

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

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—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:

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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 *Cassandra*, 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*),

Mira de Amescua, *El palacio confuso*, translated 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.

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—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

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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:

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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

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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).

—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

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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.

—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.

—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 (*volkstoeeltjes*), 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.

—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

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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.

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—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.

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—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

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*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.

—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.

—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.

—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.

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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.

—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,  
Opdringh van het bloed, met yselijck bezwaeren,  
Doch niemant weet de pijn als die 't zelfs is ervaren,  
Jae 't maect 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.]

—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 ("fAy,  
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.

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

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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 tweedemaal, 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.]

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 geweld 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 verloor uw Vrouwe? 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," "abrsa." 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.

—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 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.

—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.

—More generally speaking, the existence of this translation and the

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others offers an unusual insight into the nature of the *comedia* and its life 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.

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Appendix A. Plot comparison

<i>La venganza honrosa</i>	<i>'t Quaedt syn Meester loondt</i>	
<p><i>Act I.</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.</p>		
<p>Ricardo asks for the hand of Emilia, Astolfo's sister.</p>		
<p>A servant announces that Porcia is giving away alms.</p>	<p>Ricardo tells Astolfo that Porcea has asked him to appear in beggar's clothes to talk to him.</p>	
<p>Several beggars enter to ask for alms. Porcea enters, speaking about poverty. Enter Astolfo, dressed as a beggar.</p>		

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 with Ricardo.

Norandino says Astolfo stole his 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, but Porcia persists and they put the garrote on him. He falls, apparently dead.

Astolfo and Porcea discuss Norandino's sentence. Porcea 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

<i>La venganza honrosa</i> , 184a	<i>'t Quaedt syn Meester loont</i> , 49-50
<i>Duque de Mantua:</i>	<i>Mantua:</i>
Pues por vengar la traición	Laes, vals ick overwick wat dat my is ervaeren,

vengo de cólera ciego  
volando por la región,  
no del aire, mas del fuego,  
que me abrasa el corazón.  
Bien es, soldados valientes,  
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

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  
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 Beklaghe 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 steeds in d' echt na kinder-  
teeling,  
Doch oneerbaere kind'ren is quel, en verveling,  
En als de kinder-wijn 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 zyn kindt  
misdoot!

't Is droevichste ellend dat ons mach overkomen.

de la razón que tenemos.

Que pues murió Norandino,  
todo este pueblo asolar  
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.

*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.

*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 heys 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 mideds!

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.