becoming more complex and multivalent over time. The individual efforts of Gosson and Munday, along with that of many others, collided to create a vast resource tapped by an almost uncountable number of writers whose aims were as varied as the genres in which arguments against the theater appeared during the heyday of Elizabethan and Jacobian theater. Understanding this situation and its complexities has implications outside of England, as similar metonymic origin stories are central to both French and Spanish theaters. If Gosson and Munday can serve as an example of the foundations of one antitheatrical movement, the intricacies of their publishing force us to reevaluate the way we think about other origins and anti-theatrical movements as well.

Chapter 2: Seeing Double- Spanish Anti-theatricalism's Co-opting of Visual and Verbal Stimuli as Polemical Strategy

London, of course, was not the only site of controversy or debate over public drama during the 16th and 17th centuries. Driven by renowned authors like Tirso de Molina, Calderón de la Barca, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, and the prolific Lope de Vega, Spanish *comedias* charmed Spain's metropolitan centers during in the last decades of the 16th century and into the 17th. These pieces of theater evolved from their roots in the Italian *commedia dell'arte* tradition, crystalizing into a hybrid form of drama that included both comedic and tragic elements within single performances. *Comedias*, as they were called, were put on in open air theaters called *corrales* and presented paying audiences with a variety of entertaining sights and sounds, captivating their attention through fictional plots and sensual stimulation intensely focused on spectators' eyes and the ears. *Comedias* were filled with fantastic caricatures of real-life figures, and their fictional portrayals placed kings, queens, dukes, murderers, scoundrels, clowns, young maids, and all sorts of other characters in front of individuals who might never have encountered any such figures in real life, fictional or otherwise. Cloaked gentlemen skulked city streets at night, plotting to meet up with secret love interests hiding half concealed behind window casements. Serving men and old handmaids cracked bawdy jokes at one another and performed ridiculous dances that threatened at impropriety. Perhaps more visually captivating than either of these tropes were the young women who put on the clothes of their male counterparts to seek revenge or to improve their marital status in one way or another. Seeing the beautiful, talented young women who performed on the stages of the *corrales* wearing form-fitting pants and carrying swords would have been a spectacle all on its own for many early modern audiences, and their prevalence in Golden Age drama underscores the visual appeal of the stage during the period.

In some sense, Spanish *comedias* were also popular with contemporary audiences because they re-imagined everyday public and private spaces: a city corner could be the place where an important secret is revealed, a closet the site of a miracle, and a nearby forest the setting for a legendary duel. These spaces were lent fictional significance that changed how they could be imagined by the public, if only for the span of a few hours. The mix of metrical styles in *comedias,* a practice unique to Spanish drama, meant that spectators could expect a range of verbal stimuli over the course of a performance as well. From the playful of octosyllabic *redondillas* to the much more serious, fourteen-syllable alexandrines and everything in between, *Comedias* often shifted their meter emphasize important moments within the plot. Audiences in turn paid close attention to the rhythm of each verse or stanza for context clues on how to react in each moment of a performance, creating a link between sound and experience that left a strong impression on listeners minds.

As popular as all these elements made *comedias* in Spain around the turn of the 17th century, the combination of enchanting fictions and dramatists acknowledged aims of inciting audiences to passionate, emotional states through their dramas meant that the *comedia nueva* was seen as problematic by a selection of the population. As a result, anti-theatrical sentiments appeared almost simultaneously with the codification of early modern dramatic performance in metropolitan centers during the late 1570's. And while Spain's anti-theatrical movement is unique in that few of Spain's 16th and 17th century moralists dedicated entire treatises to criticizing the impact of drama on the public, many moralists still found space in their writing to condemn *comedias* in similar language as Gosson, Munday, and William Prynne.

Contemporary Spanish drama, for these writers, had nothing to offer Spanish society except a diminished sense of morals and traditions and an impending threat to masculine virility.

Comedias, having been founded on base examples of grotesque humor and dangerous nocturnal fantasies, ranged from the dangerous machinations of the devil to pieces of useless frivolity. Actors and actresses, the people most directly responsible for what went on in front of Spanish audiences, were as odious and untrustworthy as the most notorious villains portrayed on stage. The *corrales* themselves were places where married men and women went to lose their morals, full of prostitution, drinking, shouting, and all kinds of debauchery. They were sites of infidelity and social manipulation, where deceit and overt sexuality were put on display without shame. Views like the one below from Carmelite historian and erudite author José de Jesús María in his *Primera Parte de las Excelencias de la virtud de la castidad* (1600) can be pulled out of anti-theatrical treatises published across Spain from as early as 1581 to at least as late as the 1670's:

> El teatro de las comedias, como queda referido de San Juan Crisóstomo, es la cárcel y la mazmorra donde echan grillos y cadenas a los ánimos con la lascivia y deshonestidad de las mujeres que allí representan y de las cosas sensuales que allí se dicen. Y estos efectos no son imaginados, sino que por momentos se ven y experimentan. (José de Jesús María 370)

But while the various anti-theatrical arguments found in moralistic texts from the period leverage their negative portrayals of public drama to make their point about the dangers of such spectacles, distinct patterns of rhetorical overlap between the two genres serve to create an important link between them. As will be demonstrated by my analysis of a selection of anti-theatrical treatises from the end of the 16th century to the middle of the 17th, Spanish anti-theatricalists demonstrate a concentration on sights and sounds that rivaled that of contemporary

drama. They, like the *comedias* they targeted, relied heavily on provocative imagery and verbal dexterity in their polemical arguments. Anti-theatrical texts from the period engage in complex constructions of layered images and intricate turns of phrase, both of which are aimed at getting the reader to imagine and in some ways experience grotesque scenes of debauchery, infidelity, deception, imprisonment, and infection in connection to the *corrales.* Their rhetorical strategies display an intriguing visual vibrancy that mirrors the visuality of public spectacles.

This chapter begins investigating the visual and verbal conversance between anti-theatricalism and drama by providing examples of *comedias* that demonstrate the visual and verbal power of contemporary dramatic performances. More specifically, the examples I turn to below concentrate their visual and verbal stimuli in their captivating female characters, a trend that was not uncommon for Spanish theater at the time. Both because of the imaginative nature of their fictional situations, but also as a direct result of their high artistry, many actresses who performed on the stages of the *corrales* during the late 16th and early 17th centuries came to some level of fame. Their visual appeal, with colorful outfits and flashy movements written into each performance, is cited in almost every anti-theatrical treatise published in Spain during the early modern period, making them an apt representation of the trend towards visual captivation produced by early modern Spanish drama. More significantly, much of the extant corpus of early modern *comedias* shows at least some preference for its women over its masculine characters, a trend often demonstrated by the distribution of lines between sexes. Women are often the most powerful speakers on the stages of the *corrales*, with many of their roles designed to highlight their intelligence over their male counterparts. This trend is one reason why women specifically have long been one of the major focuses in Golden Age theater scholarship.

The plays to be studied all make use of a popular female trope in Golden Age drama, that of the *mujer varonil*, or "manly woman", in looking to entertain their audiences. *Mujeres varoniles* captivated Spanish audiences for many reasons, not the least of which was their inherent challenge to traditional gender roles. Women in these roles often dressed up as men, whether to court other women or challenge men to duels, and they hunted, fought, and rode horses with more skill than their male counterparts. Seeing these actions on stage would have been highly entertaining for Spanish audiences to say the least. Lope de Vega, one of Spain's most renowned dramatists, indicates in his treatise on the *comedia nueva*, the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* (1609), that women who dress as men or who take on masculine roles had become integral characters in everyday dramatic practice by the first decade of the 17th century, providing some of the more entertaining elements of contemporary Spanish drama:

> Las damas no desdigan de su nombre,
> y, si mudaren traje, sea de modo
> que pueda perdonarse, porque suele
> el disfraz varonil agradar mucho. (Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo* lines 280-284)

Their resonance with audiences near the end of the 16th century translated to a proliferation of plays in the 17th with *mujeres varoniles* of many different types.

In part, the proliferation of the *mujer varonil* has led to a concentration in more recent years on the role of women in Golden Age theater. Many theater scholars have taken after Melveena McKendrick and other prominent early modernists, pointing to the roles actresses were given in

the *corrales* as measurements of explicit rebellion against restrictive gender norms.[54] While my analysis of the two *serranas* below certainly falls in line with these interpretive frameworks, my emphasis will be on how their movements and articulations of ideas on stage were visually and verbally impressive. As will be demonstrated below, the proto-feminist rebelliousness linked to these women can be attributed as much to their ability to captivate audiences through their visual and verbal appeal as it can be connected to the explicit challenges to traditional gender roles they produce throughout.

Having demonstrated the visual and verbal appeal of *comedias,* I will then turn to contemporary anti-theatrical texts, tracing out similar concentrations on visual and verbal stimulation in anti-theatrical writing from various moralists and theologians during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. While these pieces do not ever fully step into the realm of performance, the way they communicate the dangers of the *corrales* through descriptive imagery and provocative wordplay ultimately sets them on a similar rhetorical plane. They are, in other words, undeniably *dramatic,* creating layers upon layers of striking scenes that ask readers to imagine the effects of dramatic spectatorship in ways that cut close to the imaginative work involved in attending a *comedia.*

Oddly, however, while Spanish anti-theatricalists ultimately demonstrate a strong sense of conversance with contemporary dramatic strategy, the effectiveness of a concentration on the visual and the verbal is much more in doubt for anti-theatricalists than it is for *comedias.* As I will show, the similarities between drama and anti-theatricalism do not translate to similar levels of

[54] See Kurtz, "The 'Agricultura Cristiana' of Juan de Pineda in the Context of Renaissance Mythography and Encyclopedism" (1986); Kluge, "A Hermaphrodite? Lope de Vega and the Controversy of Tragicomedy" (2007); Parolin, "Access and Contestation" (2012); Tigner, "The Spanish Actress's Art" (2012); Boyle, *Unruly Women* (2014) and "Women's Exemplary Violence" (2014); and Bergmann, "Folklore as Queer" (2019). For McKendrick's own contributions, see McKendrick, "The Bandolera of Golden-Age Drama" (1969), "The 'Mujer Esquiva'" (1972), *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age* (1974), *Identities in Crisis* (2002), and "Breaking the Silence" (2004).

success for both genres. Polemical writing aimed at eradicating public drama from Spanish society had little actual effect on *comedias,* acting troupes, or the *corrales* themselves, and no matter how vehemently Spanish anti-theatricalists argued for the eradication of public drama, *comedias* continued to gain popularity for much of the 17th century and beyond. A lack of change in the legislation of the *corrales* in Madrid, the capital and one of early modern Spain's metropolitan centers, is telling in this regard. Madrid's approach to legislating theater companies and performance spaces reveals that the prevalence of imagery and verbal stimulation in anti-theatrical writing had very little effect on the everyday function of drama in early modern Spain, despite there being many anti-theatrical arguments warning of the danger posed by *comedias* to the public. Regulations for dramatic performance changed very little in Madrid from the 1580's to the mid 1640's, while *comedias,* as well as the *corrales* themselves, remained popular among Madrid's paying spectatorship late into the 17th century.

The combination of these factors brings up the question of why there existed such a high level of overlap in rhetorical strategies in the first place. After all, if a general concentration on sights and sounds was not a useful polemical tool, its prevalence as a rhetorical strategy is an oddity that calls for more investigation. One might expect such a strong level of rhetorical conversance to indicate a somewhat level playing field, but this was clearly not the case for early modern Spanish anti-theatricalists. As a result, the productive interplay between opposing sides in the debate surrounding public drama must exist for reasons outside of simple argumentation. Understanding what those reasons are helps paint a clearer picture of the importance of shared relationships between diverse sets of writers across a variety of different genres.

Captivating the Crowd: *Las Serranas de la Vera* and the Appeal of *Comedias*

Two exemplary pieces can be used to demonstrate the visual appeal of the style of drama popular in early modern *corrales.* Both plays take up the popular folk story of *La serrana de la vera,* a story that features one of the more interesting female figures in Spanish folklore. Originally, *La serrana de la Vera* was a murderous woman rumored to live in the mountains of the Extremadura region close to the border with Portugal. The young woman at the center of the story began as an innocent, beautiful girl in a rural town, who was uniquely skilled in masculine activities like hunting, riding, and archery. Unfortunately, she eventually suffers a series of tragic events because of her lack of gender conformity, all of which lead her to her violent lifestyle later on. In one telling, the woman at the center of the story is wronged by the man she is supposed to marry, publicly humiliated by him, and eventually raped by him and his companions. She, believing the worst of the entire male sex because of these heinous crimes, flees to the nearby mountains, using her skills to become a serial murderer whose only goal in life is to avenge herself of the crimes committed against her. She targets any young man travelling near her hideout, luring unsuspecting victims into a cave with the promise of food and drink before cutting off their heads once they fall asleep.

The differences between the two iterations of *La serrana* to be analyzed here, one from the late 1590's by Lope de Vega, and the other from the first decade of the 17th century by Luis Vélez de Guevara, provide some insight into the range visual power leveraged by the *comedia nueva* in general. The two women who represented the *serrana* of legend, Leonarda in Lope's play and Gila in Vélez de Guevara's, could not be more different, and their uniqueness gives a sense of how *comedias* stimulated the senses in a variety of ways. Lope's version, for example, contains what might be thought of as a romanticized vision of the *serrana* in question, with Leonarda retaining

some traditionally feminine characteristics, including a romantic interest in men that ultimately makes her approachable for male suitors. Because of this, she displays a baseline effeminacy that communicates her allure despite her ability to perform masculine tasks or her claims to be at least "medio hombre" (Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 2.27). Leonarda represents what happens when men transgress on their side of the bargain with respect to their female counterparts, setting the tone for future popular female figures like Doña Juana from Tirso de Molina's *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* (1615) and Rosaura from Calderón's *La vida es sueño* (1636) a few decades later. Importantly, this means that Leonarda, despite her violent and bloody actions in the second and third acts, remains somewhat sympathetic for audiences throughout the *comedia*. She does not become a murderess because she feels equal to men or because she has always dreamed of challenging their dominance over the female sex, but because she is wronged by the very system she attempted to put her faith in. Her quest is retributive, aimed at returning to a traditional *status quo* rather than at breaking down gendered boundaries. The inherent critique is therefore introspective: Leonarda presents an example of how far men have fallen rather than one of how far women can push gender boundaries, and her capability reflects a fantasy of what a woman in a similar situation might be able to do were she to have the abilities of a man.

That her success, as well as that of the other two women in Lope's *comedia,* is founded on their ability to captivate audiences and dominate the conversations on stage is a mark of both the visual and aural power of female performers and the mastery of Lope's writing. While Leonarda is absolutely a visually enticing figure, both in her beauty and in her violent behavior, her impact on the performance can be seen just as much in her turns of phrase as in her work with a blade. One measure of this is in how Lope first presents Leonarda to the audience alongside two other women, Teodora and Estela. Leonarda first appears on stage with Teodora and Estela, and the

conversation revolves around an overall lack of faith in men. The play's first line, "¿Que no hay fe en los hombres?", along with the resounding "no" that immediately follows, sets up a lens with which to view the divide between sexes for the rest of the *comedia* (Lope, *La serrana de la vera* 1.1). The doubt shown in the first line is prescient, as the treacherous actions of the play's three male characters, Rodrigo, García, and Carlos, end up producing the *serrana* of legend, and while the first conversation between Leonarda, Estela, and Teodora does not explicitly portray any sort of proto-feminist sense of power in these women, the clear focus on these three characters foregrounds a sense of individualized feminine experience in the minds of the audience.

The tension felt at the outset of the performance between Estela and Teodora, for example, exists only because the two women have distinct personalities that make them unique from one another. The play opens with a philosophical discussion of marriage and men, with each of the three women each taking a turn to provide a singular point of view. Leonarda's opening question tells the audience that something has happened to provoke her distrust in the male sex, while Estela's rapid, one-word response, "No," (Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 1.1) portrays how solidified such negative feelings can become. Her emphatic "No" then sets up a series of questions and responses between Teodora and Estela that portrays the former as skeptical of the latter's lack of trust:

TEODORA: Por uno que visto habrás,
¿todos los hombres agravias?
ESTELA: Pues por éste, si sois sabias,
conoceréis los demás.
Por la muestra, se ve el paño.

TEODORA: No estoy en eso tan diestra.

ESTELA: Y aún, de ordinario, en la muestra
pone el que vende el engaño.
Siempre la buena portada
muestra todo el edificio,
la voluntad el servicio,
y la guarnición la espada,
el silencio, las hazañas;
los ojos muestran los pechos,
la buena cara los hechos
y la lengua las entrañas.
Cargan aquí en nuestra Vera
fruta nuestros mercaderes,
y siempre, si verlo quieres,
es la mejor la primera.
Pues si en todo es lo mejor
no es bien que adelante pase;
cuantos más hombres buscase,
iré de mal en peor. (Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 1.9-32)

All three women are given a sense of depth and difference from the opening moments of the play. Estela is eloquent and above all passionate, while Teodora remains cautious of the negative stance Estela relates. Estela's metaphors connect the men in the scene with the underlying distrust women

are often made to feel, but Teodora's quick, cutting responses challenge her generalizations enough to question who has the more apt viewpoint. Leonarda does not immediately take a side, but is intelligent enough to understand her friend's distress, asking "¿Qué recelo te acobarda? ¿Qué te da, mi Estela, enojos?" (Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 1.35-36).

In contrast, the men who appear immediately after this first conversation provide a negative view of masculinity in large part because they are not afforded any sense of individuality. Upon seeing the women, Rodrigo, Carlos, and García work together to make an exclamation about Estela, Leonarda, and Teodora using a comparison to the Pleiades. Their shared efforts give a sense that these men are multiples of one another, refraining from lending audiences a sense of distinctive traits to help differentiate one from another.

DON CARLOS: ¡Oh, qué gallardas serranas!
DON RODRIGO: ¡Oh, qué villanas tan bellas!
DON GARCÍA: Parecen a las estrellas
que dicen que son hermanas.
DON CARLOS: ¡Qué gentil comparación, 125
siendo esas hermanas siete!

(Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 1.121-125)

Each contribution to the celestial metaphor also complicates the collective image rather than creating three separate viewpoints, an overlap that confuses the servant Galindo: "¡Qué por alto que han echado! Estrellas, cielo…! ¡Quimeras!" (Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 1.149-150). Other factors underline the negative light in which these men are introduced. The image of the

well-known constellation itself is clunky, as the Pleiades were seven sisters, not three; more importantly, the comparison establishes their lack of situational awareness, as the Pleiades' story is one of sexual aggression and fearful flight from unwanted male attention. Their approaches to courtship are similarly tone deaf and repetitive, provoking a feeling of redundancy that only further removes them from any unique or positive characteristics. The women, however, are presented as wonderfully entertaining in their ability to outwit their male suitors.

García goes first, attempting some clever word play relating to love and purchasing in his interaction with Leonarda:

LEONARDA: ¿Habláis conmigo?
DON GARCÍA: Con vos;
que, a esos ojos matadores
quiero comprar mil amores.
LEONARDA: ¿Mil amores?
DON GARCÍA: Sí, por Dios.
LEONARDA: ¿Cómo sabéis que esta tienda
tiene esa mercaduría?
DON GARCÍA: Donde hay luz, serrana mía,
¿quién ha de ignorar que encienda?
LEONARDA: ¿Tienda, mis ojos?
DON GARCÍA: ¿Pues no?
LEONARDA: ¿Y qué es lo que vendo?
DON GARCÍA: Antojos.

LEONARDA: ¿De qué?

DON GARCÍA: De los mismos ojos.

LEONARDA: ¿Yo, antojos?

DON GARCÍA: No, sino yo.

LEONARDA: Pues si los tenéis, hidalgo,

¿por qué los compráis en mí?

DON GARCÍA: Por hallarme ahora aquí,

que es donde perdido salgo.

(Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 1.157-172)

That she only answers with questions reflects her lack of interest in him, even as she maintains the original ploy to see if these men will be honest husbands. The irony in García's flirtatious double-meanings is punctuated by Leonarda's seemingly oblivious nature and her flippant responses. He believes she is flattered by his advances, while she plays with him by asking "¿Por qué los compráis en mí?" The fact that he has approached the wrong woman without knowing it only adds to his foolish image.

Estela's retorts are similarly powerful in their ability to shut down Carlos' advances; they are also much more negative. Openly confrontational, Estela constantly pushes back at whatever Carlos says, challenging his definition of desire, love, and satisfaction.

DON CARLOS: No seáis, serrana, esquiva;

vendedme un favor siquiera.

ESTELA: Si hecho alguno tuviera,

yo os le vendiera, así viva.

DON CARLOS: Que no sabéis qué es favor,
colijo de la respuesta.

ESTELA: ¿Qué vale?

DON CARLOS: Conforme cuesta.

ESTELA: ¿Qué es favor?

DON CARLOS: Gusto de amor.

ESTELA: ¿Amor es gusto?

DON CARLOS: Si es justo.

ESTELA: ¿Qué es amor?

DON CARLOS: Quererse dos.

ESTELA: Pues si yo no os quiero a vos,
aquí no hay amor ni hay gusto.

(Lope de Vega, *La serrana de la vera* 1.173-184)

Clearly outpacing his intelligence with her steady wit, Estela becomes visibly bored by his lackluster attempts at romance. For all her negativity, however, she remains poignant and intelligent, captivating the stage and retaining the spotlight. Her point, "Pues si yo no os quiero a vos, aquí no hay amor hi hay gusto," takes everything Carlos tries to construct in his conversation and turns it on its head, emphasizing an agreeable spunkiness in her character as she easily escapes linguistic collar Carlos attempts to place on her.

The meter used for this first scene, too, adds to its captivating nature. The *redondilla abrazada* is an octosyllabic quatrain with ABBA rhyme scheme, and it was often used for loud,

animated conversations in Golden Age *comedias.* While *redondillas* often appear in scenes where lovers speak with intense emotions, either to dedicate themselves to one other or to have a romantic quarrel, their use in this scene heightens its comedic value through satirizing the common use case for the meter. The three men see themselves as prospective lovers, yet the three women's responses make it clear that these interactions are not as romantic as the men might imagine. In each conversation the *redondillas* accentuate the idea that the women are teasing the men: the women either counter their suitor's propositions by completing their proffered rhyme schemes (Estela, for example, takes away Carlos' ability to complete his quatrain by using both *tuviera* and *viva),* or they communicate that they are staying just out of reach by breaking down the quatrains into single annunciated lines that create distance instead of bringing the characters closer together (Estela's *favor, gusto,* and *amor* all undercut the possibility of her completing Carlos' rhymes in a romantic fashion).

Additional visual stimuli can be found in thinking through the blocking necessary for this scene to be successful, as simply watching Leonarda, Estela, and Teodora from the opening lines and through the close of the first scene would have had an impact all on its own. Men in the play are often irredeemable, both because of the overtly sexual (and rather flat) discussions of the women and because they are ultimately generic to the point that one could almost be substituted for another without shifting the significance of the play. They are purposefully not visually or verbally noteworthy, fading into one another through their nondescription. Almost all the women, on the other hand, are irreplaceable and individually important. From the rhythm of the first shared line between Estela and Leonarda to the shift from passion to stoicism as the men enter the scene, Lope's *La Serrana de la vera* calls for an intricate knowledge of a variety of performative skills, including quick changes to poetic meter, blocking on stage, enunciation, wordplay, inference, and,

perhaps most importantly, timing. In only about a hundred lines, the three actresses establish a set of relationships between themselves and the men, set the tone for the issue at hand, and begin to develop the extended metaphors and allegories related to ideas of coupling and fate that are used time and again throughout the drama.

On top of this, the entrance of three men in the second part of the scene calls for a distinct shift in mood that would be challenging to pull off: Estela works herself into a bit of a fervor with her angst at the baseline incompetence of men while Leonarda and Teodora attempt to anchor her emotional excitement, but all of that must be put aside relatively quickly as they encounter the three subjects of their discussion. The scene calls for quite a bit of range on the part of the actresses if it is to be done compellingly. The women must shove down their feelings and mute their personalities in a way that diminishes their differences, becoming three individual yet substitutable sets of female bait. They mimic the interchangeability of the men, but, unlike theirs, it is an active simplification, creating a sense of layered performance on the part of the actresses. Leonarda, Estela, and Teodora step into their roles with natural grace, and the audience gets to watch as the three clearly intelligent women dumb themselves down to trick their male counterparts. Their success is also telling; Rodrigo, Carlos, and García are trying to put on gallant, heroic personas, but these are quickly seen through and undercut by the women. Leonarda, Estela, and Teodora's performances, on the other hand, go by undiscovered by everyone but the audience.

Watching the actresses on the stages of the *corrales* perform these scenes would have had a massive impact on spectators. At the very least, the three actresses performing these roles would have been stepping into a realm of discourse usually only held by men. Leonarda, Teodora, and Estela are linguistically impressive from the very first lines, and the chance that such rebellion was applauded by the audience demonstrates a wide range of appreciation and response evoked by

Lope's version of the legend. The power of the female protagonists thereby resides less in the overall message of the play and more in the way that the female performers control the sounds of the stage. Notably, Leonarda is rendered speechless in the final scenes, supposedly due to the mercy shown by the male figures who have her surrounded and threaten her with a violent death. Her silence, however, is as much a mark that the foundations of her rebelliousness are linguistic rather than physical as it is a measure of her fear of being executed. Unable to contain a speaking Leonarda, the play forces her to be silent in the final moments, underscoring the roots of her attraction in the process.

In a slightly different approach, Luis Vélez de Guevara's version of *La serrana de la vera* lends insight into how the popularity of individual actresses could be a major factor in audiences' fascination with *comedias.* The play, appearing in 1603, was written with a famous actress in mind, a woman named Jusepa Vaca, whose prominence as one of the leading actresses in Madrid's *corrales* had given her the moniker La Gallarda. Vaca's reputation as a breathtaking performer was almost unequalled among Golden Age dramatists, and both her beauty and her dramatic abilities were praised by numerous influential sources. Known as much for her wittiness as for her physical attraction, she represented the overtly sexualized, siren-like figure anxiously criticized in almost every anti-theatrical work since the *corrales* first started gaining popularity. Moreover, La Gallarda's allure was grounded in more than just her abilities on stage, as her career was ripe with controversy and scandal, much of which had to do with her promiscuity in public and her relationships with powerful men in private. As Margaret Boyle relays,

> Vaca's fame seems to be as much about her abilities as an actress as the public's fascination with her real and imagined extramarital affairs with powerful men, including the Marqués

> de Villanueva and the Count-Duke of Olivares. Vaca stood at the familiar intersection between public adoration and censure, ensuring that the question of whether or not she was a loyal wife was a favorite topic of playwrights, poets, and letter writers of the period including Lope de Vega and Quevedo. The early modern Spanish actress was already a literal site of contestation. (Boyle, "Women's Exemplary Violence" 160)

Vaca's presence alone meant that Vélez de Guevara's *La Serrana* looked to capitalize on the visual appeal of having one of Spain's most glamourous actresses perform in front of crowded theaters. Her physical allure and sexual infamy were both integral to the success of the play, a fact shown by the reward allotted to Vaca's acting company for the success achieved by her performances. Five years after the debut of the *comedia* they were awarded 10,200 maravedís for their work (Sanchéz-Arjona 120), a sum that marked her popularity in Spanish society, regardless of her transgressive characteristics.

Vélez de Guevara's version of *La serrana*, a woman named Gila, only added to the allure of having La Gallarda in the spotlight. The opposite to Leonarda's implicitly traditional sense of gender roles, Gila's character is almost never overtly feminine, even if she is described as beautiful by the men around her. In fact, she is often more masculine than many of the male characters, a pattern demonstrated both by her violent actions throughout as well as by her conversations with male counterparts of the play. Gila presents a shocking barrage of visual and verbal stimuli meant to overwhelm the stage. Not only does she easily overpower the men in the narrative, her speech throughout is brazen and crass, dominating the other characters with a litany of insults and expletives. She actively pursues sexual prospects and remains confrontational up to the point of

her execution, demonstrating a complete gender reversal in lieu of Lope's more traditional Leonarda.

Gila first enters the scene as she returns from a hunting expedition, meeting her future love interest, Don Lucas, as she approaches her family's boarding house. Gila's interaction with her future love interest just after her arrival is one of the many pieces of dialogue that secures her threat to social norms, and her boisterous nature lends insight into how she can be read in terms of her feminine power and visual appeal. Gila's first move is to undermine her father's arrangement with Don Lucas to provide lodging for him and his men, claiming that only she oversees who her and her father provide lodging for. Once again the *redondilla* adds to the scene's comedic significance.

GILA: y busque otro aloxamiento
el alférez o el sargento
para el señor capitán,
porque mi padre no aloxa
sino es a mí solamente,
a su ganado, a su gente,
y al güésped que se le antoja;
y a los soldados, camarada,
aunque el rey se lo soprique,
nunca lo acostumbra. (Vélez de Guevara 1.362-371)

Her unwavering confidence in the face of masculine authority turns aggressive after Don Lucas' response, where he exclaims his disbelief, shouting "¡Oh, qué cansada villana!" Gila's retort is

more cutting, swearing at Don Lucas to the shock of everyone involved: "¡Oh, qué fanfarrón jodío!" (Vélez de Guevara 1.375-376). By defying both her father and the Captain in one scene, Gila undermines two of the most powerful masculine figures in her life, directly challenging their control of the household as well as of the republic. She also actively insults Don Lucas with vibrant expletives. Her unwomanly behavior continues throughout the performance: she belches and continues to curse, she is rude and often confrontational, and she displays none of the later submission shown by Leonarda in the final scenes of Lope's *La serrana de la Vera*. As she claims, not only did she kill the boar she was hunting, but she also had an encounter with a wolf and a bear that ended in both animals being shot (Vélez de Guevara 1.273-335).

The appeal Gila demonstrates in the first scenes are heightened by the tragic trajectory of her character. Gila, like Leonarda, is not defiled by her male suitor, but she is treated poorly even after being offered marriage by Don Lucas. Upon realizing that he has been unfaithful, she vows to kill all the men she encounters, a number that eventually totals over two thousand. When one of those men happens to be a different former lover, she kills him too rather than accept his offer to make her an honest woman, effectively signing the death warrant to be carried out in the final moments of the piece. She is eventually caught and shot to death by a cooperative effort headed by Don Lucas. Her story portrays a woman stepping into the realm of men, encountering members of the opposite sex as equals, and then challenging them for control. Unlike Lope's version, Gila is not meant to develop a sense of injustice in the same way Leonarda does, but to entertain audiences with the most powerfully frightening female character imaginable. This is not a case, as it is with Leonarda, of a woman scorned who happens to have some skill in activities that are traditionally masculine. Her actions throughout the *comedia* push past misdemeanor level transgressions like speaking out of turn or having the final say in who lodges a boarding house,

and her criminality challenges at the *status quo* of gendered power structures. Gila aggressively appropriates masculinity, and her relative success renders her monstrous, both physically and with respect to her sense of identity.

Having Jusepa Vaca in the starring role only added to Gila's allure. Seeing one's favorite actress, a beautiful, intelligent, and dangerously sexual woman like Vaca, playing the part of a soon-to-be executed murderess might have been incredibly entertaining. Vaca's fame made her the perfect figure to play such a controversial female figure, and Gila's eventual death presented a wonderful opportunity for Vaca to show off her skills on stage. Vaca's irresistibility would have paired wonderfully with the call for retribution fulfilled by Gila's punishment, and the combination of her promiscuity and Gila's intensity would have resulted in a captivating culmination to a wildly captivating performance.

Captivating the Crowd: Julia's linguistic prowess in Calderón's *La devoción de la cruz*

On top of the visual allure women in the *corrales* provided for attending audiences, an actress' presence on stage often presented a level of verbal appeal not afforded to their male counterparts. Many popular Golden Age *comedias* emphasized the intelligence of their female characters through a distribution of speech that placed women at the forefront of performance. As Melveena McKendrick's *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age* (1974) relates, "If sex rendered these female characters inappropriate speakers, the circumstances that drive them to speak give them an authority that carried weight. Their eloquence and their reasoning, their evident persuasiveness within the fabric of the play's development and resolution, presented the audience with a clear challenge to the belief that language […was] the exclusive territory of men" (124). Feminine speech, whether because of its inherently rebellious

characteristics, or simply because women did not often get to speak out in the real world, therefore served as one of the more captivating elements in Golden Age *comedias.*

An interesting example comes from Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *La devoción de la cruz*. This play, first published in 1629 but performed often before then, shares some easily recognizable traits with other popular plays from the height of Golden Age drama. The play begins with a disagreement between a young female protagonist, Julia, her father Curcio, and her lover Eusebio, over whether she should be married to the latter man. Curcio does not want his daughter married to Eusebio, knowing secretly that the two are in fact siblings separated at birth, but Julia's love for him is too powerful to stamp out with either verbal commands or physical restraints. Her refusal to follow her father's wishes is met with the threat of being sent to a convent, a possibility that is realized once we find out that Eusebio has killed Julia's other brother, Lisardo, in a duel. Added to the plot is the theme of suspected infidelity on the part of Julia's mother, who Curcio thinks was unfaithful before becoming pregnant with the *comedia's* heroine. Julia is forced into the convent, but her time there is short lived; she quickly escapes, but not before having a confrontation with Eusebio that begins with the implication of pre-marital sex and ends with him running away after recognizing the sign of the cross on her chest, a mark that he shares with the young woman. The next two acts consist of a whirlwind of confession and death scenes before the *comedia* eventually culminates in an intense final moment in which the two recently united lovers are confronted with the truth of their situation.

On the surface the crux of the entertainment value of the play seems to come in Julia's appropriation of traditionally male roles. Julia not only attempts to arrange her own marriage despite her father's or her brother's desires, but she later escapes the convent and becomes a *bandolera,* murdering and fighting her way to reconciliation with Eusebio, who is at this point the

leader of his own band of bandits residing in the nearby forest. Julia's rebelliousness is compounded by the multiplicity of the male figures who can lay claim to controlling her interests; not only does she break her promise to be a "bride of Christ", succumbing to Eusebio's seduction while still inside the convent, but she even refuses Eusebio's dismissal and his rapid departure, vowing to follow him until she is satisfied, regardless of his wish to be left alone. Almost every action she takes eschews some type of patriarchal power.

Melveena McKendrick's reading of Julia's situation argues that moments of speech push at the cultural issues at stake in Calderón's depiction of women in his play:

> Julia's emphatic rejection of the silence and submission demanded of a daughter is an act of mutiny that would have shocked contemporary audiences almost as much as witnessing the young Don Lope de Urea strike his father across the face in Calderón's *Las tres justicias en una*. Hence, in part, Curcio's vicious reaction to her. (McKendrick, *Women and Society* 26)

While the word *could* in place of *would* might allow for a better idea of the spectrum with which a given audience member might reflect on these scenes, the foundational point here remains valid. The events of the play might represent a shocking upheaval of the normal structures of power in an everyday 17th century Spanish family, and the theoretical shock had the capacity to transform into literal shock for members of the audience who might have taken offence at being shown Julia's actions in the performance. A reading in line with anti-theatricalist rhetoric might point to Julia as rebellious and threatening to the *status quo* of Spanish gender norms at the time, using *La devoción de la cruz* as an example of how *comedias* corrupted the public at large. However, what I would

like to emphasize here springs from the interpretations provided by McKendrick, as she stresses the specific use of language in this play as a critical source of feminine rebellion. Julia is a murderous villain by the final scenes in the play, but her threat to the patriarchal figures in her life begins much before she ever holds a sword. Instead, her linguistic rebellion initiates the outrage we see Curcio display from the first *Jornada.* Her outright refusal in words sets the events of the play in motion, catalyzing both her future and Curcio's intense commitment to the conspiracy of her mother's past adultery.

CURCIO: Calla, infame, calla, loca
que haré de aquesse cabello
un lazo para tu cuello
o sacaré de tu boca
con mis manos la atrevida
lengua, que de oír me ofendo!
JULIA: La libertad te defiendo,
señor, pero no la vida:
acaba su curso triste,
y acabará tu pesar,
que mal te puedo negar
la vida que tú me diste;
la libertad que me dio
el cielo, es la que te niego (Calderón 1.599-612).

Not only is this a mark of rebellion in terms of action, but the transgression is enhanced by Julia's inability to remain silent. She speaks out against her father's wishes, prompting Curcio to threaten Julia with both with physical violence and disownment. Hearing her rant against his decision to put her in a convent forces Julia's father reveals his deepest worries involving her mother:

CURCIO: En este punto a creer llego
lo que el alma sospechó:
que o fue buena tu madre
y manchó mi honor alguno (Calderón 1. 613-616).

Her defiant defense of her right to speak reminds him of other feminine transgressions, and his reaction is to berate her to the point of abuse.

Additionally, Julia's large collection of letters to Eusebio point to a linguistically centered rebellion. She confides in Arminda, her maid, over the danger of Curcio or Lisardo finding these letters, revealing her anxiety over what will absolutely be understood as a misuse of speech by the men in her family. When the scene eventually has Eusebio himself steal into Julia's bedchamber, the linguistic threat is combined with a physical one, as her speech threatens to realize itself through the sinful act of sex. This sense is compounded by the arguments that take place between Julia and her father moments later, which are worded through ideas of Julia not being able to think or speak for herself, implying a direct link between speech and act. Her father even goes so far as to tell her to stop arguing, as he has already given his word that she would become the bride of Christ: "Basta, que yo le he mirado, y por tí he dado el sí" (Calderón 1.595-596). Curcio's attempt to strangle his daughter in the final moments of the play also underline the threat of her voice,

attempting even in his final acts to cut off her ability to transgress any further. Her call to heaven for salvation, "Valedme vos, Cruz divina; que yo mi palabra os doy de volverme a mi convento y hacer nueva vida a Dios!" (Calderón 3.2569-2573), is interestingly complex in this regard, as her sanctified apotheosis afterwards seems to highlight her faultlessness in the situation at hand.

Speaking, rather than escaping or perhaps even killing, is the mark of Julia's feminine revolt. Her refusal to give up this power may not be the only thing that causes her death, but it is critical to her sense of empowerment from the very outset of the play, and it determines the other factors of her challenge to gendered hierarchies. By presenting a woman's transgression of social norms through her ability to speak and be heard, she *voices* feminine concerns, capitalizing on a specifically feminine sense of power long before the *bandolera* archetype is overlaid onto Julia's persona. If she can be considered dangerous, it is first and foremost her speech that makes her so, not her appropriation of male actions.

Early Patterns: Spanish Anti-theatricalism in the Late 16th Century

While Spanish anti-theatrical writing in the 16th and 17th centuries certainly did not present readers with alluring figures like Leonarda, Gila, or Julia, moralists who took the time to target *comedias* and the *corrales* can be seen as having pulled from a similar strategy as contemporary drama by targeting readers minds through imagined experiences linked to seeing and hearing. As one of the earliest influential anti-theatricalist writers to publish a treatise after the construction of the first permanent *corral*, Fray Juan de Pineda (1513-1593) provides an excellent example of how moralists captivated their readers through a similar concentration on sights and sounds. Juan de Pineda was a Franciscan professor of philosophy in Córdoba and Seville whose writing centered on theological scholarship and scriptural interpretation. His anti-theatrical stance appears as a

portion of his wide-reaching *Primera parte de los treinta y cinco diálogos familiares de la Agricultura Cristiana* (1581), a "Catechistic, encyclopedic manual the aim of which is the cultivation of the human soul" (Kurtz 191). In the short selection where he takes a stance against *comedias,* he knits together various imagined theater-going experiences in a dazzling display of powerful images. Juan de Pineda's imagery is constructed though dialogue modeled after that of an early classical set of aphorisms.[55] Philaletes and Polycronio, the main characters in this portion of the *Agricultura,* have a conversation that takes a hard stance against *comedias*, touching on all the major critiques of representation described at the start of this chapter. They work through the dishonesty inherent to acting, the implicit idolatry and its offenses to God, the detestable behavior and habits of actors and performers of all types, and the complex cause-and-effect relationship between showing crowds of people sinful behavior and the fear that those individuals will imitate such actions (Juan de Pineda 504).

As is divulged early in the dialogue, Philaletes is advocating for a remedy to the influx of spectacles put on by travelling Italian acting troupes, "De lo que ahora tanto prevalencia en esta tierra" (Juan de Pineda 504). The danger of such individuals is their connection to vice and sin, and Juan de Pineda makes sure to provide some shock value in his choice of phrasing to emphasize the threat. His choice of terms for referring to actors and actresses, for example, colors his claims about the individuals who perform in public spectacles: "Ahora querría yo que mirasen en nuestra tierra cuántos baldíos y chocarreros andan habiendo del modo con que ganan gran dinero y estragan las costumbres de los que asisten a sus representaciones" (Juan de Pineda 504). The terms *Baldíos* and *chocarreros* are meant to have impact on the reader, depicting performers through negatively charged buzz words that incite readers to imagine them as vagabonds. These terms also

[55] See Hermes. Asclepius: The Perfect Discourse of Hermes Trismegistus. Translated by Salaman Clement, Bloomsbury, 2007.

represent just the right timbre of name calling, denigrating theater workers enough to communicate the danger of the situation while remaining witty enough to engage the reader's imagination. The sentence is powerful and creative, but it is not flagrantly aggressive or violent in a way that would derail the dialectical scene. Philaletes and Polycronio may be abusing theater troupes and early *comedias,* but they also retain the base line feeling of a dialogue and continue working through topics related to the controversy in a question-and-answer format. Denigration plays a strong role, but the belittlement does to not push too far in the direction of pure entertainment. Personalized insults filled with colorful language replace the pure syntactic logic of a dialogue, yet in the laundry list of critiques that follows Philaletes maintains a potent balance of roguish insults and dialectical reasoning that is meant to be both instructional and entertaining.

Targeting contemporary performances for the "Deshonestidades que allí tratan y representan," (Juan de Pineda 504) Philaletes connects the fictions of drama with the danger posed to female spectators by arguing that these spectacles "Se encendieron todos tanto en deshonestos deseos," to the extent that women in the audience "se partieron cada uno por su parte a buscar donde apagar sus llamas" (Juan de Pineda 504). Philaletes' claim pushes past making the simple point that the content of public spectacles can be dangerous to women, introducing his readers to descriptions of incensed, impassioned women desperately seeking to relieve themselves from the emotional fervor caused by the events on stage. Juan de Pineda's cultivation of a sense of the threat to the public is presented through his captivating imagery, inviting readers to experience the danger in a carefully constructed mental scene. His rant soon after maintains the combination of evocative and instructional language to varying degrees:

> Más muevan las obras que las palabras, y si de solamente mal oír se viene uno al mal inclinar y a mal desear y a mal obrar, mucho más verná a eso del mal ver espectáculos y por eso sabemos de algunos príncipes paganos de viviendas infernales que habían cometed del ante de sí suciedades indignas de ser dichas para se despertar a las cometer ellos; y otros tenían sus aposentos colgados de pinturas feísimas y de abominaciones carnales por el mesmo fin; y ansí otros príncipes virtuosos hicieron leyes contra tales desvergüenzas, entendiendo los daños que de ellas resultan. (Juan de Pineda 504)

The slippery slope he imagines evokes a sense of danger that is more powerful because of the repetition "al mal inclinar y a mal desear y a mal obrar." The colorful crescendo built by the rest of the rant delights the mind as much as it presents a horrifying sense of public spectacles. Phrases like "Príncipes paganos" and "aposentos colgados de pinturas feísimas" present imaginative twists and turns, giving readers a reason for continuing other than simply to learn about the possible impact of public spectacles. By the time readers have worked their way through "Suciedades indignas," "abominaciones carnales," and "viviendas infernales," the numerous images created almost outweigh the underlying message. The last sentence brings the focus back to the point of the piece, arguing that plays and public spectacles should be outlawed as they had been by past societies.

Juan de Pineda's imagining of the sins of public drama point to an understanding of the influential nature of visual experience, a concept foundational to both drama and anti-theatricalist sentiments across early modern Europe. More than this, his scenes of disaster and abomination have a theatrical tinge to them. His descriptions, while not scenes in and of themselves, take on the impression of interactions on stage. They *feel* like visual experiences one might have in a

theater space, evoking an imagined experience that puts readers into similar positions as spectators. Readers picture each detail as it is described, processing the images as they occur in the same way they might watch a play in a local *corral.* Simply arguing this last point is not enough, as readers must imagine the specific scenarios developed by Philaletes to have the lesson sink in properly.

Juan de Pineda, of course, is not the only example of this trend towards the visual. Pedro de Ribadeneira (1527-1611), another moralist from the late 16th century who made room in his works to criticize contemporary drama, also demonstrates a healthy appetite for descriptive imagery and delightful phrasing in his arguments about *comedias*. Ribadeneira was born in Toledo in 1527 and later became a Jesuit priest and a close companion of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Known throughout his life as a renowned public speaker and an accomplished writer, Ribadeneira's religious career took him all over the Hapsburg empire during the latter half of the 16th century, filling a variety of positions across Belgium, Flanders, Palermo, and even England. His most popular written work was as a hagiographer, completing the *Life of Loyola* in 1572, but he is also often recognized for his *Tratado de la religion* (1595), a counter argument to Machiavelli's *The Prince*. A lesser-known work, the wide-reaching moralistic *Tratado de la tribulación* (1589), concentrates on contemporary forms of entertainment. In the chapter that speaks directly to the dangers of the *corrales*, "De los medios que toman los malos para salir de las tribulaciones," Ribadeneira reveals "una severa censura de las representaciones teatrales" (Cotarelo Y Mori 522). This severity is linked to Ribadeneira's outlook on the current state of public entertainment, one that, like Juan de Pineda's, featured Thomistic interpretations of licentiousness when it came to shows and spectacles. Entertainment for "Al vulgo," is necessary, both moralists acknowledge, but contemporary drama "Es dañosa a las buenas costumbres y destruidora del vigor y esfuerzo

varonil, con tanta ofensa de Dios […]," and thereby does not qualify as acceptable entertainment (Pedro de Ribadeneira 103).

Ribadeneira's emphasis on the danger to Spanish customs is a common trope in early modern anti-theatrical writing, but the way he focuses his readers' attention also reveals the increased level of showmanship popular within his religious order. Even more so than was the case with Juan de Pineda, his diction intensifies the situation and pushes past a more simplified approach to argumentation. As he says, not only do *comedias* "se estragan las costumbres y se arruinan las repúblicas, […] pero hácese la gente ociosa, regalada, afeminada, y mujeril; gástese mucha hacienda en sustentar una manada de hombres y mujercillas perdidas" (Pedro de Ribadeneira 102). The pleasant, flowing rhythm of his syntax gives his argument an entertainment value that can be somewhat disconnected from the ideas he communicates, demonstrating Ribadeneira's prowess at constructing well worded, powerful sentiments as much as it tries to relate the dangers of the *corrales.* Even still, Ribadeneira's methodology balances didacticism with theatricality, as his depiction of the threat to gendered hierarchies that is at least as syntactically entertaining as it is relevant to the discussion of public spectacles.

Syntactic capabilities are not the only performative elements found in Ribadeneira's repertoire, however. One of the more captivating aspects of his writing comes from the parallels he creates between *comedias* and infection. The connection to disease was commonly used to critique spectacles and performers across all 16th century European theater cultures, and it would continue well into the 17th. It was grounded linked to anxieties over spread of ideas in theatergoing audiences, with depictions in anti-theatrical writing focusing on an inability to defend oneself against the allure of fiction. Ribadeneira cites Saint Cyprian to point to what happens when an individual is shown scenes of patricide or adultery as an example, claiming that the portrayal of

such actions in a fictional setting has the chance of prompting imitation on the part of the audience. As he says, “Todos los hombres de cualquiera edad que sean, oyéndolas, entienden que se puede hacer lo que en algún tiempo se hizo” (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522-3). This sentiment is echoed with more force in Pedro de Ribadeneira’s citation of Lactantius, whose *Institutiones Divinae* (c. 311 CE) looks to explain Christian doctrine in the context of a society whose roots in paganism were still prescient in the memories of many. Lactantius is cited targeting actors and performers explicitly:

> Los gestos y los meneos de los representantes, qué otra cosa enseñan sino torpezas? ¿Qué harán los mozos y las doncellas cuando ven que en tales cosas se representan sin empacho y vergüenza, y son vistas de todos con aplauso y alegría? Cierto que con lo que ven son amonestados de lo que pueden haces, y se inflaman en torpe concupiscencia, la cual con ninguna cosa más se enciende que con la vista. (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522)

In providing this link to disease, Ribadeneira opens a well-understood avenue of descriptive comparisons that communicate the danger of infection inherent to these types of performances. Already lost in a career intricately linked to sin, robbery, murder, and other despicable actions (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522), the actors spread a disease of moral transgression, cultivating the more nefarious parts of spectators’ souls and leading them to sin. Among the list of carefully constructed descriptions are “pestilencia de la república,” “fuente y manantial de todos los males,” “cátedra de pestilencia,” and “escuela de incontinencia,” as well as the incredibly interesting, if not directly linked to a sickness, “obrador de lujuria” (Pedro de Ribadeneira 523). Moralists like

Ribadeneira fretted over the implications of a wide-spread moral epidemic, with the innocence and fallibility of spectators warranting their concern.

These connections between plague, pestilence, and witchery, cultivate a lively set of imagined experiences that link Ribadeneira's arguments to *comedias* themselves. Reading even small sections of the *Tratado de la tribulación* is enough to create a wide range of imagined scenes, all of which cast public spectacles in an outright villainous light with respect to contemporary society. On top of this, Ribadeneira's vague connections between infection, performance, and sin are made more dangerous by a sense of the insatiable appetite audiences conceived for spectacles. Taking women as his focal point, he details how contemporary performances are full of lascivious women who have sold their honesty to be on stage, and whose performances are rife with nothing but bad words and overly sexual gestures. Importantly, Ribadeneira, along with many of the other moralists to be studied in this chapter, chooses to attack women in a way that runs counter to their portrayals on stage. Looking to erase whatever intelligence their roles lend them, Ribadeneria treats actresses as thoughtless, irrational symbols of sex and sin:

> Pues las mujercillas que representan comúnmente son hermosas, lascivas, y que han vendido su honestidad, y con los meneos y gestos de todo el cuerpo y con la voz landa y suave, con el vestido y gala, a manera de sirenas encantan y transforman los hombres en bestias. (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522-3)

Ribadeneria reacts to the allure of these women with a clear sense of disgust, starting with a common slur for sex workers and building to a description of women selling their honesty to seduce and ultimately control men. Using Salvian, he connects this trend to the devil, claiming that the irresistibility of such women is a tool used to snare unaware individuals and trick them into

sinning (Pedro de Ribadeneira 523). More importantly, the descriptions that link performance to witchery and disease compound the potential lack of agency in audiences by imagining situations in which the flow of sinful ideas cannot be controlled once incubation has taken place. The public's appetite for spectacles adds to the drama of the scene being created, revealing a tendency to mis-identify the root of the issue and ignore potential solutions: "La causa porque los malos no se aprovechan de las tribulaciones ni hallan alivio y consuelo en ellas es porque no buscan donde se debe buscar, ni aciertan a dar en la vena de sus trabajos" (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522). Instead, he argues, spectators' actions only make matters worse: "los que toman son redes con que se enlazan y multiplican sus culpas y doblan sus penas, que son efetos de ellas" (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522). Evidence does not come from any contemporary examples of popular practice, but from scripture, including details from the plagues in Egypt, the faults of the Philistines in taking the Ark, and the inattention of Saul to God's dismay despite the advice given to him from David (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522). In each case, the author argues, the individuals in question only needed to realize that their salvation was to be found in placating God and in following the rules as set forth in the Old Testament: "Y no entendían que el remedio de su mal era aplacar a Dios" (Pedro de Ribadeneira 523). He then updates the vision of sin to reflect contemporary practices of public spectacles, creating a sense of *comedias* consuming the hearts of audiences:

> Por esto cuando los tales se ven congojados se dan a conversaciones profanes, a juegos, a banquetes, a solaces y comedias, y andan todo el tiempo entretenidos y embelesados en fiestas y en regocijos, porque con ellos se divierten, o se olvidan de la pena que carcome y consume el corazón. (Pedro de Ribadeneira 522)

The issue, in other words, is not with imitation on stage, but with imitation *off* it, as these types of entertainment allow audiences to imagine grisly, violent, and often morally unacceptable actions with more clarity than they would otherwise, opening new avenues for sin in individuals who might not have done so had they not witnessed such things in the *corrales.* That the ability of such spectacles to have these effects remains vague and quasi-supernatural only adds to the captivating image of Spanish theater Ribadeneira works to invoke through his writing. Pushing his treatise to entertain through its syntactic and rhetorical creativity, Ribadeneira reveals in the *Tratado de la tribulación* why he was considered one of the better rhetoricians of his time and how anti-theatricalism looked to please its readership to keep them captivated and wanting more.

Marco Antonio de Camos' (1543-1606) anti-theatrical arguments in his work, the *Microcosmia y gobierno universal del hombre Cristiano, para todos los estados y cualquiera de ellos,* continues the pattern set by Ribadeneira and Juan de Pineda. Published in 1592, Marco Antonio de Camos' text is a moral invective that also seeks to challenge Machiavellian approaches to politics prevalent at the time. This book, subdivided into three main parts, features a series of dialogues between characters clearly named to invoke a sense of polarized worldviews: Benavente, Turritano, and Valdeiglesia partake in a conversation over the proper way to run a republic, beginning with the most important role, the king, and working down through the various levels of society. The title lends insight to the form of argumentation employed by the text, as Camos is true to the *Microcosmia* concept, often reverting to the idea of the different sections of the government, clergy, and public at large as different body parts that make up a whole living entity. The king represents the brain, lower officials and magistrates are linked to various limbs and other organs, the public to the body, etc. The extended use of the metonymic logic of the piece establishes a link between knowledge and agency throughout the conversation, with the majority of claims having

to do with the responsibility of officials handling what are called “enemigos publicos.” It is this link that points directly acting troupes and the *corrales* as public institutions, the same types of concerns cited by Juan de Pineda and Pedro de Ribadeneira (Marco Antonio de Camos 139-154).

The move to convert the state into a conceptual body also marks Camos’ attempt to captivate his audiences through imagery. The figurative logic used within is not unique to Camos, as microcosmic structures that compared different social or political systems to body parts were a popular route for rhetorical argumentation throughout the 16th century. Its presence in his *Microcosmia*, however, underlines the push by Camos to provide an interesting way of thinking through the challenges presented by contemporary life, and it fits nicely within this study of *comedias* as a relatively new form of entertainment. It stages the construction of a body, concentrating on the visual and capitalizing on its efficiency in communicating the ailments caused by public spectacles.

Marco Antonio de Camos’ explanation that local magistrates can be linked to the ears of a given conceptual state body, highlights this trend, as the images of these individuals listening and filtering information back to authority figures immediately provides imaginative material for readers to work through. This comparison is given some depth at the beginning of the twelfth dialogue, with the three main characters discussing what it means to truly fulfill such a role with the best interests of the entire body in mind. The crux of the issue, it seems, has to do with control over how much should be transmitted back to these authority figures, represented as the head and brain. One interpretation, given by Benavente, cites a statue from ancient Sparta that portrayed Apollo with four ears, pointing to the power of such a wide avenue of transmission. A multiplicity of ears translates directly to improved understanding and more agency, as is demonstrated by the statues’ matching number of hands (Marco Antonio de Camos 141). “Los Creteses”, on the other

hand, “pintaban a su dios sin orejas” in a similar concept of power, this time signaling the independence of the brain, and therefore figures of the highest authority (Kings, God, etc.) with respect to others’ thoughts or orders (Marco Antonio de Camos 141). In both cases ears are a critical mechanism in the ordering of the world occupied by the state, and in both cases the metaphorical imagining takes on its own theatrical momentum. Readers think through the problem within the confines of Camos’ logic of the body, a methodology that highlights how the extended metaphor cultivates cultivate interest through visual imagery.

From here, Marco Antonio de Camos delves into the issue of public spectacles. The question of the danger posed to audiences from the *corrales* and the duties of local officials as the ears of the state comes in a bit of a forced moment from Valdeiglesia, who begins to work into a discussion of whether it is the responsibility of these officials to protect communities from the harm threatened by outsiders in a contemporary society. These ideas quickly shift to a discussion of the role of entertainment in provoking and exacerbating “pecados publicos,” pointing to the responsibility of public officials to curb negative behavior.

> Aunque no alabo ni tengo por Bueno, de que esto se haga en ninguna manera, poniéndose en peligro de pactar, porque está claro que, del entrar y salir las mujeres, cuales quiera que ellas sean […], en los aposentos de los hombres, nacen grandes inconvenientes, ofensas de Dios, y notables escándalos. Pero no a todos pueden prevenir los ministros de justiciar: por lo cual principalmente se les encarga, que tengan cuenta con castigar pecados públicos, y quitar las ocasiones que suele a ver en la república para ellos. (Marco Antonio de Camos 148)

As is the case with Pedro de Ribadeneira, the critiques of entertainment move through some of the more well-known commentaries from religious figures in the history of the church, including St. Augustine and St. Thomas, along with some other respected classical moralists like Cato and Seneca. The crux of the criticism can be seen in a citation of Aristotle, whose eradication of poets marks an important precedent for Valdeiglesia:

> Hablando Aristóteles de los chocarreros y jugadores dice, que como están continuamente puestos en fiestas y banquetes, placeres y pasatiempos, no se ocupan jamás en considerar los preceptos de filosofía: de suerte, que por maravilla se halla entre ellos hombre modesto, ni Bueno. Lo cual, si era reprehensible a ley de Filosopho, que juzgáis será a ley de Cristiano. (Marco Antonio de Camos 148)

Although Marco Antonio de Camos only spends a small portion of his *Microcosmia* to imagining how *comedias* have some part in the declining morals in Spain, his critique is more powerful considering how he updates the images of the public enemy represented by actors and acting troupes. For example, the musicians, actors, and other contemporary performers, according to this author, often did not go to mass, and therefore should not be allowed to take communion (Marco Antonio de Camos 149). Additionally, the new-found performative dances that were becoming popular as inter-act shows, such as the *Zarabanda*, were not only scandalous and lascivious, but were conceived by the devil himself (Marco Antonio de Camos 149). He concludes by reiterating that stopping such spectacles is crucial to keeping the imagined body of the state morally sound, bringing readers back to the image of a physical body before moving on to other important topics.

These three texts show a considerable amount of repetition and overlap in terms of their general opposition to public spectacles, but their approaches to keeping their instruction delightful to their readers reveal distinct features that allows for individual consideration. All three authors leverage powerful concepts of sin and images of the devil's influence to cultivate interest in their readers, but each does so in a slightly different, equally captivating, manner. Pedro de Ribadeneira capitalizes on the disgust provoked by his links to disease and infection, while Jose de Pineda and Marco Antonio de Camos use formal elements to present a quasi-theatrical sense of dialectic. Both Camos and Juan de Pineda also develop separate strategies within their dialogues to layer imagery and imagined experience for their readers. Camos' metonymic metaphors condense the complexity of the issue into a more tangible and approachable format, distilling the subjectivity of what makes a society better or worse into a question of what helps or harms a single body, while Pineda's erudition takes on euphuistic qualities that provide a poignant display of linguistic and syntactic acrobatics. All these patterns highlight the necessity of cultivating interest in other ways than simply arguing the case against the *corrales* and public spectacles in general, revealing a common strategy across early Spanish anti-theatricalists that focused on competing with drama through its ability to entertain audiences through sights and sounds.

The Pattern Persists: Anti-theatricalists and Imagery in the Early 17th Century

While Juan de Pineda, Pedro de Ribadeneira, and Marco Antonio de Camos provide a sense of how anti-theatricalism co-opted the visual power of drama at the early stages of the *corrales*, analysis of anti-theatrical writing in the 17th century reveals a continued shared concentration on sights and sounds even as *comedias* became a predominant form of public entertainment in Spanish metropolitan centers. One of the more influential anti-theatricalists from the early modern period,

Carmelite Friar José de Jesús María (formerly Francisco Quiroga Arias) shows as much in his *Primera parte de las excelencias de la virtud de la castidad* (1600). The *Primera Parte* concentrates on the dangers of public spectacles in a section titled "Como el uso de las comedias destruye la honestidad de la república y ofende las leyes divinas y humanas, y el piadoso sentimiento de los Doctores sagrados" (José de Jesús María 368). It begins by addressing drama's visual power directly, creating tension between two images to represent the false confidence audiences often have in attending *comedias.* Interestingly, José de Jesús María does so through contradictory images of two women. He first romanticizes the influence held by virtuous women in early modern Spanish society, describing the ideal woman as having a "Rayo hermosísimo del resplandor interior del alma que está adornada felizmente con la gracia" that seems to spread with natural and powerful force to touch on all those who bear witness to its image (José de Jesús María 368). He then juxtaposes this purely positive image by depicting the poisonous nature of "Mujercillas desdichadas," a derogatory phrase aimed in this case at any woman who would choose to perform on stage in the *corrales* (José de Jesús María 368). With these women, who are clearly the presented as the opposite of the virtuous examples he begins with, "ponzoña sensual" takes the place of virtue, and the positivity of the infectious power held by virtuous women becomes dark and ominous. Once again women are treated with little respect and little consideration for the power and intelligence they displayed on stage. Instead, the women connected to the *corrales* were lascivious and dangerous, infecting "al corazón de las personas honestas" with "la sangre deshonestísima" (José de Jesús María 368). The charged language continues for several lines, actively invoking images related to suffering, sin, and inappropriate desire in the minds of his readers:

> De aquí viene la triste inquietud con que sale de la comedia la mayor parte de los que la oyen. De aquí los deseos fogosos de solicitar a estas miserables, de aquí darles joyas y preseas, y de aquí el andar en su seguimiento desalentados y perdidos. (José de Jesús María 368)

Just as natural virtue spreads through a point of contact between the soul of a righteous woman and that of any man who sees her, José de Jesús María imagines a scene in which the poison of sin and debauchery infects those who visit the *corrales*, resulting in a "Triste inquietud" (José de Jesús María 368). Part of the danger, in a similar sense as is presented by Pedro de Ribadeneira, comes from the inability of spectators to fight off the infection. It does not matter if an audience member is attending such performances with a predisposition for sin or whether that individual is attending for the first time with little in the way of expectations, the very nature of being exposed to the visual content of a *comedia* is enough to overwhelm whatever virtue exists in the body. The spectator has no choice, making the performance dangerous in the same way a plague or outbreak of measles might. The ties to plague would have had even more significance when the *Primera Parte* was first published, as Castille had suffered immensely from plague for a number of years leading up to the turn of the century.[56]

Conversely, the underlying importance of imitation cannot be ignored. As is the case with many of the early anti-theatrical writers covered in this study, part of the danger of representation is society's inclination towards imitation and mimicry. For José de Jesús María, imitation is dangerous because it was a powerful tool in navigating life's circumstances. Whatever can be

[56] For an excellent look into everyday life during the time of plague, as well as for how plague factored into public opinion, see Ruth Mackay's *Life in a time of pestilence: the great Castilian plague of 1596-1601*. Cambridge University Press, 2019.

witnessed has the possibility of being imitated, including the nefarious, sinful acts performed by contemporary performers in *comedias.* Imitation represents an active, conscious step away from the safety provided by Catholic doctrine and into a realm dominated by paganism, idolatry, and even the devil himself. Audiences are liable to imitate the actions they have seen performed on stage, leading to adultery, lascivious behavior, and a general loss of morals. What is worse, such imitation also retains its natural tendency towards infection: in short, imitation always causes more imitation. In the end, a compounded sense of sin, desire, infection, and contamination arises as the consequence of allowing *comedias* to be a part of any society.

José de Jesús María's solution is to describe what happens when audiences imitate what they see on stage, attempting to produce a negative sense of such an experience in the imaginations of his readers. After moving through an invective against pagan performers and dramatists in ancient Greece and Rome, he takes the time to refute the arguments in favor of the theater that were codified in a 1598 *Memorial* sent to King Phillip II advocating for the re-opening of the *corrales* after a period of closure prompted by a death in the royal family. In theory, José de Jesús María's focus on the document sent to Phillip II presents a bit of anti-theatricalism that deliberately approaches the subject of drama from a contemporary understanding of drama in the 17th century. This is not, in other words, an overarchingly general invective that treats the question of the *corrales* as just one form of entertainment that is causing a decline in Spanish morals, but a move to address contemporary performances in the *corrales* through their current and ongoing effects on major metropolitan populations.

In practice, the main difference between José de Jesús María and his predecessors can be seen in his unique approach to building significance through visual imagery and descriptive phrases. His first point is a review of St Thomas' claims about the necessity of light-hearted

entertainment as relief from the stresses of life, attempting to counter the first argument provided in the *Memorial* to the King. This section breaks itself into three sub-claims: in order to fall under Saint Thomas' categories of acceptable entertainment, there must be (1) honorable people employed in entertaining, (2) a general feeling of recreation, and (3) the presence of laudable actions for society to emulate. José de Jesús María points to the women who performed in *comedias* as a measurement of the lack of all three characteristics, claiming that these women do not represent honorable performers, but instead were "mujercillas deshonestas," dishonest prostitutes who rob the public of their money in large quantities through "las cosas sensuales que allí se dicen". These women, according to José de Jesús María, provide nothing but dangerous, lascivious movement onstage (369-371). Such a concentration on the danger of witnessing the actions of these "mujercillas lascivias" also appears in the fifth argument, which takes issue with the claim that *comedias* give good examples and teach valuable lessons. His point here is that whatever is learned cannot be of use in Spanish society, as these entertainments only teach that which is dishonorable and lacking morals.

As he continues, his invective against female performers develops into a variety of images and short imaginative scenes: first, the appearance of alluring, adulterous women onstage places spectators in danger of imitating such figures, leading to the loss of morals among female audience members: "Se han visto infinitos de doncellas que perdieron su castidad, y casadas que se hicieron deshonestas, y otras mujeres que se fueron a la mancebía movidas de ser representar cosas torpes en las comedias" (José de Jesús María 374). The use of the verb *ver* clearly centers the argument on the visual, and the following critique assures that these entertainments, along with the *Zarabanda* dance style popular as an *entremés,* are placed alongside an intensifying feminization of Spanish men, alleging that it turns them into useless shadows of masculininty, "Hombres

muelles, afeminados, e inútiles para todas las empresas arduas y dificultosas" (José de Jesús María 374). On top of this, the description of an infinite number of "doncellas que perdieron su castidad" is also visually complex, asking readers to both imagine one or two of these types of women, and to imagine an *un-imaginable* number of them plaguing the cities of contemporary Spain.

Feminine transgression continues in his sixth point, where José de Jesus María turns to *Leviticus* to contend with the actions of some performers on-stage who enact romantic scenes for the audience. Taking issue with the adulterous actions presented by the possibility of two performers kissing on stage, he argues that often the woman involved would be married to someone other than the man she interacts with. He then envisions this scene taking place in *corrales* across Spain, making use of an infinite possibility of licentiousness while honing-in on the necessity of purity and cleanliness for public entertainment. José de Jesús María repeats this strategy in his contention of cross-dressing later on, in which he notes that *Deuteronomy* 22 forbids women from dressing in men's clothing, once again giving his readers imagined visual material to consider as they read (José de Jesús María 374).

The weight of José de Jesús María's impressionable imagery is compounded by the other three points of criticism opposing the *Memorial* (as the tenth is merely a reprint of another critic's thoughts on the matter), all of which concentrate on the familiar theme of infection. The strongest of these comes in the third argument for banishing *comedias,* which counters a claim made in the *Memorial* that even if *comedias* are unnecessarily obnoxious, and are therefore a form of social disease, this does not mean that they cannot be remedied or cured in some way to fit the society in which they propagate. The implicit point is that one would not remove a sick portion of the body to save the parts that have yet to show signs of infection. José de Jesús María jumps on this,

providing an image of such a surgery and arguing that it is in fact the more medically sound approach to infection:

> Esta razón, aunque tiene apariencia justa, estriba en tan falsos fundamentos, que, con darles vueltas, al contrario, está respondido a ella […] que cuando algún miembro está ya podrido, se corta y entierra, porque no corrompa é inficione todo el cuerpo, y lo mismo es necesario que se haga en este […] conviene cortarle y sepultarle, porque no inficione los demás miembros sanos. (José de Jesús María 372)

The concentration on infection appears as an implicit worry in the second of his ten points as well. Worded much less pointedly in terms reflecting sickness and disease, this section aims to counter the sentiment that *comedias,* though "excesivo," were not so bad as to warrant being altogether removed from society. The author restates the viewpoint portrayed in the *Memorial:*

> La segunda razón que alegan en favor de las comedias es que, aunque haya exceso en el ejercicio de los actos humanos, no por eso se han de prohibir si no son de suyo ilícitos, y así tampoco las comedias, aunque haya exceso en el uso de ellas, y que por ser entretenimiento útil todas las repúblicas bien ordenadas las admitieron. (José de Jesús María 371)

José de Jesús María assures readers that such a sentiment seems to be based in solid reasoning, but he goes on to point out that the majority *comedias* have so many "Perniciosos excesos, y por el consiguiente muchos y graves pecados" (José de Jesús María 371), as to warrant being labeled

illicit, even if the art in and of itself is not sinful. He then counters the last point made in the *Memorial*, that many admired societies allowed spectacles and actors, by listing the *repúblicas* that banished those same spectacles from their lands entirely. While not explicitly a point that compares *comedias* to disease, the idea of banishment and quarantine plays a subtle, yet important role:

> Antes las repúblicas bien morigeradas y cuidadosas de la honestidad y bien común desterraron de ellas los teatros y representaciones como ocasión vehemente de la corrupción de las costumbres. (José de Jesús María 371)

The danger, José de Jesús María indicates, cannot be controlled, as is argued implicitly by the *Memorial*. It is not a matter of small outbreaks of disorder than can be easily controlled and written off as society's natural inclination to revelry, but an epidemic that threatens to erode foundational values and customs in Spanish society. *Comedias* are to be treated like a plague and denied a foothold with the utmost seriousness for threat of infecting the whole population.

In the eighth contention the metaphor for infection shifts to compare actors and snakes, alleging the content portrayed onstage to be venomous rather than infectious. Here once again his argument builds from a foundation of visual imagery:

> La comedia, así en la farsa como en los entremeses, está vomitando ponzoña a borbollones en los circunstantes, y abrasándolos en sensualidad con sus acciones y palabras deshonestas, que es veneno de mayor malicia que el de todas las serpientes. (José de Jesús María 380)

The verbs *abrasar* and *vomitar* are explicitly visual, causing audiences to imagine vomiting and engulfing sensuality before moving into a connection to snakes and venom, a parallel that also takes its power from the imagined experience of seeing a snake and watching it bite. While venom and infection have substantial differences, the changes to the metaphor reflect relatively little change in the aims or logic of the piece. Venom, like an infection, begins locally yet is globally threatening in terms of a body, it shuts down important functions and patterns that regulate day to day operations, and it can be seen as a dangerous outside force that requires caution and distance to properly avoid. In fact, the move to broaden the threat here demonstrates good writing, in the sense that the turn towards venom presents an equally potent, yet distinct image of fear. Infection's danger is silent and creeping, yet it is for the most part passive. The fear of infection is related to that of trauma, in that much of the mental anxiety comes from its innocuous beginnings: one never knows when infection takes hold until it is too late to take preventative action. Fear of infection is specific to the combination of active invasion and a seemingly passive and muted point of origin. It is also difficult to imagine. Venom, however, necessitates physical contact and carries with it the idea of visual and physical surprise. It parallels the helplessness of infection but narrows the time between the threat and its effects, presenting a prescient anxiety of what might happen in the present. These subtle differences give breadth to the danger *comedias* represent, while both metaphors maintain a relatively equal amount of concentration on visual imagery to communicate the overall threat to society.

Jesuit historian Juan de Mariana's (1536-1624) *De Spectatulis* (1609) continues the trend by barraging readers with a plethora of images in his attempts to lure them away from the dangers of the stage. Originally only a small section of a larger treatise titled *De Rege* (1598), Juan de

Mariana's critique of the *corrales* became one of the first treatises to be entirely dedicated to the eradication of *comedias*. His title recycles that of classical writer Tertullian, whose 2nd century *De Spectatulis* was foundational to almost every piece of anti-theatrical criticism studied in this work. This, along with its concentration on the visual and its status as one of the most cited pieces of Spanish anti-theatricalism, makes it an important checkpoint for any study of the controversy surrounding Spanish *comedias* at the time.

Like his Carmelite counterpart, Juan de la Mariana makes use of some of the same arguments seen in the earliest of anti-theatrical treatises in early modern Spain. The appeal to imagery in *De Spectatulis*, however, is heightened substantially from both the late 16th century moralists and his contemporaries. Much of the significance created by his rhetorical strategies is communicated through language that looks to cultivate powerful images and imagined experiences in his readers. In Mariana's own words, the purpose of *De Spectatulis* is to "Probar que la licencia y Libertad del teatro […] no es sino una oficina de deshonestidad y desvergüenza, donde muchos, de toda edad, sexo y calidad, se corrompen," (Juan de Mariana 430). The image of an office of dishonesty cultivates a sense of an active, intentionally malignant influence on audiences by performers in the *corrales*, portraying the *corrales* as somewhere people gather to hold meetings on how to corrupt the public. Actors and actresses are imagined as plotting the logistics of sin, clearly communicating Mariana's penchant for the dramatic. The critique following, that "con representaciones vanas y enmascaradas" viewers learn "vicios verdaderos," (Juan de Mariana 430) only adds to the image, giving the evil actors employed in the business of sin a uniform with which to operate. The next sentence multiplies the flow of imagery, with Juan de Mariana adding layers both by addressing the visual power of performance and through evoking a third image for his readers: "Amonéstaselas lo que pueden hacer, y enciéndanse en lujuria, la cual principalmente por

los ojos y orejas, se despierta" (Juan de Mariana 430). The awakening of witchery in audiences is provocative and specific, producing a scene in readers minds where they imagine not only opening their eyes but also the distinct feeling of coming to consciousness after a period of sleep. That the awakening is detrimental and perverted gives this section more impact, creating a tragic moment in the minds of his readers in which the true experience of a *comedia* is brought to light.

The idea of awakening returns as Juan de Mariana discusses the danger posed by women, capitalizing on the dual significance of the verb *despertar*, which connotates both the experience of awakening from sleep and physical arousal more generally. Painting a picture of the perverse "Mujeres de excelente hermosura, de singular gracia de meneos y posturas," he complains that their illicit and scantily dressed performances bring out the most shameful parts of male society, claiming that the sight of one of these women can awaken/arouse men to corruption (Juan de Mariana 431). That the corruption and its awakening can be both sexual and Platonic is communicated through the plethora of provocative imagery he conceives.

It is unsurprising that Juan de Mariana turns to women to make his point in this section. As was indicated by the short study of Lope and Vélez's *Serranas de la vera*, much of the visual allure of the *corrales* stemmed from the impressive nature of the women associated with *comedias.* Tellingly, women also make up much of the imagery cultivated in *De Spectatulis.* The eighth chapter, aptly titled "Que las mujeres no deben salir ´las comedias a representar," inverts an image of birth to depict actresses as prostitutes:

> Este es pues el primero y mayor daño que nace de esta libertad y abuso de las representaciones donde se hallan mujeres; […] las tales mujeres que andan con los representantes y los acompañan, son ordinariamente deshonestas y se venden por dinero;

> porque ¿Cómo es posible estando rodeadas de tantos hombres lujuriosos y ociosos de día y noche vivir honestamente? (Juan de Mariana 432)

His extreme misogyny creates multiple layers of complex imagery to work through. From the birth of abuse to a forceful herding of women to an image of them being surrounded by lecherous men, the significance of the implicit claim about actresses and their relation to sex workers is communicated through descriptive insults that evoke powerful imagery. He even builds on these images, claiming that a woman who would remain virtuous in such circumstances would be nothing short of a miracle, as likely as water lighting on fire (Juan de Mariana 432). The men, for their part, cannot be trusted because of the influence of their lascivious female counterparts. What wont they do, he asks rhetorically, before following up with another evocative bit of wordplay: "¿De qué engaños no usan para hartar el apetito encendido?" (Juan de Mariana 432). *Engaños*, or tricks, are only ever a short step away from ideas of seeing and perceiving, and even the idea of an incendiary appetite has some visual significance. The remainder of *De Spectatulis* continues in this fashion, racking up an impressive, if overzealous, assortment of images related to the dangers of *comedias.*

Two later critics from the next two decades, Pedro Puente Hurtado de Mendoza (1578-1641) and Fray Jerónimo de la Cruz (1587-1654), solidify the trend into the 1630's. Cotarelo y Mori's treatment of the younger author, Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, begins by referencing two familiar ideas from his 1631 treatise *Scholasticae et Morales Disputationes de Tribus Virtutibus Theologicis*, the general sin of being an actor, and the clear loss of morals of any woman who would walk on stage (Hurtado de Mendoza 363). First, Hurtado de Mendoza moves through an

attack on actors, targeting stereotypes about their overly sexual and implicitly criminal lifestyles. Their disgrace comes from a lack of morals and a seeming ignorance of proper social boundaries:

> Que viven mezclados hombres y mujeres; ellos muchas veces jóvenes desenfrenados; día y noche meditando amores y encomendando a la memoria versos amatorios. Mujeres casi siempre impúdicas, en libre contacto con ellos, pues las mujeres no están en lugares distintos; a las que ven los hombres vestirse y desnudarse; y a en el lecho, ya semidesnudas y siempre provocativas. (Hurtado de Mendoza 364)

Hurtado de Mendoza's imagining of actors' lives through a series of imagined tragedies is explicitly dramatic, intensely visual, and much like Juan de Mariana's writing it underlines an anxiety surrounding the types of individuals who would pursue a profession in these types of spectacles and entertainments. As he says:

> En el teatro refieren asuntos de amores, donde se abrazan, se toman las manos, se besan, y estrechan, hacen señas y entablan secretos coloquios. Si esto hacen en público, ¿que no harán en el retiro de sus habitaciones? (Hurtado de Mendoza 364)

Seemingly just a harsh judgement of comedians and actors in general, this selection reveals Hurtado de Mendoza's feelings through another series of descriptions that portray a scene in readers minds similar to that of actual performance. He enacts the scene in readers minds through the details he provides, relying on an imagined spectacle to argue for the eradication of drama in real life. To his credit, Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza seems to understand the irony of his aesthetics

of imagery, as he pushes into claims about the dangers of seeing as he voices his anxiety over actors' ability to infect others with their habits and customs. Women who see the allure of young actresses, "hermosas, elegantes de cuerpo y traje, graciosas, *falaces*, bailarinas, y músicas" (Hurtado de Mendoza 364), will look up to them, eventually trying to be like them, just as the men will want to become gallant swordsmen, marauding through the night. The effect of *comedias,* he alleges, is to lead young women away from a life of marriage and childbearing and to threaten the divide between the sexes.

The conflation of acting and actors' lives off-stage also re-appears in this text. Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza's first point details women and men living together and spending all their time simulating and acting out love scenes. This allows him to make the arguments he does about bad examples, sinful characteristics, and an overall view of the stage as dangerous and revolting:

> Y concluye con examinar el asunto de la permisión de las comedias […] cree que no deberían acaserarle su continuación, origen de muchos daños, raptos, holgazanería, bandos, y desórdenes. De todo deduce que la permisión es *per se* ilícita. (Hurtado de Mendoza 364)

In truth, Hurtado de Mendoza's depictions of theater troupes hyperbolizes what he thinks goes on back-stage or before performance. While many of these theater troupes did in fact involve love interests between actors, most of them also included married couples and families whose very existence depended on being able to provide for themselves, as well as on the existence of the *corrales.* The frivolity with which he treats training for the stage conflates the idea of the characters of *comedias,* allowing him to inscribe dramatic significance into imagined relationships between actual performers. Regardless of his inability to provide proof of such relationships, his anxious

imaginings of sinful intimacy and his fantasies of investigation link his moralism to visuality and perception.

Similar uses of imagery to communicate danger in the *corrales* can be found some years later in the work *Job evangelico stoico ilustrado,* a doctrine of ethics and politics published around 1635 by Jerónimo de la Cruz, a lecturer of theology at the San Jerónimo el Real in Madrid at the time. Speaking of *comedias,* he paints a wonderfully complex picture that features the devil schooling actors, actresses, and audiences:

> En ellas se representa con la viveza de los colores que el demonio sabe dar a un pensamiento ocioso y a un corazón lozano, cómo ha de armar traiciones la mujer casada a su marido, le facilita el hecho y disminuye la fealdad con el ejemplo que allí le ponen delante de otras que lo han hecho así. (Jerónimo de la Cruz 203)

Highlighting the sinful nature of spectacle in this way is reminiscent of the types of the stage itself, and the sense of handing sin to lazy souls and vibrant, lush hearts alike portrays the danger of an alluring performance. The image of arming traitorous women that appears after only solidifies the sense of his dependence on imagery to make his point. As he moves to claims about the negative influences such performances have on society and customs, especially with respect to women, he creates a series of pseudo dramatic images:

> Enseñan la […] a fingir en lo público, a perder los temblores en lo secreto, a hacer llaves falsas, a buscar puertas ocultas y ventanas excusadas, a no temer la oscuridad de la noche, ni los peligros de la casa. (Jerónimo de la Cruz 203)

From learning to lie in public to looking for dark doors in the night, Jerónimo de la Cruz's critique of the power of fiction is communicated through imagery that stages its own set of scenes in readers' minds. He leverages his own anxieties over audiences imitating the events of *comedias*, creating an imagined imitative experience that prefaces that of drama and categorizes it as resoundingly negative, turning the visual power of performance against itself. He goes on to counter the common claim that the theater stands as a positive example of society. As he states, such beliefs are based in trickery and deceit, terms that create significance through their links to perception and visual power (Jerónimo de la Cruz 204).

Minding the Gap: The Disconnect Between Polemics and Legislation in Early Modern Madrid

What the treatises analyzed above show is that one of the most common patterns found in 16th and 17th century Spanish anti-theatricalism is also one of the baseline characteristics of drama itself. In comparing early modern Spanish moralists against the drama they so virulently opposed, the seemingly insurmountable differences between two polemical attitudes come to share an important point of overlap. While this is interesting on its own, those shared characteristics become even more intriguing when they are placed next to a comparison of the efficacy of each's concentration on provocative imagery and performance. One would expect that the similar strategies for captivating audiences and readers would reveal a sense of constancy with respect to their approach. Provocative imagery, in other words, must be an incredibly useful tool, no matter the aims of whatever piece is being written or performed. Such is clearly the case with respect to drama. As has been shown, much of the success of the *corrales* springs from audiences' enjoyment

of seeing performers enact the exciting plots of *comedias* in person. Even today scholars are warned that reading Calderón, Lope, or Shakespeare is not the same as seeing it live, and in-person performance is given special reverence for its ability to entertain audiences in a more profound way than simply reading lines on a printed page.

For Spanish anti-theatricalists, however, the focus on imagery and wordplay seems to have had little impact in terms of convincing readers of their anxieties. Even though a rhetorical pattern concentrating on sights and sounds can be traced through at least five decades of criticism, attempts to captivate audiences through impressive displays of imaginative writing did not lead to the expulsion of *comedias* or the permanent closure of the *corrales.* The *corrales* became ever more popular throughout the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and even when stoppages did occur, they were often either tied to a period of plague or a death in the royal family. While the critics of early modern Spanish drama paint a picture of lascivious, siren-like women dancing in full view of an audience whose control over their own thoughts or emotions was rendered tenuous at best, such aggravated portrayals are not reflected by trends in legislation. A gap exists between what critics saw as dangerous and the treatment of those elements by legislative bodies, indicating that their strategy was less than effective in eradicating *comedias* from Spain's spectating public during the early modern period.

Evidence is shown in the lack of change over almost a century in corresponding municipal action in Madrid regarding the establishment of *corrales, comedias,* and the presence of spectacles. Madrid's history of legislation with respect to its *corrales* provides a unique example of how polemics interacted with dramatic practice in early modern Spain. Established as the capital in 1561, what was a relatively small city quickly grew to be one of the more influential metropolitan regions, welcoming much of the Spanish royal court as well as a many of the Golden Age's most

well-known artists, writers, and thinkers by the early 1600's. This made Madrid an important seat of art and culture as much as it was a seat of governmental power. The city's population also played a role in the evolving identity of Madrid during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Starting at around 5,000 people in the 1530's, the official move to Madrid made by King Phillip II in 1561 resulted in a large migration from the surrounding countryside, bringing Madrid's population to over 110,000 by 1700. The massive influx of inhabitants during this period meant that Madrid was constantly trying to stay ahead of its own growth, complicating how city officials dealt with rising challenges involving housing, health care, human waste, and a litany of other social and municipal issues. It also meant that a rising middle class began to hold more sway in Madrid over the course of the second half of the 16th century.

The result was that the city was both a site of great innovation and one of great chaos. In terms of performance and drama, Madrid was one of the only places in Spain during the 16th and 17th centuries that a member of the middle class could afford to see the opulent spectacles of the *corrales*, as well as where one could see the latest performances. While some *comedias* became so popular over years of reprisals that they were put on in many cities and regions throughout Spain, Madrid represented the front line for drama and theaters, the leading edge where new pieces were put on, tried out, tinkered with, etc. It was a place where drama continually pushed its own boundaries, eventually codifying into both a staple of public theater and a laboratory for dramatic experimentation. Madrid was like no other city in Spain when it came to drama and the *corrales.*

As interesting as this made the capital for those who wanted to experience the latest and greatest in performance, however, Madrid's status as the center of innovation for the *comedia nueva* meant that it's authorities often had to figure out how to regulate the *corrales* and their audiences long before other metropolitan areas. They had little precedent to go on, designing rules

around attendance, seating, pricing, and the distribution of profits (the *corrales,* unlike theaters in England and France, were linked to public hospitals and created revenue for the care of those who could not afford it) without other examples to build from. Because of this, the relative constancy of Madrid's regulations of the *corrales* during the late 1500's and into the 1600's is striking. Not only do most of the regulations stay the same from their first imaginings in the 1570's, but even with the influx of anti-theatricalist sentiments among many of the capital's moralist writers the rules of the stage remained relatively fixed through much of the 17th century. Anti-theatricalist anxieties, whether over lascivious female performers, the criminality of actors in general, or the danger of drama's aims of soliciting emotional reactions from its audiences, made little difference in the everyday practice of regulating the *corrales* and their performers.

The regulation of drama in Madrid can be divided into three main periods. The first, beginning in the first third of the 16th century with the rising popularity of traveling Italian performers and the work of one of Spain's first dramatists, Lope de Rueda, can be understood as one of relative legislative indifference, with the newly cemented *coralles* operating with relative freedom in the first years of their existence. This first period can be loosely capped off at the beginning of the 1580's. Very little standardized control was placed on spectacles before this time, as many of the actors and troupes were traveling organizations that often dealt with local officials on a case-by-case basis. The earliest piece of legislation to include even a general restriction for performers and spectacles appeared in 1534, but even this was not directly interested in control or oversight. In fact, it refused to recognize actors as special or separate from society by holding them to the same standards as other individuals with respect to what types of clothing were socially acceptable at any given moment (Cotarelo y Mori 619). This approach reflects a general sense of an inclusion of actors in society. This is not to say that actors and their troupes were not a cause

for concern among local municipalities, but that the solution to these outsiders seemed to be to attempt to eliminate any special treatment they might receive. Such an approach demonstrates a desire to erase the distinction between actors and audiences, holding acting troupes to the same laws as the general population and refraining from developing special circumstances for public spectacles.

The second period coincides with the codification of the *corrales* and the *comedia nueva.* This period standardized the relationship between the *corrales* and the local government, setting a precedent that would change very little for the next century. A 1587 appeal for a license to include women in performances of the company *Los Confidentes Italianos* provides some insight into which elements of performance raised concerns, as well as how the agreements between actors and municipalities could be positive and beneficial for both parties. There is little controversy in the document, and it reads with as little feeling or style as a legally binding petition should: there is some information about the petitioner, a bit of background on former precedents, followed by the names of the women in question who will be permitted to perform (*Licencia para representar mujeres, 1587*). Not only was their petition accepted, but the only restrictions were also that these women, Angela Salomona and Angela Martineli, be married, that they bring their husbands with them, and that the play not contain any cross dressing on the part of either the women or the men (Cotarelo y Mori 620). And while the threat of cross-dressing has been shown to be an ever-present issue in critiques and defenses of the *comedias*, its presence in the petition it is not necessarily controversial or a sign of government crack-down on the loose morals in the *corrales.* In fact, such a requirement is present in almost every piece of legislation concerned with censoring the theater across the republic for the next eighty years, even though by the 17th century some of the most

popular pieces were known to have a *mujer varonil* or other female character who has put on men's clothing to take control of her own circumstances.

The lack of change during the remaining two periods can be easily demonstrated from a quick comparison of two major pieces of legislation involving the operation of *corrales* from 1608 and 1641. These come from the Consejo de Castilla, the committee responsible for the day-to-day governance of the capital region of Spain. While both orders lay out the licensing processes for all *comedias,* actors, and professional playing groups in Madrid, the 1608 document represents the first real codification of censorship or regulation on a wide scale within the city limits. This first document serves as a mark of how ingrained into society the *corrales* had become in a short period of time. At this point, for example, the *corrales* had seen a few different closures for a variety of reasons (plagues, deaths in the royal family, religious holidays, etc.), they had normalized three act tragicomedies as the standard format for dramatic productions, and they had determined set times and dates for performances throughout the year. Like most legislative decisions involving large populations of the public, the Consejo can be seen as responding to a form of entertainment that had grounded itself firmly in the culture of early 17th century Spain. It was still early enough in the life of the *corrales* for the government to have some control over what developed after 1608, but it was late enough in the growth of *comedias* that their general operations were not expected to shift substantially anytime soon.

Importantly, the Consejo's order of censorship in 1608 reflects a somewhat normal process of control for municipal governments in terms of reacting to new types of public gatherings. The order contains a list of thirty-three requirements for the playing of *comedias*. In direct contrast with the arguments lobbied by the anti-theatricalist writers above, there is little in the document that would demonstrate support of wide-reaching censorship or of a growing concern over the

infectious nature of rebellious, overly sexualized women. Unsurprisingly considering the steady influx of capital brought in by the *corrales* during the first decade of the 17th century, the order reads more like a commercial permit than it does a critique. The first ten provisions deal largely with logistical details and obvious requirements for events involving a substantial public spectatorship. These include the mandatory licensing of all plays through the Consejo de Castilla, a yearly troupe census, and opening and closing times for the *corrales* throughout the year. Instructions mandating on-site oversight from two *comisarios* named annually follows, before other requirements lay out further minutiae (the prohibition of free admissions; guidelines for substituting or filling in for the two *comisarios;* the requirements for weekly and yearly accounting reports as well as daily records; and set seat prices) (Cotarelo y Mori 622-625).

The lack of attention to the concerns raised by the antitheatrical writers covered above demonstrates a distinct gap between what those religious authorities worried about and how the municipal government of Madrid aimed to manage public performances. In fact, of the thirty-three provisions, only two of them refer to any of the issues raised in the critiques covered above. Both, interestingly, are related to the dangers of having men and women in the same area of the audience. The eleventh and twelfth provisions read:

> Que no se consienta que hombre alguno entre y esté en las gradas y tarimas de mujeres, ni mujer alguna entre por la puerta de los hombres al vestuario, ni otra parte, si no fueren las que representaren; y si alguno lo hiciere, los alguaciles le pongan en la cárcel y hagan información de ello para que sea castigado.

> Que no se consienta que en los aposentos señalados para mujeres entre con ellas hombre alguno, si no fuere sabiendo notoriamente ser marido, padre, hijo, o hermano, ni que en el teatro donde se hace la representación haya silla ni banco ni persona alguna, asistiendo para esto y lo demás los tales comisarios en los dichos corrales. (Cotarelo y Mori 623)

What is telling about these two provisions is that neither of them addresses the many issues raised about women and their danger to audiences, outside of simple seating divisions. In piece after piece writers like Pedro de Ribadeneira and José de Jesús María have been concerned with the shamelessness of actors on stage and the threat to contemporary social order, with numerous passages devoted to women, adultery, lascivious acting or dancing, immodest behavior, cross-dressing, and more. Even in 1608, with the *corrales* firmly set into Spanish society and the *mujer varonil* figure becoming ever-more popular among dramatists and audiences alike, such concerns did not make their way into the restrictions and licensing processes for the theater troupes. Such a disconnect reflects how little antitheatrical critiques meant to audiences and government bodies concerned with public safety in the *corrales*, perhaps pointing to the impressive momentum the *comedia nueva* had at the time. The lack of intensely restrictive measures portrays a progressive attitude taken by the Consejo and a divide between what needed to be legislated and the arguments against performances published by the religious and moralistic scholars cited above. The *Comedias* were public events that needed to be taxed and regulated, but they were still allowed much of the creative freedom that has come to be understood in Lope and others' plays.

It should be noted that in 1615 the Consejo did put out a reformed list of rules that addressed some of the issues at stake in pieces from critics like José de Jesús María, Juan de Mariana, and Pedro de la Ribadeneira. The stipulations in this document are much more concerned with modesty

and illicit behavior than the 1608 legislation, restricting unmarried women, women dressed as men, and lascivious dancing, among other trends (Cotarelo y Mori 626-628). The language of these stipulations, however, is much less aggressive or religiously charged as is demonstrated by the authors named above. The paragraph about the attire of women on stage, for example, does away with the dramatic tone used in critiques.

> Que las mujeres representen en hábito decente de mujeres, y no salgan a representar en faldellín solo, sino que por lo menos lleven sobre él ropa, baquero o basquiña suelta o enfaldada, y no representen en hábito de hombres, ni hagan personajes de tales, ni los hombres, aunque sean muchachos, de mujeres. (Cotarelo y Mori 626)

Connections to the devil and threats of hellish punishment disappear, as do the implications that actors and actresses are terrible people, leaving a list of innocuous guidelines with which individuals that do perform can keep themselves in the boundaries of decency as stipulated by the sumptuary laws common to everyone. Moreover, the list of plays that were performed in the year 1615 that contained women in cross-dressing roles demonstrates the relative toothlessness of this regulation.

One victory for critics in this piece of legislation might be the ban on "cosas, bailes, [y] cantares" that were deemed lascivious or dishonest (Cotarelo y Mori 626). Popular dances like "Escarramanes, chaconas, zarabandas, carreterías", and others "semejantes a estos" were prohibited in the *corrales* during or between performances (Cotarelo y Mori 626). However, while certainly a step towards anti-theatricalist arguments against *comedias*, these regulations do not hold a special place in the general update to the rules. Of the fifteen new stipulations only two of

them, the two described above, refer to any of the issues brought up in critiques, and these two do not sit in any particular place that would point to an emphasis or specific concern over them. Moreover, the neutrality of the rest of the order with respect to actors reflects that the 1615 legislation was not an update intended to target the illicit behavior of theater troupes, but a simple re-organization of the rules based on popularity and concerns for public safety.

Nearly four decades later in 1641 the situation remained relatively the same. The biggest change to regulation comes with a re-organization of the governing body concerning censorship and the creation of a special council to oversee these entertainments. The rules and regulations for performing, however, remained altogether the same as those laid out in 1608 and 1615. Twelve companies at a time were permitted to exist within the city limits, no two companies could share the same stage in a day, all plays had to be run through a censor, etc. (Cotarelo y Mori 632). The wording considering women's roles is kept as well, with phrases like "decente para las mujeres" and "siendo casadas" reappearing in much the same tone as the earlier document:

> Que las mujeres representen en hábito decente de mujeres, y no salgan a representar en faldellín solo, sino que por lo menos lleven sobre él ropa, baquero o banquina, y no representen en hábito de hombres, ni hagan personajes de tales, ni los hombres, aunque sean muchachos, de mujeres.
>
> Que los autores y representantes casados, traigan consigo a sus mujeres, y las mujeres no pueden representar ni andar en las compañías, no siendo casadas, y siéndolo, anden con sus maridos. (Cotarelo y Mori 632)

The lack of emphasis surrounding women's roles in *comedias* as a special concern in the legislation indicates a relative indifference to what kind of characters women played on stage, as well as the relative ineffectiveness of anti-theatricalists' approach to providing entertaining treatises that argued for the closure of public theaters.

The big picture in Madrid is one where those who wrote against *comedias* had little to do with the day-to-day operations of the *corrales.* Contrary to how the situation might seem at first glance, many of the moralists who disliked the implications of public spectacles and contemporary drama were completely disconnected from the processes of municipal control, and the rhetorical strategies shared between both genres clearly did not translate to anti-theatricalists playing an active role in determining the guidelines for contemporary performance. The points of overlap that seem significant to the history of dramatic performance in Spain have little to do with dramatic practice, creating an interestingly complex set of relationships between drama, moralists, and the *corrales* themselves.

Conclusion

Just as was the case in the previous chapter, early modern Spanish anti-theatricalism can be shown to have broken through the logic of opposition at the center of polemical debate by co-opting the styles of visual and verbal stimulation common to contemporary dramatic performance. Riddled with provocative imagery and thoughtful combinations of phrases and insults, moralists create powerful mental scenes through similar epistemological avenues as dramatic performance, asking audiences to cast themselves as the protagonists or antagonists in imagines scenes that center around *comedias'* malignant characteristics.

Anti-theatricalism's inability to make an impact on contemporary legislation, however, means that the significance of their productive interplay remains difficult to pin down. One might assume that the overlapping characteristics would play out in similar ways, but the demonstrable gap between argumentation against *comedias* and the legislation meant to regulate them calls for a nuanced understanding of their productive interplay that looks for meaning outside social or political activism. After all, even if patterns of detailed imagery and intricate turns of phrase did not help moralists eradicate public drama from 16th and 17th century Spanish society, their prevalence in the period's anti-theatrical writing is still an important factor in understanding how anti-theatrical treatises were constructed and why they appeared at all.

One of the ways we can understand the significance of the shared rhetorical strategy is in recognizing the dramatic elements of anti-theatrical writing as opening an interpretive space grounded in acknowledging the similarities between diverse sets of early modern writers. In other words, while early modern Spanish anti-theatricalism absolutely developed out of a concern over the impact of the innovative secular form of entertainment presented by *comedias*, their turn towards visual and verbal elements in their writing strategies opens a reading that values polemical writing from a literary standpoint rather than simply an argumentative one. Reading Spanish anti-theatricalism with this in mind levels moralistic writers with literary ones, providing some common ground upon which individuals like Quevedo, Lope, and Calderón can be compared to lesser-known names like Juan de Pineda and José de Jesús María. This approach reads anti-theatrical moralists as creative thinkers whose understanding of popular rhetorical and performative strategies linked them to other writers from the period, establishing some intriguing common ground between those not usually considered in literary studies. Reception and circulation aside, all these individuals attempted to popularize their writing through similar processes of

mutation and mirroring, and all of them faced the challenge of keeping the interest of a viewing and reading public that had access to a wide variety of captivating, novel forms of entertainment. Juan de Pineda's inventive use of dialogue and Marco Antonio de Camos' intricately metonymic structure, for example, can be understood as practical, topical decisions made during a period that stressed both encyclopedic knowledge and rhetorical ingenuity. Their stylistic, structural, and aesthetic choices reflect their understanding of contemporary rhetorical practices, linking them to the celebrated authors of early modern Spain in ways that cannot be understood without analyzing their moralistic texts.

Chapter 3: A Debate on Common Ground- Emotion, Anti-theatricalism, and the Symbiosis of the *querelle des Imaginaires*

The final chapter of this study aims to emphasize the often-symbiotic relationship between those that opposed public performance and the dramatists whose careers depended on it. Far from being incompatible or antagonistic in an absolutist sense, the shared rhetorical and aesthetic strategies of French anti-theatricalists and dramatists from the 1650's to the 1670's highlight a productive interplay between both camps that strongly influenced both polemics and drama. In tracing out the affective aims of one of the period's most renowned dramatists, Jean Racine, during a time when French theater and anti-theatricalism alike concentrated on the impassioned responses of audiences in public theaters, I argue that those individuals who wrote for the stage were not at all disconnected from those that opposed public facing drama, but instead took on many of the ideas produced by anti-theatricalism, recycling and re-imagining them for their own purposes.

Because Racine's emotively centered tragedies during the period are drawn from the same principles of dramatic theory argued as dangerous by those who opposed public performances, two of his early successes, *Alexandre le Grand* (1665) and *Andromaque* (1667), demonstrate his conversance with anti-theatricalist ideas from the 1650's onward. Racine's relationship with anti-theatricalist sentiments opens a line of interpretation that understands early modern French anti-theatricalism as participating in a productive interplay with the drama it criticizes, a reading furthered by Racine's involvement in the *querelle des Imaginaires,* a controversy involving his former mentor Pierre Nicole and Jean Desmarets de St. Sorlin. Racine, responding to virulent attacks on dramatists and poets by Nicole, published a public letter that responded to the allegations lobbed against dramatists in Nicole's *Les Visionnaires* (1664). And while neither Racine nor Nicole produced a piece of writing that directly followed up on their confrontation in the *querelle*

des Imaginaires,[57] their shared rhetorical and aesthetic strategies show how both men utilized polemical debates as a fruitful laboratory of ideas. Both authors demonstrate hybrid strategies linked to declamation, interconnected interior structure, and emotional response, bridging the gap between critique and performance to reveal a conversation, or dialectic, of criticism.

This chapter will begin by analyzing the affective aims of renowned playwright Jean Racine at the early stages of his career, demonstrating that his two first successful tragedies, *Alexandre le Grand* (1665) and *Andromaque* (1667), were conversant with the theories on emotional impact from anti-theatrical polemicists and dramatic theorists alike. The concentration on emotion in these two tragedies reflects Racine's preference for personal, affective drama, but it also highlights the dramatist's understanding of contemporary discussions surrounding the licentiousness of public performance in the mid-17th century. His strategy of evoking impassioned responses in his audiences reflects a conscious construction of his authorship that tapped into a popular shift towards emotional content in other mediums beginning in the early 1660's. Next, I will detail how the very same rhetorical strategies used by Racine throughout *Alexandre* and *Andromaque* are subverted by Pierre Nicole in his *Traité de la Comédie*, producing a hybrid form that both appropriates and substantially shifts elements first used by Racine. Nicole's overtly academic tone, his knowledge of the difference in strategies of declamation, and his looping, layered structure show that his writing is not purely imitative, but instead re-imagines those same characteristics from Racine's writing. These parallels build a natural conversance between the two authors, emphasizing the compatibility of anti-theatricalists and dramatists alike.

The ramifications of demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between anti-theatricalists and dramatists, specifically between Racine and Nicole, are two-fold. First, if Racine can be shown

[57] Racine did compose a second letter in response to the criticism he received for his *Lettre à l'auteur des Hérésies Imaginaires, et des deux Vissionnaires*, but he decided not to have it printed.

to have largely ignored Nicole's remarks as he moved from *Alexandre* to *Andromaque,* then we must be able to shift our understanding of the role played by those vehemently opposed to the theater during the early modern period. For one, the *querelle* between Nicole and Racine can be read as Racine's attempt to control characterizations of his authorship as much as it reflects a discussion over the danger of performance. Racine's *Lettre* presents a conscious effort to control his self-image, with Racine performing the role of his dramatist persona in a non-serious and uncomplicated fashion. Nicole's *Traité* presents a similar opportunity, as he plays off Racine's rhetorical maneuvering by inverting his former student's use of enthymemes, in effect creating an anti-Racine that appropriates, yet converses with, the sense of Racine's authorship.

Second, tracing out the multi-directional effects of the productive interplay between anti-theatricalism and drama gives a more accurate view of how both are involved in a symbiotic relationship instead of calcifying as confrontational forces. Current scholarship often focuses exclusively on the effects of polemical writing and moralism on drama itself. Nicole's status as one of the more vehement voices of French anti-theatricalism, for example, is often tied to his *Traité de la Comédie,* a work that would go on to affect later critics and dramatists alike for many years. Joseph Harris and Julia Prest take this stance,[58] writing Racine's participation in the *querelle des Imaginaires* into a larger narrative of a constant back-and-forth between the two easily identifiable sides. His *petites lettres* are subtly present in the background of the authors' overview of Pierre Nicole and Bernard Lamy, whose questioning of the licentiousness of the theater marked some of the earliest examples of an anti-theatricalist movement that would build more momentum towards the end of the century. Emilia Walton-Godberfforde[59] addresses a related idea, pointing to the literary and dramatic elements in works from polemical writers like Pierre Nicole and

[58] Harris and Prest, "Guilty Pleasures: Theater, Piety, and Immorality in Seventeenth-Century France" (2016).
[59] Wilton-Godberfforde, "Unmasking Falsehood" (2017).

Bernard Lamy that "reinforce, unwittingly, the theater's sway on the spectator" (38). In a different piece, Fabien Cavaillé[60] concentrates on the stylistic prowess in the *Traité de la Comédie*, Nicole's most staunch antitheatrical text, arguing that an underlying analogy to gluttony marks a dramatic rhetorical strategy in his critique of the *Théâtre* (141). Cavaillé links the analogy of overeating to Nicole's attempt to undermine the main defense of performance in 17th century France, that performance is aimed at cultivating mental nutrition (141). Tracing the *Traité de la Comédie*'s conversance with Racine re-orients these interpretations, and, like the example provided by Christopher Semk's[61] study that leverages later antitheatrical author, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, to demonstrate an example of strategic use of dramatic and theatrical principles in religious sermons during the late 17th century (122), it looks to redefine the implicit antagonism between those that worked on-stage and those that tried to eradicate public drama from society altogether. The relationship between the two, as will be shown, was much one of productive conversance rather than blatant opposition.

Playing One-Self: Racine's Passion As a Measure of Polemical Conversance

While the earliest French dramatic theorists from the 17th century worried about the commitment to illusion in public playhouses, frowning at the "spectator's intellectual and sensory relationship to the play as a whole," (Harris, 165), by the middle of the seventeenth century the product of this relationship, the emotion provoked by drama's illusions, received the most critical attention. In part, this is due to a shift in the aims of drama itself. If early examples of Western European drama revisited classical claims about the power of spectacle through ideas of instruction and virtue, by the 1650's Racine, Molière, Corneille, and other French dramatists had abandoned

[60] Cavaillé, "'Repaître Nos Yeux de Ces Vains Spectacles'" (2016).
[61] Semk, "Bossuet's Ticklish Subjects: Preaching and Pleasure" (2017).

the pretenses of instruction, preferring instead to concentrate on affective elements that made audiences feel the weight of the events taking place on stage. As a result, the criteria of successful theater flipped from those pieces that provoked careful thought on the significant connections between drama and the real world to performances that aimed to "Prevent the spectator from reflecting rationally" at all (Harris 30).

In turn, French anti-theatrical tracts from the 1650's onward often portray an anxiety over the emotive nature of public spectacles. Many stipulate that soliciting such emotional response is unwarranted and even criminal in public settings, charging dramatists everywhere to admit their manipulative and sinful behavior. Laurent Thirouin, writing of the broad overlaps between anti-theatrical writing across the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, points to the "reflexion" of 17th century anti-theatricalism as specifically being "Une meditation sur la *mimèsis* et sur le jeu des passions" (22). Pierre Nicole's barbed criticism of dramatists in his *Visionnaires* claims that writers of poetry and drama poisoned "des âmes des fidèles" through a veiled use of dangerous "passions criminelles, […] capables de surprendre et de corrompre les âmes simples et innocents," (Nicole, cclxxix), and works on dramatic theory from Bernard Lamy, the Abbé d'Aubignac, and La Mesnardière all highlighted the dangers in drama's affective influence. After all, if the performances of the mid-17th century were uncontrollable variables with a direct impact on the public consciousness, and if dramatists openly aimed to produce such responses, moralists had every reason to be concerned. Such emotionally charged performances could have strong ripple effects on French society, unravelling the morals of a population through the convergence of the fictional and the real. These views on the emotive dangers of drama would permeate polemic

debates for the next century of theater criticism, laying the foundation for complex concepts like *intérêt* and identification in the 18th century.[62]

Racine's use of emotion in *Alexandre le Grand* (1665) and in his subsequent tragedy, *Andromaque* (1667), thereby communicates a level of conversance with French anti-theatricalism during the 1660's. His push to create tragedies that capitalized on their ability to provoke emotional responses reflects a carefully constructed impression of his authorship and an active interaction with the concerns of both dramatic theorists and anti-theatrical moralists. He consciously chooses, in a move much in line with the turn towards affective artistry prevalent in the first years of Louis XIV's adoption of absolute power, to produce plays that depend on the very anxieties of anti-theatricalists and other moralists of the time, producing an interesting image of Racine as a writer at a crucial point in his early career.

Alexandre le Grand's specifically affective vision of its monarch serves as a marker of Racine's conversance. Alexander's conquest across the ancient world was a well-known story during the 16th and 17th century, but popularized images of the Hellenistic monarch originally focused on his prowess as a conqueror. His military success, unrivaled until the Roman empire, made him a useful metaphor for French political figures whose aims at expansion served as the basis of France's foreign policy throughout the early modern period. Louis XIII was the first French king portrayed as Alexander, a connection made in large part due to his quest to expand French holdings on its southern and eastern borders. The prince de Condé, a noble from the Bourbon family who would go on to rebel against royal authority in the early part of the 1650's, was also depicted as an Alexandrian figure after some military successes over the Spanish in the Pyrenees in the 1630's (Thirouin 224). Both examples show Alexander being a symbol of military

[62] See Harris, 30.

success. These men were Alexandrian in their abilities as generals and commanders; they were stoic, powerful forces of imperialism lauded by the citizenry for their conquest of new territory. Importantly, this early version of the Alexandrian image actively distanced the emotional capacity of these figures. Early comparisons to Alexander stressed physical prowess, not emotional range, and any indications of compassion or humanity were overwritten by ties to his militarism. This usage persisted for much of the 17th century, and while another playwright, Claude Boyer, widened the Alexandrian image with elements of generosity and mercy in a play that premiered some two decades before Racine's (Thirouin 224), ties between political figures and Alexander commonly selected for his military qualities over everything else.

Racine's depiction in 1665 significantly shifts the Alexandrian image of the early 17th century. In his play, Alexander's imperial attitudes are balanced by his generosity, his clemency, and more than anything his capacity for erotic love. This turn towards an emotional Alexander made an impact on general audiences and the royal family alike, solidifying a trend in linking major French political figures to Alexander that had begun with Louis XIV's assumption of royal power in 1661. In part because Louis did not have any direct military experience outside of France, but also due to a recent turn in artistic taste that has often been linked to the propagandistic efforts of the man later known as the Sun King, the use of Alexandrian images throughout the 1660's began to capitalize on Alexander's affective allure more than the threat of his military power. Charles Le Brun's painting in 1661, *Les reines de Perse aux pieds d'Alexandre,* is perhaps the most well-known example, providing the mold for other depictions and beginning a reappropriation of the image of Alexander that would endure for much of the early part of Louis XIV's personal reign. Showing a scene from Alexander's conquest of Persia in which Darius III's wife and daughter mistake Hephaestion, Alexander's close friend, for the young Macedonian

monarch, Le Brun's painting captures a tender moment of forgiveness and compassion. His portrayal of the young, gentle ruler cultivates a sense of Alexander's genial, loving nature, both in terms of his immediate response to the misperception and in refraining from doing any harm to the helpless women prostrated before him. It is "A glorification of the eminently royal virtues of pardon and magnanimity" (Hogg 27).

Le Brun's preference of emotion over militarism complicates the image of Alexander's perfection, presenting him as both a warrior and as a passionate lover in search of some level of acceptance on the part of his beloved. The popularity of such a portrayal meant that Le Brun's image of Alexander quickly disseminated across a variety of artistic and literary mediums, driving the updated version of Alexander as the paramount of monarchical grace, in part because of the young king's influence. Chloé Hogg details the many artistic re-imaginations of Le Brun's first depiction of Alexander in this light:

> Le Brun's contemporaries encountered his painting in royal historiographer André Félibien's written description of *Les reines de Perse*, in Gérard Edelinck's engraving of the painting, in the tapestry series produced after the *Histoire d'Alexandre* paintings by the Gobelins workshop, in Sébastien Leclerc's engravings of the tapestries, and in smaller-scale engravings of the painting completed by a number of different artists after the success of Edelinck's composition. (Hogg 23)

Racine's portrayal is cut from the same cloth as Le Brun's, and Alexander's affective characteristics are integral to the play. The plot revolves around three characters forced to stand against Alexander's conquest across India, focusing on their decisions to submit or resist to the

oncoming overwhelming force. The three monarchs, Porus, Taxile, and Axiane, must decide whether to fight to the death or to surrender, weighing out the consequences in emotional terms including suffering, passion, pride, glory, and infamy. Adding to the affective nature of the play, the three royal figures threatened by Alexander's armies are not portrayed as antagonistic or problematic; instead, each reflects noble qualities, presenting idealized, overwhelmingly positive outlooks on the grace and altruism possible in monarchs. The play portrays Alexander similarly, amplifying his magnanimity and affection. His appearance in act III manifests a sense of absolute power that runs as an undercurrent through the first two thirds of the play, highlighting the monarch's profundity through his passionate expressions of love, mercy, and grace. The king's budding relationship with Cléofile presents a monarch with emotional range and the capacity for physical attraction, and his clemency to Porus in Act 5 follows the trend begun by Le Brun's *Les reines de Perse,* portraying the power of affect as equal to that of conquest. Similarly, the inclusion of Axiane, a character designed by Racine to anchor the divide between Porus and Taxile by providing dramatic space for a romantic dispute (Forestier 228), provokes another set of conversations that also emphasize the weight of affection in the context of political strife. Working as a multiplier, Axiane, Porus, and Taxile's love triangle adds to the already complicated arguments over submission, defeat, and glory, presenting audiences with the separate tragedy of having two honorable kings argue over "un personnage féminin digne de l'amour de deux rois rivaux" (Forestier 228).

The relationships between these characters produce three overarching emotional challenges. Alexander must decide whether to conquer or to be merciful, and, conversely, Porus and Taxile must argue over whether to resist or to submit to his authority. Audiences are pulled in by Taxile's logical evaluation of the situation as much as by Porus' zealous and warlike reaction

to the impending threat to his kingdom. Both invoke a dichotomy of pride and shame in their discussion of the best course of action. The second tension is purely romantic and arguably provides the most tender image of Alexander and Louis XIV: Alexander must convince Cléofile of his love for her, while Cléofile must overcome her awe an Alexander with an absolute sense of magnanimity. It is important to note, as Forestier does, that Cléofile's conversations with Alexander do not seem to directly affect the conquest-plot, remaining tangential to much of the rest of the play's action (Forestier 229). The result is a secondary love plot that is solely aimed at producing emotional responses in the audience. The possibility of being loved by Alexander, the absolute embodiment of celebrity, would have hit home in the hearts of a population whose own monarch had attempted in recent years to cultivate a similar level of fame and adoration, emphasizing Louis' push to portray his love for his people as tender, caring, and intensely personal. Finally, Taxile and Porus' dispute over their love for Axiane provides an added pressure to their already tenuous relationship in the face of immediate conquest. Their love triangle repeats the romance of the Alexander/Cléofile relationship, but it inverts the pleasant flatteries of the two would-be lovers with serious conversations of loyalty, worthiness, and desperation, all of which create easily traversable affective avenues. These three tensions should also be read in the context of the plot: as has long been recognized, "Nothing seems to happen in this singularly uneventful tragedy" (Forestier 43), meaning that the weight of Alexander's greatness creates the main momentum of the action, while emotions become the material construction of our interest and Alexander's magnanimity, all of which reflect positively on Louis XIV. In presenting Alexander in this way, Racine thereby impresses his own image as an affectively charged dramatist.

Parfait dans l'Esprit: Racine's Profound Enthymemes

Racine's push to provide an affectively charged Alexander does not simply rest in the creation of emotional tensions surrounding love triangles, passionate speeches of defiance, or Alexander's clemency. Instead, the enthymematic logic he uses to construct his vision of the Macedonian monarch demonstrates the deep emphasis on emotion more than plot tensions ever could. Enthymematic power comes from the assumption that paring down statements into more succinct versions can allow for more perfect communication of significance than longer, more detailed elucidation might. The idea is that enthymematic structures produce more impact in a shorter space by layering information into stated and unstated concepts. The "givens" of an argument are left out, assumed to be present in the reader's mind and leveraged for meaning regardless of their lack of presence in an actual statement or demonstration.

Racine's ability to leverage enthymematic concepts can undoubtedly traced to his mentors Pierre Nicole and Antoine Arnauld, authors of their own guidebook to rhetorical strategies, *Logique ou l'art de penser* (1662). In the small section on enthymemes both authors emphasize the ability of enthymematic lines to provide more perfect sensations than complete statements might. To them, enthymemes are "syllogisme[s] parfait dans l'esprit, mais imparfait dans l'expression," that "supprim[e] quelqu'une des propositions comme trop claire et trop connue, et comme étant facilement supléée par l'esprit de ceux à qui l'on parle," rendering the discourse in question " plus fort et plus vif" (Arnauld and Nicole 211). Gilles Declercq gives a helpful gloss, saying: "Autrement dit l'imperfection logique de l'enthymème se convertit en perfection psychologique, puisque son caractère elliptique procure du plaisir à l'esprit de l'auditore ; plaisir naturel qui justifie une analyse esthétique de l'enthymème et la convocation d'un exemple littéraire " (Declercq 286).

Alexander becomes something of an enthymeme himself in Racine's play. Surprising many of its first audiences, *Alexandre le Grand* withholds its main character from the action for a substantial portion of the run time for the performance. Subtly present as a pseudo-omniscient imperial force, Alexander does not actually play a direct role until the third act, even as the threat of his presence is the focus of many of the conversations between the other characters. This delay reflects Racine's use of emotion as a major theme of *Alexandre* as much as it showcases his ability to re-orient rhetorical theory to suit his individual aims in creating for the stage. Rather than making him a weaker, more liminal figure in the performance, Alexander's "incompleteness" renders him more legendary, allowing his enigmatic vacancy to develop an absolute sense of his magnanimity before he sets foot on stage. Alexander's enthymematic impression inscribes the weight of his prestige into the heart of the play while laying open the high tenor of other characters' emotional states.

From the first *"Quoi?"* spoken by Cléofile the audience begins to understand the pressures of his perfection, and the delay between the opening lines and Alexander's first appearance on stage in Act III actively cultivates a sense of his power. This kind of constancy develops an image of kingship that is more legendary than it is tangible, but the question from the start is not whether the Indian forces will be conquered, but how to act in the path of an overwhelming force. Cléofile's warning to her brother at the outset leverages an image of blindness that corresponds to the question of recognition rather than a dispute over possible outcomes. Cléofile's point takes place without Alexander physically present, but his absence sets up a sense of the power of infamy and reputation more than it inhibits his reach. He does not have to argue his own case against Taxile, nor do we see him ask Cléofile to do so:

CLÉOFILE.

Quoi? Vous allez combattre un roi dont la puissance

Semble forcer le ciel à prendre sa défense;

Sous qui toute l'Asie a vu tomber ses rois,

Et qui tient la fortune attachée à ses lois?

Mon frère, ouvrez les yeux pour connaître Alexandre, 5

Voyez de toutes parts les trônes mis en cendre,

Les peuples asservis, et les rois enchaînés,

Et prévenez les maux qui les ont entraînés. (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.1.1-8)

It is merely his reputation that pushes the two to confront each other over the best course of action in the wake of such an unstoppable force. This, in turn, sets the stage for a theme of self-reflection, a cornerstone of the tragedy's concentration on self-recognition.

While Taxile's first responds by claiming that he will not run simply because of Alexander's reputation (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.1.18), his lines are prefaced by the ultimate issue he grapples with for the rest of the action, whether it is acceptable to submit to the Macedonians if there is no way to defeat them, even if the threat is not yet physically present. His rhetorical queston, "Quitterrai-je Porus, trahirai-je ces princes que rassemble le soin d'affranchir nos provinces[…]" (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.1.13-14), remains the focal point for Porus, Axiane, and Taxile, regardless of Alexander's conspicuous absence on stage. It is not a question of reputation being equal to power, but whether it is a ruler's duty to defend his territory when victory is unattainable. Alexander's ability to conquer is never in question. This question presents a problem when Taxile asks Porus to consider peace with the Hellenic forces:

TAXILE.

Seigneur, il faut l'entendre,

Nous ignorons encor ce que veut Alexandre.

Peut-être est-ce la paix qu'il nous veut présenter.

PORUS.

La paix ! Ah de sa main pourriez-vous l'accepter ?

Hé quoi ? Nous l'aurons vu par tant d'horribles guerres,

Troubler le calme heureux dont jouissaient nos terres,

Et le fer à la main entrer dans nos États,

Pour attaquer des rois qui ne l'offensaient pas ?

Nous l'aurons vu piller des provinces entières,

Du sang de nos sujets faire enfler nos rivières,

Et quand le ciel s'apprête à nous l'abandonner,

J'attendrai qu'un tyran daigne nous pardonner ?

(Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.2.137-148)

Porus may be misreading the situation by refusing to believe that any peace could be offered or accepted, but the overall weight of Alexander's reputation is not up for debate. Porus even goes out of his way to acknowledge Alexander's strengths, explaining:

PORUS.

Oui je me consens qu'au ciel on élève Alexandre;

Mais si je puis, Seigneur, je l'en ferai descendre,

Et j'irai l'attaquer jusque sur les autels

Que lui dresse en tremblant le reste des mortels. 160

(Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.2.157-160)

From here the conversation turns to a debate over the best choice of action. Even this decision is worded through concepts rooted in emotion. Taxile indicates his indecision as a choice between acting intelligently and acting honorably, clearly linking emotion to bad decision making: "J'écoute comme vous ce que l'honneur m'inspire, Seigneur, mais il m'engage à sauver mon empire" (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.2.217-18). He understands glory's allure, but he also comprehends the enormity of Alexander's forces and the inevitability of losing a direct conflict. He recognizes the nuance involved in deciding with one's emotions and being able to regulate them, balancing fame and infamy as much as emotion and rationality.

Porus, of course, has already made his decision: "Si vous voulez sauver l'un et l'autre aujourd'hui, prévenons Alexandre, et marchons contre lui (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.2.219-220). His choice, however, springs from a different foundation than Taxile's, marked by his desire to "éprouver ma valeur" (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.2.236), as much as by the knowledge that such actions will "promet dans l'histoire un place éclatante" (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 1.2.250). Blindness presents itself once again as Porus responds to Taxile's question of what to do if Alexander wants a peace agreement. Opposite to Taxile, Porus' "áveuglement" represents an emotional reaction rather than a logical one. While the plural *nous* points to the pressure placed on

him by his people, the second portion of the response highlights Porus' understanding of the double-edged nature of his predicament. His admiration of Alexander's celestial elevation acknowledges the other man's prowess and portrays his concerns over the upcoming encounter. His eventual acquiescence late in the play serves as an important moment of surprise, as most of the resistance demonstrated by Axiane and Taxile is connected to their shame at not responding as heroically as their compatriot. His refusal to submit is portrayed as courageous, tragic, and above all emotionally charged. It is powerful, the play's logic dictates, to acknowledge larger forces in the universe and to succumb or submit to them as they re-orient one's destiny. That some of those forces are purely affective only solidifies the emotional Alexander depicted by the play.

Cléofile's conversation with Éphestion in Act II demonstrates a similar concentration on Alexander's affective power despite his lack of presence. The young monarch's reputation as a lover plays a similar role as his reputation as a conqueror: there is plenty of talk to create a sense of its effectiveness, but there is a delay in physical proof. Alexander's reputation is impressed upon Cléofile, but these details remain hearsay until he speaks with her in the third act. As is the case with the earlier conversation between Porus and Taxile, however, his absence does not have any negative effect on the efficacy of his courtship, demonstrating once again the image of a monarch who loves his people and whose character is grounded in eliciting passionate responses.

Cléofile's individual situation can also be read as enthymematic. Her reputation, as she sees it, does not warrant such praise or attention from Alexander, the "comble de la gloire." That she seems to be the only figure capable of inflicting any meaningful change on Alexander's attitudes or emotions is meaningful, however, and the way Éphestion describes the King's timidity gives a sense of the infamy held by Cléofile herself. He is "ce timide vainqueur" (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 2.1.383), when thinking of the possibility of her love for him, fearful of not

being able to cultivate a similar feeling of adoration from her. Not only does this moment tap into the emotional portrayal of a monarch that runs parallel to Louis XIV's image in popular culture, but, because his memory of her makes him nervous, it is not too far to assume that Alexander's impression of her creates a similar level of anxiety as is shown with Taxile, Axiane, and Porus. He is fearful of her power over him, so he contemplates his actions from afar rather than directly speaking with her at first. This fear, however, does not affect the power of his enthymematic nature elsewhere, and the effect is a doubled enthymematic logic that raises Cléofile to an Alexandrian height of absolute, and therefore incomprehensible, gentility.

Racine's skill with enthymemes is developed one step further in the fourth and fifth acts, where Alexander's clemency is used to fortify the image of his magnanimity even as he appears in corporeal form. By filling in the incomplete, "perfect," piece of the enthymeme, Racine creates a situation where the anxiety and excitement at the Alexander's impending appearance can be resolved by his presence and clemency. By the end all have aligned with Cléophile's initial submissive response: Axiane's impassioned integrity brings on as much praise as Porus' emotionally reactive response, while Cléofile's confusion at being the center of attention and her anxiety over her brother's fate elevate her into a vague and unknowable, yet touching, magnanimity of her own. Immediate submission and heroic defense are both treated as equally valuable by the emotionally and morally progressive Alexander, and the profundity of his impression is not lessened by such affective levels of significance. The implied tragedy comes from an inability to recognize the greatness of Alexander rather than Alexander's need to violently eradicate the forces that oppose his desires. While he is ultimately idealized, that idealization remains distinctly positive throughout.

Early criticism of the play indicates how Racine's enthymematic portrayal of Alexander was somewhat controversial, as concerns over the absence of the titular character translated into arguments that the play was deeply flawed and incomplete. As Racine tells us in his first preface from the published version of the play, this complaint comes in two forms. First, there are questions about the title, arguing that Alexander is not the central figure in the play and that the title is therefore misleading (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 6). It is odd, in this view, to have reputation stand in for a character for as long as it does in the play, as well as to have a piece that is "ne soit autre chose que la générosité de ce conquérant" (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 6). This complaint leads to the next common issue brought up by Racine's contemporaries, that his absence makes Porus, one of the Indian kings standing in opposition to the Macedonian conqueror, more likeable than Alexander himself. As Racine himself points out, however, the absence of a demonstration of Alexander's power does not render it less grandiose. If the first two Acts set him up to be a violent conqueror, his ability to see value in others renders him that much more virtuous by the end (Racine, *Alexandre le Grand* 6-7). Racine takes Alexander's wholesomeness and perfection as absolute, arguing that providing a sense for the power of impression with respect to the glorious monarch can be a worthwhile aim. The implicit corollary is that Alexander's enthymematic reputation, and through him Louis XIV's, is satisfying on its own.

Emotional Stages: *L'Affaire d'Alexandre*

Alexandre le Grand's performance history reveals yet another factor that highlights Racine's emphatic pursuit of emotion in the play, and it once again demonstrates a conversance on the part of the young author with the concerns of anti-theatricalists and dramatic theorists alike. Racine's career, which was just beginning in the mid 1660's, propelled him into stardom after the

first performances of *Alexandre le Grand* in December 1665. Originally put on by Molière's troupe at the Palais Royale, *Alexandre*'s opening night was packed to the brim, bringing in a total of almost 1300 *livres* and nearly tripling the income from the premiere of Racine's *Thébaïde* a year prior (Forestier 237). Such success continued for the next four performances, bringing in an average of over 1100 *livres* in each case (Forestier 237). By the fifth performance, however, attendance had dropped off dramatically, totaling a meager 460 *livres* just two days after a showing had brought in more than twice that number. Perhaps due to this shift, as well as to the influence of either Louis XIV himself or his sister-in-law, Henrietta of England, Racine's play was taken out of the hands of the Troupe du Roi and given instead to their rivals, the actors from l'Hôtel de Bourgogne (Forestier 240-5). The change in actors has been attributed to a difference in opinion regarding what type of enunciation was preferrable on stage. Bernard Lamy, an anti-theatricalist whose stance set him alongside other moralists in the later periods of the *querelle du Théâtre*, gives some insight into the divide in enunciation, or *declamation*, during the mid-17th century, describing two types of "discourse" as they were performed in the theater at the time:

> Il faut donc distinguer le discours en deux espèces, en discours naturel, et en discours artificiel. Le naturel est celui dont on doit se servir dans la conversation pour s'exprimer, pour instruire, et pour faire connaître les mouvements de sa volonté, et les pensées de son esprit : l'artificiel est celui que l'on emploi pour plaire, et dans lequel s'éloignant de l'usage ordinaire et naturel, on se sert de tout l'artifice possible pour charmer ceux qui l'entendront prononcer. (Lamy 287)

The division Lamy describes pertains to the two different types of acting on-stage as much as it speaks to a general use of language. Although the division was not explicit, by the mid-1660's the type of enunciation used in conversation, deemed *naturel*, could often be seen in comedies, while the more scripted and poetically rigid *artifice* was most often used in tragic plays. The artificiality of the latter kind of declamation, as well as its recognizable cadence, derived from the alexandrine itself. Composed of verses containing twelve syllables with a stress on the sixth and twelfth syllables, forming couplets with matching end rhymes, the use of alexandrines in French theater is singular in early modern poetics, because it did not operate as a part of a varying set of verse structures that could work off one another to shorten or lengthen lines or stanzas. Unlike Spanish drama, for example, which varies between lines of six, eight, seven, and twelve syllables, or English theater, which made use of both iambic pentameter and blank verse, French tragedy in the 17th century was ultimately committed to the alexandrine. On the most local level the metrical patterns of this system of poetics builds looped climactic structures through the stresses in a given line or stanza. The first of these stresses comes on the sixth syllable in each line, "Au respect de la césure à l'hémistiche (half-way point of the verse)" (Forestier 247). The next mirrors the one at the half-way point of the line, building towards the twelfth and final syllable, a trend that melds with the elaborate use of end rhyme (Forestier 247). Forestier goes on to explain the theory of Alexandrines, working into how the "Accent circumflex," a process of raising ones' voice to a crescendo in the sixth and twelfth syllables, affected the rhythm of a line:

> La poésie déclamée a conservé ce schéma d'intonation issu du vers chantée. […]Se caractérise par une intonation [qui] montée de la voix jusqu' à la césure placée à l'hémistiche et redescente ensuite avec un légère remontée sure la dernière syllabe- et par

> un rythme particulier- pause vocale après la sixième et la douzième syllabe qui provoque un allongement de la syllabe qui précède. (Forestier 248)

In practice, alexandrines produce series of strong, yet surprisingly flexible, looped climaxes. A single line builds towards an accented, stressed syllable, completes that syllable, drops off to build toward the end of the line once more and resolve again at its close. This, along with a three-fold stress on the sixth and twelfth syllables, "de hauteur, d'intensité, et de longueur" (Forestier 248), lends itself to passionate exclamations due to its doubled climax and resolution. It is easy to imagine how an alexandrine line performed beautifully could have strong effects on audiences, and Forestier mentions cases where Montfleury, a famed tragedian for the Hôtel d'Bourgogne who played many famous roles including Rodrigue in Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* (1637), performed lines so well that unsolicited applause forced a small delay in the action of the play (Forestier 250).

Molière, whose comedies had replaced the strict adherence to metrical structure with colloquial speech, was famous (or perhaps infamous) for his contention that successful performance did not require the rigid alexandrine rhythm traditionally used by French dramatists of the past like Pierre Corneille, Phillipe Quinault, Thomas Corneille, and others. Georges Forestier sums up Molière's attitude, reminding his readers that "Dans ses *précieuses ridicules* (1659) il faisait expliquer par Mascarille, avec toute l'ironie que prenaient ces paroles dans la bouche d'un personnage ridicule interprété par lui-même" (Forestier 250). Racine's feelings ran opposite to those of his former colleague, and he clearly disagreed with Molière's relaxed style when it came to his own material. As Forestier puts it, "On conçoit que Racine, formé à l'école de la grande déclamation du barreau par Antoine Le Maître, ait été réservé envers les efforts de Molière pour introduire un peu moins d'emphase sur le théâtre" (Forestier 251). Moving *Alexandre*

to the Hôtel seemed like the most logical choice for the affectively concentrated Racine. On top of their familiarity with the stringent formalism of the alexandrine, the members of the Hôtel seemed to have the advantage of being better performers of tragic material. “La Grange et La Thorillière, par leur prestance et leur déclamation ‘trop unie’, ne figuraient pas des copies asses nobles d’Alexandre et Porus, à l’heure où Louis XIV ‘était’ Alexandre” (Forestier 251). The removal of *Alexandre* from the Troupe du Roi, as well as the immense amount of publicity the move provoked, thereby marked a conscious shift in performative style and deeply affected the image of Racine as a dramatist, showing the value Racine placed on the structure of the alexandrine, a preference that would continue for the rest of his career.

Fame and Reputation in *Andromaque*

Making its debut two years after *Alexandre le Grand,* Racine’s next tragedy *Andromaque* (1667) underscores the persona of an emotionally centered Racine first created in his portrayal of Alexander in 1665. The play depicts four characters from the generation of Greek heroes directly following the Trojan war. Set in the lands governed by Pyrrhus, Achilles’s son, the plot centers on his unrequited love for his captive, Andromaque. She does not return his affection, but she is wary of angering the king and provoking him to murder her only son, Astyanax, the only thread left of the former glory of Troy. Oreste, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, is sent as a spokesperson for Greece to convince Pyrrhus to give up the child. This primary tension is complicated by two more relationships of unrequited love. Oreste is smitten for Hermione, who shows no interest in him other than as a tool to ensure that Pyrrhus and Andromaque do not come to an agreement. Oreste’s emotions and eventual actions are driven by his love for Helen’s daughter, even as they seem to run opposite to his role as the voice of the rest of the Greek city

states. Hermione, for her part, wants to marry Pyrrhus, but seemingly only because of his status and her jealousy of the magnificent figure of Andromaque.

Infamy and reputation serve as the main affective thoroughfares for the play. Much like the impression of Alexander that drives the first three acts of *Alexandre le grand,* the specter of the Trojan War weighs heavily on the characters of *Andromaque,* with every character attempting to leverage his or her connection to it as a means of achieving his or her desires. *Andromaque,* however, also develops a second level of emotional of pressure, revealing publicly facing emotional concerns like shame, glory, and reputation to be a thin veneer covering a much more turbulent set of guiding principles. In this sense, *Andromaque* serves as a powerful sequel to *Alexandre le grand,* pushing past a level of affect that is purely public to highlight personal conflicts driven by passionate responses.

The opening issue over Pyrrhus' delay in getting rid of Astyanax sets up this first level of affect. Pyrrhus' indecision is politically charged, and the play takes off from the challenge of reconciling ideas of recognition and reputation. He has caused a fair amount of anxiety over his decision to court Andromaque, making "Toute la Grèce éclate en murmures confus" (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.1.68), and Oreste's discussion of the events leading up to the first scene emphasize that Pyrrhus has forgotten "son sang, et sa promesse" (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.1.68), in vying for Hector's wife. Both claims carry the weight of judgement from the previous generation of Greek heroes. By choosing to delay the decision over Astyanax' future, Pyrrhus defies the fame and memory of these men, risking the longevity of a Greek sense of victory as much as his own reputation. The same sense of reputation and memory also work as the main obstacles for Pyrrhus' desire to take Andromaque as his wife, the main reason he delays his decision about her son. When Andromaque and Pyrrhus first interact, Andromaque's immediate reaction is to reference her

allegiance to Hector and Troy (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.4.262). Later, as she calls attention to her choler at her son's imprisonment, she communicates her anger through language tied to fame and infamy. Beginning with her aggravated first words to Pyrrhus, she points to the shadow cast by the memory of Hector:

> ANDROMAQUE.
> Je passais jusqu'aux lieux, où l'on garde mon fils. 260
> Puisqu'une fois le jour vous souffrez que je voie
> Le seul bien qui me reste, et d'Hector et de Troie,
> J'allais, Seigneur, pleurer un moment avec lui,
> Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd'hui. (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.4.260-4)

Her son is the only living entity solidly tying her to her past, and she laments having to visit him in captivity. As much as she cares for her son, too, his existence painfully reminds her of her loss. Her "seul bien" is therefore doubly significant, touching on both the male figures in her life.

Andromaque's focus on memory and fame becomes even more powerful as she realizes the danger presented to her son's life by the arrival of Oreste. Her son is imprisoned and mistreated, she implies, because of the prowess and danger presented by his father rather than anything he could do in the present or the future. Pyrrhus reiterates this feeling in his own statement, "Leur haine pour Hector n'est pas encore éteinte. Ils redoutent son fils" (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.4.269-270). Infamy, in the eyes of the Greeks, is enough to warrant the murder of a small child, regardless of the lack of immediate danger he presents. Andromaque's response is indignant, showing her disbelief once again through ideas of fame and infamy: "Digne objet de leur crainte! Un enfant

malheureux, qui ne sait pas encor Que Pyrrhus est son maître, et qu'il est fils d'Hector" (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.4.270-272). Astyanax does not *know* Pyrrhus or that his father is Hector, meaning he does not *know* the story or either man's fame. He is unaware of his unexpressed loyalty to his father and how that translates immediately to infamy in Greece. Moreover, he is unaware of the infamy of Pyrrhus to the surviving members of Hector's family, unable to understand the baseline hatred he should feel for the son of Achilles. His lack of knowledge or experience is argued with a sense for how all of this *seems* to Greece and the remnants of Troy, pointing to the power of memory once more. Andromaque's dedication to Hector also anchors the connection between memory and tragedy (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.4.333-342). Not only is her *haine* for Pyrrhus immediately present in some of her first interactions with him, but so too is her lamentation for her husband and the life she used to live. Almost every moment involving Andromaque reaches back to the tensions of this ancient dispute, providing a constant backdrop of despair that steeps the play in remorse. Her tragedy comes from a constant push to recover and remember the past as much as it grows out of an inability to consider the present. If only she could bring herself to marry the son of Achilles, much of the drama of the play would be resolved in a bloodless manner. Her devotion to stay true, however, echoes a response to Achilles' murderous treatment of Hector just as it mirrors Hector's own devotion to completing his duties as honorably as possible in the face of certain death. Moreover, in the absence of her husband she takes over his responsibilities with respect to Troy. She understands her duty to the past and fulfills it in every moment, avoiding the flip-flopping of Pyrrhus and Oreste. Even as she imagines a possible second coming of Troy she is anchored by her ties to the past, and much like Hector she bemoans a world that has cast her into such a dire situation. So too does she wage battle against her situation:

ANDROMAQUE.

Dois-je les oublier, s'il ne s'en souvient plus ?

Dois-je oublier Hector privé de funérailles,

Et traîné sans honneur autour de nos murailles ?

Dois-je oublier son père à mes pieds renversé,

Ensanglantant l'autel qu'il tenait embrassé ?

Songe, songe, Céphise, à cette nuit cruelle,

Qui fut pour tout un peuple une nuit éternelle. (Racine, *Andromaque* 4.1.1072)

Andromaque's lines "Allons le voir pour la dernière fois," are especially poignant in their overlap with the many representations of Hector's wife since Homer. Racine presents her tragic decision both in terms of its agony and its necessity, and it is Andromaque's passionate loyalty that places pressure on Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste. Moreover, such a thread touches on one of the more important themes in the *Iliad.* The first conversations in the epic between Agamemnon, Chryses, Nestor, and Achilles show just how detrimental terrible leadership can be, and the trend is repeated and reworked throughout the text. Making Andromaque as solid in her decisions as the most powerful and affective characters of the original epic demonstrates just how well Racine taps into ancient sources for representations of some of the most intense moments of human experience.

The concentration on fame continues until the final moments of the piece, where Oreste's soliloquy utilizes a sense of horror developed from an understanding of the power infamy. He is horrified at the realization of the reputation he has cultivated by killing Pyrrhus, not only to Hermione, but also to himself and the rest of Greece:

ORESTE.

Que vois-je ? Est-ce Hermione ? Et que viens-je d'entendre ?
Pour qui coule le sang que je viens de répandre ?
Je suis, si je l'en crois, un traître, un assassin.
Est-ce Pyrrhus qui meurt ? Et suis-je Oreste enfin ?
Quoi ? J'étouffe en mon cœur la raison qui m'éclaire.
J'assassine à regret un roi que je révère.
Je viole en un jour les droits des souverains,
Ceux des ambassadeurs, et tous ceux des humains ;
Ceux même des autels, où ma fureur l'assiège.
Je deviens parricide, assassin, sacrilège.
Pour qui ? Pour une ingrate, à qui je le promets ;
Qui même, s'il ne meurt, ne me verra jamais,
Dont j'épouse la rage. Et quand je l'ai servie,
Elle me redemande et son sang et sa vie !
Elle l'aime ! Et je suis un monstre furieux !
Je la vois pour jamais s'éloigner de mes yeux,
Et l'ingrate, en fuyant, me laisse pour salaire
Tous les noms odieux que j'ai pris pour lui plaire.

(Racine, *Andromaque* 5.4.1565-1582)

Oreste's terror reflects an understanding that killing Pyrrhus is now one of the foundational markers of his persona. In looking to supplant Pyrrhus as the Achilles, or perhaps the Agamemnon,

of his generation, he accidentally becomes the villain, and the self-image he confronts undermines whatever surety of character he had coming into the conversation. His disbelief at his own infamy, "Et suis-je Oreste enfin?" has strong impact in this setting, especially considering the focus on loyalty and memory. Loyalty and treason have been constant underlying factors since the first conversation, setting up a rhetorical bottleneck where characters voice their concerns or desires through ideas of fame, politics, and infamy. In this case, Oreste's inversion of the normal pattern in depicting *himself* as disloyal is a mark of the power of infamy. This change represents a confrontation with his own fall, a reaction to understanding the distance between his position a few moments before and his position there and then. His shock stamps his acknowledgement of the repercussions of his actions, recognizing himself not as the brave hero saving Greece from a traitor, but as a "monstre furieux", guilty of a heinous crime. The subsequent screams and shouts reflect his understanding, too, of the longevity of reputation.

Digging Deeper: Underlying Personal Emotion In *Andromaque*

Andromaque may seem to present its tensions and pressures through fame, but Andromaque is the only character whose inner desires matches her outward communications. Her worry over her husband's lineage and her trauma at the destruction of Troy line up with her lamentations throughout, and it is perhaps for this reason that she escapes unscathed by the end: her utilization of fame, like Alexander's before, finds its agency in its simplicity and sincerity. That Oreste, Pyrrhus, and Hermione are less sincere is clear to from the outset. Their communication leverages political pressure and memory, but each of the three characters is shown to be driven more by personal desires. Hartle uses Pyrrhus' flip-flopping on the issue of rebuilding

Troy as an example, highlighting the “demolition du héros” as Pyrrhus strains to decide between Greece and Andromaque:

> This "démolition du héros," to use Bénichou's term, is made more explicit by the contrast between the blunt Pyrrhus as he responded to Oreste in I.ii and the Pyrrhus *soupirant* in the following scene with Andromaque. […] And Racine is careful to reinforce our awareness of this decay by a clear-cut echo from one scene to another. Trying to interest Andromaque Pyrrhus offers to re-build Troy; but we remember that this is the same Pyrrhus who just minutes ago had said to Oreste:
>
> Je songe quelle étoit autrefois cette ville,
> Si superbe en remparts, en héros si fertile,
> Maîtresse de l'Asie; et je regarde enfin
> Quel fut le sort de Troie, et quel est son destin.
> Je ne vois que des tours que la cendre a couvertes,
> Un fleuve teint de sang, des campagnes désertes,
> Un enfant dans les fers; et je ne puis songer
> Que Troie en cet état aspire à se venger.
>
> Perhaps he is sincere when he speaks to Andromaque — the lover's enthusiasm makes him capable of anything — but when Andromaque refuses him he realizes, or says he realizes, the extent to which passion blinded him:

J'ai songé, comme vous, qu'à la Grèce, à mon père,
A moi-même en un mot je devenois contraire;
Que je relevois Troie, et rendois imparfait
Tout ce qu'a fait Achille et tout ce que j'ai fait.
Je ne condamne plus un courroux légitime.
Et l'on vous va, Seigneur, livrer votre victime. (Hartle 7)

Pyrrhus seems to bring up larger issues surrounding topics like empire, destiny, and the clash of their two cultures, but his wording merely covers the polarizing emotions he experiences as a result of his love for Andromaque and her subsequent rejection. His ability to shake the foundation of Hermione, Andromaque, and even Oreste, is tied to emotional turmoil brought about by personal desire. He wants Andromaque, but cannot have her, so he resolves to play the role of the Greek hero.

Hermione's admonition of Oreste in Act II can be examined with an eye for a similar facade. Hermione's first moments on stage communicate a feeling of bewilderment and betrayal, and her quest for vengeance is inarguably personal. Moreover, she has emotional swings that threaten the stability of everyone else involved. She struggles with her decision to doom Pyrrhus, forced on by her sense of pride and honor, yet held back by a common human decency reinforced by her unrequited love. Hermione's first encounter with Oreste marks her personal vendetta against Andromaque and Pyrrhus rather than a reflection of her concern for the political implications of his task. Her push to move the conversation away from their private history and towards Oreste's duties as a Greek official (Racine, *Andromaque* 2.2.505-506), seems to bring out her political

worries over the rise of Troy in the next generation, but her conversation with Cléone immediately preceding portrays a different set of anxieties, ones wrapped up in their private history:

CLÉONE.

Et qu'est-ce que sa vue a pour vous de funeste ?
Madame, n'est-ce pas toujours le même Oreste,
Dont vous avez cent fois souhaité le retour,
Et dont vous regrettiez la constance et l'amour ?

HERMIONE.

C'est cet amour payé de trop d'ingratitude,
Qui me rend en ces lieux sa présence si rude.
Quelle honte pour moi ! Quel triomphe pour lui,
De voir mon infortune égaler son ennui !
Est-ce là, dira-t-il, cette fière Hermione ?
Elle me dédaignait, un autre l'abandonne.
L'ingrate qui mettait son cœur à si haut prix,
Apprend donc à son tour à souffrir des mépris ?
Ah dieux !

CLÉONE

Ah ! Dissipez ces indignes alarmes.
Il a trop bien senti le pouvoir de vos charmes.

Vous croyez qu'un amant vienne vous insulter ?
Il vous rapporte un cœur qu'il n'a pu vous ôter.
Mais vous ne dites point ce que vous mande un père.

(Racine, *Andromaque* 2.1.389-405)

Hermione's concerns are focused on her past treatment of him, as well as on the perception of her failure to win-over Pyrrhus. The attempt to get Oreste to focus on the current political dilemma has more to do with private anxieties than it reveals any genuine concern for the political arguments being made on both sides. Much of her words express anxieties over love, memory, and her position with relation to Andromaque, Pyrrhus, and Oreste. Her focus remains narrow, emphasizing personal relationships and leaving out concepts related to her culture, country, duty, etc.

Oreste, for his part, does not allow the conversation to deviate from the private sphere as quickly as Hermione would like. His concentration on their past gives him leverage throughout the scene:

HERMIONE.
Hé quoi ? toujours injuste en vos tristes discours,
De mon inimitié vous plaindrez-vous toujours ?
Quelle est cette rigueur tant de fois alléguée ?
J'ai passé dans l'Épire où j'étais reléguée ;
Mon père l'ordonnait. Mais qui sait si depuis,

Je n'ai point en secret partagé vos ennuis ?

Pensez-vous avoir seul éprouvé des alarmes ?

Que l'Épire jamais n'ait vu couler mes larmes ?

Enfin, qui vous a dit, que malgré mon devoir,

Je n'ai pas quelquefois souhaité de vous voir ?

ORESTE

Souhaité de me voir ? Ah divine princesse…

Mais de grâce, est-ce à moi que ce discours s'adresse ?

Ouvrez vos yeux. Songez qu'Oreste est devant vous,

Oreste si longtemps l'objet de leur courroux.

HERMIONE

Oui, c'est vous dont l'amour naissant avec leurs charmes,

Leur apprit le premier le pouvoir de leurs armes,

Vous que mille vertus me forçaient d'estimer,

Vous que j'ai plaint, enfin que je voudrais aimer.

ORESTE

Je vous entends. Tel est mon partage funeste.

Le cœur est pour Pyrrhus et les vœux pour Oreste.

(Racine, *Andromaque* 2.2.519-538)

This is not a conversation over how political maneuvering will best suit Greece, Troy; Oreste and Hermione only speak of their complicated relationship. Her *inimitié* is the central focus, as are her *courroux* and his *amour.* Such a pattern is matched by Oreste throughout, as his very first words mirror his concerns, hoping to swing Hermione to his side with his actions. His use of *courroux* explains his presence, marking the difficulties in his task and separating him from any political drives. Changing her view of him is the ultimate aim of his voyage, with the political issue merely setting a pretense for his visit. His longer speech to Pylade affirms these concentrations, and it is not until he has dwelled on his pain at seeing Hermione promised to Pyrrhus that he gives any indication of how Andromaque and Astyanax's futures matter to his desires. Even still Oreste is suspiciously absent from his own summation of the pressures of the situation:

ORESTE

J'entends de tous côtés qu'on menace Pyrrhus.
Toute la Grèce éclate en murmures confus.
On se plaint qu'oubliant son sang, et sa promesse,
Il élève en sa cour l'ennemi de la Grèce,
Astyanax, d'Hector jeune et malheureux fils,
Reste de tant de rois sous Troie ensevelis.
J'apprends que pour ravir son enfance au supplice,
Andromaque trompa l'ingénieux Ulysse,
Tandis qu'un autre enfant arraché de ses bras,
Sous le nom de son fils fut conduit au trépas.
On dit, que peu sensible aux charmes d'Hermione,

Mon rival porte ailleurs son cœur et sa couronne ;
Ménélas, sans le croire, en paraît affligé,
Et se plaint d'un hymen si longtemps négligé.
Parmi les déplaisirs où son âme se noie,
Il s'élève en la mienne une secrète joie. (Racine, *Andromaque* 1.1.67-82)

He *éntends* the situation of Pyrrhus, but he does not place himself as a part of the competing pressures. *Toute la Grèce* shouts in confused murmurs, but he is not included as one of these murmurers, emphasized by the impersonal *On* that follows. The adverse feeling of joy is perhaps the best indication of the distance between his aims and the situation at hand, revealing a discordant happiness at how his agency is improved by the political gridlock. His *joie* is secret because it has nothing to do with taking a side on the issue; it is directly linked to the new opportunity to fulfill his personal desires.

Andromaque therefore represents a maturation of the concept of fame. It takes Alexander's fame as a starting point, peeking behind the curtain to examine the underlying personal elements that wield the power wrought by reputation. In turn, understanding reputation, fame, and infamy in *Andromaque* calls for a reevaluation of the previous patterns set by Alexander's relationships to Taxile, Axiane, Porus, and Cléofile. If Racine's earlier play pushes a simple, yet absolute relationship between power, agency, and passion, *Andromaque* pushes past this simplicity, rendering many of those connections impotent by showing the facade of reputation, history, and memory in everyone except the play's titular heroine. Personal passions are revealed to be the underlying foundations of every character's decisions, underlining Racine's understanding of the conversations surrounding drama at the time. Deeply familiar with anti-theatricalist concerns over

impassioned responses from spectators, Racine's *Andromaque* marks one of the more intoxicating portrayals of passion presented on stage during the period.

II. A Heated Discussion: Racine and Nicole's Conversance in the *Querelle des Imaginaires*

If Racine's push towards emotive drama in his two consecutive plays during the mid-1660's marks his general conversance with contemporary anti-theatrical debates involving the affective power of performance, his participation in the *querelle des Imaginaires,* an anti-theatrical controversy sparked by his mentor, Pierre Nicole, allows us to look at a specific period of productive interplay between anti-theatricalism and drama more deeply. The *querelle* between Racine and Nicole, rather than demonstrating a purely antagonistic relationship, underscores the symbiotic nature of anti-theatrical debates, as the rhetorical and aesthetic strategies of both writers were supported and developed through their interactions with one another.

Pierre Nicole (1625-1695) was a member of a sect of Jansenists thinkers residing in an abbey outside of Paris called Port-Royal-des-Champs. Port-Royal was founded as a Cistercian abbey in 1204, and it was reinvigorated by a reformation of its Augustinian values in 1609, a movement spearheaded by Abbess Marie Arnauld (1591-1661). Shortly thereafter it opened its first elementary schools for French children, later named the *Petites Écoles*, which evolved into elite educational institutions, producing students trained in both the writings of the Fathers of the Catholic church and the Greek and Latin authors of classical rhetoric. While the schools were highly effective, instructing some of the great writers and thinkers of the 17th century, Port-Royal's particular approach to the teachings of St. Augustine would become controversial in the 1630's when the Arnauld family welcomed Jean du Vergier de Hauranne, the Abbot of Saint-Cyran, as its head of theology. The controversies surrounding Port-Royal were sparked by the Abbot's

connections to Dutch writer, Jansenius (1583-1638), whose commentary on Augustine, *Augustinus* (1640) re-interpreted a handful of Augustine's arguments about the Christian faith in ways that were seen as heretical by religious authorities, both in France itself and by religious authorities in Rome. Among the controversial topics in Jansenius' commentary on Augustine was the re-evaluation of the idea of free will, as Jansenist readings of Augustine broke with the beliefs set forth by the Council of Trent almost a century earlier by taking a stricter approach to the idea of predestination that erased much of mankind's predilection towards choice or agency in the face of God's gift of grace. Jansenius' *Augustinus* also took issue with other matters of theological importance, including the frequency of communion, the doctrine of assurance, and the authority of the Pope outside of Rome. *Augustinus'* popularity meant that France's theological authority, the College of Sorbonne, was asked to review the work, and in 1644 they supported a Papal Bull that outlawed the text as heretical, citing strong connections to another heretical sect, Calvinism.

The Sorbonne's conclusions were met with outright opposition by the leading members of Port-Royal, who were quick to retaliate against what they saw as an overreach of power and an unfair reading of *Augustinus*. Antoine Arnauld, Marie's brother and a leading theologian strongly influenced by the Abbot of Saint-Cyran, published *De la fréquente communion* in 1643 in an attempt to clear the air around Jansenism, but his efforts did not produce the desired effect. Attempts to reconvile the Jansenist sect with religious authorities continued, however, with Nicolas Caussin and François Pinthereau, two other theologists with connections to Jansenism, publishing apologies for Port-Royal in the same year that the Sorbonne decried *Augustinus* as heretical. Antoine Arnauld's 1655 text, *Lettre à un duc et pair* took up the fight once more, taking issue with the refusal of absolution for the Duke of Liancourt based on his suspected connections to Jansenism, but again to little avail. Even Blaise Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales* (1656-1657) could

not smooth over the controversy, and in 1664 Pope Alexander VII backed Louis XIV's request to have the Jansenists formally sign a document titled *The Formula of Submission for the Jansenists,* agreeing thereafter to abandon those practices deemed heretical. After their refusal to sign the *Formulaire*, as it is known today, many scholars and theologians at Port-Royal were further ostracized, refused communion, and cut off from their regular salaries.

Pierre Nicole's role at Port-Royal was tied to the *Petites Écoles* as much as it was to the controversy over Jansenism. Nicole was an influential figure in teaching classical rhetoric to the students at Port-Royal during his tenure, instructing Greek and Latin while writing a well-known rhetorical manual, *La Logique, ou L'art de Penser* (1662), with Antoine Arnauld. As one of the leading theological figures at the abbey, Nicole also wrote a handful of treatises aimed at resolving the issues surrounding Port-Royal's dedication to Jansenism. His *Les Imaginaires, Ou Lettres Sur L'Hérésie Imaginaire* (1664) represents one attempt to resolve the issue posed by the allegations of heresy tied to Jansenism. Its ten letters argue vehemently for a reevaluation of the practical measures of Jansenism, alleging that religious attitudes and practices at Port-Royal explicitly avoided those aspects deemed heretical by the Sorbonne and the Vatican. Nicole also defended the writings of Jansenius in his *Imaginaires,* claiming that those individuals who maligned Jansenism and Port-Royal were biased and conspiratorial. The title *Imaginaires* marks the underlying argument of the piece, that any heresy on the part of that small sect of Catholics who had differentiated themselves from the Jesuits was imagined on the part of the accusers and therefore had no merit.

The *querelle des Imaginaires* began when Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, a veteran member of the *Académie française,* responded to Nicole's *Imaginaires,* highlighting all the issues inherent to the Jansenist's claims of imagined heresy. The controversy came as Nicole penned a

retort to Desmarets in another series of letters titled *Les Visionnaires* (1665), where he attacked Desmarets for his connections to poetry and drama, arguing that any man who spoke "continuellement, comme il fait, d'allégories, d'applications mystiques […] ce n'est pas un marque qu'il soit véritablement spirituel," and therefore should not allowed to speak out in theological debates (Nicole cclxxix). His attacks labelled Desmarets, as well as all poets and dramatists, as *empoisonneurs publics,* public poisoners who should be ashamed for propagating their "Écrits pernicieux," and who should be considered "Coupable d'une infinité d'homicides spirituels" (Nicole cclxxix). This aggressive attack shifted the scope and scale of the theological debate intended by Nicole, prompting an influx of both anti-theatrical doctrines and apologies for the theater in response. One of those defenses was Racine's *Lettre à l'Auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"* (1666), a piece that targeted his former instructor for the unwarranted attacks on dramatists and poets. Because Racine's response came at a crucial moment in his career, appearing in print just after his first big hit, *Alexandre le grand,* as well as because of his ties to Port-Royal and Nicole, the *Lettre* has been read as an important moment for both writers. Not only are Racine's later plays often read with the *Lettre* in mind, but Nicole's own success, including his *Traité de la Comédie* (1667), is also linked to the two authors' dispute.[63] Tracing the involvement of both Racine and Nicole in the *querelle des Imaginaires* thereby sheds light on the practical, productive role of polemicism, as each used the *querelle* as a building block for constructing popular images of their authorship.

[63] For explorations of the effects of the *querelle des Imaginaires* and Racine's role in the *querelle* see Picard, *Racine polémiste* (1967); Marin, *La critique du discours* (1975); Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder* (1999); Declerq, *Jean Racine 1699-1999* (2003); Forestier, *Jean Racine* (2006); Thirouin, *L'aveuglement Salutaire* (2007); Hammond, "'Quel funeste poison?'" (2016); Harris and Prest, "Guilty Pleasures" (2016); Connors, "Pierre Nicole, Jean-Baptiste Dubos, and the Psychological Experience of Theatrical Performance in Early Modern France" (2017).

Racine, for his part, uses the platform provided by the *querelle* to add nuance to his identity as a dramatist. The tone and style of the *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires,"* written by Racine in the year following the success of *Alexandre le grand* does not seem to immediately fit into the portrait of his authorship cultivated on the stages of the Palais du Roi and the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Alternating between sarcastically playing with the logic of the attacks in the *Visionnaires* and effortlessly poking holes in the claims of his former mentor, Racine's response scoffs at the ridiculousness of Nicole's argument more than it communicates genuine concern over Nicole's theories on performance. This lack of seriousness is perhaps highlighted most by Racine's natural, colloquial style in his critique. Shedding the complex and serious persona impressed upon audiences by *Alexandre le Grand*, the Racine that comments in the *Lettre* is witty and seemingly nonchalant.

Rather than breaking from the persona cultivated in his tragedies, however, this move reflects a conscious strategy as much as his use of enthymemes in *Alexandre* a year before. Approaching the argument with an unaffected attitude dissolves the tension of Nicole's remarks, removing the threat of tragedy set up by Nicole. These are not serious allegations, Racine's tone seems to imply, so even a serious, weighty dramatist like himself can participate in the discussion without a need to dip into the realm of emotional response. The calm, easy manner of his argumentation effectively shifts the genre of the controversy, demonstrating a performative agility on the part of Racine that only widens the impression of his skillset. The *Lettre* does not show Racine as angry or frightened by the allegations Nicole makes in the *Visionnaires*, but as entertained and amused by the ridiculous nature of Nicole's anti-theatrical position. Here he taps into something more akin to Molière's outlook on performance, showing that argumentation in

comedies usually dictate that someone look the fool. By presenting himself as the carefree voice of reason, Racine casts Nicole into the part of Arnolphe or Sganarelle.

Unruffled Sarcasm: Racine's Engagement with the *querelle des Imaginaires*

Racine's response begins by targeting Nicole for his wild jabs at Desmarets, criticizing his aim more than the fight itself. The issue is that Nicole chose to insult poetry and drama in passing, thereby stepping into untenable territory, inciting the *Académie française* and Racine himself. The rhetorical question posed just after the opening lines, "Et qu'est-ce-que les romans et les comédies peuvent avoir de commun avec le jansénisme?" (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*13) marks his disbelief at being included without reason in the argument at hand. Accordingly, his first piece of advice is simply to have more tact: "Il ne falloit pas tout d'un coup les injurier. Vous pouviez employer des termes plus doux que ces mots d'empoisonneurs publics, et de gens horribles, parmi les chrétiens" (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*14-15). The dramatist adds that other religious writers from Port-Royal were successful in arguing over scripture without involving others, poignantly indicating that Nicole had enough enemies already without bringing in more without cause and alluding to Blaise Pascal as an example of how to step lightly while engaging in important theological debates (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*14). He later emphasizes that he does not care whether Nicole and Desmarets continue to argue over the question of Jansenism, sarcastically giving Nicole permission to continue writing in the same vein as is shown in the *Imaginaires:*

> Pour vous, monsieur, qui entrez maintenant en lice contre Desmarets, nous ne refusons point délire vos lettres. Poussez votre ennemi à toute rigueur: examinez chrétiennement ses

> mœurs et ses livres: feuilletez les registres du châtelet a employez l'autorité de saint Augustin et de saint Bernard pour le déclarer visionnaire: établissez de bonnes règles pour nous aider à reconnaître les fous; nous nous en servirons en temps et lieu. (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*24)

He even mentions that he has enjoyed the spectacle on occasion:

> Je vous déclare que je ne prends point de parti entre M. Desmarets et vous; je laisse à juger au monde quel est le visionnaire de vous deux. J'ai lu jusqu'ici vos lettres avec assez d'indifférence, quelquefois avec plaisir, quelquefois avec dégoût, selon qu'elles me sembloient bien ou mal écrites. (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*11)

Coursing through these moments is a tongue-in-cheek attitude that chides Nicole by reminding him of his faulty logic. Early on, Racine sardonically asks if Desmarets' connection to novels and comedies necessitates a general aversion to all of these types of writing: "Faut-il, parce que Desmarets a fait autrefois un roman et des Comédies, que vous preniez en aversion tous ceux qui se sont mêlés d'en faire?" (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*14) The question itself is ridiculous, revealing Racine's mockery of Nicole's logic. This point is driven home later when Racine reminds Nicole of his dependence on classical authors in his theological texts. Here too he is sarcastic and disparaging, beginning with a throw-away concession of his lack of theological experience before criticizing the faulty connections in Nicole's writing.

> Je ne suis pas un théologien comme vous; je prendrai pourtant la liberté de vous dire que l'église ne nous défend point de lire les poètes, qu'elle ne nous commande point de les avoir en horreur. C'est en partie dans leur lecture que les anciens pères se sont formés. Saint Grégoire de Nazianze n'a pas fait de difficulté de mettre la passion de Notre-Seigneur en tragédie. Saint Augustin cite Virgile aussi souvent que vous citez saint Augustin. (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*17)

The *Je ne suis pas un théologien* is ironic given the lesson Racine gives directly after, cutting into Nicole's ethos by underlining how Racine's lack of experience is still more useful than all of Nicole's years of theological study. The rhetorical "Qu'est-ce que vous concluez de là? Direz-vous qu'il ne faut plus lire Virgile, et ne plus aller à la comédie?" is just as rhetorical, highlighting how easily Nicole's claims are torn apart. A similar process occurs as he questions what Nicole would rather everyone read instead: "Que voulez-vous? tout le monde n'est pas capable de s'occuper à des choses si importantes." (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*17). Racine also highlights Nicole's refusal to acknowledge how his comments about *empoisonneurs publics* would touch on renowned French writers from the previous generation, arguing that "Vous n'avez pas considéré que ni Madame d'Urfé, ni Corneille, ni Gomberville, votre ancien ami, n'étoient point responsables de la conduite de Desmarets" (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*18). Even more, Racine reminds his mentor of Port-Royal's warm reception of *Clélie* in the recent past, joking that Nicole and his colleagues "endured" the praise put upon them by Scudery in the novel:

> Vous avez même oublié que mademoiselle de Scudéry avoit fait une peinture avantageuse du Port-Royal dans sa *Clélie*. Cependant j'avois ouï dire que vous aviez souffert patiemment qu'on vous eût loués dans ce livre horrible, L'on fit venir au désert le volume qui parloit de vous. Il y courut de main en main, et tous les solitaires voulurent voir l'endroit où ils s'étoient traités d'illustres. (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*18)

Importantly, however, the tone refrains from reaching acerbity or scorn. Racine prods at Nicole's logic, but he does not lash out with the same veracity as his former mentor, nor does he turn the public poisoner comment back onto Nicole, choosing instead to poke at his skills in debate. Such a focus is rather above board compared to the kinds of irascible attacks Nicole turned to in the *querelle des Imaginaires*. Throughout the *Lettre,* however, Racine keeps his tone grounded in satire and sarcasm.

One of the more illuminating elements of the *Lettre* is the short, Bocaccian allegory presented some half-way through Racine's letter. Within, two friars are misidentified upon a visit to Port-Royal, a situation that eventually leads to their mistreatment by Jansenist characters whose likeness to contemporary officials at Port-Royal are clear throughout. When the truth is finally brought out and the *Capucins* treated to a lavish meal, the officials are made to look all the worse due to their bigotry and prejudice towards other members of the cloth. The story of the two *Capucins* clearly underlines the hypocrisy on display in Nicole's attack on Desmerets, but it does so in a way that portrays a chortling incredulity at such outlandish behavior, a sharp contrast to Nicole's haughty attitude toward those outside of his immediate circles.

The short version of the tale is that two travelers come to Port-Royal and are treated rather rudely after being mistaken for Papal legates opposed to the writings of Jansenius. It is only when

another individual returns and recognizes one of the two *Capuchins,* telling Angelique how they are "fort bon religieux," that their treatment is reversed and are thereafter taken to a lovely meal (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"* 21). Racine puts his storytelling ability on display, quickly creating a handful of unintelligent, reactive characters whose bumbling demonstration of the behind-the-scenes action at Port-Royal is laughably awkward. The abbess Angelique, for example, does not know of anything the two men did to warrant their cold reception, but merely hears that their beliefs are not aligned with her own:

> Comme ils 'étoient à table, le diable, qui ne vouloit pas que ces bons pères soupassent à leur aise, mit dans la tête de quelqu'un de vos messieurs que l'un de ces capucins étoit un certain père Maillard, qui s'étoit depuis peu signalé à Rome en sollicitant la bulle du pape contre Jansénius. Ce bruit vint aux oreilles de la mère Angélique. (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*21)

Her immediate reaction is harsh, but not to the point of being violent or problematic:

> Elle accourt au parloir avec précipitation, et demande qu'est-ce qu'on a servi aux capucins, quel pain et quel vin on leur a donnés? La tourière lui répond qu'on leur a donné du pain blanc et du vin des messieurs. Cette supérieure zélée commande qu'on le-leur ôte, et que l'on mette devant eux du pain des valets et du cidre. L'ordre s'exécute. Ces bons pères, qui avoient bu chacun un coup, sont bien étonnés de ce changement. Ils prennent pourtant la chose en patience, et se couchent', non sans admirer le soin qu'on prenoit de leur faire faire pénitence. (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*20)

Racine pushes the point of his allegory immediately after, presenting the moral for his former mentor and arguing that Nicole's *Vissionaires* employs much the same approach as the flat, uncompromising characters of his allegory:

> Voilà, monsieur, comme vous avez traite Desmarets, et comme vous avez toujours traité tout le monde. Qu'une femme fût dans le désordre, qu'un homme lut dans la débauche, s'ils se disoient de vos amis, vous espériez toujours de leur salut; s'ils vous étoient peu favorables, quelque vertueux qu'ils fussent, vous appréhendiez toujours le jugement de Dieu pour eux. La science étoit traitée comme la vertu. (Racine, *Lettre à l'auteur des "Hérésies Imaginaires"*21)

While the moral reads somewhat seriously, placing the allegory in the middle of his critique shows some comedic genius. The tale hits whimsically more than it conveys a genuine attempt at being didactic or confrontational, as the antagonists within are relatively benign even in their foul treatment of the innocent *capuchins.* The tensions are more awkward or embarrassing than vicious, providing an important inversion to Nicole's feud. To Racine, the conflict over the *Imaginaires* and the later *Visionnaires* are both as trivial as the food on the allegorical table, yet Nicole had to throw insults around, involving others for no apparent reason.

This is not to say that Racine's letter is not biting in its reproach. Nicole would surely have been insulted by more than a few of the sarcastic punch lines that litter the short piece, and Racine underscores Nicole's personal faults with a familiarity that makes his critique even more powerful. He doubts, for example, that his mentor is capable of taking advice. Racine concludes his small

story about Port-Royal by acknowledging the futility of the lesson, saying “Je ne doute point que vous ne vous justifiiez par l'exemple de quelque père” (Racine, *Lettre à l’auteur des “Hérésies Imaginaires”*21). He knows the immediate reaction Nicole will have to the allegory, and he lays a bit of a rhetorical trap. If Nicole responds, softening his tone in his arguments, he has been won over by Racine; if he does not, he falls into the allegory itself, becoming as flatly irrational as the irascible characters within. A similar touch on the part of Racine can be detected in the final lines, where perhaps the most sarcastic barb of the entire letter can be found:

> Retranchez-vous donc sur le sérieux; remplissez vos lettres de longues et doctes périodes; citez les pères ; jetez-vous souvent sur les injures, et presque toujours sur les antithèses. Vous êtes appelé à ce style. Il faut que chacun suive sa vocation. (Racine, *Lettre à l’auteur des “Hérésies Imaginaires”*25)

Telling Nicole to follow his natural instincts after teasing him for those very same inclinations is brilliant, forcing Nicole between a rock and a hard place without bringing himself to stoop to his level of derision.

Teasing, however, is where Racine draws the line. He never crosses into violent personal attack, compares Port-Royal to satanic forces, or scorns them for their beliefs. Racine somewhat lightheartedly and quite comedically lays out the ridiculousness of the situation at hand, and the droll sense of humor relayed throughout places Racine as a playful commentator more than a third combatant, with humor and entertainment emphasized more than disdain or contempt. By removing himself from the seriousness of Nicole’s style of polemic in the *Visionnaires,* Racine produces one more layer to the character of his authorship that in some ways makes him into an

enthymeme in his own right, much like his rendition of Alexander the year before. The image of his authorship that builds itself around eliciting passionate responses through his carefully structured dramatic tensions and novel composite characters is complicated by the comical portrait suggested by the *Lettre.* The effect seems to be a much more tangible, approachable version of the author, but it only adds to the mystique of his persona, broadening his range to include both ends of the spectrum with respect to 17th century French drama. Not only can Racine produce wonderful portraits of kings through envisioning ancient Hellenistic conquerors, but he can also, the *Lettre* indicates, handle opposition without breaking a sweat or involving himself too seriously. Even his former instructor, Pierre Nicole, is no problem for the brilliant author on display in Racine's response, rendering his teacher as no more than an outdated, over-worried pedant.

Le Métier Plus Indigne : Nicole's *Traité de la Comédie* and the Institutions of Oratory

Racine's interaction with his former mentor informed the rhetorical and aesthetic strategies of Pierre Nicole in the years following. Nicole would publish his first purely anti-theatrical treatise, the *Traité de la Comédie,* two years after Racine's *Lettre* first responded to his allegations of criminality in the *Visionnaires.* By the time the *Traité de la Comédie* appeared in 1667, Pierre Nicole had been fairly successful as a writer, having built up a robust sense of his authorship in the decades before the *querelle* both through his work as a translator and through his involvement in theological debates surrounding Jansenism and Port-Royal.[64] Nicole's *Traité* clearly has Racine's *Lettre* in mind, as some of the very same types of rhetorical strategies shown in Racine's

[64] Between 1656 and 1658, he contributed to Blaise Pascal's *Provinciales*, later translating them into Latin. In 1662 he published *La Logique, ou l'art de penser* with Antoine Arnauld, a doctrine on classical rhetoric largely based on Cicero and Quintilian. In 1664 he broadened his attacks on theological terrain, writing *La Perpétuité de la foi dans l'Église catholique touchant l'eucharistе,* a doctrine reprimanding Protestants.

work are clear in Nicole's, with the moralist's own portrayal of his persona in the *Traité* operating as an imitation and inversion of many of the elements natural to the "Racinian" representation. His neutral, academic tone, the style of declamation in the piece, and the structural looping he inscribes into the chapters of his *Traité* can be seen as operating on the same stage as Racine's cultivation of his own persona in his *Lettre,* creating a version of Nicole that can share space with Racine and ultimately produce his own impressions about the confrontation being staged. His writing leverages strategies visible in the younger author's work, reimagining and re-purposing it to produce a vision of Nicole that performs in general conversance with the portrait of the renowned dramatist constructed through *Alexandre,* the *Lettre,* and *Andromaque*.

Tracing Nicole's similarities to Racine's particular theatricalism in the *Traité de la Comédie* first requires a foundational understanding of classical rhetoric, how it helped form the roots of early modern education in Europe, and how it was viewed and utilized at the *Petites Écoles* of Port-Royal. Beginning in the medieval period and stretching deep into modernity, the study of classical rhetoric was an important tool in the instruction of composition, grammar, memorization, linguistics, and languages, as well as in argumentation, defense, and creative invention. Students were often asked to use texts in a variety of ways. On one hand, annotations were an important part of both reading comprehension and an understanding of composition, argumentation, and the beginning of persuasion. Students might be expected to annotate a particular passage of Quintilian or Cicero with an eye for picking out concepts or phrases that seemed the most important, recording them in personal handbooks to be used in later compositions. Students were also often asked to memorize parts of the original texts in Latin, improving both their grammar skills and their mental acuity in the process. As such, Classical rhetorical texts were foundational to early modern education, not only in providing strategies for composition and argumentation, but also in

their role as material goods, as dissectible commodities of words and phrases used to cultivate personal libraries dedicated to articulation and persuasion in the early modern world.[65]

Humanist education was also foundational to the *Petites Écoles* at Port-Royal, including the concentration on utilizing rhetorical texts from classical Latin to instruct students. Gilles Declercq describes Jean Racine's education as an example by referencing the slight, but impactful differences between a Jansenist education and a Jesuit one in mid-17th century France:

> Au plan pédagogique, Port-Royal est en mesure d'initier à l'ensemble des savoirs philologiques de l'humanisme : Latin, grec, hébreu (Arnauld d'Andilly), mais aussi langues romanes (italien, espagnol), sans négliger la part des sciences.
>
> Nous insisterons pour notre part sur une pratique au fondement du cahier d'Extraits de Tacite et Quintilien, à savoir la lecture directe des textes antiques qui distingue les Petites Écoles de l'enseignement jésuite, caractérise par le recours aux manuels, méthodes, abrégés de rhétoriques, et littératures antiques. Au-delà des classes de grammaire, cette « lecture des anciens Auteurs » est en effet le fondement du travail des élèves : lecture active qui requiert l'annotation, la copie et la glose portées sur des cahiers tels ceux que nous avons conservés de Racine. (Declercq 266-267)

[65] The lessons in morality produced by classical rhetoric also played an important role in education, as the texts in question were not limited to technical information, often branching into ethical concerns and the dangers of persuasive speech. Quintilian's *l'Institutio Oratoria* provides a wonderful example: "*L'Institutio* est en effet loin de se limiter à un livre technique ; ses deux premiers livres traitent de l'éducation des jeunes enfants et le dernier de la moralité de l'orateur : le rhéteur latin est donc perçu comme pédagogue et moraliste" (Declercq 276).

While such education was typical of "l'humanisme Classique," putting on display the benefits reaped from *translation studii* (Declercq 268), the concentration on individualization with respect to these methods distinguished Port-Royal from other schools of thought. As Declercq puts it,

> Faisant reproduire à l'élève le geste du copiste médiéval, cette pédagogie révèle l'essence *doxale* de l'éducation classique, l'élève étant invité à s'approprier le meilleur des grands modèles. […] Acquisition d'un savoir doxal, mémorisation de formules générales et donc transposables dans différents contextes de discours et d'écriture, la culture topique fonde la polyvalence fonctionnelle d'une formation rhétorique qui privilégie l'idéalité et l'universalité, à la différence des esthétiques modernes soucieuses d'originalité créatrice. (268)

For students at Port-Royal, polyvalence and individuation through imitation and citation drove oratorial and authorial success. Imitation was a personalized method of communication as much as it demonstrated adherence to a structured system of poetics and aesthetics, and the selection and organization of phrases or concepts can be read as markers of conversations between writers.

These details factor into Nicole's conversance with Racine first through the distinct shift in tone from that of the criticism in the *Visionnaires.* Erasing the image of a foaming-at-the-mouth moralist from his earlier writing, Nicole's *Traité* reflects a calm, intelligent critic rather than the irascible man mocked by Racine. From the first lines he is measured and careful, bringing up an argument about the role of c*omédies* that echoes that of the *Visionnaires,* but having replaced his choler with a much more academic, argumentative approach. This cultivates his *ethos* and the logic of the overall argument about contemporary drama as much as it strives to be emotionally relevant,

thereby tapping into a similar resource as Racine in his two plays during the period. The preface serves as a marker of the calm, confident approach Nicole displays:

> Une des grandes marques de la corruption de ce siècle est le soin que l'on a pris de justifier la Comédie, et de la faire passer pour un divertissement qui se pouvait allier avec la dévotion. Les autres siècles étaient plus simples dans le bien et dans le mal: ceux qui y faisaient profession de piété témoignaient, par leurs actions et par leurs paroles, l'horreur qu'ils avaient de ces spectacles profanes. Ceux qui étaient possédés de la passion du Théâtre reconnaissaient au moins qu'ils ne suivaient pas en cela les règles de la religion chrétienne. Mais le caractère de ce siècle est de prétendre allier ensemble la piété et l'esprit du monde. On ne se contente pas de suivre le vice, on veut encore qu'il soit honoré et qu'il ne soit pas flétri par le nom honteux de vice, qui trouble toujours un peu les plaisirs que l'on y prend, par l'horreur qui l'accompagne.[…]Il faut regarder quelle est la vie d'un Comédien et d'une Comédienne; quelle est la matière et le but de nos Comédies ; et quels effets elles produisent d'ordinaire dans les esprits de ceux qui les représentent, ou qui les voient représenter; quelles impressions elles leur laissent; et examiner ensuite, si tout cela a quelque rapport avec la vie, les sentiments et les devoirs d'un véritable Chrétien. Et c'est ce qu'on a dessein de faire dans cet écrit. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 452)

The situation, as Nicole presents it, is quite serious, as his determination of plays as one of the "grandes marques de la corruption" indicates, but his tone speaks to a primarily analytical aim rather than a volatile sense of outrage. Leaving behind personal jabs meant to provoke anger and opposition, the *Traité* simply suggests that an examination of the life of an actor and the

practicalities of everyday theatergoing are enough to succinctly demonstrate the negative qualities of the profession. The "il faut regarder […]" presents a calm statement of the subject matter to be discussed while it leaves room for the readers to make their own decisions: if *comédies* are to be allowed, the *Traité* indicates, a meticulous examination of their effects on society and the inherent ties to sin, disease, and contagion should be encouraged by both sides of the debate, even if only to give a more solid understanding of how plays and theaters operate in their contemporary setting.

Inverting the move Racine uses in his *Lettre,* Nicole's work creates a persona that is as serious as Racine's is nonchalant, but without the frantic immediacy shown in his outrageous comments to Desmarets at the start of the *querelle*. This move can also be understood as a shift in declamation similar to Racine's in *L'affaire d'Alexandre* due to the inversion of emotion at the foundation of the *Traité.* Nicole shows his rhetorical prowess by approaching the idea of emotional solicitation in a novel, yet imitative manner. If Racine's promotion of his authorial persona actively cultivates an image of an unworried professional dramatist whose participation is marked by his turn towards *naturel* declamation, Nicole's neutral tone removes him from the conversational style of the *Lettre.* By being overtly neutral, yet altogether critical, Nicole portrays himself as playing a rational role beside Racine's emphatic pursuit of the passions. The move inverts Racine's declamatory techniques because it is just as far from a set of natural emotional responses as the overtly dramatic performances at l'Hôtel de Bourgogne might have been, a move that would have been recognizable to readers and audiences keeping up with the *querelle,* especially after the controversy surrounding Racine's change of acting troupe during the first few weeks of performances of *Alexandre le grand.* In turn, the genre of the performance between the two writers shifts as well, becoming a lesson in patience, careful examination, and experience rather than a coming-of-age narrative emphasizing a student's ability to surpass his former instructor. Nicole

highlights his conversance with the patterns of contemporary theater production while simultaneously providing clear evidence of his own abilities in leveraging the very same elements that had been crucial to Racine's recent success.

Looping Effects: Nicole Re-imagines the Alexandrine in the *Traité de la Comédie*

Nicole's conversance with Racine in the *Traité* is further colored by the moralist's clever use of rhetorical looping and layering in the anti-theatrical piece. While it is an incredibly dense text overall, the *Traité* works diligently throughout to prove the original slander in the *Visionnaires* by adding depth to the claim of *empoisonneurs publics.* Leaving behind other complexities brought out in the *querelle* deemed too granular to speak to the danger inherent to public spectacles (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 454), the structure and logic of the piece, as well as all thirty-five internal divisions, are all built to elaborate on one single point.

More tellingly, the *Traité's* construction is largely driven by a re-imagination of the use of alexandrines in contemporary drama. The *Traité* employs similar patterns of looping and layering throughout, using complex, interlocking claims that provide depth and support through each chapter's relative independence and cooperation with the others. In turn, these re-interpretations drive the particular portrait of Nicole as a creative, topical, and impressive author. A look at the way alexandrine verses create phonetic loops and layered meaning allows for a better understanding of Nicole's strategy in the *Traité*. Alexandrines, especially with respect to how they are utilized by Racine, cultivate significance in interlocking steps from the most local to the most global levels. The versification pushes past being simply aesthetic, developing complex and interconnected sets of relationships between lines, verses, stanzas, and characters. The following

scene is pulled from the first conversation between Andromaque and Pyrrhus in *Andromaque,* and it provides a nice example for the interlocking nature of Racine's style:

PYRRHUS

Me cherchiez-vous, Madame ?

Un espoir si charmant me serait-il permis ?

ANDROMAQUE

Je passais jusqu'aux lieux, où l'on garde mon fils.

Puisqu'une fois le jour vous souffrez que je voie

Le seul bien qui me reste, et d'Hector et de Troie,

J'allais, Seigneur, pleurer un moment avec lui,

Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd'hui.

PYRRHUS

Ah, Madame ! Les Grecs, si j'en crois leurs alarmes,

Vous donneront bientôt d'autres sujets de larmes.

ANDROMAQUE

Et quelle est cette peur dont leur cœur est frappé,

Seigneur ? Quelque Troyen vous est-il échappé ?

PYRRHUS

Leur haine pour Hector n'est pas encore éteinte.

Ils redoutent son fils.

ANDROMAQUE

Digne objet de leur crainte! 270

Un enfant malheureux, qui ne sait pas encor

Que Pyrrhus est son maître, et qu'il est fils d'Hector.

(Racine, *Andromaque* 1.4.258-272)

Two types of looping are formed by the alexandrine verses in this selection. The more localized of the two operates within individual character's sets of lines, where the syllables ending the first line also serve to complete the end rhyme in the last line. Andromaque, for example, explains to Pyrrhus that she has come to see her son with the line "Je passais jusqu'aux lieux, où l'on garde mon fils," before lamenting that "J'allais, Seigneur, pleurer un moment avec lui, je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd'hui." She begins with the same sound that she ends with, creating a natural sense of resolution through the matching, overlapping sounds. The *fils* and the *lui/hui* complete a phonetic loop, resolving the rhythm of her lines before Pyrrhus speaks again. Pyrrhus has his own moment of resolution in the next two lines, with the rhyme between *alarmes* and *larmes*. The effect of these two examples is primarily aesthetic, but the cadence of the scene is nonetheless driven in part by the looping and resolution of the sounds, providing the material upon which the drama of the situation can unfold. Andromaque does not want anything to do with Pyrrhus, and her feelings are underlined by the rhyme scheme that closes her off from Pyrrhus.

While this first type of looping distances the two characters from each other, closing off their speech from other speakers on-stage, at other moments the rhyme schemes work in an opposite fashion, driving characters together whose desires run counter to one another. The same scene shows Pyrrhus and Andromaque competing over a single sound just after their closed loops create a sense of distance, and the result is a set of complex and interconnected meanings that become more global as their conversation continues. Pyrrhus' *éteinte* is outmatched by Andromaque's *crainte,* an approximate rhyme that works to give her agency as she interrupts Pyrrhus. It also forcibly connects the two characters through making them share an alexandrine and a rhymed pairing. Andromaque's response captures Pyrrhus' original claim of a threat through its phonetic similarities to *crainte,* reworks the sound, and effectively overwrites its first significance to leverage her own desires. The resulting repetition of sounds layers the significance and intention of both words, creating a tug of war between the ethereal traces of Hector's memory and the tangible power of Greek fear. Both the closing of Andromaque's lines with respect to Pyrrhus and her use of his own sounds against him work to develop meaning. Locally, Andromaque shows herself to be indifferent to the desires of her captor. More generally, however, she is willing to allow his speech into her own, but only when she can re-purpose it to her own advantage.

Nicole's looping in the *Traité de la Comédie* re-imagines the value of the shifts between different levels of interconnectedness as shown in *Andromaque*. Instead of complicating and bifurcating significance, where the use of the same sound to end a line can produce a sense of discord and confusion between two characters, the movement from local to global interconnectedness in the *Traité* tempers foundational points about *empoisonneurs publics,* welding them together to give each point of overlap more rhetorical strength. His opening chapter,

for example, takes the issue of emotional provocation to the root of performance, arguing that the very idea foundational to being a *comédien* involves a long-term goal of influencing audiences. From the start this goal is a central issue of drama:

> Il est impossible qu'on considère le métier de Comédien, et qu'on le compare avec la profession Chrétienne, qu'on ne reconnaisse qu'il n'y a rien de plus indigne d'un enfant de Dieu et d'un membre de Jésus-Christ que cet emploi. […] C'est un métier qui a pour but le divertissement des autres; où des hommes et des femmes paraissent sur un Théâtre pour y représenter des passions de haine, de colère, d'ambition, de vengeance, et principalement d'amour. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 454)

Connective tissue like the *Il faut* in "Il faut donc que ceux qui représentent une passion d'amour en soient en quelque sorte touchés pendant qu'ils la représentent," and the *Ainsi* in "Ainsi la Comédie, par sa nature même, est une école et un exercice de vice" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 455), build the argument outwards in scope and scale, drawing out inferential reasoning for his readers through a well-constructed enthymeme involving passion and danger: the *Théâtre's* goal is to induce passion; passions are dangerous; danger in passion is difficult to sense, so it is best to steer clear altogether when possible. The Quintilian influence is clear, especially as Nicole moves to an assertion of the threat posed by the theater in the next chapter, making explicit the ideas alluded to in the section prior. He focuses on love as the strongest, most sinful passion:

> Comme la passion de l'amour est la plus forte impression que le péché ait faite dans nos âmes, ainsi qu'il paraît assez par les désordres horribles qu'elle produit dans le monde; il

> n'y a rien de plus dangereux que de l'exciter, de la nourrir, et de détruire ce qui la retient. Or le principal frein qui sert à l'arrêter est une certaine horreur que la coutume et la bonne éducation en impriment; et rien ne diminue davantage cette horreur que la Comédie; parce que cette passion y paraît avec honneur et d'une manière qui, au lieu de la rendre horrible est capable au contraire de la rendre aimable. Elle y paraît sans honte et sans infamie. On y fait gloire d'en être touché. Ainsi l'esprit s'apprivoise peu à peu. On apprend à la souffrir et à en parler, et l'âme s'y laisse ensuite doucement aller en suivant la pente de la nature. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 456)

Love in the *Théâtre*, by which Nicole seems to mean anything not quite disconnected from lust, is dangerous not only because of its ability to provoke unwarranted passions, but also because it creates its own allure. *Théâtre's* ability to *détruire* becomes a sought-after commodity, a false nourishment that corrupts the body instead of sustaining it. From here the step to poison is quite short, and Nicole follows up in the third chapter by stating it outright. Arguing against the implicit counterclaim that "Comédies et les Romans […] n'y représente que des passions légitimes," he leverages sexuality and concupiscence to identify *Théâtre*'s poisonous qualities:

> Il est inutile de dire pour justifier les Comédies et les Romans, qu'on n'y représente que des passions légitimes; car encore que le mariage fasse un bon usage de la concupiscence, elle est néanmoins en soi toujours mauvaise et déréglée; et il n'est pas permis de l'exciter en soi ni dans les autres. On doit toujours la regarder comme le honteux effet du péché; comme une source de poison capable de nous infecter à tous moments, si Dieu n'en arrêtait les mauvaises suites. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 457)

Nicole concludes his introductory remarks by using the vision of *empoisonneurs publics* as a stepping-stone, building on his individual points and alleging that the pattern of arousing dangerous passions is enough to render the *Théâtre* wholly reprobate:

> On ne peut donc nier que les Comédies et les Romans ne soient contraires aux bonnes mœurs, puisqu'ils impriment une idée aimable d'une passion vicieuse, et qu'ils en font une qualité héroïque, n'y en ayant point qui paraisse davantage dans ces héros de théâtre et de roman. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 457)

By this point in the piece Nicole has made clear the breadth and depth of his overall argument: the *Théâtre* is aptly categorized in the *Visionnaires* as a "public poison," and it is his role to elaborate on the implications of its popularity in the face of its licentiousness.

Notably, Nicole builds the *Traité* so that all the individual claims can stand on their own *and* combine to construct a larger sense of the threat at hand. This contributes to the looping effect present throughout the *Traité*, refusing to let pro-theater counterclaims to take hold in any one section without having to deal with the remainder of the treatise. A claim seeking to disprove the links between passion and sin, for example, must address a wide range of topics just to be conversant, including, but not limited to idolatry, lust, concupiscence, female fragility, human emotional intelligence, and the ability to sense incremental levels of corruption. Every chapter of the *Traité* either produces a new way to defend against apologists or leads into one that will, while chapters work independently *and* cohesively, bringing readers back to a wider image of sin and social negligence while detailing the issues involved in everyday practice. Eventually, Nicole's

points build an aggregate view of the negative characteristics of the *Théâtre,* tracing the far-reaching effects of performance and its concentration on illicit emotion.

His first dive into specifics targets the issue of concupiscence through its supposed antidote: marriage. As he argues, marriage is only a small protection against the dangers of uninhibited sexuality, as concupiscence "Est toujours déréglée en elle-même et ce n'est que par force qu'elle se contient dans les bornes que la raison lui prescrit" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 457). Even in the safest of environments, Nicole indicates, sexual drives are constant sources of danger, barely held back by social ties and traditions. Performance, however, does not provide a controlled version of the passion, making it even more of an issue to incite lust and love on purpose*:*

> Or en excitant par les Comédies cette passion, on n'imprime pas en même temps l'amour de ce qui la règle: les spectateurs ne reçoivent l'impression que de la passion, et peu ou point de la règle de la passion: l'auteur l'arrête où il veut dans ses personnages par un trait de plume ; mais il ne l'arrête pas de même dans ceux en qui il l'excite. La représentation d'un amour légitime, et celle d'un amour illégitime font presque le même effet, et n'excitent qu'un même mouvement qui agit ensuite diversement selon les différentes dispositions qu'il rencontre ; et souvent même, la représentation d'une passion couverte de ce voile d'honneur est plus dangereuse, parce que l'esprit la regarde plus sûrement, qu'elle y est reçue avec moins d'horreur, et que le cœur s'y laisse aller avec moins de résistance. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 457-8)

The portrait of sexual deviance produced by Nicole could be its own argument against the *Théâtre*, opening troubling questions about what is being presented on stage and how audiences read into such scenes, but the next section builds on the issue, adding that "Ce qui rend le danger de la *Comédie* plus grand, est qu'elle éloigne tous les remèdes qui peuvent empêcher la mauvaise impression qu'elle fait" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 458). This addition complicates his point above, highlighting how it is the nature of *Comédies* to take attention away from the very things that could remedy their negative impacts. While this section can also be read on its own, its placement demonstrates careful consideration of the connections implicit to the arguments Nicole wants to underscore overall. Nicole maintains this structure throughout the *Traité*, expanding the reach of the *Traité* while maintaining the integrity of each specific argument.

Sections VII-IX, for example, all work to demonstrate how *Comédies* can seem harmless but are deceptively malevolent. The connections to the earlier argument about concupiscence are immediately clear, but so too is the understanding that this section will attack performance along a slightly different avenue of thought. All three of these sections detail how the very entertainment that seems harmless is in fact detrimental, with each argument leveraging a slightly different angle. Section VII opens by re-imagining the power of corruptive forces. As Nicole explicitly points out, corruption of the soul occurs by degree, not as a binary distinction caused by one single action: "Il y a bien des degrés avant que d'en venir à une entière corruption d'esprit, et c'est toujours beaucoup nuire à l'âme que de ruiner les remparts qui la mettaient à couvert des tentations" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 460). This in and of itself is a worrying pattern, but Section VIII adds to it by indicating the inability of men and women to sense the difference between God's grace and the Devil's malevolence. As he states, theater-goers "Ne s'imaginent pas que ces lectures et ces spectacles ne leur aient fait aucun mal," mostly because "La parole de Dieu, qui est la semence de

la vie, et la parole du diable qui est la semence de la mort ont cela de commun qu'elles demeurent souvent longtemps cachées dans le cœur sans produire aucun effet sensible" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 461). Their disbelief does not render the activities they witness any less transgressive, nor does it lessen the danger inherent to the *Théâtre.* The *Théâtre* slowly corrupts the souls of its audiences, and those individuals are unable to perceive the small changes to their habits and attitudes, making the situation that much more dire. Nicole admits in Section IX that an added complication is the presence of "les gens qui font profession de piété" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 462), whose bad example only aggravates the injury to the public. The defenders of drama point to this trend as an example of how *Théâtre* is not illicit, but Nicole makes sure to underscore the false logic inherent to such a claim. Corruption, he reminds his readers, can be spread even through good intentions:

> Les personnes du monde ne faisant point d'exemples ne sont presque coupables que de leurs propres péchés: mais ceux qui veulent passer pour vertueux, et qui pratiquent en effet quelques bonnes œuvres, sont coupables de leurs propres péchés et de ceux des autres ; et non seulement ils perdent le mérite de leurs bonnes actions, mais ils les empoisonnent en quelque sorte en les faisant servir à engager les autres dans le péché. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 463)

The three claims made in this selection hold a substantial amount of weight individually, but they also clearly develop in synchronization with one another. Nicole's logical progression aptly predicts the opposition on the horizon, smoothly transitioning each point to target slight nuances that might arise in a defense. Once he proves that there is danger in corruption on many levels,

some too small to sense, he moves to block the easy way out: if even the most religious can be mistaken on this issue, the danger inherent to public performance is more far reaching than one might think. The corollary, of course, is that it must be easier and safer to simply agree with Nicole's sentiments and abandon the *Théâtre*.

The constancy of his logic begins to cultivate its own momentum by this point, as all three claims covered above build on Nicole's opening arguments, providing a powerful layering effect that addresses the licentiousness of passion in the *Théâtre* from multiple angles. Each point makes its own case, but so too does it underscore concepts linked to passion, poison, and a lack of control. Nicole will remain true to his intent for the remainder of the *Traité*, adding several more layers to each of the three sub-claims he used to prove performance's poisonous qualities early on. The depth of the *Traité* is created through this process of redundancy, as scholars familiar with the *Traité* understand. Each time Nicole returns to an issue he adds another layer to it, signaling that the issue may be more complex than readers are ready to admit.

Chapter X provides a good example. This section is dedicated to the ability of *Comédies* to trick audiences into believing that passions are healthy, a point made in at least three instances before. Here, however, Nicole changes the terms of his argument, working into claims about idolatry and the love of God through alluding to the number of women who are tricked into feeling emotional connections to the men and love plots displayed on stage:

> Il y a une infinité de femmes qui se croient innocentes, parce qu'elles ont en effet quelque horreur des vices grossiers, et qui ne laissent pas d'être très criminelles devant Dieu, parce qu'elles sont bien aises de tenir dans le cœur des hommes une place qui n'appartient qu'à

> Dieu seul, en prenant plaisir d'être l'objet de leur passion. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 465)

These women are unaware that their feelings represent the first steps toward sin, according to Nicole:

> Elles sont bien aises qu'on s'attache à elles, qu'on les regarde avec des sentiments, non seulement d'estime, mais de tendresse ; et elles souffrent sans peine qu'on le leur témoigne par ce langage profane que l'on appelle cajolerie, qui est l'interprète des passions, et qui dans la vérité est une sacrilège idolâtrie. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 465)

Tying himself back to the idea of deception, Nicole highlights how the corruption of the *Théâtre* has hidden itself from these women, despite the intent to root out sin. His reasoning relies on the idea of representation as idolatrous at its foundation:

> C'est pourquoi quelque soin que l'on prenne de séparer de la Comédie et des Romans ces images de dérèglements honteux, l'on n'en ôtera jamais le danger, puisque l'on y voit toujours une vive représentation de cette attache passionnée des hommes envers les femmes, qui ne peut être innocente; et que l'on n'empêchera jamais que les femmes ne se remplissent de l'objet du plaisir qu'il y a d'être aimées et d'être adorées d'un homme ; ce qui n'est pas moins dangereux ni moins contagieux pour elles que les images des désordres visibles et criminels. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 465)

The last sentence combines idolatry with the idea of infection, providing a new layer that places the worship of idols in parallel with the *empoisonneurs publics* argument coursing throughout the *Traité:* pleasure invoked by *Comédie* is poisonous to the soul due to the idolatrous undertones of representation. This is a new claim, but Nicole places it so that it builds on previous understandings just as much as it represents its own complaint about the role of performance. Yet another layer can be detected by looking at the opening line of this chapter, where Nicole has also redefined his "poison" to reflect more complex ideas of controversy:

> Dieu ne demande proprement des hommes que leur amour ; mais aussi il le demande tout entier. Il n'y veut point de partage. Et comme il est leur souverain bien, il ne veut pas qu'ils s'attachent ailleurs, ni qu'ils trouvent leur repos dans aucune autre créature, parce que nulle créature n'est leur fin. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 464)

A connection to performance is on its way, but the path Nicole takes slightly shifts the angle of question of licentiousness. The layering here is subtle, but powerful: *Théâtre's* poison is complex and can infect the body in troubling ways; it affects even the love of God, challenging the foundations of religion with its specific corruption. While the love of God and idolatry can be two sides of the same theological coin, they can also operate somewhat independently of one another. Nicole's structure sets up a division that marks out two levels of being idolatrous: on one hand is a lack of love for God overall, while on the other audiences actively misplace their love by worshipping something else. The sin is doubled by Nicole's layering and compounded yet again when idolatry is threaded into contamination and poison at the end of the section.

The next two chapters continue the trend, even as the first sentences seem to tap into distinct topics. Chapter XI begins with a claim towards *Comédies* and *Romans* instructing the language of passion, "l'art de les exprimer et de les faire paraître d'une manière agréable et ingénieuse," a trend that is not to be underestimated (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 465). Focusing on the *langage des passions* adds a new focus yet again to the *Traité,* but Nicole makes sure to inscribe it into the existing scheme, opening the section with a transition that ties itself to the final sentences of Section X above. The move works to provide depth once again as he shifts into a slightly different point, ensuring general cohesion. Chapter X notes how live representation elicits passionate attachment to characters within performances, a sentiment picked up by the opening lines of chapter XI:

> Les Comédies et les Romans n'excitent pas seulement les passions, mais elles enseignent aussi le langage des passions, c'est-à-dire l'art de les exprimer et de les faire paraître d'une manière agréable et ingénieuse. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 465)

Not only, Nicole provides, do these events excite emotion in unreasonable and unsafe ways, they also provide their own means of reproducing such illicit behavior by instructing audiences in a language of sin. Chapter XII piles on, circling back to emphasize the argument that such passions are corrupt at their core:

> Le plaisir de la Comédie est un mauvais plaisir, parce qu'il ne vient ordinairement que d'un fond de corruption, qui est excité en nous par ce qu'on y voit.(Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 466)

Each of these three claims has come up already, but the arguments and details in chapters X-XII add depth, creating new layers to the recurring points that add to an aggregate idea of the *Théâtre* and its licentiousness. Love of God could stand as its own argument against performance, but it also works as a measure of the deception taking place. Similarly, the *langage des passions* taught to audiences could represent its own complaint from Nicole, but its emphasis creates a strong sense of overlap with the themes of poison and infection emphasized throughout. Every step of the *Traité de la Comédie* ties itself to the original critique of the *Visionnaires* in one form or another, while each individual section simultaneously builds implicit and explicit connections to the comments that come directly before and directly after.

In fact, the network developed throughout the *Traité* is even more sophisticated than has been shown so far. The same ties between the chapters covered above can be seen in three non-successive chapters taken at random and set next to one another. Chapter XVII, for example, refocuses on the sin inherent to the *Théâtre's* provocation of passion, a subject familiar by this point to Nicole's readers. A new layer is added in the details here, however, as Nicole elaborates on the composition of the sin. "Spectateurs ordinaires des Comédies," he states, "sont pleins de concupiscence, pleins d'orgueil, et pleins de l'estime de la générosité humaine, qui n'est autre chose qu'un orgueil déguisé" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 471). Sexual expression has been pursued earlier on, but Nicole's move to target specific nuances in prideful actions marks some new territory in his attacks. Moving further in the section, he also proves his points by citing Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid.* Pointing to the "paroles barbares" of the characters involved in the controversial tragicomedy from decades earlier, Nicole uses Corneille as an example of the kind of corrupt visions produced onstage:

> Et cependant en les considérant selon la raison, il n'y a rien de plus détestable ; mais on croit qu'il est permis aux Poètes de proposer les plus damnables maximes pourvu qu'elles soient conformes au caractère de leurs personnages. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 472-3)

He has turned to both Corneille brothers before, but this is only the second moment of the *Traité* that specifically cites popular pieces of drama as evidence of the claims he makes throughout. If the message of sin is well established by this point, Nicole's methodology in proving specific aspects of sin continues to evolve.

Moving to chapter XXVII does produce any sense of disconnect as might be expected in jumping ahead by about a third of the text. This portion takes off almost as if it continued straight from Nicole's treatment of Corneille, continuing to look at sin, this time from the other side. The first lines revert to a discussion of the love for God. "Une des principales parties de la piété," Nicole writes, "et un des principaux moyens de la conserver, est d'aimer la parole de Dieu, et d'y trouver sa consolation" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 485). The later point, "Ceux qui se plaisent dans la Comédie, ne se peuvent plaire dans la vérité; et ceux qui trouvent leur plaisir dans la vérité; n'ont que du dégoût pour ces sortes de plaisirs" (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 486), might as well sit directly after his sentiments surrounding *Le Cid*, providing a nice dichotomy with which to justify his judgement of the play from decades before. It also pulls nicely off other previous sections, emphasizing the "dégoût dans la parole de Dieu," much like chapter X. The biggest difference comes in his constant citation of Saints, but once again this strategy adds depth to his overarching claims more than it detracts from their cohesion. If even Church fathers agree with his

points, any push back with respect to idolatry, the love of God, and the inherent sin in illicit passions must deal with these authors as well.

Chapter XXXII could similarly serve to cap off this trio were it to be placed next to the previous two random selections. Short, but to the point, Nicole taps into a more general sense of sin, danger, and responsibility as he moves towards the final points in the *Traité:*

> Si le Chrétien se considère comme pécheur, il doit reconnaître qu'il n'y a rien de plus contraire à cet état qui l'oblige à la pénitence, aux larmes, et à la fuite des plaisirs inutiles, que la recherche d'un divertissement aussi vain et aussi dangereux que la Comédie: et s'il se considère comme enfant de Dieu, comme membre de Jésus-Christ, illuminé par sa vérité, enrichi de ses grâces, nourri de son corps, héritier de son royaume; il doit juger qu'il n'y a rien de plus indigne d'une si haute qualité, que de prendre part à ces folles joies des enfants du siècle. (Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie* 491-2)

Even though this section does not sit anywhere near the other two, it paints a clear progression from the specifics of the sin (deception, bad examples, violent characters, illicit passions, etc.) to the responsibility every individual to commit to his/her love of God completely, to a more general statement of the dangers of performance. Morevoer, the *rien de plus indigne* in Section XXXII is the exact same line as the first sentence of the *Traité,* explicitly connecting the text's opening points to its conclusion, re-inscribing the totality of Nicole's arguments once again to reinforce his points about the danger of theater.

« On n'y représente que des passions légitimes »

The creative hybridity demonstrated by both Nicole and Racine lends helpful insight into the role of anti-theatricality in early modern French drama in two ways. For one, Racine's portrayal in modern critical narratives of the *querelle du Théâtre* must be broadened to account for his nonchalance in response to Nicole's faulty judgements surrounding psychology, performance, and mimetics. If, as many have argued, Racine's *Phèdre* represents the renowned author's symbolic self-immolation around a decade later, his involvement in the *querelle des Imaginaires* and his clear understanding of the stakes of an emotionally centered theater dictate that we should look to account for how he pulls ideas from polemics and re-imagines them for his own purposes. Understanding the impact of the *querelle des Imaginaires* on Racine thus becomes a question of range: Was his writing of *Phèdre* a marker or a constant anxiety, a worry worming its way into Racine's mind despite the facade of nonchalance in his immediate retort? Or was it an epiphany, a moment of realization that a thought he had thrown away so carelessly was in fact more valuable than he had given it credit? The case may be, as Nicholas Hammond aptly states, that Racine's last tragedy "Stresses the centrality of virtue," in its preface because of a lingering concern with the "usefulness" and "solidity" of performance, thereby demonstrating at least in part an admission of the truth of Nicole's critiques (Hammond 86). His defiance of the allegations against drama in the *Visionnaires,* however, brings out the question of whether Nicole's text weighed on him throughout the years of his success, or if he only actively adopted his former mentor's point of view at the end of his career. Whichever is the case, or whether the truth lies somewhere in-between, the details of this study allow for a more accurate portrait of Racine's later years with his own agency and creativity in the foreground.

More generally, the conversance between Nicole and Racine marks a need for a shift from a traditionally confrontational interpretation of the *querelle des imaginaires,* and along with it the

wider assumption of opposition with respect to anti-theatricalists and dramatists across all three theater cultures studied in this dissertation. If Nicole's success and Racine's dramatic persona are both indebted to their interactions in the *querelle* and their works afterwards, then their relationship should be thought of as complementary or symbiotic more than it can be read as inherently antagonistic. In this sense, the two perform on the same rhetorical stage, working with one another to provide a spectacle of opposition that is consumed by audiences and readers in ways similar to drama itself, with each writer taking on a role somewhat fictionalized by the arena of polemics they enter in tandem. The situation of the *querelle des imaginaires* is not alone in this respect either, as is shown by the arguments between English playwright Ben Jonson and Thomas Dekker in the War of Theaters, the theatrics and rhetorical strategies of anti-theatrical tracts from Spanish religious figures, and even the earlier *querelle du Cid* involving French dramatist Pierre Corneille's move to tragicomedy in the late 1630's. The details of Racine and Nicole's dispute show how the confrontation seemingly at the center of anti-theatrical debates is at least as much an aesthetic or rhetorical principle as it is a measure of the oppositional nature of the conflict(s) at hand. Anti-theatricalists and the individuals who find success performing or writing for the theaters of all three regions cannot be thought of as ultimately distanced by their opposition, but as intricately interconnected by it, as co-dependent on the very tension that differentiates one side from the other.

Conclusion

The polemics studied above represent crucial moments of productive interplay between seemingly incompatible polemical camps. In pulling these examples together I have attempted to demonstrate how the interactions between early modern anti-theatricalism and early modern drama not only informed the futures of both performance and polemics, but also how these controversies helped form the unique attributes that characterized the early modern period more generally. For one, Western polemics would forever feel the impact of the newfound theatricality presented by anti-theatrical treatises in all three countries. While never quite reaching the same level of theatricality as drama itself, the examples studied in this piece demonstrate performativity in ways that overlapped with the drama they criticized. From Spanish anti-theatricalism's concentration on sensory stimulation to Anthony Munday's performative authorship and Pierre Nicole's sense of antagonism through enunciation (*declamation)*, early modern anti-theatricalists wielded many of the tools of dramatists and stage performers. They stepped into scripted roles, played up narratives of villainy and heroism in the context of controversy, produced impassioned arguments with audiences in mind, and slowly learned that the most effective method of captivating spectators was through the eyes and ears.

The productive interplay between polemical forces shown above also illustrate one of the defining characteristics of early modern Europe, a concentration on mutation and variation. Each of the polemical interactions and resulting interplay has at least some overlap with elements of other controversies, but none leveraged their rhetorical conversances in precisely the same way. English anti-theatricalists, like their continental counterparts, emphasized the specific danger public drama posed to women in arguing for the closure of London's theater spaces, but they hardly ever placed blame on women directly. While this can be read as simply the result of women not

being allowed on stage during the period, the resulting difference in argumentative tone concerning women is critical to the unique identity of both polemical traditions. Juan de Mariana's concern over lascivious, alluring actresses undermining masculine virtue runs counter to Stephen Gosson's anxieties over the susceptibility of female spectators in Lodnon's theaters. The fact that both writers agree that contemporary drama was straying from Christian virtues as a result only adds another level of complexity. Similarly, Gosson, Pierre Nicole, and José de Jesús María all responded to apologies for the theater in their writing, but none of them did so with the same intent and none of them composed the same type of response. Gosson's reply to Thomas Lodge in *An Apology for The Schoole of Abuse*, the earliest example of the three, was designed to protect Gosson's image as a writer at a time when his career was just taking off. Failing to find access to Lodge's apology for drama, but knowing that the apology had been written, Gosson had little choice by to try to stay one step ahead of his opponent. His response thereby enacted the only strategy it could, and he attempted to protect his newborn reputation as a capable writer and rhetorician above all else. Gosson's reining in of his stylistic flourishes runs counter to the strategy of both Nicole and Jose de Jesús María, who both leaned into aesthetics and a heightened sense of style to respond in their respective controversies. Even these two elevated their style in different ways, with Nicole designing his interlocking argumentation to complement and balance Racine's writing, and José de Jesús María co-opting a concentration on the visual much like a performance in the *corrales.*

Other variations are more subtle but still present a range of distinctive outcomes. Many polemicists turn to Thomistic criteria to discuss the licentiousness of drama, but rarely do writers come to the same conclusions. Some, mostly apologists, see drama as a positive influence, or at least as a place where difficult situations can be acted out in front of discerning, competent

audiences who are better off afterwards. Most anti-theatricalists take the opposite stance, but there are a substantial number of both pro-and anti-drama advocates that exist somewhere in the middle. Thomas Lodge agrees with the sentiment that contemporary drama does not concentrate on virtuous instruction, but he argues that the lack of valuable didacticism does not present enough of an issue as to warrant absolute censorship. Lodge's view on a lack of instruction is also held by many anti-theatricalists, but rather than overlooking the deficiency these writers point to it as the one of the underlying problems of public performance. Even here total agreement is rare, with some moralists arguing that Thomastic ideas of entertainment translate to the need for a total ban on stage plays, while others merely looking to rescue drama from the base, popularist patterns it had recently adopted. As we have seen, too, contemporary drama's effects on anti-theatrical writing took many forms: Pierre Nicole's *Traité de la Comédie* was clearly influenced by Racine's *Alexandre le grand* but looking at how it creates significance through its recycled dramatic elements reveals a substantially different strategy than can be seen in the selections pulled from the Iberian Peninsula.

What the various complexes of overlapping likeness and insurmountable difference demonstrate most is a need to better understand the complex web of influences that tied together a wide variety of early modern writers. The dramatists, moralists, religious scholars, educators, and many types of other writers I have covered all operated on some level of conversance with one another, and these interactions helped cultivate important variations in style, genre, aesthetics, and rhetorical strategy that would go on to serve as the foundation for both popular and literary composition in the years following. The details behind Munday and Gosson's influence, between the disconnect of Spanish anti-theatricalism from its practical, municipal regulations, and between Pierre Nicole's and Jean Racine's symbiotic feud point to an evolving understanding of early

modern writing that is somewhat removed from the traditional ideas of authorship that permeate current scholarship. After all, if there is less distance between who can be considered a "writer" and who an "author" in each of these three historical cultures than is usually assumed, then the inclusion of anti-theatrical sources might bring about updated understandings of the impact of drama and dramatists during the late 16th and 17th centuries. Including them in early modern drama studies as a rule, rather than as an exception, will help provide a more complete portrait of early modern writing in future scholarship.

Epilogue- A Reversed Trajectory

Interestingly, while the productive interplay between anti-theatricalism and drama in these three cultures provides an opportunity to level the playing field between polemicists and the renowned authors of the early modern period, by the end of the 17th century such leveling is no longer necessary. By the end of the 1600's England, France, and Spain would all see anti-theatrical sentiment emerge victorious over public drama in some fashion or another. The high-water marks of the *question du Théâtre* in France, for example, often concentrated on poetics first and ethics second, ignoring the question of whether drama should exist in early modern society and instead emphasizing the characteristics it should contain. By the 1690's, however, anti-theatrical rhetoric like that of Pierre Nicole's had strongly influenced public opinion, resulting a waning acceptance of public drama more generally.

Much of this had to do with the controversial elements of contemporary comedy, especially in the works of Molière, which had cut out many of the neo-classical poetic and aesthetic elements in early French drama to concentrate on humorous portrayals of contemporary social archetypes. The developments in comedies prompted by Molière's updates were viewed negatively by critics

who took the lack of the lack of structure as a sign that French drama had lost much of its artistic grandeur. Arguments that drama had fallen from the lofty heights of Corneille and Racine were common, and apologists for drama had little success finding ways to assure moralists that performances still held the same virtues they began with in the 1630's. Franco-Italian theologian Francesco Caffaro's (1650-1720) apology for French theater, the *Lettre d'un théologien* (1694), demonstrates the overall change in tone. Caffaro's text argued that many of the church fathers cited in anti-theatrical treatises since the 1660's generally understood public drama to be a socially acceptable form of entertainment, and that while dramatic performances posed some threat to the public, they still offered valuable life lessons that could add to public virtue. Caffaro's apology, which would have been somewhat routine only thirty years earlier, was instead met with unprecedented hostility. A litany of responses appeared over the next few months, the most important of which came in the form of French Bishop Jacques Benigne Bossuet's (1627-1704) *Maximes et Réflexions sur la Comédie* (1694). Bossuet was absolutely against drama, arguing that it corrupted morals and drove audiences towards concupiscence (Cotarelo y Mori 13). While reiterating many of the points Nicole made in his *Traité*, he openly criticized Caffaro for his support of lascivious, illicit forms of entertainment, hanging him to dry publicly and questioning his ability to serve the Catholic church. Caffaro was forced to rescind his views and apologize for his treatise, a sign of how dire the situation had become. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's famous letter to apologist Jean D'Alembert some fifty years later[66] solidifies the idea that anti-theatrical beliefs became more prevalent over time, with Rousseau counselling D'Alembert against his proposal that Geneva should have its own theater industry. Theater, Rousseau argued, held little to no didactic value, and it had the potential to pervert society. Rousseau cites the corruption of Paris as

[66] See *Sur le project d'établir un Théâtre de Comédie à Genève* (1758).

proof, pointing to drama as one of the main causes of the patterns of immoral behavior plaguing France during his time.

A similar situation occurred in Spain, where the small successes anti-theatricalists had in the first half of the 17th century sowed the seeds for widespread censorship in the second. As was shown in the third chapter, anti-theatricalist anxieties were relatively undervalued by the municipal bodies legislating the *corrales* well into the 1640's. While theaters did close for substantial periods between 1644 and 1646, the closures were out of reverence for members of the royal family who had died rather than because of anti-theatrical sentiments (Cotarelo y Mori 25). The *corrales* did remain closed from 1646 to 1649, but this period was an exemption rather than the new norm, and once they re-opened the remainder of Phillip IV's reign saw little in the way of extreme censorship or prohibition (Cotarelo y Mori 25).

Philip IV's death in 1665 brought about redoubled efforts by moralists to close the *corrales* and end public drama in Spain's metropolitan centers. The Consejo de Castille attempted two separate times to convince the Queen Regent to halt public performances in Madrid, even including ideas for how to subsidize the hospitals dependent on the *corrales* in their proposals. While the Queen ultimately decided to leave the *corrales* open, the consensus reached by the Consejo in 1666 and a specially designed committee in 1672 meant that anti-theatrical attitudes were beginning to have more purchase. By the end of the 1670's, a substantial number of moralists from around the country, many of them church officials, were demanding the closure of the theaters, sparking a strategy of grass roots lobbying in individual towns and municipalities (Cotarelo y Mori 26). This approach was much more successful than petitioning the King or Queen had been, and by the turn of the century places like Seville and Córdoba had banned *Comédias* entirely (Cotarelo y Mori 28). Tuleda, Pamplona, and other cities followed suit in the first two decades of the 18th

century, and further restrictions meant that by 1750 Spanish drama had all but succumbed to the increasing weight of public anti-theatrical sentiment (Cotarelo y Mori 40).

In another quirk, while anti-theatrical attitudes in both France and Spain sprung from arguments that public drama was inherently un-Catholic, England's anti-theatrical movement at the beginning of their civil war and throughout the interregnum came to view the loose morals and ethical gray areas of performance as too Catholic for the Parliamentary forces trying to rid themselves of Charles I's influence (Butler 442). The act that closed the theaters in London in 1642 was worded in clearly anti-theatrical terms, with the language of the document presenting the ban as a way to regain social order, closely linking drama with ideas of chaos and confusion in the process (Butler 444). Ironically, the decades leading up to the order to close the theaters in 1642 saw anti-theatricalist arguments gaining the most traction since the edification of public drama in the 1580's, and English drama in the 1630's and 1640's was far less socially volatile than it had been during Elizabeth or James' reign (Butler 445). Regardless of the diminished threat posed by drama, however, anti-theatricalist attitudes drove dramatic censorship, eventually forcing public theater and other illicit entertainments underground, where performances only went on through "collusion" between audiences, actors, and playwrights (Clare 462). Theaters eventually opened again after Charles II's restoration, but by then little remained of the dramatic style prevalent throughout the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Carolingian periods.

Closing this study with Pierre Nicole's *Traité* may help explain why anti-theatrical sentiment seems to have overridden support for public drama over time. Nicole's concentration on emotion and his allegations of *empoisonneurs publics* reflect a nuanced, complex understanding of the psychological impact of mimetic representation, an understanding shared by Stephen Gosson and Anthony Munday in England and the numerous religious Spanish commentators

shown in the second chapter of this study. In this sense, the commonalities between anti-theatrical documents across these three theater cultures represent the first steps in the development of a foundation of criticism involving the psychological significance of performance. It is discomforting to acknowledge, especially because scholarship in the 21st century tends to view early modern drama as one of the more important artistic and literary movements of the pre-modern Western world, but anti-theatricalists were perhaps just as critical to early theories of the possible psychological impact of performance as scholars and theorists are today. While a substantial amount of scholarship is tainted by portrayals of writers like Nicole, Munday, Pedro de Ribadeneira, Gosson, Bossuet, and Lamy radical religious figures rather than serious contributors to important debates about early modern experiences, The many examples of anti-theatricalists worrying anxiously over the detrimental effects of public performance represent some of the earliest interrogations of the psychological effects of spectatorship. As Logan J. Connors posits, both early modern drama and its corresponding anti-theatricalist opposition "Served as […] dynamic site[s] to test and contest emerging psychological and psychosocial theories" (Connors 174).

Many of the anxieties found in anti-theatrical treatises analyzed above can be traced to similar worries in today's societies, especially in terms of the impact of digital media. Modern sensibilities may not agree with the spiritual danger emphasized by many early modern anti-theatricalists or the explicit connections to sin, adultery, violence, and Satan, but concerns over imitation and illicit education are still an important topic for many, especially when it comes to discussions over the role of violent video games, explicit music, or the display of sexual content in media today. Seen through this lens, the vehemence with which anti-theatricalism often attacked public performances and contemporary theater industries is altogether much more understandable,

as is the intense concentration on proving the "public poison" of early modern stages. And while the voracity of the attacks on the various early modern stages covered in this study have resulted in an unwillingness for modern scholars to look too deeply into anti-theatricalism as a sub-genre of writing in its own right, the logic at the foundation of antitheatrical concerns is often much more viable than that of the apologists who attempt to response to such critics. As has been shown, the apologists for early modern drama were often unable to produce solid evidence of the beneficial characteristics of public theater. In contrast, many of the points made by anti-theatricalists are still prescient today, including the dangers of too much entertainment, the impact of shows that are too violent or overly sexual in content, and the intricate processes of imitation foundational to spectatorship and the construction of identity. Anti-theatricalism, rather than being overly constrictive and outdated even in its own time, provided insight into issues that would define modernism, perhaps more so than even the performances they targeted. Moreover, in many cases, the anti-theatricalist antagonists seem to have been in the right all along.

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