Clothes Make the Woman: Transvestism and Transgression in Tiempo Común's 1990 Production of *El acero de Madrid*

Mindy Badia
University of Arkansas

Director Hugo Márquez's staging of *El acero de Madrid*, with Alfredo Carnevalli in the pivotal role of Teodora, is but one example among many of cross-dressing on the late twentieth-century stage and screen. From Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie*, to feminist performance artists of New York's WOW café, to comedian Dana Carvey as the "Church Lady," transvestism has become a staple of both popular and *avant-garde* entertainment. This recent proliferation of cross-dressed characters even prompted Lawrence Senelick to proclaim transvestism "the theater's trendiest trope" and to inquire ironically, "Doesn't anybody have a gender anymore?" ("The Illusion" 12). 1

Perhaps a better question would be if anybody has *ever* had a gender. Certainly, the frequency of cross-dressed characters and actors in all varieties of performance media is not unique to the last half of the twentieth century. In the case of drama from Spain's *Siglo de Oro*, stock characters such as the *mujer vestida de hombre* or the occasional cross-dressed *gracioso* place Tiempo Común's transvestism firmly within *comedia* conventions. In a dynamic fashion, Márquez's casting choice underscores the ways in which *both* Golden Age and contemporary drama explore self-consciously the performative transaction as a manifestation of the constructedness of gender roles. 2

The Venezuelan group's adaptation of Lope's text was received quite favorably by audiences at the Golden Age drama festival held annually at the Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso, Texas. Guadalupe Silva, a reviewer for the *El Paso Times*, praised the staging as "filled with the fluid performance of professionals who know their work by heart and do it well." She also congratulated the group for its successful efforts to bring the *Siglo de Oro* to the present, an observation supported by the many awards, including Best Play, Best Director and Best Actress, lavished on Tiempo Común for its (re)restaging of *El acero de Madrid*.Additionally, Silva characterizes Carnevalli's portrayal of Teodora as "excellent as a hypocritical old woman with a bass voice" but writes little about the effects of the Venezuelan group's casting choice on audience reception. 3

Spectators familiar with Golden Age drama would have recognized the exploration of men and women's social roles undertaken through the recourse of cross-dressing as a key feature of the genre. Although Spain did not have a tradition of cross-dressed *actors* (as did England), numerous instances of *comedia characters* who appropriate the clothing of the opposite sex do exist and much recent criticism centers on the 4

ability of these characters to invert cultural norms. Carmen Bravo Villasante's study of the *mujer disfrazada de hombre* merely touches upon the social implications of theatrical cross-dressing, noting only that to describe a Renaissance woman as manly, in deference to patriarchal values, was to pay her the highest complement (64-6). Melveena McKendrick's seminal analysis of the *mujer varonil* suggests that Golden Age gender play ultimately resulted in the affirmation of seventeenth-century Spain's rigidly-defined categories of male and female. McKendrick's position has been contested by Catherine Connor Swietlicki, who affirms that the *mujer vestida de hombre* does indeed have a subversive potential:

> La mujer vestida de hombre que se porta varonilmente o aun de una manera superior a lo que puede hacer el hombre corriente representa un desafío a la masculinidad esencial y supuestamente natural . . . Su desafío es subversivo porque la metafísica de su época trata de garantizar la jerarquía social y la identidad sexual aunque los dos conceptos son construcciones socio-culturales. (144)

Connor Swietlicki concludes that although some critics read the fact that women who disguise themselves as men in the *comedia* reinscribe themselves into the patriarchy at the play's conclusion by marrying, the simple act of casting doubt on the notion of gender as essential undermines the repressive social systems within which the dramas unfold (144).

Examples of male *Siglo de Oro* dramatic characters who dress as women have also inspired scholars to study more closely the ways in which the theater may simultaneously affirm and question a society's construction of gender. Sandra Messinger Cypess observes that although there are only about thirty plays in which men dress as women, presumably because doing so implied a loss of power, in the case of Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa*, the cross-dressed Castaño gives a voice to feminist ideas and resists assumptions regarding male and female roles (181-182). Drawing conclusions similar to Connor's, Messinger-Cypess notes that *Los empeños* brings to the foreground the notion of gender as a cultural construction (185). Christopher Weimer also examines the subversive nature of Sor Juana's play, centering on Castaño's drag performance as an inversion of the misogynistic paradigm of "woman" espoused in the *comedia.* This inversion, in Weimer's words, "gives *Los empeños de una casa* a distinctly modern quality, separates it from most other Golden Age dramas and makes it worthy of even further examination" (97). Jean Canavaggio's general study concurs with the theses of Weimer and Messinger-Cypess, positing that male transvestism in *Siglo de Oro* drama uses disguise in order to reveal. Moreover, Canavaggio writes that a man in a dress is a hybrid individual, existing for himself as a male and for other characters as a female, yet not fitting perfectly within either category (144-45). 5

Assuredly, not all instances of theatrical cross-dressing serve to challenge the patriarchy; even though the practice has become less controversial in terms of its shock value, drag, particularly male to female, is still a hotly debated topic in academic circles. In her polemical article 6

"Classical Drag," Sue-Ellen Case observes that because women were not allowed to perform in ancient Greek drama, plays and conventions of classical antiquity "can be regarded as allies in the project of suppressing actual women and replacing them with the masks of patriarchal production" (318). Case's argument that men who portray female characters on stage perpetuate gender stereotypes, denying women the freedom to define themselves, is anticipated in Johann Wolfgang Goethe's response to a late eighteenth-century performance of Carlo Golondoni's *La Locandiera* . Lesley Ferris paraphrases the German playwright's praise of the Roman tradition of all-male performance, stressing Goethe's implicit assertion that at least on stage, "men made better women" ("The legacy" 51). In his review Goethe writes:

> [O]n the Roman stage we find no cold absence of love, no female wantonness--the performance merely reminds us of them. We applauded the young man lightheartedly and were delighted that he was so well acquainted with the ensnaring wiles of the fair sex that through his successful imitation of feminine behavior he had avenged us for every such offense women had made us suffer. . . what we found here was the enjoyment of seeing not the thing itself but its imitation, to be entertained not through nature but through art, to contemplate not individuality but a result. (qtd. in *Crossing* 49-50)

7 According to feminist performance theorists such as Peggy Phelan, Amy Dolan and Erika Munk, women fare no better in contemporary drag. The hegemonically constructed idea of woman (albeit in an exaggerated form) perpetuates notions of a fundamental difference between males and females, with the hierarchy implicit in this differentiation. Ferris's introduction to *Crossing the Stage*, a collection of essays on transvestism in performance, brings the controversy to light as follows, "Cross-dressing . . . is riddled with dissension and ambiguity. Contemporary drag, for example, answers to a viable gay aesthetic while simultaneously promulgating misogynistic images of women" (9). Ferris paraphrases Munk and Dolan's arguments, noting that in a drag performance, the male defines the female without ever losing his privileged status as a man.

8 Such polemics may well leave Tiempo Común's staging dangerously situated somewhere between a conservative rock and a liberal hard place. Spectators who want or expect to see, in the words of Peter Brook, "classical theater as it ought to be performed" might well object to this instance of perceived unorthodox cross-dressing in the *comedia*. On the other hand, audiences more accepting of experimental stagings of Golden Age drama could view Teodora as a mere pawn in the patriarchy's play for power. I would submit that Teodora is a character fraught with ambiguity which, by definition, suggests the possibility of a multitude of potential, even contradictory interpretations. Additionally, the cross-dressed actor must be studied in the context of the play as a whole, for it is Teodora's relationship to the plot and to other characters that helps define more clearly the role of transvestism in Tiempo Común's staging as at once groundbreaking and conventional.

9 *El acero de Madrid* centers on Belisa, a young woman who, denied

the freedom to pursue her romantic interest in Belardo, feigns illness in order to escape the confines of her home. Belardo's servant Beltrán disguises himself as a doctor and prescribes the perfect remedy: Belisa must leave her house in order to drink water laced with steel (hence the play's title) and to socialize with other people. To protect his daughter's virtue, and to ensure that she marry Prudencio, the husband *he* prefers, Belisa's father asks his sister Teodora to watch over the girl. Aunt Teodora proves to be a poor choice; she is easily seduced by the flattery of Riselo, a friend of Belardo's who pretends to love Teodora so that she will forget her familial obligations. When Beltrán's charade is discovered, he and Belisa escape paternal wrath by donning the clothing of the opposite gender and fleeing the house. The play's conclusion replicates conventional *comedia*: plot patterns: Belisa explains to her father that she and Belardo are already married, Teodora is appropriately repentant and the secret nuptials are legitimized by a reluctant paternal seal of approval. *El acero*'s humor is derived from Belisa's machinations to secure her freedom and the multiple instances of role-playing within the role, including cross-dressing, in which characters engage in order to achieve their desired goals.

10 Throughout Lope's text, Belisa's aunt demonstrates ambiguous behavior, and the modern staging reflects the character's contradictions through casting. Teodora's first words are to scold Belisa for looking at a man and to warn the young girl of the fragility of her honor. The aunt's strict adherence to her religious vows and the honor code is exemplified by Carnevalli's portrayal of the character as the production opens. (video clip 1) Here, Carnevalli's gestures are stiff and mechanical, his step a regimented march. The ambiguity of the character's gender, the female name cancelled out by the masculine features, the shapeless garment, and the absence of gender-inflected mannerisms, contribute to a character that is neither entirely male nor female. Teodora's characterization through costuming, movement and dialogue creates a sharp contrast to the giggling Belisa, bedecked in feathers and vivid colors and brazenly greeting the men she passes.

11 Furthermore, Tiempo Común's decision to cast a male actor in the Teodora role deviates significantly from other (textual) examples of cross-dressing in the *comedia* because in the Venezuelan staging, the transvestite is not merely a *gracioso* or a woman spurned. First, Teodora bears the responsibility of protecting young Belisa's virtue, a duty conventionally given to male relatives in *Siglo de Oro* drama. Second, the character appears dressed as a nun, which bestows upon her the power of the Church and simultaneously underscores the indeterminacy of her sex. Because of the significance of her role, casting Carnevalli as Teodora affords the contemporary production not only the opportunity to play with notions of male and female, but also to satirize a representative of the Church and of established social order, blurring distinctions between such binarily opposed categories as man and woman, mother and father and religious and secular.

12 It is precisely Teodora's costume that situates her within a tradition of gender-ambiguous social figures, as Marjorie Garber observes in *Vested Interests*:

> The role of religion in Western culture . . . almost inevitably invites both gender parody and gender cross-over. The male nun [and] the female monk . . . are recurrent figures of fantasy as well as of history and propaganda. They . . . are "third kinds," figures who put in question received beliefs . . . . (213)

Lope's text supports designating Teodora as a "third kind" through the potential double meaning of the term "tercera," (2412) which Belisa uses to describe her aunt's transformation after meeting Riselo. Moreover, Lisardo, in both the text and staging, says that Teodora is "entre fraila y dueña," (90) a play on words with the normally masculine gender of the word *fraile*; he later characterizes her in phallic terms as an "águila de media arriba; de medio abajo culebra" (91-2).

13 The questioning of an essential gender that begins with the indistinguishable sex of Teodora is intensified by the dramatic change in the character's behavior after she is wooed by Riselo. In the modern staging, Carnevalli displays Teodora's supposed feminine side through parodic coquetterie. (video clip 2) Here, Teodora's surprise approximates that of audience members, now acutely aware of the distance that separates the reality of the corporeal presence on stage and Riselo's (re)creation of Teodora's body. The actor moves fluidly, flutters his eyelashes and giggles self-consciously. Later, he toys with a shawl, an accessory that replaces the rosary Teodora held in her hands in the opening scene. Significantly, the character refers to herself in the feminine gender for the first time only *after* Riselo's attentions, underscoring the irony that the spectacle of a man portraying a woman is most obvious when Carnevalli acts in an exaggeratedly feminine way.

14 Carnevalli's parodic performance also illustrates the modern production's self-conscious exploration of conventions of romance and marriage in the *comedia*. The traditional parallel relationships between *dama* and *galán* and *criada* and *criado* are problematized by the overtly theatrical nature of Riselo's false admiration and the questionable gender of the object of his affections. Teodora's role as a go-between in these socially unacceptable relationships is also suggested by the positioning of characters on stage. Before Riselo, Teodora saw to it that men and women remained on opposite sides of the stage, a separation underscored by the crisscrossing lines representing streets used by the production. However, after falling victim to Riselo's charms, Teodora "crosses over" to the other side, thus paving the way for Belisa and her maid to follow suit.

15 Teodora's hyper-feminine behavior continues even after Riselo leaves and she returns home, where aunt, niece and Beltrán make plans to meet with their lovers.(video clip 3) Teodora's changes in behavior and attitude produce a permissiveness that approaches encouragement of Belisa's pursuit of Belardo. In these scenes, the actor vacillates between a parody of "woman" and the ambiguity suggested by his stature, facial features and the sexless nun's habit. This purely theatrical vacillation grants the character the freedom to move from one world to the other and is reflective of Teodora's eventual transformation into a conduit: a means by which Belisa--the guarded, sheltered young woman-- is able to make contact with her lover.

Tiempo Común's adaptation of this text capitalizes on the tradition of cross-dressing in the *comedia*, establishing connections between seventeenth-century drama and late twentieth-century theatrical staging. In fact, Carnevalli's portrayal of Teodora may actually surpass recent efforts to blur male/female distinctions because it is an apparent example of gender-blind casting. According to Senelick, this practice continues to be uncommon and could "go far to reinvigorate the weary war-horses of our stage," allowing the classics to "gain in theatrical dimension and playfulness" (16). Senelick's sentiment is echoed by Amy Dolan who, in her discussion of cross-dressing as a mechanism whereby dominant discourse is challenged or affirmed, wonders why more directors do not consider cross-sexuality casting. Given such observations, it is clear that Tiempo Común's use of transvestism is not only an intensification of the gender-bending *mujer varonil* or the cross-dressed *gracioso* of mainstream Golden Age drama, but is also a step beyond the conventionally cross-dressed characters appearing in much of *contemporary* entertainment. 16

As Tiempo Común deconstructs the notion of gender as essential, the adaptation undermines the binarity of male/female classification *per se*, creating through the Teodora character a third category that paradoxically affirms, subverts and reshapes the other two. Tiempo Común's Teodora, echoing Canavaggio's discussion of cross-dressed characters, employs a double disguise in order to remove the mask of convention that would posit holy matrimony as the only appropriate end for Belisa. As an ambiguous figure, Carnevalli's Teodora has the potential to examine critically the idea of marriage precisely because the institution relies so heavily on sex role absolutes. Yes, Belisa marries at the close of the play. However, she does not wed Prudencio, with all the good behavior implicit in the name, but rather Belardo, a thinly-veiled reference to a certain playwright who, if only for a short time (and especially through the filter of Tiempo Común's staging), destabilizes rigid notions of male and female, allowing characters to slip in and out of preconceived gender roles with the ease of putting on or casting off a dress. 17

Add your comments to this article | View comments on this article

Works Consulted

El acero de Madrid. Videocassette. By Lope de Vega. Tiempo Común. Chamizal Theater Festival. El Paso, Texas. 1990.

Bravo-Villasante, Carmen. *La mujer vestida de hombre en el teatro español (siglos xvi-xvii)*. Madrid: Mayo de Oro, 1988.

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Atheneum, 1968.

Bullough, Bonnie and Vern L. *Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender*. Philadelphia: UPP, 1993.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Canavaggio, Jean. "Los disfrazados de mujer en la Comedia." *La mujer en el teatro y la novela del siglo XVII: actas del segundo coloquio del grupo de estudios sobre teatro español*. Toulouse-Le Mirail: Univ. of Toulouse le Mirail, 1979. 134-45.

Case, Sue-Ellen. "Classical Drag: The Greek Creation of Female Parts." *Theatre Journal*. 37 (1985): 317-27.

Connor Swietlicki, Catherine. "Teatralidad y resistencia: el debate sobre la mujer vestida de hombre." *Encuentros y desencuentros de culturas: desde la Edad Media al siglo XVIII. Actas de la Asociación de Hispanistas*. Ed. Juan Villegas. Irvine: U of California P, 1994. 139-45.

Cypess, Sandra Messinger. "Los géneros (re)velados en *Los empeños de una casa* de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. *Hispanoamérica: revista de literatura*. 22.64-5 (1993): 177-85.

Dolan, Jill. "Gender Impersonation Onstage: Destroying or Maintaining the Mirror of Gender Roles." *Gender in Performance: The Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts*. Ed. Lawrence Senelick. Hanover: UP of New England, 1993. 3-13.

Ferris, Lesley, ed. "Introduction." *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-dressing*. London: Routledge, 1993. 1-19.

---. "The Legacy of Goethe's Mimetic Stance." *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-dressing*. London: Routledge, 1993. 51-7.

Garber, Marjorie. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. Routledge: New York and London, 1992.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. "Women's Parts Played by Men in the Roman Theater." *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-dressing*. Trans. Isa Ragusa. Ed. Lesley Ferris. London: Routledge, 1993. 47-51.

Heise, Ursula K. "Transvestism and the Stage Controversy in Spain and England, 1580-1680." *Theatre Journal* 44.3 (1992): 357-74.

Holt Sawyer, Corinne. "Men in Skirts and Women in Trousers, From Achilles to Victoria Grant: One Explanation of a Comic Paradox." *Journal of Popular Culture*. 21.2 (1987): 1-16.

Lacan, Jaques. *Écrits*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W. W. Norton, 1977.

McKendrick, Melveena. *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age: A Study of the mujer varonil*. London: Cambridge UP, 1974.

Phelan, Peggy. "Crisscrossing Cultures." *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-dressing*. Ed. Lesley Ferris. London: Routledge, 1993. 155-70.

Senelick, Lawrence. "The Illusion of Sex." *American Theatre*. Nov. 1995: 12-16.

---. "Introduction." *Gender in Performance: The Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts*. Hanover: UP of New England, 1992. ix-xx.

Silva, Guadalupe. "Convoluted Comedy Ridicules Sexual Mores." *El Paso Times*. 17 Mar. 1990: 5-E.

Vega y Carpio, Félix Lope de. *El acero de Madrid*. Eds. Aline Bergounioux, Jean Lemartinel and Gilbert Zonana. Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1971.

Weimer, Christopher Brian. "Sor Juana as Feminist Playwright: The Gracioso's Satiric Function in *Los empeños de una casa*." *Latin American Theatre Review*. 26 (1992): 91-7.

Who's Telling This Story Anyhow? Framing Tales East and West: Panchatantra to Boccaccio to Zayas[1]

Margaret Greer
Duke University

My central interest in this essay is the use of the frame tale by the Spanish Baroque writer María de Zayas y Sotomayor in her two-volume collection of stories, the *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* (Amorous and Exemplary Stories) and the *[Desengaños amorosos] Parte segunda del Sarao y entretenimiento honesto* ([Amorous Disillusions] Second Part of the Soire and Honest Entertainment) published in 1637 and 1647, respectively. To understand Zayas' particular use of the frame tale, however, I will approach it through a brief consideration of the function of artistic frames in a larger sense, and of the nature and function of the frame tale as it was employed, or omitted, by Zayas' predecessors in the novella tradition. 1

First let us imagine a fond father or mother who in a burst of parental enthusiasm puts a child's first tempra painting in a real frame and hangs it on the wall. What is the significance of that frame? In the mind of parent and child, at least, it says, this is not just a four-year old's play with color, this is important; this is ART (Illustration 1). 2

Now, working in reverse, if we call to mind a favorite painting, whether it be Velázquez, Monet, or Picasso and, in our mind's eye, remove its frame, does it diminish it in some way? Does it make more tenuous the stature of that image as a work of art? I would be tempted to say that it does, until I think of a small print I have of one of my favorite paintings, La Tour's Education of the Virgin (Illustration 2).[2] It has no frame, just two tacks holding it to the wall above my desk in my office, yet looking at it transports me to another realm of aesthetic as well as educational purity. I would deduce from this mental exercise that the declaration of aesthetic value can be either internally or externally coded. 3

If we turn to theater, we find the same to be the case. Theaters with a proscenium arch and a stage curtain need no mediating *dramatic* frame or prologue to define the dramatic world. But dramatic prologues are an important constituent of Spanish Renaissance drama from Juan del Encina forward, when plays were performed in improvised theaters and playwrights were defining the conventions of drama for their audiences. Although they gradually disappeared from *corral* (public theater) performances once permanent theaters were established, they continued in vigor as a vital part of the street performances of the *autos sacramentales* (allegorical religious dramas) for the annual Corpus Christi celebration.[3] Informal street theater today, too, requires some kind of frame definition. This may be effected by a barker, or a lone performer who attracts a group of spectators. On the other hand, the separate, aesthetic realm may in this 4

case need to be marked internally, by opening the dramatic action with a heightened theatrical rhetoric --"overacting"--which marks this interaction as distinct from the everyday world of the street itself. Once a semicircle of spectators forms, they themselves mark out the limits of the aesthetic "object", within which space, time and being have the peculiar doubleness of drama. While most mature human beings respect the integrity of the object thus demarcated, the frame is not impermeable. Naive spectators do sometimes behave like Don Quixote before Maese Pedro's puppet show; Henry Sullivan (386) cites two cases of twentieth-century spectators of a German version of Caldern's *La dama duende* (The Phantom Lady) who intervened across the frame at least verbally. The Argentine dramatist Osvaldo Dragún told me that when in the last days of the military regime that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983, his troop, using theater as a political weapon, performed his works wherever they could gather a crowd in the streets of Buenos Aires (figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). One play in particular caused "framing"problems. In his brief play, *Historia de un hombre convertido en perro* (Story of a man transformed into a dog), as the title indicates, the main character is transformed from a speaking human being into a barking dog. As he was reduced to barking, the spectators might understand the political point being made, but all the neighborhood dogs saw was a new interloper in their territory, and the only way the troop could keep them from attacking was by, shall we say, turning up the theatrical rhetoric, and, in solidarity with the "caninized" actor, all barking ferociously until the real dogs retreated.

Presumably, most of us are not mongrel readers. While we 5
acknowledge the thorny problem of the ontology of fictional discourse, in practice we are generally able to recognize the presence of a fictional text by its own combination of external and internal markers: externally the book as a physical object in itself, and the liminary elements that Genette (1987, 7-8) calls the "paratexte" of the work-- title, preface, epigraph, etc., and internally by stylistic clues. The latter may be as close to the time-honored "Erase una vez..." (Once upon a time . . .) as is the opening sentence of Cervantes' novella, *La ilustre fregona* (The Illustrious Kitchen-Maid): "En Burgos, ciudad ilustre y famosa, no ha muchos años que en ella vivían dos caballeros principales y ricos" [In the illustrious and famous city of Burgos, not many years ago there lived two principal and rich gentlemen] (Cervantes 297). Or the clues may appear more subtly and slowly, as in *La fuerza de la sangre* (The Power of Blood): "Una noche de las calurosas del verano volvían de recrearse del río, en Toledo, un anciano hidalgo, con su mujer, un niño pequeño, una hija de diez y seis años y una criada. La noche era clara; la hora, las once; el camino, solo, y el paso, tardo...." [One of those hot summer nights, in Toledo, an elderly gentleman, with his wife, a small boy, a sixteen-year-old daughter and a serving girl, were returning from an outing to the river. The night was clear, the hour, eleven o-clock, the road, deserted, and their pace, slow] (Cervantes 239). Even in this second case, the special rhythm of the second sentence would alert most readers that they are not perusing a seventeenth-century equivalent of a police report.

If these subtle forms of framing are, in practice, generally sufficient to 6
delimit a fictional text, what, then, are the purpose and function of the

much more assertive framing devices used by Boccaccio in the *Decameron* (c.1350), Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales* (1386-1400) (and their Eastern predecessors) and the many novella writers who followed in that tradition? Why did Cervantes in his *Novelas ejemplares* (Exemplary Stories) (1613) dispense with the frame and why did Lope personalize it in the *Novelas a Marcia Leonarda* (Stories for Marcia Leonarda) (1621-1624)?[4] Why did the many Spanish novella writers of the 1620s and 1630s follow the example of Cervantes rather than Boccaccio or Lope? Finally, the question of most interest to me, why did Maria de Zayas y Sotomayor opt to use a frame tale again? She appears to have written at least eight of the stories of the first volume and to have been preparing them for publication about 1625, when the preferred style was Cervantes's frame-less model. Yet she encloses her collection within a single frame that unites the two volumes, despite the ten-year separation in their publication and the much darker tone of the second volume.

In tackling these questions, I would like to make one more preliminary detour through a recent use of the frame tale, the Rob Reiner film *The Princess Bride*, which I would describe as a romance packaged for postmodern cynics. And very effectively packaged indeed. Any of you who have sons and daughters the approximate age of mine have probably seen at least bits of this film more times than you can count, and my daughter says that at the mere mention of it, her college friends launch into gleeful recitals of their favorite lines. The film opens with the sound of a child's cough, followed by strains of "Take me out to the ball game" and a view of a Nintendo-style baseball game on a television screen (video clip 1). The young boy playing it is ill and confined to his room, but is less than delighted when his grandfather arrives to visit bearing a present - "a book??" -- and proposing to read to him the story that his father read to him when he was sick, that he read to the boy's father and will now read to him. The boy is unenthusiastic but when his grandfather assures him that it has lots of sports in it, he says he'll try to stay awake. What the grandfather reads is a classic tale of a poor, gallant hero Wesley who defeats an evil prince Humperdink and wins his beautiful ladylove Buttercup, all seasoned generously with humor, magic and valiantry. At key points in the narrative, the camera cuts back to the boy, now fully engrossed in the tale, but interrupting the reading when the story seems to depart from his ideal paradigm, or when Wesley and Buttercup spend too much time kissing. 7

This cinematographic frame tale contains most of the major elements of classic literary frames. The first is the motif of illness. In Boccaccio's frame, this illness is without - the plague raging through Florence, from which the seven ladies and three gentlemen retreat both physically and psychologically, recounting stories in the safe haven of beautiful gardens in country estates. More often, the sickness is within; in Petrus Alfonsi's 12th-century *Disciplina clericalis*, a dying Arab transmits his wisdom to his son by telling him a series of stories and proverbs containing moral lessons (Gittes 59).[5] The pretext for story-telling in María de Zayas' novellas is the illness of the heroine of the frame tale, Lisis, whose friends gather to entertain her and speed her convalescence by telling stories. In Zayas' tale, as in numerous stories in novella collections, the true illness is *doubly* within, for the physical symptoms are the result of *mal de amor* 8

(malady of love)--in the case of Zayas' Lisis, suffering caused by jealousy and disappointment in love, as her beloved don Juan neglects her for her cousin Lisarda. Boccaccio (1982, 2-3) too, in his "Proemio" (Proem) cites his former suffering of frustrated passion and offers his stories as pleasure, counsel and cure for the "charming ladies" who suffer love's melancholy (2-3). Zayas' frame narrative seems, until the very end, to posit two possible remedies for the suffering of unrequited love; on the one hand, Lisis is promising to marry another man, the adoring don Diego; on the other, the enclosed narrators hammer in the point that their tales are to warn women against the pitfalls of desire and male treachery. Their counsel prevails at the end as the heroine of the frame follows many of the fictional protagonists into the closed, woman's world of the convent. No kissing there.

Another element that Reiner's cinematic frame shares with literary frame tales is that of a physical separation from the everyday world, a separation that permits story-telling. Often the frame underlines the horror and threat of the outside world. Boccaccio describes the physical and social ravages of the plague with gruesome detail, and Marguerite de Navarre's narrators in the *Heptameron* (1559) narrowly escape war, violent bandits and a roaring flood.[6] Zayas, and later Mariana de Carvajals *Navidades de Madrid* (Christmas in Madrid) (1663) mark the separation in terms of temperature, contrasting the inner warmth with the icy December temperatures without. In so doing, they link their settings with the folklore tradition of storytelling "alrededor de la lumbre" (around the fire), a tradition also evoked by the very titles of two earlier Spanish novella collections, *Timoneda's El Patrañuelo* (Tall Tales) (1567) and Eslava's *Noches de Invierno* (Winter Nights) (1609).[7] I would hardly be original in suggesting that the comfort proffered in the frame settings in companionship and a crackling fire is a physical translation of the psychic or metaphysical "warmth," comfort, or "cure" provided by narrative itself, as it models a meaningful design for human life, for a cold, chaotic existence in which order and purpose are rarely self-evident. 9

Reiner's grandfather, like the narrators of many frame tales, represents the wise man (or woman) who instructs an inexperienced listener through an entertaining tale. In the eighth century frame narrative *Panchatantra* , the three doltish young sons of a mighty king learn worldly and political wisdom from the tales of a wise man (Gittes 9-10); in don Juan Manuel's *El Conde Lucanor* (Count Lucanor) (1335), the wise old servant Petronio provides the guidance requested by the Count in the form of exemplary tales. While the grandfather reads to a boy, Boccaccio, Lope de Vega and many other writers of novella collections posit a primarily female readership. Zayas' narrators, however, address a mixed audience, both within the frame and as presumed readers of the collection, exhorting women to attend the warnings in the tales, and entreating men to hear or read them with a chivalrous spirit and open mind. 10

This dialogue with a fictive audience is, of course, one of the primary functions of the frame tale, as Amy Williamsen demonstrates in the case of Zayas. Anne Cayuela points out in her study of the liminary apparatus of seventeenth-century Spanish fiction that reading is a communicative act 11

in which one of the parties is absent, and publication in printing made works available to a large and heterogeneous audience. One result is an emphasis in the liminary apparatus on the nature of the *destinatario* (receiver) and on the concrete aspects of the communicative act (Cayuela 1994, 81, 123-124). The prologue, in a kind of act of seduction, creates an image both of the author and of the implied or ideal reader in order to obtain not only a reading, but a particular kind of reading (Cayuela 1994, 321-322). Two of our novella authors perform this image-creating function quite literally: Cervantes in the self-portrait he paints in the prologue to his *Novelas Ejemplares* (Exemplary Stories), and Lope de Vega, who depicts his fictive listener Marcia Leonarda in glowing color. The fully personified communicative act in frame narratives make this image-operated seduction of the reader yet more dramatic, particularly in frames such as those of Marguerite de Navarre and María de Zayas, which involve extensive exchange between fictional narrators and their listeners. This function of the frame is of the utmost importance in Zayas' collection, as we will see.

First, however, I would like to consider two other perspectives on the nature and function of frames, theories which focus more on the other end of the author to "real" world relation, that of the sociohistorical and ideological context and the author's use or omission of a frame tale. Katherine Gittes provides a fascinating perspective on the relation between cultural structures and frame narratives in her study of an early time period, the development of the tradition from early Eastern tales to Chaucer and *Cité des Dames* (The Book of the City of Ladies) by Christine de Pizan (1405). With reiterated apologies for the imprecision of the terms "Eastern" and "Western,"[8] Gittes draws a fundamental contrast between East and West in the metaphysical conception of the world. The East, rooted in nomadic tribal life, saw the world as open, and appreciated the infinite variety and limitless renewability of life. Early Arabic literary forms, such as the pre-Islamic *qasida* or ode and the tenth and eleventh-century Arabic *picaresque*, or *maqamat*, have a loose, open-ended and linear structure, organized not by a unifying theme or idea but by the perspective of the speaker or central character (Gittes 334-345). Hence, a collection such as the *Thousand Nights and a Night*, the product of a culture which avoids rounding off numbers, but prefers 1001 as meaning a large, indefinite number (Gittes 33, 46). Gittes traces the Western view of a more closed universe back to Greek mathematical principles, to the preference of Pythagoras for geometry over algebra, and for what Gittes describes as

> [a] concept of organization, a notion of unity, in which the whole has greater importance than the parts. Pythagoras, voicing what had been implied in Greek thought before his time, stated that the universe is harmonious because all its parts are related to one another mathematically. He thought that mathematical order lay behind the apparently mysterious, arbitrary, and chaotic workings of nature (Gittes 1991, 24).

This insistence on harmony, unity, and the orderly subordination of the part to the whole underlies the literature, art and architecture, and world

view passed on from Greece and Rome to medieval European philosophers (Gittes 1991, 29).

Medieval Spain served as the bridge over which the frame-tale 13
collection, along with so many other elements of Eastern culture, reached the West. The collection of tales known as the *Panchatantra*, much of which seems to have originated in India and the Near East, acquired in its eighth-century Arabic translation an open-ended frame in which a wise man tells stories to educate a king's sons who had previously refused instruction (Gittes 8-20). Augmented and renamed with an Arabic touch *Kalilah and Dimnah* , the collection came to Europe through the Arab conquest. When Alfonso X had it translated in the thirteenth century, it became, according to a recent editor Thomas Irving, the first extensive piece of prose literature in the popular language of Spain and a point of confluence in the streams of Arabic and Spanish civilization (*Kalilah and Dimnah*, 1980, xi). It also furnished the model for the widely-read *Disciplina Clericalis* that the converted Spanish Jew, Petrus Alfonsi wrote first in Arabic, then translated into Latin. That work, according to Gittes, "ranks above all other works in bridging 'Eastern' and 'Western' narrative traditions and in funneling Arabic content and structure to European medieval vernacular writers (1991, 57).[9] The frame narrative tradition that developed thereafter, according to Gittes, bore the continuing tension between open and closed structures, between the attraction of symmetry and the suspense of the indefinite (113). Whereas, she says,

> the earliest Arabic frame narratives suggests that medieval Arabs perceived the natural world as a world where boundaries and structure, if they exist, are not especially desirable. The later European frame narratives, notably the *Decameron*, the *Confessio* and the *Canterbury Tales* suggest the reverse; that even though the natural world appears disorderly, the medieval Christian longed to see a spark...which would give the sensation that underneath the disorder lies a comforting divine harmony, perhaps ordered along Pythagorean lines. The harmony hinted at in these fourteenth-century frame narratives is a harmony which the reader will see and fully comprehend in the afterlife. What looks like disorder on earth is God's order misperceived (1991, 148).

H. H. Wetzel, beginning approximately where Gittes leaves off in 14
time, traces the development of the novella from the late Middle Ages to Cervantes, in a more closely deterministic fashion. He relates the presence or absence of a developed narrative frame-as well as the predominance of different types of novellas-to the relative stability or flux in the political and ideological structures of the age. Within the stable order of feudalism and medieval Christianity, collections of *exempla* did not require an elaborated narrative frame, for order was perceived to be supplied by Divine Providence, whose operation the *exempla* helped to explain allegorically. Says Wetzel,

> It was not by chance that the first European collections of novellas appeared at the end of the thirteenth century in

> southern and central Italy; in that "anarchic" land, the autonomy of the towns and of their citizens was most advanced, the social order profoundly overturned by the nascent preponderance of the merchant bourgeoisie and orthodox faith heavily buffeted by the revaluation of man, a new consciousness of his own value and the effect of major heretical movements (46).

15 Within this turbulent world, Boccaccio supplied a harmonious fictional order to contain the chaos of reality, the social breakdown brought on by the plague, "a symbolic index of the danger which threatened to dissolve the civic, religious and moral norms of the society" (47). That Boccaccio felt empowered to supply such an order, and felt the need to do so, Wetzel relates to the sociopolitical order of Florence in his day, in which a commoner such as Boccaccio could participate actively both in the financial and political life of the city, and in which social norms were in flux and civic equilibrium precarious, as the bourgeois "virtues" of a modern economy intermingled with traditional aristocratic codes of conduct. With the refeudalization of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, frame narratives were either weakened or omitted by authors who enjoyed no true political power, but were limited to a subordinate role in princely courts (Wetzel 1981, 50). For his mid-sixteenth-century collection, Bandello constructed no organizing frame but dedicated each of his 214 stories to one of a variety of notable figures in the courtly society he knew. Wetzel relates this practice to his dependent position within an Italy whose cities no longer enjoyed the relative autonomy of Boccaccio's Florence, but were buffeted by European power contests on Italian soil, and in which the discovery of the New World and the Reformation were transforming the mental as well as the physical world (53). That Marguerite de Navarre, on the other hand, constructed a highly elaborated narrative frame within a rigidly hierarchical political structure, Wetzel attributes to her privileged position, one of true authority as queen of France, albeit a France torn by religious dissension. Hence the importance of the lengthy discussions by quite fully developed frame personalities, who express profound differences of viewpoint (50-51).[10] And finally, in the declining empire of seventeenth-century Spain Cervantes, says Wetzel, "made a virtue of the necessity of renouncing the frame" (54). He exchanged the powerlessness of an *hidalgo* (the lowest level of nobility) without even the comfort of a subordinate position at court "for the empowerment of a gifted artist who constructed fictive reality to his own image and dissolved the contradictions of reality through well-known literary devices such as recognitions, found children, etc." (54-55). One might contest his evaluation of the Cervantine renunciation of the frame in the light of that author's announcement of a future work that has the sound of a framed novella collection, *Semanas del Jardín* (Weeks in the garden). On the other hand, Wetzel might claim vindication in the fact that such a collection never saw publication.

16 If we bring the theories of Gittes and Wetzel to bear on Zayas' choice of a fully developed frame narrative, the results are contradictory. From the scarce documentation of her life, we can say that she probably enjoyed

a somewhat more secure socio-economic position than Cervantes, as the daughter of Fernando de Zayas, who was at one time the Majordomo of the Count of Lemos and who was named administrator of an estate of the Order of Santiago in 1638. (Barbeito Carneiro 165-172). In no way could we argue that she enjoyed true political authority, as did Marguerite de Navarre. At best we could claim for her, as she does for herself, a position of moral authority as self-appointed spokeswoman for women within an absolutist, resolutely patriarchal Counter-Reformation society that denied them any legitimate independent agency. By Gittes' categories, this was an ideologically closed society, one that would foster the containment of difference, of the chaotic multiplicity of reality, within a strictly controlling frame, but by those of Wetzel, it would make the erection of such a frame impossible for a powerless female. Zayas does not use the frame as a format for true discussion of philosophical difference, as does Marguerite de Navarre, but rather as an arm of philosophical combat in the defense of women. She makes of it, we might say, a "thesis" frame narrative.[11] And it is the effective propagation of this thesis, I would argue, that motivates her use of such a frame.

17 The frame narrative of Reiner's film modeled for postmodern viewers how a boy moves from playing electronic games to avid attention to a traditional romance. At first, he objects to the "kissing parts" and tells his grandfather to skip them, although his grandpa assures him "Some day you may not mind so much." That "someday" arrives by the end of the story, when he tells his grandfather *not* to skip the description of the sublime final kiss of Wesley and Buttercup.

18 What has changed his mind? The story, of course. Peter Brooks suggests that narrative accomplishes what is logically unthinkable. Jerome Bruner (1991) seconds this idea and adds several important observations: 1) that human beings, from their earliest years, perceive and organize existence through narrative; 2) that narrative *constitutes* reality as much as it reflects it; and 3) that changes in narrative paradigms may reshape not just plots, but modes of thought.

19 The Reiner frame shows narrative moving an Oedipal boy to acceptance of what for him was previously unthinkable: that the objective of a hero is not just excelling at sports or defeating the evil antagonist, but should include blissful, lasting union with an ideal member of the opposite sex--the traditional plot that however unrealistic, assures the continuation of the species.

20 Zayas, however, faced a much more formidable logical obstacle. Within the genre of the "novela amorosa" (love story), she seeks to implant the conviction that heterosexual union is *not* the desired goal but a fatal trap for women, and that true happy endings can only be found by sublimating desire for any corporeal male and rejoining the mother in the feminine world of the convent. To accomplish that, she not only tells story after story of the fatal effects of desire, but *models* in her frame narrative the re-educative effect of those stories, as Lisis breaks her engagement to don Diego and retreats with her mother to the safety of convent walls. Zayas' decision to employ a frame tale, I would propose, is not aesthetically motivated in the need to delimit and organize fictional worlds, but polemically designed to enhance the power of the narrative to

transcend the limits of fiction and reorganize her readers' modes of thought.

Add your comments to this article | View comments on this article

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anonymous. 1980. *Kalilah and Dimnah*. Ed. Thomas Ballantine Irving. Newark, Del.: Juan de la Cuesta.

Bandello, Matteo. [1966]. *Le Novelle*. 2 vols. Ed. Francesco Flora. [Verona]: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore.

Barbeito Carneiro, Isabel. 1986. *Escritoras madrileñas del siglo XVII. Estudio bibliográfico-crítico*. 2 vols. Ph.D. Diss., Universidad Complutense.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. 1982. *The Decameron*. Trans. Mark Musa and Peter Bondanella. New York: Mentor Books.

Brooks, Peter. 1985. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. New York: Vintage Books.

Bruner, Jerome. 1991. "The Narrative Construction of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 18: 1-21.

Carvajal, Mariana de. *Navidades de Madrid y noches entretenidas, en ocho novelas*. Ed. Catherine Soriano. Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid.

Cayuela, Anne. 1994. *L'Appareil liminaire des libres de fiction en prose*, Université contribution à l'histoire de la lecture en Espagne au XVIIème siècle. Ph.D. Diss., Stendhal Grenoble III.

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. 1990. *Novelas ejemplares*. Ed. Fernando Gutiérrez. 6th ed. Barcelona: Editorial Juventud.

Conisbee, Philip. 1996. *Georges de La Tour and his world*. Catalogue of the exhibition at the National Gallery of Art and the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, 1996-1997. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Erdocia, Carolina. 1997. *Hacia una poética de la representación sacramental del Siglo de Oro español: Los sacramentales de Calderón de la Barca y la celebración del Corpus Christi*. Ph.D. Diss., Princeton University.

Eslava, Antonio. 1986. *Noches de invierno* . Ed. Julia Varella Vigal. Pamplona: Institución Príncipe de Viana del Departamento de Educacin y

Cultura del Gobierno de Navarra.

Flecniakoska, Jean-Louis. 1975. *La loa*. Madrid: Sociedad General Española de Librería, S. A.

Gittes, Katharine S. 1991. *Framing the Canterbury Tales. Chaucer and the Medieval Frame Narrative Tradition*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Losse, Deborah N. 1994. *Sampling the Book. Renaissance Prologues and the French Conteurs*. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press.

Lyons, John D. 1989. *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Modern France and Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Menocal, Mara Rosa. 1987. *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Montesa Peydró, Salvador. 1981. *Texto y contexto en la narrativa de María de Zayas*. Madrid: Dirección General de la Juventud y Promoción Sociocultural.

Navarre, Marguerite de. 1984. *The Heptameron*. Trans. Paul A. Chilton. London: Penguin Books.

Pabst, Walter. 1972. *La novela corta en la teoría y en la creación literaria. Notas para la historia de su antinomia en las literaturas románicas*. Trans. Rafael de la Vega. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S. A.

Piña, Juan de. 1987. *Novelas exemplares y prodigiosas historias*. Ed. Encarnacin Garca de Dini. Verona: Facolt di Lingue e Letterature Straniere, Universit degli Studi di Pisa.

Sullivan, Henry. 1983. *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries: His Reception and Influence, 1654-1980*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tetel, Marcel. 1981. "*L'Heptaméron:* Premire nouvelle et fonction des devisants." In *La nouvelle française à la Renaissance*, 449-458. Edited by Lionello Sozzi & V. L. Saulnier. Geneva: Editions Slatkine.

Timoneda, Joan. 1986. *El Patrañuelo*. Ed. Jos Romera Castillo. Madrid: C tedra.

Vega Carpio, Lope de. 1988. *Novelas a Marcia Leonarda*. Ed. Julia Barella. Madrid: Ediciones Jucar.

Wallace, David. 1991. *Giovanni Boccaccio*. Decameron. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wetzel, H. H. 1981. "Eléments socio-historiques d'un genre littraire: l'histoire de la nouvelle jusqu'à Cervantès." In Lionello Sozzi & V. L.

Saulnier, eds., *La nouvelle française à la Renaissance*, 41-78. Geneva: Editions Slatkine.

Williamsen, Amy. 1991. "Engendering Interpretation: The Manipulation of Reader Response in María de Zayas." *Romance Languages Annual* 3: 642-48.

Zayas y Sotomayor, María de. 1983. *[Desengaños amorosos]. Parte segunda del Sarao y entretenimiento honesto*. Ed. Alicia Yllera. Madrid: Cátedra.

-----. 1948. *Novelas ejemplares y amorosas*. Ed. Agustín C. de Ameza y Mayo. Madrid: Aldus.

ENDNOTES

[1] This essay is a slightly-expanded version of an address first presented at the Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literature, Lawrence, Kansas, in September, 1994. A longer consideration of Zayas' technique constitutes the final chapter of my forthcoming book on her stories, *Desiring Readers: María de Zayas tells Baroque Tales of Love and the Cruelty of Men*.

[2] My print attributes this to Georges de La Tour, but according to the catalog of the exhibit of La Tourís work in the National Gallery of Art in 1996-97, while the original conception was due to George, some art historians believe the execution of the work may be due in large part to his son Etienne. See Conisbee, p. 124.

[3] See Flecniakoska and Erdocia.

[4] Juan de Piña goes Cervantes one further, in a witty near-abolition of the prologue too in his collection, published in 1624. He reduces it to two sentences: "*El Prólogo* se introduze a suma de lo impresso: dilatado, nunca visto de la ociosidad. Las *Novelas exemplares y prodigiosas historias* deste libro dizen la brevedad que afectan, como el *Prólogo*" (The Prologue presents itself as a summation of what is printed, postponed, never seen by idle readers. The *Exemplary novels and prodigious stories* of this book, like its Prologue, bespeak the brevity to which they aspire) (1987, 33). Piña transfers the explanatory and apologetic function of the standard prologue to a complex Epilogue.

[5] Illness is also a motif in numerous French collections: Philippe de Vigneulles, *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles; Le Seigneur de Cholires, Les*

Après-disnees du Seigneur de Cholires and others (Losse 63). In Mariana de Carvajal's *Navidades de Madrid*, the lady of the house has been confined to the house caring for her ailing, elderly husband and, curiously, it is his death near the Christmas season that makes the story telling possible.

[6] As Lyons (1989, 76-78) points out, however, the refuge they take, in a Franciscan monastery, is in a moral sense at least, the heart of the danger, as Franciscan monks, both in the frame and enclosed tales, represent the threat of religious hypocrisy. The same could be said of Zayasís frame refuge, for the courtly gathering of men and women revolves around the same lure and threat of amorous desire central to her stories.

[7] Eslava shows as well the economic effect of love sickness; first tale tells how one of the participants of his frame gathering lost a ship due to the immoderate passion of its young captain.

[8] Gittes cites María Rosa Menocal's study of the insistent repression of the substantial impact in medieval Europe exercised by Arabic culture, both as the source of learning, of literary traditions, and of material well-being, and as a negative pole against which theologians and writers like Dante reacted.

[9] Menocal (1987, 139-142) argues that Boccaccio scholars have paid too little attention to the importance of the Arabic and Hebrew inspiration and Arabic or Andalusian sources in the *Decameron*, as, for example, the model of scatalogical tales within a didactic frame provided him by Petrus Alfonsis *Disciplina clericalis*.

[10] Wetzel is thus closer to Marcel Tetel's reading (1981) of a fundamental ambiguity, indeed a manichean duality, in the *Heptameron* than to Paula Sommer's assertion of an ascendance (1984) of Protestant faith therein.

[11] Montesa Peydró (1981, 351), in his excellent discussion of her use of the frame, also describes her collection as a whole as *an obra de tesis* (thesis work) (emphasis in the original).

Casta Painting:

Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico

Ilona Katzew

New York University

This article first appeared in the catalog for the exhibition New World Orders: Casta Painting and Colonial Latin America, organized by the Americas Society Art Gallery, Sept. 26-Dec. 22, 1996. Laberinto wishes to express gratitude for the permissions to reproduce this article and the accompanying drawings and paintings, which have been granted by the Society (http://www.americas-society.org), the author, and the owners of the art works.

In 1770 Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, a Spanish prelate and archbishop of Mexico from 1766 to 1772, remarked on the diversity of Mexico's population as opposed to Spain's: 1

> Two worlds God has placed in the hands of our Catholic Monarch, and the New does not resemble the Old, not in its climate, its customs, nor its inhabitants; it has another legislative body, another council for governing, yet always with the end of making them alike: In the Old Spain only a single caste of men is recognized, in the New many and different.[1]

As Lorenzana observed, the social composition of Mexico during the eighteenth century was based on the existence of various castas or castes. This term was used in Mexico to refer to the different mixed races that comprised society; it also served to indicate socioeconomic class. The

Spanish prelate's emphasis on social heterogeneity was not meant to imply a harmonious coexistence of the diverse races, but instead to remind both colonial subjects and the Spanish Crown that Mexico was still an ordered, hierarchical society in which each group occupied a specific socioeconomic niche defined largely by race. Throughout the colonial period Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities emphasized racial differences as a way of exerting their control over the population. But the blurring of social boundaries that resulted from race mixing precluded a de facto categorization of the population, which greatly concerned Spanish authorities. Anxiety over this loss of control permeated much of Mexico's reality during the eighteenth century and also accounts in part for the emergence of the distinct pictorial genre produced there known as casta painting. This essay will explore some of the reasons that might have led to the development of casta paintings, proposing that they be viewed within the larger context of identity-formation in Mexico during the eighteenth century.

2 The production of casta paintings spans the entire eighteenth century. These works portray the complex process of *mestizaje* or race mixing among the three major groups that inhabited the colony: Indian, Spanish, and Black. Most of these paintings are comprised of sixteen scenes depicted on separate canvases, although occasionally the scenes are represented on a single, compartmentalized surface (painting 1).[2] Each scene portrays a man and woman of different races with one or two of their progeny and is accompanied by an inscription that identifies the racial mix depicted. The series follow a specific taxonomic progression: at the beginning are scenes portraying figures of "pure" race (that is, Spaniards), lavishly attired or engaged in occupations that indicate their higher status. As the family groups become more racially mixed, their social status diminishes. In addition to presenting a typology of human races and their occupations, casta paintings also include a rich classificatory system within which objects, food products, flora, and fauna are clearly positioned and labeled.[3]

3 Since the sixteenth century, Spaniards had transposed their own social schema onto their colonies in the New World. The subordination of State to Church and the ideology of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood)--where the absence of Jewish or Muslim blood defined an honorable Old Christian--were factors contributing to Spain's hierarchically organized society, whose members had clearly delineated social roles.[4] When the Spanish colonized the New World, they brought with them this division of society into nobles and plebeians. By converting the Indians to the Christian faith, an imperative that gave justification to the colonial enterprise, Spaniards became the aristocracy of Mexico regardless of their origins or occupations. The supremacy of Spaniards (or whites) was remarked at the end of the colonial period by Alexander von Humboldt (1769 - 1859), a German natural scientist who traveled in the New World: "any white person, although he rides his horse barefoot, imagines himself

to be of the nobility of the country."[5] Indians, who, with the exception of their own nobility, were associated with agriculture, became the tribute-paying plebeians. Nevertheless, the Spanish system admitted the existence of an Indian Republic within the colony, which meant that the Spaniards recognized the existence of an internal hierarchy for Indian society. Because Indians were destined collectively to become "New Christians," they merited the protection of the Spanish Crown. Blacks, on the other hand, were brought to the New World as slaves and were in theory situated at the lowest echelons of society; they worked as domestic servants for the Spaniards and as laborers on the sugar plantations, mines, and estates. Blacks were considered a homogeneous group with no rights and were redeemable only on an individual level, once they had proven their loyalty to the Church and their masters.[6] In practice, however, Spaniards often preferred Blacks to Indians and employed them to oversee Indian labor. By their association with whites, many Blacks came to occupy a de facto position superior to that of Indians.

While intermarriage among the three groups did not become common until the second half of the seventeenth century, sexual contact among Spaniards, Indians, and Blacks occurred as early as the sixteenth century.[7] This resulted in the growth of a large group of racially-mixed people known collectively as castas-the general term used by Spaniards and creoles (Spaniards born in the Americas) to distinguish themselves from the large masses of racially-mixed people. By the end of the eighteenth century, approximately one quarter (25.4 percent) of the total population of Mexico was racially mixed.[8] From the sixteenth century on a variety of names served to designate the different castas of Mexico. The most widely used terms were those referring to the mixtures between the three main groups: mestizo (Spanish-Indian), mulatto (Spanish-Black), and *zambo* or *zambaigo* (Black-Indian). In the seventeenth century two additional terms appeared: *castizo* (a light-skinned mestizo) and *morisco* (a light-skinned mulatto).[9] By the eighteenth century a whole array of fanciful terms had been devised to refer to the different castas and their offspring. Several documents record these officially designed classifications, which include zoologically inspired terms such as *lobo* (wolf) and *coyote,* as well as names alluding to the racial indeterminacy of specific admixtures, including *tente en el aire* (hold-yourself-in-mid-air), and *no te entiendo* (I-don't-understand-you).[10] While most racial taxonomies list sixteen mixtures, some enumerate fourteen, others nineteen or even twenty. These numerical differences point to the impossibility of definitively categorizing the racially mixed, impeding the creation of a fixed system of classification and representation. 4

Although most of these terms were clearly not applicable in ordinary communication, they suggest a basic principle: Spanish or white blood is redeemable; Black is not. In other words, while the purity of Spanish blood was inextricably linked to the idea of "civilization," Black blood, bearing 5

the stigma of slavery, connoted atavism and degeneracy. This principle is explicitly stated in an illustrated manuscript by Joachin Antonio de Bafarás entitled *Origen, costumbres, y estado presente de mexicanos y phillpinos* (1763).[11] The author, presumably a Spanish merchant living in Guanajuato, as inferred from the text, offers a description of the different aspects of the colony, including its history, government, industrial activities, forms of entertainment, military guilds, foodstuffs, population, and customs.[12] An important part of his manuscript is devoted to the description of the generations of Mexico (fig.1), which are accompanied with illustrations that, in all likelihood, derive from the author's knowledge of the popular casta series (figs. 2, 3, 4). In his system of classification, Bafarás suggests that so long as Spaniards are mixed only with Indians, the blood can be purified. However, the mixture of Spanish or Indian with Black can never again be purified back to Spanish or Indian. In this system of identity-formation, Bafarás emphasizes the supremacy of the white pole to the Black:

> These are, among the vast types of peoples of New Spain, the main castas or generations that it contains, originated from the introduction of Blacks...If this Kingdoom had freed itself from the mixture with that nation, it would by now be purely Spanish wihout any corruption. Since Indians belong to a pure nation, upon mixing with Spaniards thay become perfectly Spanish in the third step.[13]

In his *Idea compendiosa del Reyno de Nueva Esparña* (1774), the native of Cádiz, Pedro Alonso O'Crouley, also provides a detailed description of the lineages of New Spain. In this account the author explains how Spanish blood as opposed to Black could be redeemed: 6

> It is known that neither Indian nor Negro contends in dignity and esteem with the Spaniard; nor do any of the others envy the lot of the Negro, who is the "most dispirited and despised." . . If the mixed-blood is the offspring of a Spaniard and an Indian, the stigma disappears at the third step in descent because it is held as systematic that a Spaniard and an Indian produce a mestizo; a mestizo and a Spaniard, a castizo; and a castizo and a Spaniard, a Spaniard... Because it is agreed that from a Spaniard and a Negro a mulato is born; from a mulato and a Spaniard, a morisco; from a morisco and a Spaniard, a torna atras [return-back-wards]; and from a torna atras and a Spaniard, a tente en el aire [hold-yourself-in-mid-air], which is the same as mulato, it is said, and with reason, that a mulato can never leave his condition of mixed blood, but rather it is the Spanish element that is lost and absorbed into the condition of a Negro.... The same thing happens from the union of a Negro and Indian, the descent begins as follows: Negro and Indian produce a lobo [wolf]; lobo and Indian, a chino; and chino and Indian, an albarazado [white spotted]; all

of which incline towards the mulato.[14]

The need to devise such an artificial classificatory system was 7
intended, at least from an ideological point of view, to emphasize the supremacy of Spaniards. According to such a perspective, Blacks, who were thought to embody a regression to an earlier moment of racial development, served as a foil for Spanish superiority. In other words, imagining the "descent" or degeneration in which humanity could fall was a necessary part of imagining the exaltation to which it could aspire.[15] This type of "scientific racism," which attempted to give social ranking and social disability a biological basis was symptomatic of the social disruption that permeated colonial society, or, to borrow Anne McClintock's words, "the poetics of degeneration was a poetics of social crisis."[16] In fact, the term "race" was used in shifting and unstable ways during the colonial period, sometimes to denote "biological ethnicity," sometimes cultural alliances. Moreover, the rhetoric of race throughout the eighteenth century was used to invent distinctions between what we now call classes.

The eighteenth century in Mexico saw the increasing blurring of social 8
boundaries as the necessary consequence of racial mixing, but also of the change in the distribution of wealth. In addition to the frequency of intermarriage, which legitimized interracial liaisons, Mexico's society was marked by a more frequent "passing" of one racial/social category to another. The great economic expansion in Mexico during the eighteenth century allowed a number of families from lower social groups-descendants from Indians and slaves-to amass great wealth and buy their way into the elite by purchasing certificates of legal "whiteness" called *gracias al sacar* (thanks for letting out).[17] Racial identities were also often manipulated for purely practical reasons. Individuals who were racially mixed, but who identified themselves culturally with Indians, for example, would often choose to emphasize their mestizo origin to avoid paying tribute, using every-thing from clothing, hairstyle, language, and popular opinion to back their claims.[18] The lack of internal cohesion for Blacks made individuals from this group particularly prone to manipulating their racial identity; some adopted Indian and Spanish customs in an attempt to escape the liminality of their status.[19] Nevertheless, while at first race was used as an indicator of status, by the eighteenth century being Spanish no longer guaranteed exclusive superior social standing.[20]

The increasing erosion of race as an indicator of socioeconomic class 9
resulted in a greater insecurity about status among the elite. Spanish and creole anxiety over the loss of control of the population and of their privileged status was by no means imaginary. As early as June 1692, a group in Mexico City led by Indians, but soon Joined by all elements of the populace, rioted, looted the market in the Zócalo (the main square), and

invaded and set fire to the viceregal palace. In his accounts of these events, the creole intellectual Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora (1645-1700) traced the causes back to the floods of the preceding summer, which had caused the maize and wheat crops to rot, resulting in a poor harvest and high prices. When the mob of Indians and castas attacked the palace, they shouted, "Death to the Spaniards and Gachupines [Spaniards born on the Iberian Peninsula] ... who eat our maize!," and alleged, "Is this not our land? Why do Spaniards want it?"[21] Throughout his account, Sigüenza y Góngora blames the Indians and castas' habit of drinking for the revolt. Noteworthy is his thorough disdain for the Mexican populace, which he describes as "a common folk so very common ... composed of Indians, of Blacks both locally born and of different nations in Africa, *chinos*, mulattos, *moriscos*, mestizos, *zambaigos, lobos,* and even Spaniards ... who are the worst among such a vile mob."[22] He then adds: "We live among such a populace while we pride ourselves of greatness. If only this truth, very much to our detriment in the present situation, would have never materialized! ..."[23] Soon after the riot of 1692, colonial authorities attempted to segregate the Indians from the Spaniards, and especially from the remaining castas who were thought to have prompted the Indians to rise in riot.[24] While these attempts met with little or no success, they nonetheless conveyed the elite's fear of the populace and its desire to create a more rigorous social order.

10 The emergence of casta painting is in part related to the elite's anxiety regarding the fallibility of this imperial order. For the colonial elite, the classificatory system purveyed in casta painting was devoid of negative connotations. It was a way of creating order out of an increasingly confusing society. Early examples of casta painting in particular-those produced in the first quarter of the eighteenth century-might have been intended as reminders to the Spanish Crown that Mexico was still a rigidly structured society. Moreover, the placement of Spaniards at the beginning of these classifications underscored the fact that Spaniards presided over society The deployment of the family trope created a sense of unity within hierarchy, and it promoted an image of domesticity that masked racial tensions. At the same time the image of the family served to "naturalize" the overall social hierarchy portrayed in casta paintings. Since the subordination of woman to man and child to woman were considered natural facts, other forms of social hierarchy could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature.[25] In this respect, casta paintings promoted an image of the colony that served to countervail the anxiety fostered by such events as the riot of 1692 and simultaneously demonstrated to Europeans precisely those aspects that distinguished Mexico from the Old World.

11 Although not much is known about who commissioned the casta cycles, there is no doubt that they were produced for a predominantly Spanish and creole audience.[26] In this sense it is interesting to note that the paintings do not distinguish between Spaniards and creoles and that they

use the general epithet of "Spanish" to refer to both groups. Among the only known contemporary references to these paintings is a letter of 1746 by Andrés Arce y Miranda to Juan José de Eguiara y Eguren (1696- 1763), professor and rector of the university of Mexico. Eguiara y Eguren was compiling a vast bio-bibliography, entitled *Biblioteca mexicana,* ultimately published in 1775, of all known Mexican writers, the aim of which was to counteract European denigration of the peoples and cultures of the Americas. In the letter, Arce y Miranda suggests that Eguiara y Eguren deal in the *Biblioteca* with the subject of the mixture of lineages "to clarify the purity of blood of creole literati; because we must be wary that the preoccupation that they have in Europe that we are all mixed (or as we say, *champurros),* contributes not little to the indifference in which they hold the works and writing of the worthy."[27] Arce y Miranda then mentions that Viceroy Fernando de Alencastre Noroña y Silva, Duke of Linares (1711-1716), had conceived the idea of presenting to the King of Spain and his court the different racial mixtures of the colony through a series of paintings by Juan Rodríguez Juárez (1675-1728), a renowned artist working in Mexico City. Arce y Miranda also mentions that Juan Francisco de Loaiza, auxiliary bishop of Puebla (1743-1746), having the same idea, commissioned from Luis Berrueco, a painter from Puebla, a canvas divided into sixteen compartments representing the different castas of Mexico, which he claims to have seen. Although this painting has not been located, another casta set by Berrueco comprised of sixteen separate canvases has been identified.[28] Most of the castas in this series are portrayed in full-length and are lavishly attired; a number of them are shown engaged in a trade.

Instead of praising or even just approving of these works, Arce y Miranda viewed them with contempt and pointed out that what had been exported to Spain was an image of "the useful, not the noble minds," a vision of "what harms us, not what benefits us, what dishonors us, not what ennobles us." [29] As a creole intellectual, his concern was not with promoting an image of an industrious society that would perpetuate Mexico's colonial status, but a favorable image of the enlightened creole elite at a time when it was being vehemently attacked in Europe as Intellectually inferior. [30] Arce y Miranda's disavowal of the casta pictorial genre is also related to the image he believed these works fostered: a society in which " Spaniards got lost in the entanglement of race mixing, resulting in their discredited intellectual abilities abroad. This theory might have accounted for the subsequent inclusion of the Spanish literati at the beginning of numerous casta sets. 12

In addition to the information provided by Arce y Miranda regarding the commission of certain casta paintings, it is known that Archbishop Francisco Antonio Lorenzana brought back with him to Toledo a casta set signed by the Puebla artist José Joaquin Magón in 1772. [31] It is also known that Viceroy Antonio María Bucareli (1771-1779) remitted a casta set with 13

Antonio de Ulloa to his niece Juana Antonia Bucarell y Baeza, Countess of Gerena. [32] Other casta paintings were sent to the Real Gabinete de Historia Natural (Royal Natural History Collection) in Madrid, founded by Charles III in 1771. [33] Among these is the only known Peruvian cycle, sent by Viceroy Manuel Amat y Juniet (1761- 1776) to Prince Charles IV in 1770 . In his letter to the Prince, Amat y Juniet explains why he commissioned the set:

> My greatest wish being to contribute to the formation of the Natural History Collection in which our Most Serene Prince of Asturias has invested himself: I have thought it conducive to his enlightenment...to send a rare product of these domains, which is the notable mutation of appearance, figure, and color, that results from subsequent generations of the mixture of Indians and Blacks, which tends proportionally to be accompanied by certain proclivities and characteristics. With this idea I had the twenty canvases copied and shipped ...and I will continue to refine these combinations until the end, if there is such In hope that our Lord and Prince will accept this humble offering of my whole-hearted devotion, and to ease his understanding, the admixtures are ordered with numbers indicating that the son or daughter that appears in the first intermarriage, is, according to gender, father or mother in the next representation. [34]

Amat y Juniet's idea for commissioning this anonymous series of twenty paintings surely stems from his knowledge of the well-known Mexican works that preceded this set. [35] The ordering of society in such paintings clearly underlines the role of classification as a way of rendering visible and stable an increasingly fluid society. It is a way of representing the unrepresentable; an attempt of quantifying, and thus controlling, the evanescence of colonial social rigor. At the same time, these works were intended both to "enlighten" and amuse their audience. 14

The Enlightenment is generally credited with fostering the acute observation and categorization of all manifestations of life, giving impetus to the exploration of other cultures and prompting the "logical" arrangement of these "discoveries." Yet, the fascination with "other" cultures ("other" in relation to Europe, that is), had a long tradition in Western thought. The Old World's hunger for the exotic resulted in its projection of chimerical traits onto the New. Prior to the "discovery" of America, the furthest confines of the world were thought to be inhabited by monstrous races-giants, pygmies, two-headed men, Amazons, and hermaphrodites-a European fancy that gave a place, albeit unknown, to the most feared human "aberrations." This fascination with the unknown contributed to Europe's long-lasting curiosity about the physical characteristics of the peoples of the New World, which is also evinced in the constant official requests for information on the different castas and 15

their customs issued by the Spanish Crown beginning in the sixteenth century. [36]

Significantly, in addition to the set commissioned by Amat y Juniet, other casta paintings found their way into the Real Gabinete de Historia Natural in the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1776, the same year the Gabinete opened its doors to the public, an official decree was issued requesting viceroys and other functionaries to send natural products and artistic curiosities. [37] Casta paintings were displayed with a host of archaeological objects, rocks, minerals, fossils, and other "ethnographic" items. By entering the space of the Gabinete, casta paintings acquired a specific meaning related to their assumed "ethnographic" value. The Gabinete provided the ideal forum from which colonial *difference* could be contained and articulated as a category of nature. Thus, the inclusion of objects such as casta paintings, in addition to satisfying Europeans' curiosity for the exotic, points to their need to classify the peoples of the Americas as a way of gaining control of the unknown. 16

Numerous works of art in all media representing the peoples of the Americas began to be produced as early as the sixteenth century and continued throughout the Enlightenment period. [38] A large painting from the eighteenth century by the Portuguese artist José Conrado Roza entitled *The Wedding March* (1788) portrays a group of eight dwarfed figures from Brazil who were shipped as gifts by the governors of different Brazilian provinces to King Pedro III of Portugal (1777-1786). Each figure bears an inscription explaining his or her origin. For instance, the inscription on the figure with skin discoloration states: "Siriac, a native of Cotinginba, sent to Bahia to be presented to our Lord Prince and Captain General, Don Rodrigo Jose de Menezes e Noronha. He arrived in this court in July 1786, at the age of twelve. The famous accidents of this Black's skin are visible in his portrait." [39] The painting offers a visual spectacle of the "uncanny" human types meant to satisfy the curiosity of a European audience. 17

Another late example of the classification of the peoples of the Americas is provided by Luis Thiebaut's *Quadro de historia natural, civil y geográfica del Reyno de Perú* (Picture of the Natural, Civil, and Geographic History of the Kingdom of Peru, 1799). This large painting was intended as an anthology of the flora, fauna, natural resources, and human inhabitants of the viceroyalty of Peru. In this system of representation, each motif is accompanied by an inscription describing its main characteristics. In the upper register of the painting are thirty-two representations of the different human "specimens" of Peru, which Thiebaut divides into "civilized" and "uncivilized" nations. The inscription states that "in order to speak with precision of the character of the inhabitants of Peru, it is convenient to divide them into three main classes: Indians, Spaniards, and Blacks, from whose union result other mixed 18

castas." 40 Thiebaut provides a description of the figures' physical characteristics, temperaments, and occupations. While mulatto women are "those who mostly engage in domestic service, whose self-assurance and sharpness is imponderable ... who eat poorly, yet live to dress well," Limeños (Spaniards born in Lima), "have a beautiful disposition for the arts and sciences, yet lack the fire and spirit of the Spaniards; are discreet ... and choose dignity over riches." As for the Indians of the Ucayali River, Thlebaut describes them as "cannibals ... convinced that there are no other men in the world beyond those they know." 41 These examples show how Thiebaut articulates and fixes society through a grid that emphasizes very specific traits. Although the purpose of his painting was to "enlighten" Spaniards about the diverse nature of Peru, it dissected reality into a compendium of immutable and stereotyped categories. This presentation of such select and specific categories results in a major feature of the purported Enlightenment: the subjective contrivance of reality through its ostensibly "objective" description and classification.

19 Interestingly, the inscriptions in these works serve to enhance the reality effect of the images; they are a way of rendering the "other" more real, of making the subjects more tangible. In this regard, the carefully labeled casta paintings, which exemplify the "notable mutation of appearance, figure, and color" that resulted from race mixing, as Amat y Juniet so clearly put it, purvey an image of the exotic that feeds directly into European expectations. They provide an arrangement of the racial mixtures in a "table," an ordered structure that articulates, in visual terms, the multiple "racial permutations" that fascinated Europeans. 42 In this respect, it is important to note that a key factor that distinguishes casta paintings from the works discussed above is the fact that they were produced by colonial artists instead of Europeans. Thus, while casta paintings fit within European concepts of the exotic, they also portray an image of the self. A number of visual strategies are employed to construct this self-image, including the emphasis on the luxury and abundance of the colony and the mediation of reality as conveyed by the careful selection of the scenes represented.

20 Early examples of casta paintings reveal a special concern with the construction of a particular self-image. In a manner similar to that of royal portraiture, these paintings provided a vision of reality destined to be scrutinized abroad, mainly by imperial authorities. The accordance of luxurious garb to the different castas in these paintings, for example, is intrinsically related to the desire to export an image that would underscore the colony's wealth. In the earliest known surviving casta painting, signed by a member of the Arellano family (1711),43 the careful attention given to the figure's attire and jewelry, in addition to stressing the colony's wealth, reveals the artist's wish to bring the importance of the mulatto woman to the foreground. This is further corroborated by the work's inscription, which reads: "Diceño de Mulata yja denegra y español en la Ciudad de

México. Cabesa de la America a 22 del mes de Agosto de 17011 Años" (Rendering of a Mulatto, Daughter of a Black and a Spaniard in Mexico City, Capital of America on the 22 of the Month of August of 1711). The inscription alludes to Mexico's prominent place in the New World. This form of pride in the local is also present in an earlier work by a member of the Arellano family, entitled *Traslado de la imagen y estreno del santuario de Guadalupe* (Procession of the Virgin of Guadalupe, 1709), executed for Viceroy Francisco Fernández de la Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque (1702-1711). In this painting the same interest in classification is evident from the cartouche in the lower right corner enumerating the different sites depicted. Moreover, the painter portrays New Spain's different social groups in lavish regalia as they congregate to honor the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's preeminent patron.[44]

Another early casta cycle that stresses the luxury of the different castas is attributed to Juan Rodríguez Juárez. Although it is not known whether this is the series commissioned by Viceroy Alencastre Noroña y Silva, the set is without doubt one of the earliest extant. Each painting represents half-length figures wearing jewelry and Indian and European clothes. In *De Español, y de India Produce Mestiso* (Spaniard and Indian Produce a Mestizo), the Spanish male is dressed in the fashionable French style of the period adopted after the arrival of the Bourbons to the Spanish throne in 1700; he wears a typical French coat and wig, while under his arm he holds the three-pointed hat or *tricornio*. In this painting equal attention is given to the representation of native garb: the Indian woman wears a lavishly ornamented *huipil* and a luxurious assortment of jewelry, including a pearl bracelet, necklace, and pendants. In another painting of the series, *De Castiso y Española Produce Español* (Castizo and Spaniard Produce a Spaniard) (painting 3), the *castizo* figure is shown wearing the characteristic Spanish long cape and broad hat that signified *hidalguía,* or purity of blood and honorable status. Also from the first quarter of the century is an incomplete casta series signed by José de Bustos (paintings 4-5), in which the figures are represented in half-length and are also portrayed in lavish attire.[45] The portrayal of Spaniards and other castas in fashionable garb in these examples is intended to foreground the colony's wealth and progressiveness. In fact, the emphasis on the grandeur of New Spain was typical of creole patriotic rhetoric. At the end of the seventeenth century, Agustín de Ventacourt (1620-1700) described the luxury of Mexico City as follows:

> the City's beauty lies in its inhabitants for the elegance and cleanliness that adorns them; there are over eight-thousand Spaniards and more than twenty-thousand women of all conditions, where neatness prevails and gracefulness abounds, and where even the poorest woman wears pearls and other jewels assembled for her... Great is the elegance and luster... where rich. and officials, including the most unimportant, sport a ruff and black cape, and ride on carriages and horses. Greatness it is, but whoever was to see them together, unable to distinguish between a rich noble or honorable man and an

artisan, would think it impolitic; still this is the bizarreness of the country, which inspires majesty, aggrandizes humble hearts, and annihilates wretched conditions. [46]

The "bizarreness of the country," the excessive deployment of wealth, as Ventacourt observed, allowed the elite to ascertain its equal, if not superior, position in relation to the Iberian peninsula. Those who abandoned Spain wanted to surpass their country in wealth to justify their exile; those born in New Spain wanted to prove, through the extravagant display of wealth, that they were firmly rooted in their new country. [47] In fact, the uniform assignment of luxurious garb to the different castas in these early series is the most outstanding feature that distinguishes them from most casta cycles produced after 1750. Luxury, thus, becomes paradigmatic of the privileged social and economic reality of Mexico that the elite wanted so desperately to convey to Europe. 22

Dress, however, has more than one function in casta painting. While early examples emphasize the colony's wealth by according luxurious attire to all elements of society, casta series produced after 1750 use clothes to indicate a broader range of socioeconomic classes. In a set signed in 1763 by Miguel Cabrera (1695-1768), for instance, the first eight paintings portray race mixtures in which the dominant figure is the Spanish male. [48] These paintings form a coherent group in which every female and offspring, regardless of race, is lavishly dressed. Cabrera emphasizes the supremacy of Spaniards by portraying them with their families in sumptuous dress. In two instances the families are shown to be merchants-one of the most lucrative occupations during the colonial period-as they stand in front of their stalls at the Parián (the main marketplace in the Zócalo). The members of the lower castas, however, are portrayed wearing tattered clothes, and mostly engaged in trades. In *De Indio, y Barsina; Zambayga* (From Indian and Barcina, Zambaiga) (painting 6), for instance, the large ceramic jug in the lower right corner points to the Indian's occupation as an *aguador* (water carrier), while in *De Castiso, y Mestisa, Chamiso* (From Castizo and Mestiza, Chamizo) (fig. 19), the family group is shown manufacturing cigars. 23

The differences between early casta sets and those produced after 1750, such as Cabrera's, seem to respond to the elite's increasing concern over the impossibility of discerning the different social groups in the colony, due partly to the fact that clothes were often used to obliterate identity. In 1679, the Bishop of Michoacán complained about "the notable disorder ... in dress, both for its scant honesty and for the indiscriminate use of silks and precious materials, as well as gold, silver, and pearls, by nobles and plebeians alike." [49] Although expressed in more patriotic terms, Juan de Viera also mentions the use of dress as a way of masking identity when he 24

describes Mexico City's women: "It is wonderful to see them in churches and promenades, often without knowing which is the wife of a count, which of a tailor." [50] In fact, the increasing blurring of boundaries between the different classes was also the cause of much concern in Spain:

> It is virtually impossible today to distinguish the noble from the plebeian, the rich from the poor, the honorable from the low; and from here originate vanity, arrogance, the abandonment of agriculture and of all work; and ultimately evil altogether. My Lord [King Philip V] provide that each dress according to his class, so that his dress bespeak his profession, and nobles not be confused with plebeians, nor rich with poor. [51]

The fact that Cabrera, as well as many other artists consignment of this fruit was sent to Spain in the who painted casta cycles, used clothing as an indicator of socioeconomic class echoes the pervasive concern in Mexico and Spain regarding the loss of social boundaries. Social stratification is thus rendered clear in these paintings through the differentiation of clothes.

In addition to clothes, the difference between early casta paintings and 25
those produced in the second half of the eighteenth century is marked by the latter's inclusion of objects, food products, flora, and fauna signifying the natural abundance of the Americas. This representation of disparate elements typical of the colony is clearly exemplified in Cabrera's set. The first work, *De Español, y de India, Mestisa* (From Spaniard and Indian, Mestiza) , depicts a pineapple with the word "Piña" inscribed on it. The pineapple was one of the fruits that aroused the most interest among the Spaniards. It is known that a consignment of this fruit was sent to Spain in the early sixteenth century, and reputedly King Ferdinand found it superior in taste to all other fruits. [52] The painting also includes an assortment of native textiles, as indicated by the inscription of the word "Xilotepeque" and the condensed form "Xilo.e" On the rolls of fabric heaped in the stall. The black dot on the woman's temple in *De Español, y Mulata Morisca* (From Spaniard and Mulatto, Morisca) is a fashionable adornment worn by women in Mexico known as a *chiqueador*-a cut piece of velvet glued onto the person's face to simulate a mole, a sign of beauty. The parrot in *De Espñol, y A1bina, Torna atras* (From Spaniard and Albino, Return-Backwards) is also typical of Mexico. Of all living creatures, parrots particularly appealed to Spaniards, for they were both larger and more colorful than the African species they knew. [53] Finally, the food depicted in *De Indio, y Barsina; Zambayga* (From Indian and Barcina, Zambalga) (painting 7) is a characteristic Mexican dish made of filled corn husks known as *tamales*.

On one level the representation of these "typical" objects of the colony 26

was meant to satisfy Europe's desire for the exotic. On another level, however, the depiction of these variegated articles can be interpreted as proud renditions of the local. In fact, these samplings of colonial life form the core of a number of creole patriotic chronicles of the period. In *Breve compendiossa narración de la ciudad de México, corte y cabeza de toda la América septentrional* (1777), for example, Juan de Viera states his motives for writing his account:

> Convinced by the request of a few European friends, who, not blinded by the passion of national spirit, are anxious to divulge in their homeland the greatness of this court if not unknown there, at least denied, because it is true that the sole mention of the Americas triggers in them the idea of an uncultivated land filled with errors and superstition, spells and sorcery. This is why they supply travelers to the Americas with all sorts of relics to defend them from imaginary incantations, and for mourning them as though they were never to see them again, without realizing that their interest is motivated by the exaltation of the abundance of gold and silver, posts and work, and that this is what causes them to forget their own homeland, their parents and relatives, and never, or very rarely, to return to their place of birth. I write for these reasons, so that the entire world will know that such rapture stems from the abundance, wealth, and beauty of this hemisphere. [54]

27 In his account, Viera offers a detailed description of the most outstanding secular and religious buildings of Mexico, its forms of entertainment, markets, foodstuffs, crafts, customs, etc. In other words, he emphasizes precisely those aspects that are frequently represented in casta paintings. Viera's narrative, like Cabrera's paintings, was intended to provide to Spain a vision of the "abundance, wealth, and beauty" of the American hemisphere. The author's description of the colony's trades fostered an image of an industrious and prolific society; it was a way of countervailing the ill-founded assumptions in Europe that Mexico's population was predominantly idle and culturally inert.[55] Both Viera and Cabrera thus mediate reality with the purpose of promoting a favorable view of the colony abroad.

28 Reality is also negotiated in casta paintings through the selection of particular scenes. Among the most significant aspects of the configuration of this self-image is the inclusion of Spaniards at the beginning of the cycles as a way of stressing their superior status. In these scenes Spaniards are mostly portrayed as the possessors of culture, reading or sitting next to their writing implements; as merchants or bearers of arms; or as partaking in leisure activities that include playing cards, playing music, and eating (paintings. 8, 9, 10). They are also shown in scenes standing next to their nursing wives . In other words, Spaniards are featured as the controllers of

women's sexuality. The exaltation of maternity and the breeding of a virile race of empire-builders were widely perceived as paramount for controlling the health and wealth of the male imperial body politic. [56] In this sense, it is interesting to note that the nursing scenes are mostly confined to those mixtures that include the Spanish male. Another striking representation of the Spanish male as the dominant figure is provided by a small painting of an incomplete casta set. Here the family group is depicted in a literal space of superiority-atop a roof-from which the standing Spanish man beholds the entire Alameda (the main park) and part of the city through his telescope. The albino woman sits with her back against the city, while the child stands immediately behind her. The composition stresses the subordination of child to woman, and of woman to man, while the last is featured as the controlling agent. The erect standing male is not only portrayed in a position of mastery over female and child, but through his gaze, as possessor of the city itself.

29 In stark contrast to the former depictions are scenes representing the mixture of a Spanish man and a Black woman . In this example the couple is shown in the interior of a kitchen; the woman is about to strike her husband with a kitchen implement while their child tries to stop her. If the previous scenes exemplified domestic bliss and featured the Spanish male as controller of his family and his environs, here the iconography has been reversed to that of domestic degeneracy. Other similarly violent scenes show the mixtures of Indians with admixtures of Blacks. In a painting from an anonymous casta set, the *chamizo* male is actually shown stabbing his Indian wife (painting 11), while in a painting from another set a mulatto woman is shown attacking an *albarazado* man . The message is clear: certain mixtures-particularly those of Spaniards or Indians with Blacks-could only lead to the contraction of debased sentiments, immoral proclivities, and ability to a decivilized state. The incorporation of this type of scene in a number of casta sets serves to highlight the positive traits associated with mixtures that excluded Blacks, which bore the promise of a return to a pure racial pole.

30 Despite these images of violence, the majority of casta sets offer a vision of colonial society, in which members of the lower castas are usually shown at work or enjoying themselves in a moderate fashion. This is even noticeable in scenes showing the selling of *pulque*-the Indian's favored intoxicating drink extracted from the maguey plant. Prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, the consumption of *pulque* was mainly associated with religious ceremonies; by the sixteenth century the consumption of this fermented drink was widespread among Indians and castas. Numerous colonial documents attest to the aggravations caused by the indiscriminate consumption of *pulque*. In fact, this beverage was blamed for causing the famous riot of 1692. [57] *Pulque* was often mentioned as a cause of random acts of violence and sexual crimes, and this is precisely what is often represented in the literature and in numerous illustrations. Viceroys and other colonial authorities complained repeatedly about the noxious effects

of the beverage and attempted to ban its consumption. Their efforts met with no success, as its dispensation provided great revenues for the Spanish Crown. 58

31 While some casta paintings offer a type of "ethnographic" representation of the *tlachiquero* Indian extracting *pulque* from the maguey plant , most commonly they present the consumption of this beverage by the different castas. In José de Páez's *De Cambujo, é India, produce Sambaigo* (Cambujo and Indian Produce a Zambaigo), the consumption of *pulque* at the *almuercería* (food stall) takes place in a controlled environment, as the child drinks quietly out of a *jícara* (bowl). Another example is provided by Ramón Torres, who shows a family peacefully congregated around a barrel of *pulque* . Quite the opposite is represented in a set by the Spanish artist Francisco Clapera. 59 In *Genizaro, y Mulata Gibaro* (From Genizaro and Mulatto, Gibaro) the *genizaro* man, who has returned home drunk, lies on the floor half-naked as his wife and child try to lift his inert body. The scene recalls Humboldt's description of the pernicious effects of drinking in Mexico:

> The police in Mexico City provide cars to pick up the drunks who lie on the streets like corpses. They bring them to the central police station, and on the next day they place a large ring on their ankle to compel them to work for three days cleaning the streets. They are released on the fourth day, with the certainty that many will be apprehended again within the same week. 60

It is worth noticing that it is a Spanish artist , not a Mexican one, who presents such an indecorous scene of drunkenness in the colony.

32 Equally significant is the inclusion of an Indian couple at the end of most casta cycles, who are labeled *Indios Bárbaros* (Barbarian Indians), *Indios Gentiles* (Heathen Indians), *Indios Apaches* (Apache Indians), and most commonly *Indios Mecos* (paintings 12, 13). The term meco--a contraction of *chichimeca,* from the Nahuatl *chichi* (dog) and *mecati* (lineage)--was the generic appellation used to refer to the "uncivilized," warrior-like Indians that inhabited the colony. From a formal point of view, the *meco* Indians depicted in casta paintings derive from a long European tradition of representing the natives of America and have little to do with their real appearance. It is well-known that throughout the colonial period unassimilated groups of Indians, inhabiting northern Mexico, aroused great fear among the population; their conversion to the Christian faith was a constant preoccupation of colonial authorities. Descriptions of the "callous" nature of the Indians abound in the literature of the period. Bafarás, for example, states:

> These Indians are always nomads; they live in Mountains and

> the countryside even when they have dwelling. They go around naked, except for their private parts, which they cover with textiles made of cotton. Their usual food is meat, of deer or other animals; the most valued being that of horse or humans whose head they use as a cup or jug to drink water. As soon as they are born their faces are inscribed with various markings and signs with a flint, to distinguish themselves from the different nations amongst them...On their back they carry a case or quiver filled with arrows with a sharpened flint and they are so dexterous in shooting them that they hit the birds as they fly. [61]

An interesting case related to the fear prompted by these Indians and the desire to pacify them is provided by the advocation of the Virgin of the Macana. Legend has it that after the Indians of New Mexico had been pacified in 1660, they rose in riot and killed numerous Spaniards, including twenty-one Franciscans. In addition to destroying the mission's churches, it is said that an Indian chief, instigated by the devil, struck a sculpture of the Virgin on the forehead with his *macana*--a wooden club with sharpened blades used by the Indians and known as a *maquahuitl*--but was unable to destroy it. The devil then repaid the Indian chief by hanging him from a tree. After the Indians were pacified again, attempts were made to restore the Virgin's sculpture, but as the mark on her forehead would not disappear, it became a sign of her miraculous preservation. This sculpture, which became known as the Virgin of the Macana, was transferred in 1756 to the church of San Francisco in Mexico City. [62] In a rare painting of this legend the sculpture of the Virgin of the Macana is depicted in the foreground while she holds a *macana* between her hands. She is flanked to the left by a group of Franciscans being slain by an Indian, and to the right by a pacified Indian and the Spanish officials. The wound on her forehead serves as a reminder of her invincibility. In the far left a group of Indians is shown throwing stones at the Spaniards; the inscription reads: "Aqui los soldados apedriaron los mecos" (Here the *mecos* threw stones at the Spaniards). Immediately beneath this scene the Spaniards are shown firing at the Indians. On the far right the Indian chief appears hanging from a tree by the devil, as the Virgin appears before the two fighting bands. 33

Both legend and painting make reference to a real event, the famous rebellion of the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico in 1680, in which twenty-one of the thirty-two Franciscans, and over 380 Spanish colonists and officials were killed. What is startling about the legend of the Virgin of the Macana is the fact that it disregards the specificity of the Pueblo rebellion; likewise, the painting identifies the Indians simply as *mecos*. The word meco thus becomes the generic term for referring to the unchristened Indians living in the colony. The incorporation of the meco Indians in casta painting is symbolically controlled by representing them at the bottom of the classificatory system. It is their positioning, more than the way they are 34

represented, that determines the place they occupied within colonial society.

Although I have limited myself to only a few examples, these scenes are nonetheless paradigmatic of the ways in which self-image is constructed in casta painting. The strategies of self-representation in the casta pictorial genre can be summarized as follows: first, the emphasis on the overall stratification of society through the metaphor of race; second, the highlighting of the wealth and abundance of the colony as a way of proving to Spain that Mexico did not lag behind Europe; third, the deliberate mediation of reality evinced through the scenes selected for representation. The idea of racial hierarchy is clearly at the heart of these works. In this sense, they provide an image of society that might not seem, at first glance, to be entirely sympathetic, especially for the modern viewer. But if we accept that casta paintings were commissioned by the Spanish and creole elite, we understand why hierarchy, as a necessary condition for the subsistence of any imperial order, becomes the main subject of these works. In fact, the desire to preserve a hierarchical society is what led Archbishop Lorenzana to stress to incoming priests the importance of keeping a rigorous classification of the population. He recommended that Indians marry pure Indians, Spaniards, or *castizos,* and that they not mix with the different castas "that disturb the peace of the people." 63 The threat to the white Spanish imperial body politic embodied by the emergence of the castas accounted for the ideological need to systematize society; this in turn brought about the inevitable purveyance of racial stereotypes. Casta paintings are remarkable works that open a window onto colonial society and customs. They nonetheless present a mediated vision of reality that should not be taken at face value, but analyzed in terms of how identity was formed within the colonial contest.

NOTES

I wish to thank my friend and colleague John A. Farmer for his suggestions in writing this essay.

1. Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, *Historia de la Nueva España escrita por su esclarecido conquistador Hernán Cortés* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Hogal, 1770), introduction, n.p. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
2. A small number of casta paintings are also painted on copper plates.
3. For the vast corpus of casta painting see María Concepción García Sáiz, *Las castas mexicanas: Un género pictórico americano* (Milan: Olivetti, 1989). This book is the first attempt to assemble the large body of casta paintings. Since its publication, numerous other series have been identified in public and private collections throughout the world; a number of these are published for the first time in this catalogue. Casta series to date number well over one hundred.
4. For a more thorough and nuanced discussion of the much debated subject of the social composition of Mexico, see Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967); John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1978); Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican National Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), chap. 6.
5. Alexander von Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre el reino de la Nueva España (1807-11)* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1966), bk. 2, chap. 7, p. 90.
6. Lomnitz-Adler, pp. 260-270. For the Black population in Mexico, see Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México, 1519* - 1810: *Estudio etnohistórico* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972).
7. Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574 -1821* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 24.
8. Ibid., p. 25.
9. For the etymology of these words, see Manuel Alvar, *Léxico del mestizaje en Hispanoamérica* (Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación lberoamericana, 1987).
10. Patricia Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62, no. 4 (November 1982), pp. 572-573.
11. This hitherto unpublished original manuscript consists of two volumes-one devoted to text, the other to illustrations. Hispanic Society of America, New York, MS. HC: 363-940-1, 2.
12. The anthological nature of this manuscript is akin to the one by the native of Cádiz, Pedro Alonso O'Crouley, *A Description of the Kingdom of New Spain* (1774), trans. and ed. Seán Galvin (Dublin: Allen Figgs, 1972). While O'Crouley's manuscript appears to be the result of the author's own initiative, the way Bafarás presents his information, often as answers to specific questions, suggests that he responded to a specific request. From the sixteenth century on the Spanish Crown issued numerous questionnaires requesting detailed information about the colony to govern it better. See *Cuestionarios para la formación de Relaciones Geográficas de Indias: Siglos XVI/XIX,* ed. Francisco de Solano (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988). Bafarás's manuscript might be the response to one of these questionnaires. However, the emphasis on the

nature of the Indians, whom Bafarás viewed unsympathetically, and the illustrations of the military guilds of Mexico, also suggest that this manuscript was produced at the request of a military official in Spain who perhaps intended to travel to the colony.

13. Joachin Antonio de Bafarás, *Origen, costumbres, y estado presente de mexicanos y philipinos* (1763), vol. 2, p. B50.
14. O'Crouley, p. 20.
15. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 46.
16. Ibid.
17. Lyle N. McAlister, "Social Structure and Social Change in New Spain," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 43, no. 3 (August 1963), p. 355.
18. Stuart B. Schwartz, "Colonial Identities and the *Sociedad de Castas,*" *Colonial Latin American Review* 4, no. 1 (1995), p. 186.
19. Solange Alberro, *Del gachupin al criollo o de cómo los españoles de México dejaron de serlo* (Mexico City: Jornadas 122/El Colegio de México, 1992), pp. 170-171.
20. Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey,* p. 25.
21. Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, "Alboroto y Motín de los indios de México" (1692), in *Seis obras,* ed. William G. Bryant (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1984), p. 123.
22. Ibid., p. 113. Also cited in David A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State,* I492-1867 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1993), p. 371.
23. Sigüenza y Góngora, pp. 119-120.
24. Juan Pedro Viqueira Albán, *Relajados o reprimidos? Diversiones públicas y vida social en la ciudad de México durante el siglo de las Luces* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987), p. 32.
25. This idea was first suggested in reference to Victorian Britain by McClintock, p. 45.
26. Most casta paintings have surfaced in Spain.
27. Cited in Efraín Castro Morales, "Los cuadros de castas de la Nueva España," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas,* no. 20 (1983), pp. 679-680.
28. The set is reproduced in its entirety in María Concepción García Sáiz, "Nuevas precisiones sobre la pintura de castas," *Cuadernos de arte colonial* (Madrid), no. 8 (May 1992), pp. 77-104.
29. Castro Morales, p. 680.
30. For the emergence of creole patriotism in Latin America, see Brading.
31. This series now belongs to the Museo Nacional de Antropologia, Madrid. It is published in its entirety in García Sáiz, *Las castas mexicanas,* pp. 90-101.
32. Francisco de Solano, *Antonio de Ulloa y la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1979), p. 370.
33. See Paz Cabello, "Coleccionismo americans y expediciones cientificas del siglo XVIII en la museología española," *Archivo per l'antropologia e la etnologia* (Florence), no. 113 (1983), pp. 115-135; María Angeles Calatayud, *Pedro Franco Dávila: Primer Director del Real Gabinete de Historia Natural fundado por Carlos III* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988); *Historia de las colecciones americanas del Museo de América* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1994).
34. Cited in Francisco de las Barras de Aragón, "Documentos referentes al

envio de cuadros representando mestizajes humanos y varios productos naturales del Perú, hallados en el Archivo de Indias de Sevilla," *Actas y memorias de la Sociedad de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria,* (Madrid) 9 (1930), pp. 78-81.

35. The set is reproduced in its entirety in García Sáiz, *Las castas mexicanas,* pp. 114-121, although the author does not ascertain its origin.
36. See *Cuestionarios para la formación de las Relaciones Geográficas de Indias.>*
37. Calatayud, p. 95.
38. For the European tradition of representing America, see Hugh Honour, *The New Golden Land. European Images Of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (New York: Pantheon, 1975); William C. Sturtevant, "First Visual Images of Native America," in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old,* ed. Fredi Chiappelli, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 417-454. For the representation of America in maps, see Walter D. Mignolo, "Putting the Americas on the Map (Geography and the Colonization of Space)," *Colonial Latin American Review* 1, nos. 1-2 (1992), pp. 25-63.
39. "Siriaco natural de Cotinginba donde passou a Bahia edahi o mandou depresente ao Princepe N.S. o Governador e Captaõ General q entaõ era D. Rodrigo Jose de Menezes e Noronha Tem 12 anos deidade echegou aesta corte en Julho de 1786 os varos e celebres accidentes deste preto se descobrem no seu retrato."
40. Francisco de las Barras de Aragón, "Una historia del Perú contenida en un cuadro al óleo de 1799," *Boletín de la Real Sociedad Española* (Madrid) 12, no. 5 (1912), pp. 224-284. In this article the author transcribes all of the painting's inscriptions.
41. Ibid., pp. 259-260.
42. For a discussion of classification during the Enlightenment, see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1994), chap. 5.
43. Three members of this family who often sign their work only with their surname have been identified. The first two are Manuel and Antonio Arellano; the third signs his works as "el mudo Arellano." See Manuel Toussaint, *Pintura colonial en México,* vol. 1 (Mexico City: lmprenta Universitaría, 1965), p. 145; *México en el mundo de las colecciones de arte. Nueva España,* vol. 1 (Mexico City: Grupo Azabache, 1994), pp. 236-237.
44. Reproduced in *México en el mundo de las colecciones del arte,* vol. 1, pp. 236-237.
45. There is almost no information on this artist. He is mentioned in *Historia de la pintura en Puebla* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1963) by Francisco Pérez Salazar as working in Puebla around 1724 and is again listed in Abelardo Carrillo y Gariel, A*utógrafos de pintores coloniales* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1972), p. 151, and in Toussaint, p. 150. He has also been identified as the possible author of an apostolate in the Altar de la Divina Providencia (altar of the Holy Providence) in the tabernacle of Mexico City's Cathedral. See Nelly Sigaut, "Altar de la Divina Providencia," in *Catedral de México: Patrimonio artístico y cultural* (Mexico City: Seeretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología y Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1986), pp. 45-55.

46. Fray Agustín de Ventacourt, "Tratado de la Ciudad de México y las grandezas que la ilustran despues que la fundaron los españoles (1698)," in *La ciudad de México en el siglo* XVIII *(169o-I780): Tres crónicas* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1990), pp. 46-47.
47. Solange Alberro, p. 179.
48. For other reproductions of this set, see García Sáiz, *Las castas mexicanas,* pp. 81-87.
49. Viqueira, p. 30.
50. Juan de Viera, "Breve compendiossa narración de la ciudad de México, corte y cabeza de toda la América septentrional (1777)," in *La ciudad de México,* p. 257.
51. Cited in Juan Semepere y Guarinos, *Historia del luxo, y de las leyes suntuarias en España* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1788), pp. 159-161.
52. Honour, p. 46.
53. Ibid., p. 35.
54. Viera, p. 189.
55. See Brading, chap. 14.
56. McClintock, p. 47.
57. Sigüenza y Góngora.
58. For drinking in the colony, see William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1979), and Viqueira, pp. 169-219.
59. Very little is known about Francisco Clapera. He was born in Barcelona in 1746. On March 6, 1768, he became "Académico Supernumerario" at the Academía de San Fernando in Madrid. While the exact date of Clapera's arrival in Mexico, via Peru, is unknown, by 1790 he was already teaching at the Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City. See Clara Bargellini, "Dos series de pinturas de Francisco Clapera," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* (Mexico City), no. 65 (1994), pp. 159-178.
60. Cited in Viqueira, pp. 207-208.
61. Bafarás, vol. 1, p. 75.
62. Vicente De P. Andrade, *Compilación de datos históricos sobre algunas advocaciones con que es venerada la Sma. Virgen Maria en la Iglesia Mexicana* (Mexico City: El Tiempo, 1904). This advocation was recorded in 1746 in a *novena* by Fray Felipe Montalvo.
63. Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, "Avisos para la acertada conducta de un párraco en América," in *Concilios Provinciales primero y segundo celebrados en la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de México (1555 y 1565)* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Hogal, 1769), p. 394.

The *Comedia* in Amsterdam, 1609-1621: Rodenburgh's Translation of Aguilar's *La venganza honrosa*

Matthew D. Stroud
Trinity University

In the seventeenth century, the Spanish *comedia* was not only known outside of Spain, it informed other national literatures and was even performed abroad, either in Spanish or in translation. In most cases, it was received into an established cultural environment, such as Corneille's adaptations in France; its appearance was not considered politically inflammatory in any sense as the host cultures were able to deal with the *comedia* as only a literary phenomenon. In the case of the Low Countries before 1648, however, the *comedia* was translated and performed in a colony in more or less open rebellion against Spain at the time, a scenario that would insert literature directly into political conflict. Nine *comedias* appeared in the these colonies before the official end of the conflict with Spain: 1

> Lope de Vega, *La escolástica celosa* , translated by Theodore Rodenburgh as *Jaloersche Studenten* or *Jalourse Studentin* (*The Jealous Students* or *the Jealous Student*), 1617 (Praag 48-49)
>
> Lope de Vega, *El molino*, translated by Theodore Rodenburgh as *Hertoginne Celia en Grave Prospero* (*Duchess Celia and Count Prospero*), 1617 (Praag 61)
>
> Lope de Vega, *El perseguido*, translated by Theodore Rodenburgh as *Casandra*, 1617 (Praag 62)
>
> Lope de Vega, *La reina Juana de Nápoles*, translated by Me. Hendrik de Graef as *Joanna, koningen van Napels of den trotzen Dwinger* (*Juana, Queen of Naples or the Proud Tyrant*), 1617 (Praag 63)
>
> Gaspar de Aguilar, *La venganza honrosa*, translated by Theodore Rodenburgh as *'t Quaedt syn meester loondt* (*Evil Repays Its Own Master*), 1618 (Praag 71)
>
> Lope de Vega, *La hermosa Alfreda*, translated by P. A. Codde as *Alfreda*, 1641 (Praag 54)
>
> Lope de Vega, *El amigo por fuerza*, translated by Isaac Vos as *De gedwongen vriend* (*The Friend By Force*),

1646 (Praag 44)

Mira de Amescua, *El palacio confuso*, tranlated by Leon. de Fuyter as *Verwarde Hof* (*Confused Palace*), 1647 (Praag 75-76)

Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño*, translated by Schouwenbergh as *Het leven is maer droom* (*Life Is But A Dream)*, 1647 (Praag 116-117)

A quick glance will reveal that this group of plays is not what modern scholars might have expected. The decision to translate a particular play is almost always a function of personal taste, but it is hard to imagine that one would choose a play that was not also considered to have merit in its own time. If one assumes that the translators dedicated their time to plays that they and others thought deserved their attention, one notices right away that the canon has changed quite radically between their day and ours. Noticeably missing are some of Lope's plays most admired and studied in the twentieth century, including *Los comendadores de Córdoba* and *La desdichada Estefanía*. In fact, one could argue that, except for *La vida es sueño*, not a single one of these plays would be considered today important or interesting enough to perform in Spanish, much less translate and perform in another language. Most of these plays fall into the category of plays that we tend to dismiss, but which make up the great majority of *comedias*: pot-boilers full of frequently implausible action but not necessarily marked by a tightly constructed plot or other evidence of "high art." Of course, as in Spain, it is possible that lofty artistic purposes were not the sole end of theater production, and that the translators and producers had entertainment for the masses in mind. Rodenburgh, at least, appears to have been quite impressed by the extravagance of *comedia* plots because, although he was in general faithful to the plot and even the language of the original, he actually added bizarre plot elements beyond those found in the Spanish versions. 2

Art and entertainment may not have been the only motivations for these translations. Five of these nine plays were translated in Amsterdam in 1617 and 1618, during the so-called Twelve Years' Truce in the Eighty Years' War. Once the truce fell apart in 1621, it would be 20 years before the next appearance of a Dutch *comedia*. During the truce, even though there was peace on the ground, one could hardly imagine a more complex political and cultural context for the presentation on stage of theatrical works imported from a foreign land. For Amsterdammers of the era, everything was political, and Dutch translations of *comedias* are merely another proof of the central assertion of cultural studies that culture is political as well as aesthetic. For John Fiske, culture "is neither aesthetic nor humanist in emphasis, but political" (284), and Joseph R. Roach adds, "Culture is not innocent and neutral but partisan.... [It] is the occasion and the instrument of struggle between contending groups with differing amounts of power, or, at least, with different kinds of power" (10). The transmission of culture and power from one place to another, from one 3

people to another, is never a wholly innocent act, and nowhere is the political nature of culture more visible than in the relationship between empire and colony. Here, culture mines various boundaries: us and them, here and there, king and subject, master and slave. All borderlands "traditionally exist as sites of political contestation, risk, and risk taking" (Roach 13), and colonies are extreme examples of borderlands, both in and out, us and them, at the same time.

Theater, at least in Western history, has almost always been an adjunct of empire. Colonial performances of imperial works are not only meant to entertain imperial colonizers (usually but not always the ruling class as well as the invaders and occupiers), but also to instruct and acculturate the colonized. Even, or perhaps especially, works that deal with local people and issues from an imperial perspective can both bring the colonial society to the metropole and also work to caricaturize, stigmatize, and misrepresent the colonial culture (Roach 13-14). Anytime a play is performed in two different cultures it is viewed, in Susan Bennett's term, by "different viewing publics" (101), each with different perspectives and different expectations. When one adds an additional translation from one language to another, the differences in the way the text is received can be enormous. Finally, there is something in the nature of theatrical performance itself that underscores the play of representation between identity and difference. David McDonald describes these two opposites as inseparable sides of the same coin: 4

> Representation stressing identity (amid differences) is grounded in mimetic fidelity to what it portrays.... Accuracy, authenticity, and repeatability establish its truth.... The other side of representation stresses *difference* (amid similarities), focusing on a unique truth that appears through a system of differences in which nothing is ever the same. Each representative instance closes in on itself: separate, isolated, and perceived as related only through a grid, grammar, or rhetoric of performative signs. Difference, within identity, generates the awareness of representation as an image that stands apart from the thing it represents, as something other than its referent, or more of the same." (129-30)

The aesthetic response to these concerns has traditionally asserted that art is a human experience that transcends nationalism and local cultural difference. Daryl Chin describes this humanistic ideal as "interculturalism," and adds a warning, "Interculturalism can so easily accommodate an agenda of cultural imperialism" (174). Civilization, when it confronts cultural otherness, always absorbs it through symbolization; there is no culture that cannot be symbolized, rendering it both other and same simultaneously. Thus, anytime one deals with a translation (physical, linguistic, generic, etc.), one must confront the issues brought up by Jonathan Culler's definition of intertextuality: "participation in the discursive space of a culture: the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of a 5

culture and its relation to those texts which articulate for it the possibilities of that culture" (103).

As a site of culture relating to the Spanish texts it imported, Amsterdam could hardly have been more marked by difference and otherness, and not just in its dealings with Spain. In the early seventeenth century, the city was an important center for business and culture, independent and mostly unallied with any single ideology or factional loyalty, but intensely interested in the political conflicts around it and their effects on business. Amsterdam had a constitution developed in the Middle Ages, and it was essentially self-governing. There was a sheriff who represented the Count of Holland, but the most powerful civic leaders were the burgomasters, who controlled both civic affairs and the military guilds. It considered itself an independent city-state, neither part of Holland nor part of Spain, and it did not participate in the revolt against Spain as did other parts of Holland. For example, after the success of the Duke of Alva in 1572, he found a warm welcome for his troops in the city (Regin 5). Later, as Holland continued to have military success against the Spanish and once even captured the silver fleet, Amsterdam resolutely refused to help the Protestant takeover of all the Low Countries. In 1638-1639, the city illegally provided Antwerp with ships and supplies in its struggle against Prince Frederick Henry and his dream of unification. Amsterdammers even escorted Spanish ships loaded with silver so that the Spanish soldiers could be paid; and ships to be used by the Spanish were built along the Zuider Zee (Murray 35). 6

On a local level, politics in Amsterdam was a complex mixture of liberalism vs. conservatism, independence vs. alliance, and religion vs. commerce. After Amsterdam's trade began to suffer due to its early isolation, it returned to the Orange fold in 1578 with the signing of the *Alteratie*, the manifesto for Dutch independence. Even so, while the new City Council had a Calvinist majority, ten of the 36 members were Catholic, and the importance of trade meant that no opportunity to make money was to be lost on account of ideology or religion (Regin 8). The city's multicultural diversity, however, allowed ideological and political conflicts in the region to take on rancorous personal dimensions. During the Twelve Years' Truce from 1609 to 1621, when one might expect a period of greater tranquility, Amsterdam saw fierce struggles among the conservative Calvinists, many of whom were Protestants who had moved north from Catholic Flanders, the liberal intelligentsia, who were seeking the Renaissance ideal of perfection, and the pragmatic merchants, who were more interested in trade than religious orthodoxy. These parochial tensions were added to the larger context of the struggles between Amsterdam and Holland, and Holland and Spain. It is not easy, however, to categorize either liberals or conservatives as pro- or anti-Spanish. At one point, the liberals, or more radical elements of the latter, accused the maker of the truce with Spain, Jan van Oldenbarnevelt, himself a liberal, of treason. Nevertheless, in 1613, the States General of Holland passed a resolution favoring the liberals and calling for peace, while the conservatives of Amsterdam called upon the residents of the city to defy Holland and oppose any peace won at the price of religious purity. As the liberals, or Remonstrants, tried to make peace by offering all sorts of 7

concessions to the conservatives, or Counter-Remonstrants, the latter only increased and sharpened their vitriolic diatribes. Civil war was barely avoided when, in 1617, Oldenbarnevelt tried to seize control of the army and thus drag the military into the religious conflict, but the troops remained loyal to Prince Maurice of Nassau, a strong conservative and son of William the Silent (slain in 1584). By 1618, the Prince had replaced his liberal appointees with conservatives. The immediate crisis ended on August 25, 1618, with the arrest of the Remonstrant leaders, including Oldenbarnevelt, and his subsequent execution in 1619 after a trial in which his arch-foe, Reynier Pauw, served as judge. Ultimately, the liberals were defeated, although not eradicated completely; wide-open, amoral Amsterdam, or at least its conservative elements, had beaten Holland, with its more liberal tendencies, at least for a while. As a final irony, however, the same independent spirit that had led to Amsterdam's revolt against Holland continued in its failure to cede control to the Church. As Murray (32) puts it, "if a Reformed policy was followed it was because the burgomasters had practical reasons." The city leaders, not the Reformed Church, had the final say on religious matters, and they were not above using the means at their disposal to keep the Calvinists in check. Moreover, on a national level, Amsterdam's opposition to many of the goals of the States of Holland, including the establishment of a hereditary monarchy, continued throughout the 1640's and even into the 1650's, after the independence of Holland from Spain had been ratified by treaty. Overall, Amsterdam's spirit of independence can be characterized as more pragmatic than ideological, more egoistic than principled. Whatever the issue, the Amsterdammers were determined to maintain their independence, not just from Spain and the Catholic Church but from Holland and the Reformed Church as well.

8 At the same time that Amsterdam was asserting its political independence, it was also struggling to establish itself in culture and the arts. The Low Countries may have been significant players in trade and discovery, but Amsterdam was hardly an international cultural center the way Madrid, London, and Paris were. Still, by 1612, it had 50,000 inhabitants and was an intellectual center of publishing and ideas, supported by a society that believed in universal education for both sexes. As in politics, Amsterdam's cultural development is intimately connected to its pragmatic, bourgeois approach to life and its sense of freedom and independence from king, empire, church, duke, and even the House of Orange (Regin 10). Just as nobles in Spain supported the arts and dabbled in them on occasion, businessmen in Amsterdam frequently wrote or published books. At the same time, artists did not live apart from their society and were not averse to making money. Book publishing was intimately connected to art and scholarship, and even the relatively tolerant censorship laws were mostly unenforced. At every turn of events, Amsterdam's presses issued a plethora of pamphlets and other political publications.

9 The literary landscape mirrored the conflict of the political arena, as Dutch literature consciously engaged European Renaissance ideals. Burgher salons offered music and discussions of the arts, debating the merits of native versus imported styles and ancient versus modern texts.

For the most part, home-grown literature produced in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century was not heavily political but dealt much more with a kind of day-to-day realism, a focus on the common people and common activities, the coarse and the racy, rural humor and down-to-earth wisdom (*boertig*), and the immediacy of the social and natural environment, all of which were represented in farces and comedies (Regin 54-55). At the same time, intellectual poetry in imitation of Latin models flourished in the chambers of rhetoric which began in the fifteenth century and flourished under Burgundian rule and which had for some time participated in annual contests to create the best dramatic productions. The members of the chambers of rhetoric, who were clearly writing for an intellectual minority, prized technique and prosody over imagination and lyricism.

There was a great deal of interest in drama even before the first autonomous theater opened in 1637. While the Schouwburg contained many of the innovations also seen in the *Coliseo* of the Retiro Palace, the old stage of 1617 in many ways resembled a *corral*. There was no perspective view, and all scenes were most likely juxtaposed (Regin 112). Imported themes, whether classical or contemporary, served as an indirect medium for liberal political commentary against the conservatives. The primary models were classical (Greek and Latin drama, especially Seneca and Euripides), French (imitating the Renaissance style), Italian, and Spanish. The first classical play performed in Amsterdam was *Achilles ende Polyxena* in 1597, but not all playwrights were content to limit themselves to Greek and Roman models. Indeed, according to Murray (123), it was in the theater that Dutch literature made its most effective challenge to the Latinists of the chambers of rhetoric. Some experimented with French, Spanish and Italian forms, while others rejected all imports and wrote farces, short plays (*volkstooneeltjes*), and romances that were particularly popular (Regin 108). Bredero in particular fought to encourage native Dutch dramaturgy, and considered Lope and other Spanish playwrights as no more worthy of imitation than the Greek and Roman models (Murray 141). At the same time, of course, theater in Amsterdam as elsewhere drew the attention of the moralists, who believed that the lessons of these new plays did not reflect the Calvinist party line. Indeed, the presentation of most foreign ideas, especially those of Catholic writers, was considered to be heresy and therefore in itself a challenge to the Calvinists. However, as was typical in Amsterdam at the time, freedom won out, and some popular plays were openly critical of the Reformed Church. 10

A central figure in Dutch letters at the time was Samuel Coster, who continued to attack the Calvinists. Coster's *Nederduytsche Academie*, founded in 1617, holds an important position in the literary history of Amsterdam due to its encouragement of vernacular literature and awareness of current humanist literary and cultural trends at home and abroad. The curriculum of the Academy was truly extraordinary, and included Hebrew, mathematics, history, Greek philosophy, with plans to add astronomy, medicine, law, and more (Murray 100-101). It was in Coster's academy that the more controversial plays were created, and five of the *comedia* translations were produced within two years of its 11

opening. Given the general context of conflict, it should not be surprising that a rift developed between the classicist chambers of rhetoric and the more vital theater which attempted to transform itself from a rhetorical to a theatrical style during the second decade.

The importation of the new *comedia* style of Lope and his followers represented a further wrinkle in the complex fabric of theater theory of the day. The energetic but aesthetic stagecraft constituted a significant change from both tradition and academic models and mirrored the vigor of Dutch overseas trade. Of course, considering the background of political struggle, Amsterdam appeared to be an unlikely place to produce Spanish plays. Moreover, it seemed to represent an inversion of Spanish values. There was no great class of nobles who drew from the national wealth without significantly adding to it. Labor, even of the most menial sort, was considered a virtue. While Spain produced much raw material but manufactured little, Amsterdam was just the opposite. Despite the religious conflicts, the liberal attitude prevailed among the people on the street, and there was during this period a general attitude of tolerance of difference among the people of the city. For a pragmatic city on the make, Spanish plays, which were becoming more famous throughout Europe, were as good as those of any other country or tradition. 12

Much of this interest in foreign literature grew out of the city's predilection for the study of foreign languages, due in large part to the needs of trade but also important for the general knowledge of different cultures. A number of important literary figures knew Spanish, including Rodenburgh and the other translators, and even Pieter Hooft, and Amsterdam in the early years of the century was already a center for translation in other genres (Murray 98). Still, Spanish literature was read in Amsterdam principally through translations by Spanish Jews living in Amsterdam, who enhanced every area of the city's cultural life. In the case of theatrical works, the translators would first render a prose version of the Spanish text, which would then be given to a Dutch dramatist for rendering into verse. In other cases, mostly later, the Spanish play entered the Netherlands via French translations. 13

One might expect that the innovations of the *comedia* would be supported by the liberals opposed to orthodoxy in theater as well as in politics, but this is the point at which this cultural borrowing mirrors the confused battle lines in the political arena. Theodor Rodenburgh (1578-1644), through the auspices of the Eglantine poetry society, promoted the Spanish theater, particularly that of Lope de Vega. Born in Amsterdam, he was a conservative aristocrat who sided with the Calvinists (Murray 123). Dutch literary history tends to think harshly of Rodenburgh, whom Bredero called *verwaten jonker*, or "arrogant nobleman," and tries to cast him as the "villain of anti-classicism" (Regin 110). But for Regin, "Rodenburgh was the sole literary figure of his age to see that the Dutch drama was embarking on a sterile course" (111). While his enemies denounced him as a promoter of the old traditions, he in fact attempted to introduce Lope's *arte nuevo* and the new kind of stagecraft already seen in Madrid, Paris, and London. Rodenburgh had first-hand familiarity with the Spanish stage, having worked in Spain from 1610 to 1613, during which time he learned the language and became quite familiar with the 14

comedia (Regin 110). He wrote and produced three adaptations of plays by Lope (*La escolástica celosa*, *El molino*, *El perseguido*), and was obviously impressed by the familiar *comedia* elements of strong plots, multiple intrigues, extravagant adventures, cross-dressing, mistaken identities, and duels. Even Rodenburgh's original pieces, such as *Melia*, *Alexander*, and *Vrou Jacoba* contained the predilection for intrigue found in his Spanish inspirations.

15 Coster's Academy, meanwhile, although also intent on innovating Dutch theater, generally ignored Rodenburgh's Spanish innovations. While members said they wanted to liberate Dutch literature from the strictures of classicism, they went against their own principles when it came to Rodenburgh (Regin 112). The enmity between the Academy and Rodenburgh was due in part because he was disagreeable and pedantic, in part because he was an aristocrat in a world of burghers, in part because he embodied foreign experience and manners, and in part because he was successful. Moreover, it would not have been possible for a group of liberals who were already allied against Rodenburgh not to find his politics unpalatable. As a result of his disagreements with the other playwrights, his *comedia* translations were disdained and dismissed as unworthy. With the people, however, Spanish plays appear to have been popular in Amsterdam throughout the seventeenth century. The new kind of comedy, and even some of the serious drama, was much more popular than the imitations of classical tragedy. As the century wore on, more and more Spanish drama was produced in Amsterdam, finally making it to the public theater by the end of the century (Regin 110). In the long run, and perhaps because of the resistance to Spanish innovations, Coster's Academy could not offer a theatrical repertoire original or significant enough to establish it as a center of powerful drama (Regin 53), and its influence declined dramatically after the opening of the Schouwberg in 1637.

16 Although Rodenburgh translated three plays by Lope, a more interesting example of his translation technique can be found in his version of Gaspar de Aguilar's *La venganza honrosa* (*Honorable Revenge*), translated as *'t Quaedt syn Meester loondt* (*Evil Repays Its Master*). The *comedia*, not considered to be among the best of its type, is an extreme example of the wife-murder genre, full of intrigue and neo-Senecan gore. The structure of the translation is very much like the original. The play is cast in three acts, using the same Italian setting and even the same character names, although the Dutch sometimes uses the Italian form (Norandino) and sometimes a Dutch-sounding alternative (Norandeyn). The Spanish uses the typical and familiar polymetry, or varied use of meter for artistic and theatrical effect, and so does the Dutch, but much less often and less effectively. Curiously, in Dutch, when the meter shifts out of the rather ponderous dodecasyllabic couplets, the typeface of the printing shifts from Gothic to Roman.

17 Rodenburgh's translation follows the plot of the Spanish play more or less faithfully; a side-by-side plot comparison appears as Appendix A. In general terms, Norandino, the Duke of Milan, is married by arrangement to a faithless woman, Porcia, and becomes enraged with jealousy when she starts an affair and runs off with Astolfo, the Duke of Ferrara.

Norandino pursues them, but he gets involved in a fight and kills one man to defend another. He is captured and brought as a criminal before his wife and her paramour, but it is his wife who pronounces the death sentence against him. They speak alone and he tries to kill her, but he is unsuccessful; the sentence is carried out. Later he reappears because he is not dead after all; the Governor helped him only pretend to die. He hides among workers in Ferrara and he beheads Porcia and Astolfo. The Duke of Mantua, Porcia's father, hails the death of his daughter as a great act of personal honor and gives Norandino his inheritance. Norandino weds Emilia, who is Astolfo's sister.

18 Perhaps more interesting are the areas of difference between the two versions. At a detailed level, one can see subtle and not-so-subtle changes. In an interesting scene in Act I, which is based on the Spanish *romance* of Garci-Fernández (Stroud 62), Porcia hands out alms to the poor. Astolfo, disguised as a beggar, comes to be near his beloved. The Astolfo in Aguilar's version vows that all he wants is revenge: "Que me deis / de limosna una venganza" (167b) ["May you grant me revenge instead of alms"], presumably because he feels wronged by her arranged marriage to Norandino. Rodenburgh's Astolfo speaks more of love and the pain he feels without her:

> Me-vrouw 't zijn steken in mijn hert,
> Opdringingh van het bloed, met yselijck bezwaeren,
> Doch niemandt weet de pijn als die 't zelfs is ervaren,
> Jae 't maeckt my vaeck zo flaeuw, dat 't leven my
> verdriet. (10)
>
> [Milady, there is a pain in my heart,
> Pressing on my blood with icy weight.
> No one knows the pain as the one who himself has
> experienced it.
> Life saddens me so that I often feel faint.]

19 This contrast reflects the generally greater attention paid in Dutch to the sadness and regret caused by the arranged marriage and lost love, rather than the personal resolve to vengeance expressed by the Spanish characters. The end of Act I highlights this difference . In Spanish, the act ends with the Duke of Mantua, Porcia's father, vowing to lay waste not only the two traitorous lovers but all of Ferrara:

> Para postrar los arrogantes cuellos
> de los soberbios muros de Ferrara
> y degollar los moradores della,
> pienso tomar venganza de los hombres,
> quitándoles las vidas, de los muros,
> echándoles por tierra, de los campos,
> arrancando los árboles, de modo
> que allí no quede piedra sobre piedra. (171a-b)

[In order to lay low the arrogant tops
of the proud walls of Ferrara
and behead those who live there,
I plan to take revenge on the men,
taking their lives, on the walls,
dashing them to the ground, on the field,
uprooting the trees, so that no stone
shall remain resting upon another.]

In the Dutch version the act ends with an amorous duo between Astolfo and Porcea, who even appear in the company of Cupid:

Laet ons ghenieten dan van onze liefd' de vruchten,
En laeten Norandino zijn verlies bezuchten.

[Binnen.]

Een vertooningh waer Astolfo, en Porcea in minne troetlich zyn verzaemt, en verzelt met Cupido. (19)

[Let us enjoy then the fruits of our love,
And let Norandino sigh in his grief.

[Exeunt.]

A spectacle with Astolfo and Porcia joined together touchingly in love and accompanied by Cupid.]

In Act II, the Dutch Octavio notes that women are more subject to passion or sensuality ("zinn'lijckheyt," 21) which causes problems for men, but in the Spanish version women are either mindless objects to be possessed or stolen (as in the phrase, "ladrón de mujeres" ["thief of women"], 171c) or vexatious irritations better done away with ("ƒAy, quién hoy fuere marido / por quedar viudo un día!" ["Oh to be married so that one day I might be widowed!], 172b). After Norandino's attempt on Porcia's life, the Spanish wife coldly sentences him to garroting: "Yo lo haré. ó Dénle garrote / por salteador de caminos" ["I shall do it. Give him the garrote for being a highwayman."], 175b). The Dutch Porcea comes to the same decision, but not before she explains her actions with repeated references to love:

Lief, hoe zouder liefde zijn
Waer nimmer liefde was, als liefde in de schijn,
Mijn herte was alleen tot uwe liefd ghereede,
En rechte liefdens aert ken lijden niet de tweede,
Hoe wel ick was verzaemt niet Norandyn in d'echt,
Ick bleef uw' eyghen, mits ghy had het meeste recht:
Mijn ziele draeght uw beeldt, laet Norandyno sterven,
En met zijn dood wy onze hertens wensch verwerven.
[30]

[My love, how much saltier love is
Where there never was love, but only the appearance.
My heart was ready only for your love,
And one truly in love cannot bear both.
I was not well joined in marriage to Norandino;
I remain yours, since you had the most claim:
My soul bears your image, let Norandino die,
And with his death we gain our hearts' desire.]

Porcea may be faithless and cruel, as the men in both versions call her, but in Dutch the emphasis is clearly on her love for Astolfo. She is not the singularly evil woman depicted in Aguilar's version; she even imagines a way to spare Norandino's life by having another man put to death, letting Norandino go free, since no one in Ferrara knows him (30). Of course, after she sees him and he promises that heaven will punish both Astolfo and Porcea, she wants him dead, and the two versions converge. In the most striking difference between the two versions, when Porcia's sentence is carried out, the Spanish Norandino revives on his own (177b), while in the Dutch version, an angel appears to save the "innocent" Norandino by fighting off death ("een Enghel staet met een bloot zwaert vechtende teghens de doodt, om te beschermen een onoozellam,'t welck de Enghel behoed" ["an angel stands with a bare sword fighting against death to protect the innocent one, whom the angel guards"], 32). This particular change makes little sense, since later, as in the Spanish original, the Governor and Norandino reveal the plan by which the executioner only pretended to kill Norandino, who then pretended to be dead (Aguilar 177b, Rodenburgh 33). Rodenburgh clearly wanted to add the spectacle of the angel's appearance for its own sake, regardless of the lack of necessity for such an appearance in the plot. 21

In Act III of Rodenburgh's version, Norandino takes his revenge by decapitating both Astolfo and Porcea on stage: 22

Terstont als zy binnen zyn, moet er een vertooningh gestelt werden, waer Norandino, en Fabricio hebben Astolfo, en Porcea onthooft, te weten, Norandino onthooft Astolfo, en Fabricio Porcea, voor de tweedemael, dat de hoofden in een schotel leggen, en voor de derde mal, dat Norandino een geschreven pampier op de lichamen leyt. (49)

[As soon as they exit, there should appear a spectacle in which Norandino and Fabricio have Astolfo and Porcia beheaded, that is, Norandino beheads Astolfo and Fabricio Porcia. Then the heads are placed on a dish. Finally, Norandino leaves a note on the bodies.]

The Spanish version has no such scene: the murders are committed off-stage, with only Ricardo's account of his discovery of the bodies with the heads cut off (184b-c), although in both plays the heads reappear on a platter towards the end (Rodenburgh 53, Aguilar 185a). In the

explanations offered in the dénouement, the Spanish Norandino promises to marry Emilia, which appears to appease Ricardo. No other defense is given or expected; he accepts that his own engagement to Emilia is broken by Norandino much more gracefully than Astolfo accepted the marriage of Porcia to Norandino (185b-c). In the Dutch adaptation, Norandino explains that he was saved from death by fortune and by God himself (53), and heaven authorized his revenge against Porcia ("Den Hemel wilden dat ick my van heur zou wreken" ["Heaven wanted me to take my revenge on her"], 54). Finally, the Spanish Emilia appears to enforce Norandino's promise to marry her, with only the vaguest mention of the wrong he has done her family by killing Astolfo, her brother:

> Pues para reñir conviene
> tener muy buena querella
> y pues sé que ha de venir
> en tal peligro tu vida,
> razón será que te pida
> que te acuerdes de cumplir
> la palabra prometida. (185c)
>
> [To fight one must
> have a good reason;
> since I know that your
> life is in such danger,
> it is right for me to ask
> that you remember to fulfill
> the promise you made to me.]

In Dutch, Emilia feels the need to explain her acceptance of Norandino more explicitly. She appears not, she says, to seek justice for her brother's death but to swear her love for Norandino:

> Norandino: En heeft uw Broeders dood uw herte niet ghewondt?
> Emilia: Noch grooter was de wond die liefd my heeft ghegheven.
> Norandino: En kunt ghy lieven die uw Broeder nam het leven?
> Emilia: Mits hy verdienden zulcks verschoon ick uw' bedrijf.
> En in myn liefd ick trouwe, en stantvastich blijf. (55)
>
> [Norandino: And has your brother's death not wounded your heart?
> Emilia: Even greater was the wound that love has given me.
> Norandino: And can you love the man who took your brother's life?
> Emilia: Since he deserved it, I pardon your actions
> And I pledge my love and remain faithful.]

Given that Rodenburgh chose to translate a *comedia de honor*, a genre

often considered to be peculiarly Spanish, let us compare these two versions by focusing on the concept of honor. The Spanish word *honor* is translated literally as *eer*, which, as in English, usually connotes "virtue" or "honesty" more than "face" or "reputation." However, considering the overall faithfulness of Rodenburgh's translation, it is not surprising that we should find in his version the familiar range of meanings that also appear in Spanish. As in other *comedias*, honor can loosely be divided into three overlapping categories: what one is, what one does, and what one has, with the additional caveat that one is not in control over the possession or the loss of honor. In many instances, honor is synonymous with virtue and specifically related to respect ("eerbiedelijck" ["respectful"], 15), nobility and right ("Het edele ghemoed zeer willichlijck zich zet / In eer verweeren van die onghelijck geschieden" ["The noble mind very willingly stands in honorable defense against wrongdoing"], 34), and modesty for women ("En acht heur oock de schoonste Vrou van gantsch Ferraer. / Doch niet zo schoon als eerlijck" ["And consider her also the most beautiful woman in all Ferrara. But not as beautiful as she is honorable"], 55; cf. "eerbaerheyt" ["modesty"], 10). In part, honor is a function of one's actions in doing one's duty ("Öwy ons plichte doen na menschelijck vermoghen, / En met een yver na eerlijcke lucken poghen" ["we are able to do our duty in a human way and with zeal attempt to succeed honorably"] 45; cf. 19), of doing good (55). It is also, of course, something defined by others, "received honor" ("d'ontfangen eer," 22). It is granted by and lost due to forces over which one has no control, such as one's name ("naem," 17; "name," 49), a good reputation ("faem," 5, 17), and appearances ("Nae de schijn / Van eerelijcke doent" ["About the appearance of honorable doings"], 53). One incorporates honor into one's conception of oneself. In the ego it is impossible to separate "my whole means, my prosperity, and my honor" ("mijn middlen gantsch, mijn welvaert, en mijn eer," 30). Honor is even defined in terms of one's soul ("ziel," 49). Of particular importance is honor as mediation of one's desire ("Ach dat de lust mocht zijn verfoeyt om d'heylighe eer" ["Ah, that desire may be detested on account of holy honor"], 54) and thus linked to matters of sex and marriage. They are thieves of honor who dishonor a marriage bed ("Eer-roovers ick u noem die 't echte bed onteeren," 49).

Quite naturally, dishonor is a lack of any of these attributes; it, too, is a function of what one does ("d'oneer die my mijn Dochter heeft ghedaen" ["the dishonor that my daughter has done"], 55). Dishonor is associated with injury ("Oratio, en Tulio, hebben hem belast, / En valschelijck hem in zijn eere aenghetast" ["Oratio and Tulio have defamed him, and falsely cast a slur on his honor"], 29), sexual misconduct such as lust and rape ("Als Tulio en Oratio trachten hem zyn Vrou / Door moedwil en gewelt uyt vleeschs lust te schoffeeren, / En zyne echte Vrouwe schand'lijck te ont-eeren" ["As Tulio and Oratio tried to rape his wife by wantonness and force of flesh lust and dishonored his true wife shamelessly"], 34), a wife who does not reflect her husband's honor well ("Een echte Vrouwe die heur Man niet recht bezindt" ["A proper wife who does not reflect her husband well"], 12), forgetting one's duties ("Eerst ghy verloort uw Vrouw? Nu is uw' eer verlooren" ["First you forgot your wife? Now your honor is forgotten"], 28), putting one's

honor to one side ("stellende myn eere aen een zyde," 11; cf. 19), disrespectful tongues ("Met tongen steelt ghy d'eer van d'eerlijcke t'onrechte" ["With your tongues you turn the honor of the honorable into dishonor"], 49), disobedient children ("Doch oneerbaere kind'ren is quel, en verveling" [But dishonorable children are a torment and a bore"], 49), and death, for without honor one would gladly die ("Beneemt my 't leven eer, want graghelijck ick sterf" ["Honor takes life from me, so gladly I die"], 51). The options open to one who is dishonored are limited and unsatisfactory: one can try to keep the dishonor secret ("Dat moet om d'eerens wil by my verholen blyven" ["That which affects my honor I must keep secret"], 12). Failing that, one can exact revenge from those who have taken away one's honor ("God gave, Heer, dat ick uw on-eer mochte wreken" ["God grant, Sir, that I might avenge your dishonor"], 17; cf. 51), but really honor lost cannot be regained ("verloren eere is niet weer t'herwinnen," 49).

Clearly, Rodenburgh did not shy away from the associations of honor found in the *comedia*, including the idea that honorable revenge was justified. Nevertheless, the Spanish version places more emphasis on Norandino's revenge as a rational response to dishonor, rather than the actions of man out of his mind with jealousy. The same difference in characterization is also apparent with the Duke of Mantua, Porcia's father. Halfway through Act 3 in both, the Duke knows that his daughter has left Norandino for Astolfo, and he has learned of Norandino's death at Porcia's command; the full texts and English translations appear in Appendix B. Mantua goes to Ferrara to punish his daughter and her paramour by laying siege to the city. In Spanish the Duke is surprised by the treason and his response his blind rage; the turn of events is like fire and his vocabulary is incendiary: "cólera," "traición," "fuego," "ciego," "abrasa." The Duke enumerates in Baroque style all the horrific actions he is inspired to undertake: to kill, imprison, cripple, topple, and destroy. In Dutch, the tone is one of surprise and regret with a hint of resignation. Treason is reduced to a more general "what has befallen me" ("wat dat my is ervaeren," 49), accompanied by images of bad luck, cruel time, a loss of hope, autumn, and a daughter's fall. When he finally does mention his lost honor, it is more with resignation, since lost honor cannot be won back. Porcia is not an enemy or a traitor but a disappointment to her father. The Dutch Duke is a leader weakened by sadness, in need of encouragement by his steward. The vocabulary reflects this different attitude as he refers to complaint, fruitlessness, useless agitation, feelings, and mourning. Whereas in Spanish the Duke talks of action, in Dutch he talks of feeling. The Duke must be reminded to keep his sadness in check. 25

The Spanish Duke appeals to heaven to deliver him from his torment through revenge, which will bring happiness. He speaks of his "overwhelming anger," and he constructs a conceit based on the four elements. He now inhabits a realm of only two elements, air and fire: a man of action does not want water (the substance of tears), nor earth to be walked upon. The Duke damns the two lovers to the tortures that wind and fire can inflict. Still invoking heaven, the Duke asks that through his person, acting blindly, the lovers be caught and burned. The language is violent but the tone is righteous. It may be dark but he has great clarity of 26

purpose and reason as he lays siege to the city. The Dutch Duke is much more philosophical, speaking generally about a parent's hopes for his children and the torment that dishonorable children can bring to good parents. Heaven is not the locus of approval for revenge, but the place children come from. The Duke concludes his remarks on children with the hope that they might fully appreciate the love their parents have for them and at least return that love. But the love of seven children for their parents cannot match the love of one parent for one child. The tone is again one of lamentation, and the Duke bemoans the fact that his daughter's "misdeeds" have led him to the "disaster" of war. The vocabulary is quite negative: corrupt, disaster, saddest, misery.

As the scene comes to a close, the Spanish Duke also notes that his revenge is motivated by Norandino's death; he will destroy an entire town to take his revenge. The steward lets the Duke know that his men have rallied around him, with a curious admonition to take care. The Duke agrees that he should take care since he is blind with anger. All shout as they go to attack the city. The Dutch version also finally gets around to the topic of revenge, but here the steward must urge the Duke to take his revenge while he has the chance. The Duke responds that the revenge is for the death of Norandino, not for Porcia's dishonor. Nevertheless, he reaches the same conclusion as in Spanish: his daughter will pay for her actions with her life and blood. He will also punish Astolfo by taking his life. There is nothing in the Dutch about killing the innocent citizens of the town. The Duke speaks to the soldiers, accepting their service as they pledge to him their duty and loyalty. He will lead his men, who call upon heaven to help them as the drums sound and they go to Ferrara. 27

Overall, one can see that Rodenburgh has made both subtle and not-so-subtle changes to the original. The basic plot is there, but Rodenburgh has humanized many of the situations that in Spanish were stereotypical. The evil and dishonorable wife shows that she does have a human side; all she did she did for love. More is made of the injustice of the arranged marriage in Dutch than in Spanish, and Porcia's father, rather than raging for her death, laments his misfortune, revealing a touchingly human dimension to his character that is lacking in Spanish. On the other hand, Rodenburgh chose to add the spectacle in which Astolfo and Porcea are killed. This addition is understandable considering the preeminence of the neo-Senecan model in Amsterdam at the time. Less convincing are the appearances of Cupid and the angel. The former is definitely jarring in a play that has no other mythological or supernatural elements, and the latter is not just out of place but contradicted by the revelations of the character himself. Perhaps here, more clearly than elsewhere, one can see the force of conventionality. It is possible that Rodenburgh felt compelled to add these two appearances to satisfy the demands of the theatrical expectations in Amsterdam, which in many ways were more like those of the sixteenth-century Spanish theater than of the seventeenth-century *comedia*. In any case, although Rodenburgh was reviled for his attempts, his reworking of Aguilar's play reveals a great deal about the way a text is translated from one language to another, one culture to another. 28

More generally speaking, the existence of this translation and the others offers an unusual insight into the nature of the *comedia* and its life 29

outside Spain. From the perspective of history and politics, as usual, there is little contemporaneous documentation on which to base an interpretation of the facts (newspapers were not printed in Amsterdam until the 1650's). Still, one can speculate about things that one can state with some authority as well as things that are more open to dispute. First, the appearance of translations in 1617 and 1618 and then not again until 1641 demonstrates Foucault's notion (234) that certain kinds of discourse are excluded or permitted for social and cultural reasons, and that the boundaries change over time. There is a clear correspondence between periods when Spain was considered to be less of a threat and the use of Spanish theater as a source of inspiration for innovation on the Dutch stage. The *comedia* was permitted during the years of official cessation of hostilities with Spain, and, more particularly, during the rise of the liberal Remonstrants. It may be just a coincidence, but after van Oldenbarnevelt's arrest in 1618 and execution in 1619, which marked a temporary victory for the conservatives, no additional translations of *comedias* appeared for over two decades. By the time of its reappearance in 1641, the Spanish *comedia* had truly established itself as an artistic force in Europe, and any Spanish political threat in the Low Countries was virtually non-existent.

Second, the translations they produced provoked responses based as much on politics as aesthetics. In addition to the more philosophical and personal division of the Academy into liberal and conservative camps, the use of Spanish models would necessarily have brought to the fore the disagreements between Amsterdam and Holland, since the capital of Holland, The Hague, was also the seat of administration for Spain's colonial interests. In other words, intentionally or not, the Spanish *comedia* played a symbolic role in the local politics of Amsterdam, which directly affected its reception and very likely led to the twenty-three year hiatus in new translations. In addition, we have no way to know what Rodenburgh's intention was. Perhaps his conservatism ran to a desire to keep Holland and Amsterdam as part of the Spanish empire, a scenario that might explain why his attempts were repudiated by both liberals *and* conservatives. This explanation seems somewhat implausible because by that time the continuation of the Netherlands as a Spanish province was not really within the realm of possibility. More likely, he had dual motivations, both aesthetic and political, to rejuvenate Dutch theater and to strike a blow for freedom of expression, in which case he was denying his conservative principles as much as the other members of the Academy denied their own in rejecting his efforts.

Finally, these translations by Rodenburgh and de Graaf represent a kind of failed experiment. Either the *comedia* itself failed to impress the playwrights of Amsterdam, or Rodenburgh failed to overcome the personal animosity he evoked with the result that his intention, whether aesthetic or political, was lost, or theater failed to rise above the external political signification attached to it. It is not surprising that the *comedia* should have made its way to Amsterdam at the same time that it was known as vibrant, innovative theater across Western Europe. The Dutch were hardly less apt to import things of interest from abroad than were the French or the Italians. Unlike other places that imported *comedias*, however, Amsterdam lacked a unified stable culture that could absorb the

foreign text or not with little serious consequence to local politics. Instead, the confusion and divisions that abounded in Amsterdam at the time made any voice more threatening in an environment of political and artistic conflict. It was difficult for any one standard of poetics and taste to dominate until the political turmoil was resolved. As a result, the cultural borrowing of the *comedia* played an extraordinary but short-lived symbolic role in the local politics of Amsterdam during the Twelve Years Truce.

Works Cited

Aguilar, Gaspar de. *La venganza honrosa*. Ed. Ramón de Mesonero Romanos. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 43, vol. 1. Madrid: Atlas, 1951. 165-185.

Bennett, Susan. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Chin, Daryl. "Interculturalism, Postmodernism, Pluralism." *Performing Arts Journal* 12 (1989): 163-175.

Culler, Jonathan. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981.

Fiske, John. "British Cultural Studies and Television." *Channels of Discourse: Television and Contemporary Criticism*. Ed. Robert C. Allen. Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina P, 1987, 284-326.

Foucault, Michel. "History, Discourse and Discontinuity." Trans. Anthony M. Nazzaro. *Salmagundi* 20 (1972): 225-248.

McDonald, David. "Unspeakable Justice: David Hare's *Fanshen*." *Critical Theory and Performance*. Ed. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan P, 1992, 129-145.

Murray, John J. *Amsterdam in the Age of Rembrandt*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1967.

Praag, J. A. van. *La Comédie espagnole aux Pays-Bas au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle*. Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1922.

Regin, Deric. *Traders, Artists, Burghers: A Cultural History of Amsterdam in the 17th Century*. Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976.

Roach, Joseph R. "Introduction." *Critical Theory and Performance*. Ed Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan P, 1992, 9-15.

Rodenburgh, Theodore. *'t Quaedt syn Meester loondt*. Amsterdam: Houdthaeck, 1631.

Stroud, Matthew D. *Fatal Union: A Pluralistic Approach to the Spanish Wife-Murder* Comedias. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1990.

Appendix A. Plot comparison

La venganza honrosa	***'t Quaedt syn Meester loondt***
Act I. Astolfo complains to Ricardo about his misfortune. He is distraught over the marriage of Porcia to Norandino, the Duke of Milan, according to her father's wishes. Ricardo tells Astolfo that Porcia loves him, not Norandino, her husband.	
Ricardo asks for the hand of Emilia, Astolfo's sister.	
A servant announces that Porcia is giving away alms.	Ricardo tells Astolfo that Porcea has asked him to appear in beggar's clothes to talk to him.
Several beggars enter to ask for alms. Porcea enters, speaking about poverty. Enter Astolfo, dressed as a beggar.	

She asks each beggar what his problem is and gives them each a coin.	She recognizes him immediately.
When she asks Astolfo what he wants, he says he wants vengeance.	
Astolfo tells her he is sick in his heart because of her marriage. She gives him a coin wrapped in a paper.	
After she leaves, he reads the message in which she says there is no remedy because anything they do will cause dishonor. Astolfo is very upset.	Astolfo reads the letter, in which Porcea says that she married against her will but that she shouldn't leave her husband. She tells him to come by while her husband is off hunting. Astolfo knows he shouldn't pursue a married woman, but he cannot resist.
Norandino complains that his wife doesn't love him. He is jealous of the poor people because they at least receive something from her. Porcia hides her loathing of him, and decides to go ahead with her affair with Astolfo, honor be damned. Ricardo enters to arrange a tryst.	Norandino discusses Porcea's actions with a servant. He doesn't understand why Porcea gives out the alms himself. He is jealous. Porcea enters and Norandino accuses her. She says she just loves the poor. Norandino asks her to stay and presses her to keep her marriage vows. Porcea says that no good can come from a bad marriage. The servant tells Norandino that everything is ready for the hunt. The men leave, and Porcea confesses her love for Astolfo and the mistake her father made by marrying her to Norandino. Ricardo enters and tells her that Astolfo is waiting for her.

The Duke of Mantua says that his daughter's marriage has not turned out as he hoped.		
A servant recommends that he tell Astolfo to leave Mantua. Norandino plans to go hunting.		
The Duke of Mantua finds out that Astolfo, the Duke of Ferrara, has run off with his daughter. Mantua and his men leave to exact punishment. Later, Norandino is hunting when Mantua tells him about his wife. The two men argue over who should avenge this mischief. Norandino insists on going alone, and Mantua offers him his Duchy if he should kill Porcia. His reputation and honor are at stake.		
Norandino says the either they will never see him again or he will return with his honor restored.	Norandino and Fabricio discuss Norandino's dishonor and revenge.	
Mantua laments his bad fortune and promises revenge against Ferrara.	Astolfo and Porcea glory in being together. Porcea regrets having had to marry Norandino. Astolfo swears that he will do everything to keep Porcea. Astolfo and Porcea are seen in the company of Cupid.	

Act II. Norandino discusses with Fabricio his love for his honor and what he can do. Enter Otavio who is fighting with Horacio because Horacio stole Otavio's woman.		
Norandino, hiding, says he must kill them because they stole a woman.	Norandino says he will help Octavio, who is outnumbered 3 to 1.	
Horacio, defending himself, leaves with Norandino. Fabricio returns alone, saying that one of the men was killed.		
Fabricio and Otavio say that they will oppose Astolfo in his enterprise. Exeunt. Horacio then pleads his case to Astolfo. Astolfo asks that the criminals be brought to him. Ricardo enters with Norandino, whose hands are bound.	Norandino and Fabricio drive the others away, leaving only Octavio. Octavio tells Fabricio about Astolfo and Porcea, and the bad marriage arranged by Mantua. Octavio says that women are more subject to passion than men. Octavio tells Fabricio that Mantua is also hunting not far away.	
Astolfo accuses Norandino of thievery.		
Norandino says there are thieves in Mantua, too. Astolfo commands Norandino to go	Norandino says Astolfo stole his	

with Ricardo.	love, and he accuses Porcea of faithlessness.	
Norandino is led off as a prisoner. He will let Porcea condemn him to death.		
Porcea, alone, says that she is forgetting Norandino, that her marriage was forced on her against her will. Enter the Governor of Ferrara to tell her that Astolfo has returned from the hunt with a prisoner. Norandino is brought in and presented to Porcea. Norandino says that a faithless woman caused his misfortune. Porcea says justice must be done and she will administer justice. She asks to be alone with the robber. All exit except Porcea and Norandino. They exchange arguments.		
Norandino takes out a cloth and tries to suffocate her. She cries out. Porcia sentences him to be executed as a highwayman.	They talk, not in pleasantries, about their conflict. He accuses her; she accuses him. He tries to strangle her when the Governor enters. The Governor takes Norandino away.	
Octavio complains about the decline of the age. He tells the governor that the robber saved his life, and asks for Norandino's freedom. The governor will think about it.		
Porcia rationalizes her actions because she says she knew it was Norandino. The governor tries to intervene for Norandino,	Astolfo and Porcea discuss Norandino's sentence. Porcea	

but Porcia persists and they put the garrote on him. He falls, apparently dead.	says that no one in Ferrara knows him. They can have another put to death and let Norandino go free. The Governor leads in Norandino, with a rope around his neck. Norandino says heaven will punish them. Porcea wants him dead; Astolfo is surprised at so much cruelty in a woman. Porcea and Astolfo leave. The Governor again mentions Porcea's cruelty. Exeunt. An angel appears to counter Norandino's death.	
Fabricio is distraught about Norandino's death and prepares to kill himself. The Governor interrupts him, and explained that he spared Norandino's life. Norandino revives. They plan to bury a dead man in Norandino's place.	Fabricio enters and complains about Porcea's cruelty and faithlessness. The Governor finds out Norandino is alive and calls him a second Lazarus. Norandino comes to, and thanks the Governor. The executioner didn't really strangle him. The Governor saved him as a service.	
Norandino swears to go to Ferrara and wreak his revenge dressed as a bricklayer. Meanwhile, Porcea and Astolfo congratulate themselves.		

Porcia and Astolfo announce the marriage of Ricardo and Emilia.	Astolfo is preparing for war with Milan. Astolfo talks with his sister, Emilia, about her possible marriage to Ricardo. Fabricio enters with a servant to discuss the upcoming construction. Emilia and Ricardo are left to discuss their upcoming marriage. Emilia says that she does not love Ricardo. She leaves, and Ricardo complains about her lack of love, her cruelty.	
Act III. Fabricio and Norandino enter dressed as masons. Emilia overhears the two talk of their plot. Norandino flirts with Emilia. Emilia suspects Norandino is a nobleman. He is falling in love with her. Ricardo notices Emilia's interest in Norandino and chides her for it. Astolfo knows of the troops amassing against him and decides to have the walls of the city raised. Astolfo and Fabricio discuss the construction. Porcia says that among the workers she saw a man who looked remarkably like Norandino. When Norandino enters, Astolfo and Porcia question him but he maintains that he is only a workman named "Rodrigo."		
To prove it, Astolfo embraces Porcia in front of him. Norandino goes berserk.	Astolfo kisses Porcia to test "Rodrigo."	
Norandino is very jealous, but he doesn't reveal himself. Astolfo and Ricardo leave to talk. Norandino talks to Porcea. In a jealous		

rage, he draws his dagger and steps toward Porcea, but Emilia enters, allowing Porcea to escape. Norandino tells her that he is disgusted by Porcea, and he pledges his love to Emilia. Emilia leaves; Norandino is disappointed that he didn't kill Porcea, but he pledges that he will.		
Astolfo calls in Fabricio and says that he wants Rodrigo (Norandino) killed as a traitor.	Astolfo talks to Fabricio and says that he wants Rodrigo killed for seducing his sister, Emilia.	
Fabricio advises Astolfo to retire to his room so that Fabricio can kill Norandino more efficiently. Fabricio tells Norandino about Astolfo's plan, and Norandino swears to kill Astolfo as well.		
	There is a spectacle of Astolfo and Porcea decapitated by Norandino and Fabricio respectively. Norandino places the heads on a dish and leaves something written on their bodies.	
Mantua is laying siege to the city in revenge for Norandino's death. The Duke swears to punish Porcea with her death. Back in the palace, Emilia has a long soliloquy about what is going on. Ricardo enters to tell her that he found Porcia and Astolfo with their heads cut off along with a note saying that Norandino did it and that if anyone wanted to complain he would be in the camp of the Duke of Mantua. Emilia is amazed that Rodrigo is Norandino and that he has killed her brother. In the Duke's camp, Norandino and Fabricio enter carrying the heads of the dead lovers.		

Ricardo enters to protest the deaths. Before an explanation is given, however, Emilia exacts a wedding promise from Norandino. This satisfies Ricardo.	Mantua says that he thought Norandino was dead, and Norandino says that he was almost dead, but that God saved him. Mantua is shocked, but he approves of the actions. Fabricio removes the heads from the stage; when he returns he says that Emilia would like to speak. Emilia does not come to press for justice for her brother's death but to swear her love for Norandino. They promise to marry.	
Norandino makes Fabricio governor of Milan, and the Duke fulfills his promise to give Norandino his inheritance by giving Norandino and Emilia the Duchy of Mantua as well as those of Milan and Ferrara.		

Appendix B. Scene comparison Original texts

La venganza honrosa, 184a	*'t Quaedt syn Meester loont*, 49-50
Duque de Mantua:	*Mantua:*
Pues por vengar la traición vengo de cólera ciego volando por la región, no del aire, mas del fuego, que me abrasa el corazón. Bien es, soldados valientes,	Laes, vals ick overwick wat dat my is ervaeren, Hoe 't ongeluck bewelmt deez' oude gryze haeren, Hoe myn verkleumde Herfst' werdt wreedlijck aengetast. Hoe dat de vinn'ghe tyd myn Hope heeft verrast, En door myn dochters fael. 't verwerdt het koor myns

que en semejantes aprietos
quitéis vidas, prendáis gentes,
tulláis brazos, cortéis petos,
postréis muros, rompáis
puentes.

Cielos, pues veis mis tormentos,

porque mi venganza vea

juntamente mis contentos,

haced que mi cuerpo sea

de solos dos elementos.

Y así, podré desfogar

mi cólera arrebatada;

que no quiere el alma osada
agua,

pues no ha de llorar,

ni tierra por ser pisada.

Consúmanse los dos luego,

y porque pueda acaballos,

dejad en mi cuerpo ciego

el viento para alcanzallos,

y para abrasallos fuego.

Y aunque de noche lleguemos

a cercar esta ciudad,

yo sé que la cercaremos

con muy buena claridad

de la razón que tenemos.

Que pues murió Norandino,

todo este pueblo asolar

zinnen,

Vermits verloren eere is niet weer t' herwinnen,
Ha Porcea, vermoorster van uw Vaders hert!

Hofmeester:

Ghenaed'ge Heer u zelven niet te zeer verwerdt,
't Beklagh is vruchteloos, onnutbaer is dit woelen.

Mantua:

Helaes, de Vader moet zyn kinders faeling voelen.

Hofmeester:

Gevoelen, Heer, maer in de rouwe houden maet.

Mantua:

't Is lichter raed te geven als te nemen raed.
Helaes, wy wenshen steets in d' echt na kinder-
teeling,
Doch oneerbaere kind'ren is quel, en verveling,
En als de kinder-win door 's Hemels schick geschiete,
Men vaeken aen de kind'ren quel en ramspoet ziet.
Ach dat de kind'ren na weerliefd' tot d' ouders
zochten,
En d' Ouders liefd' in 't minste evenaeren mochten!
Maer, lacy, zeven kind'rens liefd is zo groot niet,
Ghelijck de liefde diemen inde Ouders ziet,
Allenlijck tot een kindt.

Hofmeester:

't Is deerlijck te beklaghen.

Mantua:

Vermits wy 't zo, helaes, door ondervindingh zaghen.
Helaes, bedurven eeuw, ach dat een Vader moet
Aennemen 't oorlochs ramp mits hem zijn kindt
misdoet!
't Is droevichste ellend dat ons mach overkomen.

Hofmeester:

Heer nu uw Hoogheyt heeft de wraeke voor
ghenomen,
't Is raedzaemst' Heer ghy alles aen een zyde stelt,
En dat ghy nu betoont de krachte uws gheweldt.

por vengarme determino. *Mayordomo:* Con gana de pelear todo el campo, Señor, vino; mira si mandas que luego se dé el asalto. *Duque:* Sí, amigo; y pues de enojo estoy ciego, armas. *Todos:* Armas, fuego, fuego.	*Mantua:* Ferrara tast ick aen, 'k beleght aen alle oorden, Om wreken dat zy d'Hertoch Norandyn vermoorden, En Porcea ick straf aen leven, en aen bloed. *Hofmeester:* Gh'lijck een rechtvaerdich Prins uw Hoogheydt hier in doet. *Mantua:* Astolfo zal ick zijn verdiende loon oock gheven, En 't nickerlijck misbruyck oock straffen aen zijn leven Krijghfluyden mijnes heyrs uw dienst ick zeker houw. *Al. Zol.:* Wy zweeren uwe Hoogheyt onze plicht en trouw. *Mantua:* Uw Prins zal d' eerste zijn die d'aenflach zal aenvaerden. Zweert my uw trouw. *Al Zol.:* Wy zweerent op 't punt onzes zwaerden Langh leef uw Hoogheydt, en den Hemel u bewaer. *Mantua:* Laet roeren tromm'len en wy trecken na Ferraer.

English translations

Duke of Mantua:

To avenge the treason

I come blinded by rage

flying through the region

not of air but of fire

which burns my heart.

It is good, valiant soldiers,

that, in such situations,

you should take lives,
imprison people,

cripple arms, cut
breastplates,

topple walls, destroy
bridges.

Heavens, since you see my
torment,

so that you might see my
revenge

together with my
happiness,

make my body consist of

only two elements.

And thus I shall be able to
give rein to

my overwhelming anger;

for the daring soul does not
want water,

since it will not cry,

nor earth to be walked
upon.

Let those two then be
consumed,

and, so that I may be done
with them,

leave in my body the blind

wind to reach them,

and fire to burn them.

And although we arrive at
night

to lay siege to the city,

I know that we surround it

with the great clarity

of reason that we have.

For since Norandino died,

I am determined to destroy

this whole town in revenge.

Steward:

With a desire to fight, Sir,

all around have come;

take care if you order them

to begin the assault.

Duke:

Yes, friend;

and since I am blind with anger,

to arms.

All:

To arms! Fire! Fire!*Mantua:*

Alas, I can scarcely believe what has happened to me.

How misfortune turned these old hairs gray.

How my benumbed autumn is cruelly attacked.

How fierce time takes my hope by surprise,

and by all by my daughter's fall. I weather the chorus of my senses,

since lost honor cannot be won back.

Ah, Porcia, squanderer of your father's heart.

Steward:

Gracious lord, do not defend yourself too much;

the complaint is fruitless, this agitation is useless.

Mantua:

Alas, the father must feel his children's failings.

Steward:

Sir, but keep feelings in mourning within bounds.

Mantua:

It is easier to give advice than to receive it.

Alas, we always desire in marriage to have children,

but dishonorable children are a torment and a bother,

and although children come from Heaven,

one frequently sees in children torment and adversity.

Oh that children might seek the true love of their elders,
and match their elders' love in the least.

But, alas, the love of seven children is not as great

as the love one sees in elders

toward just one child.

Steward:

It is sad to lament.

Mantua:

We say so, alas, from experience.

Alas, corrupt age, oh that a father must

take on the disaster of war because of his child's mideeds!

It is the saddest misery that we may overcome.

Steward:

Sir, now your Highness has revenge for the taking.

It is most advisable, Sir, for all to be on one side,

and that you now show the force of your violence.

Mantua:

I have attacked Ferrara; I have laid siege on all sides,

as revenge for the death of Duke Norandino,

and Porcia I punish with her life and blood.

Steward:

Your Highness acts like a just Prince.

Mantua:

I shall also give Astolfo his due recompense,

and the niggerly abuse I shall punish with his life.

Gentlemen, I gladly accept your service in battle.

All soldiers:

We swear to your Highness our duty and loyalty.

Mantua:

Your Prince shall be the first to strike a blow.

Swear to me your allegiance.

All soldiers:

We swear on the point of our swords.

Long live your Highness, and Heaven help you.

Mantua:

Let the drums sound and let's go to Ferrara.