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TEXT, VOICE, IMAGE: STAGING THE DIABOLICAL IN EARLY MODERN ITALIAN MUSICAL THEATER

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Introduction

"I' th' name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly you show?"[1]

In 1608, the Italian priest Francesco Maria Guazzo published his important demonological treatise, *Compendium maleficarum*. This work examines how diabolical forces affect human imaginative faculties.[2] Drawing on Aquinas, Guazzo focuses on how human sensorial perception translates to images (*phantasmata*) in the mind and how these images can affect emotions and perceptions of reality.[3] His comments on imagination are not unique, having been discussed in previous demonological treatises starting from the *Malleus maleficarum* (1486). The originality of Guazzo's work lies in emphasizing imagination at the very beginning of his treatise. Unlike the *Malleus*, which had to prove the existence of witches, Guazzo had nothing to prove at the outset. He emphasizes the powerful and perilous nature of illusion, the more complicated question of free will, the nature of witches' contracts with the Devil, and, crucially, the

[1] William Shakespeare, "Macbeth," in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994), I.iii.52-54, pp. 859-860.

[2] See Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, ed. Luciano Tamburini (Torino: Einaudi, 1992), Chapter 1: "Quanto e quale sia il potere della fantasia", especially p. 1: "Molto è scritto da molto sul potere della fantasia […]." The Einaudi edition is a translation of the original Latin. See also the English translation: Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum: The Montague Summers Edition*, ed. Montague Summers, trans. E. A. Ashwin (New York: Dover, 1988).

[3] See Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, ed. Montague Summers, 1: "For they argue that as the imagination examines the images of objects perceived by the senses, it excites in the appetitive faculty either fear or shame or anger or sorrow; and these emotions so affect a man with heat or cold that his body either grows pale or reddens, and he consequently becomes joyful and exultant, or torpid and dejected." See also: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Claremont, CA: Coyote Canyon Press, 2018), I, q. 78, art. 4; I, q. 84, art. 7; I, q. 85, art. 1.

dangerous power of belief. He uses imagination as something genuinely perceptible that we can see, hear, or experience but that may not physically exist. The power of belief, situated within the senses, can be so intense that what we experience can come to seem a visceral fact even in the absence of concrete evidence.

Guazzo peppers his *Compendium* with anecdotal exempla, a common practice in Renaissance demonological treatises. These exempla were usually a separate, final part of each *questio* of a treatise but were frequently mixed with the author's theological analyses. Often, Guazzo's examples express a theatrical character. A demon typically dons a costume—a physical "body"—and insidiously strings along its victims all the way to its demonic stage space. That stage space is not a formal theatrical one but something the demon constructs out of human imagination. Crucially, this construction is a liminal one that engulfs the victim and makes him or her an unwitting actor in the demon's play. The *Compendium* contains several fantastical examples. I quote one example in its entirety, from Book One, Chapter Ten titled "Può il demonio arricchire i suoi seguaci?" [Can the Demon Make His Followers Rich?]. It details the construction of an illusionary stage space, a seductive demon, and the victim who quietly transitions from theatrical spectator to active participant in the theatrical event:

> Verso il 1520 un sarto di Basilea, sempliciotto e balbuziente, entrò – non si sa in qual modo – nella cripta di Augst, e, spintosi più avanti di quanto altri avessero mai fatto, narrò d'aver visto apparizioni fuori del normale. Sceso nella cripta con un cero benedetto acceso in mano, diceva d'avere oltrepassato dapprima una porta in ferro, passando poi da una stanza all'altra fino a giungere in giardini splendidamente fioriti, e d'aver scorto, al centro, un ambiente magnificamente ornato e una bellissima fanciulla – con un diadema d'oro in capo e i capelli sciolti – il cui corpo finiva in forma d'orribile serpente. La fanciulla lo condusse davanti ad uno scrigno in ferro, difeso da due molossi neri, che, con furiosi latrati, scacciavano chi si avvicinava. La donna li tenne a bada minacciandoli, e, toltosi dal collo un mazzo di chiavi, aprì il cofano e ne cavò un mucchio di monete d'oro, argento, bronzo, d'ogni sorta, che egli mostrò in giro, asserendo d'averne portate molte fuori della cripta grazie alla generosità della fanciulla. Dichiarò, inoltre, che essa era solita affermare perentoriamente d'essere figlia d'un re, e di non avere altra

possibilità di scampo se non d'essere baciata per tre volte da un giovane costumato; avrebbe riottenuto allora il proprio vero aspetto, e recato in dote al salvatore il tesoro nascosto. Precisò pure d'aver baciato due volte la fanciulla, ma d'averle visto compiere – forse per gioia anticipata dell'imminente liberazione – gesti così orrendi da temere d'esserne sbranato vivo. Condotto da alcuni dissoluti in un bordello, non riuscì più a trovare l'ingresso della cripta e a entrarvi.

Chi non capisce il trucco? Il giovane era un minorato mentale o un mago; la fanciulla, un demone della famiglia delle Lamie, e chiedeva baci per potere, dopo il terzo, divorarlo; ma Dio non aveva permesso che ciò accadesse. I due cani erano demoni posti a vigliare un tesoro, forse vero, forse falso; le monete, per volere di Dio ottenute, erano però autentiche.

Dopo vari anni, un altro abitante di Basilea penetrò nella cripta per togliere i suoi dalla miseria, ma trovò solo ossa umane, e, vinto dall'orrore, si precipitò fuori smaniando, e tre giorni dopo morì miseramente.[4]

[Around the year 1520, a simple-minded and stuttering tailor from Basel somehow managed to enter a crypt in Augst. Venturing further than anyone had before, he claimed to have witnessed extraordinary apparitions. Descending into the crypt with a lit blessed candle in hand, he said he first passed through an iron door, then moved from room to room until he arrived at splendidly flowered gardens. There, at the center, he saw a magnificently adorned space and a beautiful girl wearing a golden diadem with her hair loose. Her body ended in a horrible serpent's tail. The girl led him to an iron chest guarded by two black hounds that, with furious barking, drove away anyone who approached. The girl kept them at bay by threatening them and, taking a bunch of keys from her neck, opened the chest and drew out a pile of coins of gold, silver, and bronze of all kinds. He later showed these around, asserting that he had taken many out of the crypt thanks to the girl's generosity. He also declared that she asserted to be the daughter of a king and had no other chance to escape than to be kissed three times by a well-mannered young man, after which she would regain her true form and bring the hidden treasure as a dowry to her savior. He specified that he had kissed her twice, but, perhaps due to her joy at the impending liberation, he had seen her make such horrific gestures that he feared he would be torn apart alive. Led by some ruffians to a brothel, he could no longer find the entrance to the crypt or reenter it.

Who doesn't understand the illusion? The young man was either mentally impaired or a magician; the girl, a demon from the Lamia family, sought kisses to devour him after the third, but God did not permit this to happen. The two dogs were demons guarding a treasure, perhaps real, perhaps false; the coins, obtained by God's will, were, however, genuine.

After several years, another resident of Basel entered the crypt to lift his family out of poverty but found only human bones. Overcome by horror, he rushed out in a frenzy, and three days later died miserably.]

[4] Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, 78-79.

This story brilliantly highlights the fascination with and skepticism of theatrical spaces. The mouth of the crypt is like the proscenium of the stage, which literally goes by the rubric of *la bocca della scena* (the mouth of the stage). As the man walks past the initial gate and into the crypt, he walks from room to room, seemingly passing by magnificent scenery. At this point, the demonic stage space has completely swallowed the man. By interacting with the demonic actors, he solidifies his role as the supposed heroic savior of a cursed princess, or rather as an unwitting victim seduced into an act that will devour him. Once the man comes to his senses, he escapes the cave. The illusionary stage vanishes to reveal a grim reality: fashioned as a peaceful bucolic scene, the crypt is actually a tomb filled with bones, stone, and darkness.

Diabolical characters like demons, sorceresses, and Hellmouths proliferated in Renaissance and Baroque musical theater. Their presence on the stage triggered heated debates about their relevance and their potentially adverse influence on theatergoers' minds. Yet these figures persisted in religious and secular productions despite the ubiquitous Counter-Reformation rhetoric that warned against invisible diabolical hazards. Priests and laypeople alike continued writing them into libretti.

How could opera producers justify including diabolical figures despite potential risks to theatergoers? How might audiences have perceived and reacted to these risks? What were the real-world implications of these staged figures, whether social, religious, or political? This dissertation, *Text, Voice, Image: Staging the Diabolical in Early Modern Italian Musical Theater*, examines the production and reception of visually and aurally staged diabolical characters in a culture still preoccupied with unseen spiritual threats. Through a comparative analysis of literary, musical, and religious texts, I show that staged subversive images, on the one

hand, elevated suspicions about the role of imagination in a culture already suspicious of performances that made representations actual and material, creating a visual link with "real" diabolical bodies. Sound, on the other hand, did not merely ornament these images. It effectively pierced the already permeable space between the stage and the audience, leaving the actors' mouths and striking the listeners' ears. It entered the sensory apparatuses of audience members, thus interacting with them directly. Further, the materiality of sound could alter a listener's sense of reality, raising the stakes of hearing these sounding figures. I argue that by staging the diabolical, theater creators articulated conceptions of spiritual bondage and influence, at once challenging the affective registers and religious epistemological regimes of their times and allowing the musical stage to become a locus of social and political influence on audiences.

By taking up these issues, this study intervenes in the scholarly conversation over questions of personhood and intellect within the broad institution of early modern performance. Even if an actor willingly dons a mask to portray a rehearsed character, he or she still gives voice, literally and metaphorically, to the represented character; the actor allows his or her body and mind to act as a temporary medium through which the role can express itself. Similarly, spectators might catch sentiments of staged roles, almost like contracting a disease or pathogen. John Rainolds, in his *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes* (1599), suggests that theatergoers catch a certain "phrensie" from the stage and begin to reflect what they have seen, "So that the whole citie was full of pale and thinne folke, pronouncing like stage-players, and braying with a loude voice […]."[5] In this light, I ask what diabolical performativity implies for a spectator's grasp of

[5] John Rainolds and William Gager, *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes (1599)* (Middleborough: R. Schilders, 1599), 118, http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/thoverthrow-stage-playes-1599/docview/2138578623/se-2.

his or her personhood. How do performances of the diabolical distort, influence, and penetrate human intellect? And how do musical productions use an audience's preexisting anxieties over the diabolical for social and political ends?

Scholars pursuing this line of inquiry primarily focus their attention on the cultural performance of victimhood and the striking appearance and psychologically-driven marvels of the diabolical on the musical stage, as is the case with Brian Levack's, Bronwyn Johnston's, and Nina Treadwell's important contributions.[6] These studies expose the various psychological registers at play in association with real and staged diabolical figures. Their work is integral to my analyses of the transactions between the staged diabolical and the audience. A diabolical attack—when a demon speaks to its victim's mind through illusion—is akin to the *meraviglia* produced on stage. To address the need for scholarship on this topic, my project traces a genealogy of writings and performances concerned with the subversive performative nature of diabolical entities—from the depictions of *monstra* in Renaissance epic poetry through early Baroque demonological treatises and on to musically staged demons, sorceresses, necromancers, and monsters in court and public theaters. Drawing from studies on the relationship between the Church and the stage in Renaissance Italy by scholars such as Teresa Megale, Eve Preus, Hans Rudolf Velten, Robert L. Kendrick, Silke Leopold, Margaret Murata, and Hilaire Kallendorf, I

[6] See Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Bronwyn Johnston, "The Devil in the Detail: Demons and Demonology on the Early Modern English Stage," Ph.D. Diss., (Oxford, University of Oxford Press, 2013); Nina Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court: The 1589 Interludes for* La Pellegrina, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

investigate how religious discourses developed into affective rhetoric central to the construction of a stage space capable of manipulating its audience to unspoken ends.[7]

In this dissertation, I investigate how belief embeds itself in physical experience and penetrates the rational mind, thereby distorting senses of reality. My analyses focus on the interplay between spectacle, particularly within the sonic domain, and the demonic during the Italian Counter-Reformation. Through an exploration of musical theater and Renaissance demonological treatises, I theorize diabolical stagings in two primary ways. First, I examine demonic nature from a theological perspective, employing Renaissance theories and accounts of the "real" demonic to conceptualize the demon as a theatrical figure—an actor—that engages in the art of temptation. This conceptualization reveals how the demon employs theatrical practice to manifest itself to the spiritual detriment of human actors and audiences. Second, I analyze the theological and political ramifications for audiences and sovereigns—whether secular or clerical—of staging diabolical figures in contexts related to musical theater, including opera libretti, musical *intermedi,* and full operatic works. I explore how sonic experiences, whether

[7] Teresa Megale, "Animated Pulpits: On Performative Preaching in Seventeenth-Century Naples," *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, March 10, 2018, 129–38, https://doi.org/10.13128/JEMS-2279-7149-22840; Eve Preus, "Admission: Figuring the Early Modern Theatre," Ph.D. Diss. (The University of British Columbia, 2017); Hans Rudolf Velten, "Devils On and Off Stage: Shifting Effects of Fear and Laughter in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Urban Theatre," in *Dramatic Experience: The Poetics of Drama and the Early Modern Public Sphere(s)*, ed. Katja Gvozdeva, Tatiana Korneeva, and Kirill Ospovat, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 250–68, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004329768; Robert L. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Robert L. Kendrick, *The Sounds of Milan, 1585-1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Robert L. Kendrick, "What's So Sacred about 'Sacred' Opera? Reflections on the Fate of a (Sub)Genre," *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 9, no. 1 (2003): sections 4-5; Silke Leopold, "Rome: Sacred and Secular," in *The Early Baroque Era: From the Late 16th Century to the 1660s*, ed. Curtis Alexander Price, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1994), 49–74; Margaret Murata, *Operas for the Papal Court, 1631-1668* (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1981); Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

demonically or theatrically produced, contribute to a curated understanding of reality and how these understandings influence human engagement and learning. In each case examined in this dissertation, both real demons and their theatrical counterparts emerge as subversive figures of temptation and control, with profound implications for the actions and worldviews of their audiences. These analyses elucidate the complex dynamics between belief, experience, and perception, demonstrating the potent impact of diabolical stagings on human thought and behavior.

I also therefore explore the intricate interplay among textual, sonic, and visual representations of the diabolical by scrutinizing depictions of sound-based spectacle through the prism of Renaissance demonological understandings of perception and audition. Generally, theatrical spectacles encompassed a synthesis of visual, auditory, and rhetorical stimuli designed to convey a message to an audience. However, the credibility of visual representation becomes particularly low within the realm of demonic theater. In both offstage demonic phenomena perceived by spectators and in theatrical spectacles, visual effects can be readily manipulated to evoke specific emotional responses in viewers. The work of Nicola Sabbatini (1574-1653), especially his *Pratica di fabricar scene, e machine ne' teatri* (1638), exemplifies the extent to which theaters sought to influence audiences' emotional reactions through elaborate stage machinery and scenic design.[8] I argue that the objects of my study made apparent the tensions between visual stimuli and the immaterial phenomena of emotional reactions and intellectual and spiritual senses of reality. In doing so, they heightened the stakes for audiences who believed that real demons could access the capacity of visual stimuli to grab the attention of viewers. This

[8] Nicola Sabbatini, *Pratica di fabricar scene, e machine ne' teatri* (Ravenna: Stampatori Camerali, 1638).

would open an avenue to interact with and manipulate the viewers' understanding of what they see and subsequently with how they conceptualize their world depending on the performer's desires, be they political, theological, or otherwise.

In a theatrical setting, visual and, crucially, aural stimuli potentially have the effect of evoking sympathetic sensations in viewers and hearers since audiences actively lend their attention to the spectacle and open themselves to a dialogical relationship with what they perceive. Alessandro Duranti suggests that audiences are anything but passive.[9] Duranti's and others' modern theories around theater and cognate issues omit considering historical modes of listening and viewing and presume modern-day Western ones, but they have the advantage of inspiring us to think more clearly across temporal boundaries.[10] Audience members enter a theatrical event with pre-existing thoughts, desires, opinions, and worldviews that cannot be discounted. He speaks of a speech act that occurs between a spectator and the spectacle. A speech act that doesn't even necessarily require actual speech, as the "mere presence of an audience socially constitutes and ratifies the nature of a speech act (a sermon, a play, a class lecture, a story telling)."[11] More recently, Ana Hedberg Olenina similarly suggests that spectators actively co-create theatrical experiences.[12] Spectators do not wait passively to be filled with staged stimuli; they actively help to construct an "augmented reality" based on their

[9] Alessandro Duranti, "The Audience as Co-Author: An Introduction," *Text* 6, no. 3 (1986): 239-247.

[10] See also Susan L. Hurley and Nick Chater, "Introduction: The Importance of Imitation," in *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science,* ed. Susan L. Hurley and Nick Chater, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 7. Hurley and Chater discuss theater spectating through a neuroscience lens.

[11] Duranti, "The Audience as Co-Author," 243.

[12] Ana Hedberg Olenina, "Sergei Eisenstein, Neurocinematics, and Embodied Cognition: A Reassessment," *Discourse* 43, no. 3 (2021), https://doi.org/10.13110/discourse.43.3.0351, 352. While Olenina primarily discusses the cinematic experience, her analysis is still applicable to theatrical production.

embodied simulation of staged material coupled with their own imaginations and the continuous unfolding of staged events.[13] She suggests that spectators interact with theatrical scenes by immersing themselves in experiences of what they perceive, even suggesting a dual doubling of the audience and the actors: actors ritualistically apply makeup and costumes to facilitate a role's ability to express its affect through them; spectators similarly become absorbed in staged events and thus accept the affective nature of what they see and hear.[14] In this modern explanation, spectators' absorption occurs visually and aurally. As thought of by Wayne Koestenbaum, "To hear is metaphorically to be impregnated—with tone, thought, and sensation."[15] "Impregnated" is of course a loaded term. It implies an infiltration and an invasion of the mind, as well as a subsequent internal reproduction of the impregnating matter.[16] Essentially, the tone, thought, and sensation carried by the infiltrating sound inscribe themselves in the mind in the form of a suggestion. The visceral sensation of receiving the instrumentalized voice facilitates Olenina's dual doubling by suggesting that the spectator experiences dual reactions: 1) the embodied simulation of the actor's experience of a given role and 2) a visceral reaction in the mind brought about by the physical invasion through the ear of the actor's foreign voice. Together, these reactions shape the spectator's active participation in constructing the theatrical space.

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[13] Oleninia, "Sergei Eisensetin," 355.

[14] Oleninia, "Sergei Eisensetin," 356.

[15] Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993), 16.

[16] For more on the internal reproduction of heard sounds and voices, see: Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, tr. Paul A. Kottman (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005); Denis Diderot, "From 'General Principles on the Science of Sound (1748),'" in *Music & Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book*, ed. Enrico Fubini, trans. Bonnie J. Blackburn etc. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Freya Jarman, *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

In conjunction with, and extending beyond, visual phenomena, sonic stimuli operate invisibly to penetrate the ear and infiltrate the mind with sensations and images via suggestion. By leveraging sonic phenomena, the objects of my study engage with the inherent tensions between visual representation and the invisible sonic realm. I focus on instances where demons, priests, and opera creators—including librettists, composers, scenographers, and impresarios—turn to the sonic dimension, analyzing the intricate interplay between aural and visual representations and the resultant sensorial stimuli. I contend that by scrutinizing the tensions between the visual and aural domains, I reveal an invisible—yet tangible—intermediary space between performers and audience members, defined by a sonic body. The physicality of this sonic body can be conceptualized in two distinct ways. Firstly, sound, though invisible, was regarded as possessing physical properties, imbuing it with a certain corporeality, particularly when articulated through language.[17] Secondly, when the source of a sound was unseen or unknown, spectators would often endow the sound with an imagined body and origin.[18] This mental projection invariably linked the spectator's mind with the sound, establishing a profound, if subconscious, connection between the auditory stimulus and the listener's interpretive faculties. This sonic body fosters a physical relationship between sounding actors and hearing spectators, enabling the former to transmit experiences, emotions, and ideas into the minds and ears of the latter, akin to a spiritual encounter.

* * *

[17] See Bonnie Gordon, "The Castrato Meets the Cyborg," *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 94–122, https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbr015, 106, 112.

[18] On the sonic body in relation to acousmatic sound, see Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 8-9.

In the brief ensuing discussion, I position my research within the historical and spiritual milieu of the Counter-Reformation in Italy. I delineate the fundamental contours of Renaissance demonological thought in Italy, with a primary focus on the eminent Renaissance Italian demonologist and exorcist Girolamo Menghi (1529-1609). This approach aims to contextualize the period's profound religiosity and pervasive fear of demonic characteristics, which left an indelible mark on the performative sphere. Besides introducing Menghi, this section serves as an introductory overview of how demonological treatises engaged with the visual and auditory spheres. It is important to note that not every opera librettist or author examined in this dissertation may have been intimately acquainted with the nuances of Renaissance Catholic demonology. Nevertheless, their works were invariably influenced by the rhetoric and cultural frameworks promulgated by Counter-Reformation teachings and regulations, as will be elucidated in Chapter One on St. Carlo Borromeo and his theatrical reforms.

Girolamo Menghi discusses demonic manipulation of visual stimuli in his *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* (1576).[19] Written in Italian, it received a much wider readership than similar texts written in Latin. In Book One, Chapter Eight, Menghi describes modes of demonic temptation through theatrical reading of demonic activity:

> Possono [i demoni] anco (fatta alcuna trasmutatione corporale) operare certe cose, che non sono in natura, e farle apparere nella nostra imaginatione, col muovere l'organo della fantasia, secondo la diversità dei spiriti vitali, e fumosità; poiché questo possono anco fare certe cose esteriori, quali applicate in qualche modo al nostro cervello, faranno apparere una cosa per un'altra […]. Possono adunque i demoni operare cose mirabili in noi in due modi, cioè con vere trasmutationi

[19] For an enlightening analysis of Menghi's works, see Armando Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), esp. Ch. 3, pp. 96-136.

> corporali, e con illusioni; ma niuna di queste operationi si può chiamare miracolo; e perciò essi non possono fare miracolo.[20]
>
> [Demons can also, by making some physical transformations, perform things that are unnatural and make them appear in our imagination by influencing the organ of imagination, depending on the diversity of spirits and vapors. Certain external things, when applied to our brain, can also make one thing appear as another. Therefore, demons can perform wondrous things in us in two ways: through real physical transformations and through illusions. However, none of these actions can be called miracles, and thus, they cannot perform miracles.]

A demon inspires humans to sin by manifesting images—external and internal— that can affect human intellect. While the demon cannot directly force human will, it can be the cause of persuasion in two ways, either visibly or invisibly.[21] The external—visible—form of persuasion, perhaps the simplest form of temptation, occurs when a demon manifests some visible images or appears perceptibly in some form to its interlocutors.[22] The demon affects the intellect due to what the *Malleus maleficarum* calls man's "incautious use of the eyes."[23] The internal—invisible—form of persuasion occurs when the demon manipulates the images in its victim's mind. According to the *Malleus*, "the Devil can impress upon the intellect some appearance that elicits the act of understanding intellect."[24] In other words, good and bad angels have influence over material substance, including sense perception. Demons use this influence to move bodily

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[20] Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* (Venice: Appresso Fioravante Prati, 1595), Bk 1, Ch. 8, pp. 106-7.

[21] Many of these ideas come from the *Malleus maleficarum*. See, for example, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum*, ed. and trans. Christopher S. Mackay (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Part I, 50A-B, pp. 181-182. Angels, good and bad, are not capable of directly changing human free will, as this is only changeable by God. They can effect change in material things, which includes sensorial perception, as long as those changes do not affect the laws of nature.

[22] Menghi clearly drew from the *Malleus*'s explanation of "visible" and "invisible" demonic temptation and persuasion. See Kramer and Sprenger, *The Hammer of Witches*, Part I, 47B-D, pp. 175-176.

[23] Kramer and Sprenger, *The Hammer of Witches*, Part I, 50A, p. 181.

[24] Kramer and Sprenger, *The Hammer of Witches*, Part I, 47B-C, pp. 175-176.

humors so that targeted images preserved in human imagination and memory come forward to be perceived again by human reasoning as a form of temptation. The *Malleus*, discussing memory, states that:

> Relevant to the topic at hand is what happens in the case of sleeping people who are asleep in terms of apparitions of dreams from spirits, that is, of images deposited in places of preservation. | (This is the result of a natural movement in location on account of the blood and humors being set into motion toward those origins, that is, toward the internal virtues of perception, and we are speaking of motion within the head and in the compartments of the head.) This can also happen as the result of a similar motion caused by demons, in the case not only of people who are asleep but also of ones who are awake, in whom the demons can direct and set into motion the internal spirits and humors, so that the images stored in the places of preservation are brought forth from the storehouses to the origins of perception, that is, to the virtues of imagination and fantasy, so that this person can imagine certain things.[25]

The demon seizes its victim's faculties of reason by displaying specific images stored in the victim's memory. The demon can use these images to incline its victim to feel and act in specific ways. Nature does not produce these images—"non sono in natura," as Menghi says—but victims experience them through natural processes manipulated by the demon. Menghi exposes the limited material abilities of demonic illusions by highlighting the simple fact that these abilities are often simulated. The authors of these texts do occasionally mention stories in which the demonic trick is not a simulation; they are, at times, inconsistent regarding this distinction between mere illusion and physical transformation. Yet the fact remains that demons are confined to the natural—as opposed to the supernatural, which is divine—rendering their tricks like stage magic in the theater.

In Chapter XIII of his *Compendio*, titled "Come gli demoni nei corpi assonti possino parlare," Menghi explains how demons speak to their interlocutors with "corpi assonti," or

[25] Kramer and Sprenger, *The Hammer of Witches*, Part I, 48C, p. 178. See also Part I: 38B, p. 156; 58A-B, p. 198-199; and 60C-D, pp. 203-204.

assumed or possessed bodies. Although most of his discussion focuses on the non-sonorous "voice" of the demonic entity—when the demon's rhetoric speaks to the mind, in the mind—Menghi does note that demons can create actual sounds that mimic the human voice. For example, demons can make a corpse seem to speak by manipulating his or her vocal organs and producing sounds that the hearer might think are actual sentences, an example of which we will see in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Menghi implies his own overriding suspicion of mimicry—acting—and of voice, which can be manipulated to suit the speaker's needs. He first gives a long explanation of human vocal production in which he describes the necessary features of speech, including lungs, tongue, teeth, lips, air, and intent. Notably, he indicates that inanimate objects have their own natural sounds, which can be heard either when they are waved through the air or when they strike something or are stricken, as happens with interactions between the tongue, expelled air, teeth, and lips.[26] Demons, which are completely spiritual beings and have no physical means by which to make sound, must instead use their "corpi assonti" to imitate human voices.[27]

We should remember that Menghi's treatise is primarily about the rite of exorcism, and even here, Menghi is interested in explaining how the demon can use the possessed body to produce a voice as if from a human megaphone. In this case, Menghi's "corpi assonti" literally mean the taken or possessed bodies. On the other hand, Menghi makes clear in this short tract that he also speaks of the demonic entity itself, outside of the possessed human body, in which case "corpi assonti" refers to the compressed airy bodies that demons create for themselves in

[26] Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 152-153.
[27] Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 154.

order to take on a corporeal form.[28] A third possibility for Menghi is the possession of inanimate objects: a demon can inhabit or use inanimate objects, such as a dead body, as loci of sound production. Whether by human or spirit production, demons in Menghi's account prompt him to linger explicitly on the final destination of sound, which "va successivamente insino all'orecchio dell'audiente, il qual all'hora intende il concetto della mente di colui che parla" [reaches the ear of the listener, who then understands the concept of the speaker's mind].[29] Menghi frequently returns to sound's ultimate destination in the hearer's ear and mind, highlighting the dangerous influential nature of demonic voices. Indeed, theologians had for centuries expressed the importance of being deaf to the sounds of the demonic. Menghi says that the figures demons place into human minds begin to persuade and counsel, and often work on

> suscitando nelle menti nostre le memorie de' peccati carnali, e spesse volte concitado l'imagini, e passioni carnali tanto in quelli che dormono, con sogni sporchi, quanto in quelli che vegghiano. Alcuna volta anco vanno nelle parti vergognose, e concitandole, le provocano agli atti lussuriosi, amministrandogli, e sottoponendogli agli amori iniqui, e scelerati […].[30]
>
> [stirring in our minds memories of carnal sins, often provoking images and carnal passions both in those who sleep, with dirty dreams, and in those who are awake. Sometimes they even go to the shameful parts [of the body] and, by arousing them, incite them to lustful acts, leading and subjecting them to wicked and sinful loves.]

Menghi's detailed exposition reveals the extent to which demonic influence can penetrate human intellect, inciting sinful thoughts and actions in dreams and waking life.

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[28] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Claremont, CA: Coyote Canyon Press, 2018), *ST I*, Q. 50, Art. 2 "Whether an angel is composed of matter and form?", *Sed contra*. "quod primae creaturae *sicut incorporales et immateriales intelliguntur*." I quote from the Aquinas Institute's "Opera Omnia Project" online: Aquinas Institute, Inc., 2020, https://aquinas.cc/; see also Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric*, 34-35.

[29] Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 153.

[30] Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 152.

Chapter Descriptions

I unravel these themes in three chapters, as outlined below.

Chapter One, “The Preacher and the Stage: Carlo Borromeo and the Perils of Theater,” delves into Carlo Borromeo's perspective on the intersection of preaching and theater, emphasizing the potential dangers posed by theatrical practices to spiritual well-being. Borromeo, an influential figure in the Catholic Church during the Counter-Reformation, believed that effective preaching was crucial for guiding the faithful. He stressed that sermons, a form of vocal performance, must be delivered with skill and passion in order to awaken the hearts of both virtuous individuals and hardened sinners. Borromeo's reforms were deeply rooted in ancient rhetorical traditions, aiming to perfect the orators' delivery to maximize their influence. He viewed theatrical performances, particularly those of the secular variety, as morally and spiritually corrupting. This suspicion extended to all forms of theater, which he believed could lead the public away from the Church's teachings and into sinful behavior. Borromeo's efforts to control theatrical practices were part of a broader Tridentine initiative to sanctify society. His strict views on theater led to significant tension between the Church's desire for control and the growing market for secular theater. Despite his comprehensive reforms and condemnation of theatricality, Borromeo acknowledged the inherent challenge of balancing the need for engaging sermons with the risk of adopting theatrical techniques that could corrupt the preacher and the congregation. Ultimately, Borromeo's work highlighted the critical role of the preacher in shaping the moral and spiritual landscape of society. By perfecting the art of preaching and emphasizing the use of the vernacular to reach a broader audience, he sought to counteract the secular influences of the theater and maintain the Church's moral authority.

Chapter Two, "Hearing Demons: Sounds and Subversion in Demonic Stage Space," examines the complex role of demonic voices in both literary and stage spectacles. It begins with a theological inspection of the demonic voice using demonological treatises and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* as foundational examples for the second half of the chapter, which examines hagiographical sung dialogues such as Girolamo Bartolomei's *Vittoria di S. Antonio* (1657), and operatic works such as Giulio Rospigliosi's 1634 opera *Il Sant'Alessio.* The chapter argues that demonic voices serve as powerful tools of imitation, influencing and altering the identities of their interlocutors. The study draws from various sources, including treatises, popular tales, and scriptural traditions, to highlight how the auditory realm becomes a pivotal space where listeners are lured and entrapped by demonic forces. Examining the work of demonologist Zaccaria Visconti, we learn about the categorization of three main types of language: the divine language of God, the vocal language of humans, and the spiritual language of angels and demons. This categorization raises questions about the nature of demonic voices, particularly whether they can be physically heard or can communicate directly to the mind. The discussion incorporates Girolamo Menghi's insights, which describe how demons can influence humans either through direct mental communication or by manipulating sensory perceptions to lead people to erroneous conclusions. The core argument posits that Renaissance demons can be seen as actors, with their vocalizations and manipulations creating a theatrical interplay between themselves and their human interlocutors. This interplay reflects broader themes of agency, the power of sound, and the continuous interaction between the diabolical and the human. The sonic plane, therefore, is depicted as a stage for spiritual conflict and introspection, where the boundaries between the self and the demonic other are blurred, as seen in *Il Sant'Alessio*. The chapter ultimately offers a perspective on the theatricality of demonic encounters, emphasizing

the significant role of sound in shaping beliefs about demons and their influence on human behavior.

In Chapter Three, "Constructing the Body Politic in the Medicean Musical Intermedi of 1589," I examine the role of the sorceress in the fourth intermedio of the 1589 Medici wedding festivities, highlighting how her ambiguous character becomes a pivotal element in Ferdinando de' Medici's political theater. This sorceress, introduced within a lavish stage spectacle, symbolizes both disorder and potential harmony, acting as a catalyst for divine intervention. Her portrayal is a hybrid of mythological and literary figures, blending the seductive qualities of Tasso's Armida and the multifaceted nature of Hecate, which allows her to embody both chaos and cosmic order. The chapter situates the sorceress within the broader context of the intermedi, a series of six musical performances interspersed within Girolamo Bargagli's comedy *La pellegrina.* These intermedi were meticulously crafted by Giovanni de' Bardi and his team, including renowned composers Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri, to enhance the spectacle of the Medici wedding. The sorceress's dramatic invocation of celestial spirits in the fourth intermedio, set against a backdrop of elaborate stage machinery, prefigures the arrival of Jove and the onset of a new golden age, metaphorically linked to the Medici dynasty's aspirations. The ambiguity of the sorceress's character is central to the political message. She is both a figure of allure and a harbinger of divine justice, reflecting Ferdinando's dual role as a ruler who must confront disorder to establish harmony. This duality aligns with the Neoplatonic and hermetic themes pervasive in the Medici court, where divine right and political power are interwoven. The intermedi, with their rich symbolism and elaborate spectacle, serve to reinforce Ferdinando's image as a divinely ordained leader. Through a blend of visual and verbal emblems, the intermedi convey complex ideological messages, with the sorceress's intermedio being

particularly significant. Her invocation scene, culminating in the dramatic appearance of a Hellmouth, visually contrasts infernal chaos with the promise of celestial order under Ferdinando's rule. This spectacle seduces the audience into a shared experience of theatrical and political myth-making, enhancing the perceived legitimacy of Ferdinando's sovereignty. In conclusion, the chapter argues that the sorceress's ambiguous role in the 1589 intermedi is crucial for understanding how theatrical spectacle and political propaganda were intertwined to legitimize Ferdinando's rule. Her character embodies the tension between chaos and order, serving as a powerful symbol of the Medici's divine mandate and their promise to bring a new era of prosperity and stability to Tuscany.

In the Coda, "Possession, Exorcism, Deception," I scrutinize the obscure Venetian comic opera *Il demone amante, overo il Giugurta* (1685) by Matteo Noris (1640-1714), a tale steeped in deceit and supernatural masquerade. Noris crafts a sinister narrative wherein a servant and a courtier conspire to delude a princess into falling in love with a fabricated demon, Pluto. This Pluto, merely a courtier in disguise, is "conjured" through a staged pagan ritual. The princess's ensuing erratic behavior alarms King Giugurta, who summons a priest. Mistaking her delirium for demonic possession, the priest initiates a chaotic exorcism, culminating in the princess physically expelling him. The scheme unravels, resulting in the banishment of the conspirators. The opera's libretto, censored by the *Esecutori Contro la Bestemmia*, reveals the tension between Noris's artistic vision and Venetian religious morality. Though set in the second century BCE, the opera's Christian allusions prompted censors to excise the priest, exorcism, and any lascivious depictions of the demon, retitling it simply *Il Giugurta*. This censorship underscores the Church's anxiety over representations of demonic possession and exorcism on stage. Exorcism, inherently performative, dictates specific actions and dialogues for the priest. Despite the farcical nature of

Noris's exorcism scene, the *Esecutori* discerned its underlying implications. The princess's sincere devotion to the demon, viewed as an act of heresy, and the priest's earnest belief in her possession, amplify the opera's central theme: deception. This theme probes the power of belief to shape reality, as the princess's delusion leads to her spiritual and rational downfall, and the priest's conviction precipitates a misguided exorcism. By juxtaposing *Il demone amante* with its censored counterpart, *Il Giugurta*, I illuminate the stakes of depicting diabolical themes on stage during this time. Noris's opera and its subsequent censorship not only expose the potency of deception but also critique the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable portrayals of the supernatural, revealing the societal and ecclesiastical anxieties of the period.

Chapter 1

The Preacher and the Stage:
Carlo Borromeo and the Perils of Theater

"[…] adfectus omnes languescant necesse est, nisi voce, vultu, totius prope habitu corporis inardescunt."

[…all emotions inevitably languish, unless they are kindled into flame by voice, face, and the bearing of virtually the whole body.][1]

St. Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan from 1564-1584, was an integral figure in the Counter-Reformation. He managed to reform the structure of the local diocese by implementing a series of eleven Diocesan Synods and six Provincial Councils in his home episcopal venue of Milan.[2] They served in large part to highlight and strengthen Bishops' legal authorities in their local episcopates. At the various synods, debates ranged from priestly conduct, the rite of confession, and heresy to sexual misconduct and witchcraft. The previous Milanese provincial council took place 254 years prior in 1311, so Borromeo's move put him on the map and made him an example for other preachers across Europe. In a letter to the young Borromeo, Tolomeo Gallio, the Cardinal of Como, told him: "lei può ben credere, che non Roma sola, ma quasi tutta la buona Europa sta hora fissa et intenta" [you can surely believe that not only Rome, but almost

[1] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, trans. D. A. Russell, vol. V, V vols. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001), 11.3.2, p. 87.

[2] Elisabetta Patrizi, "Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, in the Midst of Religious Disciplining, Pastoral Renewal and Christian Education (1564-1584)," *History of Education & Children's Literature* III, no. 1 (2008): 38.

the entirety of Europe, are now attentive and staring].[3] Indeed, Borromeo sent the texts of the synods to various dioceses across southern Italy, and local Bishops began to represent the central power of the Church, following Borromeo and his many reforms as models.[4]

Borromeo was particularly preoccupied with the perils of secular theatrical practice, which he viewed as the epitome of immorality and even the main cause of divine punishment in the form of plague.[5] He figured that to best influence and control secular activity, he had to first reinforce the Bishop's power over the secular and ecclesiastical spheres. Out of this line of thinking came several manuals on how to preach, give confession, and even construct and decorate religious buildings, all in addition to his tracts explicitly attacking spectacle as a means to *negotium diabili*. With the reinforced power of being a bishop, he gave special attention to reforming predicatory practice, through which he could ensure more widespread dissemination of his ideologies to clerics and congregations alike. In the introductory letter to his *Instructiones prædicationis verbi Dei* (1573), a treatise on preacherly oration and delivery, he stresses that "per certo la predica non pure verrà a stimolare i buoni ad ogni virtù e santità, ma scuoterà altresì il

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[3] Tolomeo Gallio, *Lettere inedite di Tolomeo Gallio Cardinale di Como al Cardinale Carlo Borromeo Arcivescovo di Milano nei Pontificati di Pio IV, Pio V e Gregorio XIII*, ed. Antonio Monti, vol. 7 (Como: Periodico della Società Storica per la Provincia e antica Diocesi di Como, 1889), 39.

[4] See also Armando Maggi, *Uttering the Word: The Mystical Performances of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, a Renaissance Visionary* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 12.

[5] See Borromeo's *Liber memorialis editus a S. Carolo An. 1579*, found in the Appendix of Carlo Borromeo, Juan de Mariana, and Daniele Concina, "De choreis, et spectaculis in festis diebus non exhibendis accedit collectio selectarum sententiarum ejusdem adversus choreas, et spectacula ex ejus statutis, edictis, institutionibus, homiliis," in *De spectaculis theatralibus: Christiano cuique tum laico, tum clerico vetitis dissertationes duae; accedit dissertatio tertia De presbyteris personatis*, Editio secunda: cui S. Caroli Borromei Opusculum de choreis & spectaculis &c. ejusdemque selectae sententiae huc spectantes adjectae sunt. (Rome: Apud Simonem Occhi, 1754), 357. The Appendix section is titled "Appendix seu collectio selectarum sententiarum S. Carolo Borromæi" [Appendix or collection of selected sayings of St. Charles Borromeo]. The contents of the Appendix are in both Italian and Latin.

cuore dei più indurate peccatori; e dissipando le folte tenebre dei vizi, in cui dormono un sonno di morte, ne illuminerà le menti colla luce soavissima della verità" [of course a sermon does not only stimulate the good in all virtues and holiness but also shakes the hearts of the most hardened sinners. And dispelling the thick darkness of vices, in which sinners sleep a sleep of death, it illuminates their minds with the sweetest light of truth].[6]

Though not explicitly stated, the initial stimulus in a sermon is the preacher's voice. Indeed I would argue that a sermon is, at its core, a vocal performance. Borromeo deeply contemplated the voice and its role in preaching. He traced the voice's influence on hearers back to the ancient orators, from whom he pulled many of his reformational ideas for preaching. Yet he remained skeptical of the ancients' deep-seated reliance on spectacle in their oratorical practices, making sure to warn preachers not to cross the line into theatrics. In the final chapter of the *Instructiones*, titled "On the Voice and Movement of the Body," he says:

> 1. Gli antichi rétori trattarono diffusamente dalla pronunzia, del gesto, dell'azione. Il ricercare però con troppo studio queste cose, quasiché in esse consista la bontà della predica, disconviene assai al ministro della divina parola; particolarmente se si considera, come da quei maestri s'insegnarono certi movimenti della persona non pur leggeri e puerili, ma veramente da scena, perciò indegnissimi e della persona d'un sacro oratore, e della sanità del pulpito che è cattedra della verità.
> 2. Ciononostante, alcuni di quei precetti, che conferiscono alla gravità e decoro della sacra predicazione, si possono utilmente studiare dal predicatore per valersene a commovere gli uditori rendendo più animato il suo discorso.
> 3. Procuri egli dunque dapprima di regolare la voce per modo, che nulla apparisca d'artificioso, ma esca colla più schietta naturalezza.

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[6] Carlo Borromeo, *Instructiones prædicationis verbi Dei*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, trans. from Latin to Italian by a priest of the Oratorio of S. Filippo Neri in Turin (1873) (Milano: Il Club di Milano, 2012), 22. When necessary, the original Latin will be quoted using Carlo Borromeo, *Instructiones praedicationis verbi Dei* (Brescia: Apud Marcum Antonium Marchettum, 1650), https://books.google.com/books?id=TEDXNEtF1DcC&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=instructiones+praedicationis+verbi+Dei+et+confessariorum+borromeo&source=bl&ots=H449MAcsX7&sig=ACfU3U236ZnvBlmLUeECpv8xML3HqS7nmA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwinn8yfhKqEAxVL5MkDHeTLAI4Q6AF6BAgZEAM#v=onepage&q&f=false. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

> 4. La moduli a seconda dei gesti che fa e delle cose che dice, acciò per avventura non dica con gran calore cose di poco momento e semplicissime, credendosi di persuadere soltanto col tuono della voce e col gesto. Per contro argomenti più incalzanti non esponga con voce fiacca, che piuttosto sembri recitar la lezione, anziché predicare qual uomo penetrato delle verità, di cui vuole persuadere gli altri.[7]
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> [1. The ancient rhetoricians extensively discussed pronunciation, gesture, and action. However, to overly focus on these elements, as if the goodness of the sermon consists in them, is quite unsuitable for the minister of the divine word; particularly if one considers how those teachers taught certain movements of the body that are not only frivolous and childish but truly theatrical, and thus most unworthy of a sacred orator and the sanctity of the pulpit, which is the chair of truth.
> 2. Nevertheless, some of those precepts, which contribute to the gravity and decorum of sacred preaching, can be usefully studied by the preacher to employ them in moving the audience, thereby making his discourse livelier.
> 3. Let him therefore first strive to regulate his voice in such a way that nothing appears artificial, but it comes forth with the utmost naturalness.
> 4. He should modulate it according to the gestures he makes and the things he says, so that he does not, by chance, speak with great fervor about matters of little importance and simplicity, believing he can persuade solely with the tone of his voice and gestures. Conversely, he should not present the most pressing arguments with a weak voice, which would seem more like reciting a lesson than preaching as a man deeply convinced of the truths he wishes to persuade others of.]

His insistence on downplaying the importance of pronunciation, gesture, and action is to be expected; the strength of divine truth through the words of the preacher should be enough to empower his sermon, an example of a way of thinking perhaps indebted to the scholastics and their pushback against Ciceronian humanism and the discipline of rhetoric. And yet, in his second point, Borromeo admits and even embraces the persuasive power of those very theatrical principles. He seems to be most suspicious of gesture and movement, which he deems frivolous and the antithesis of truth, essentially an insult to the "sanctity of the pulpit," the priest's sermon, and the congregation seeking spiritual guidance. Gestures, and the tone of voice that accompanies them, should instead be tempered and subject to the message being portrayed. The

[7] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, XX.1-4, p. 44.

spectacle alone of bodily motion and tone is too distracting, potentially obfuscating or marring the preacher's arguments. The final thirty-two points of this chapter approach the minutia of vocal and gestural theatrics that a preacher should practice, from when and how to whisper or shout to when to raise one's eyebrows or lift one's arm. For as much as Borromeo warns against over-focusing on these elements, he spends ample time here and in the rest of the treatise teaching preachers how to harness theatrical principles, based on ancient oratorical teachings, to persuade their congregations toward his worldview. Borromeo's theatrical style lies primarily in the management of the voice and, as we shall see, in the preacher's rhetoric as inscribed on the voice.

In what follows, I examine Borromeo's view of predicatory instruction and its implications for theatrical spaces. Discussing the perceived perils of theater, I highlight the tensions between theatrical traditions and the Catholic Church, all in light of Borromeo's theatrical reforms. His preaching reforms drew heavily from ancient tracts on rhetoric, which emphasize perfecting the orators' delivery (acting) skills to best influence their hearers. The ancient performative educational style aimed to reach and influence as many people as possible. It also aligned with Tridentine reforms, which desired a sacralized society and so encouraged its priests to lead their congregations with education and discipline.[8] Borromeo's theatrical preaching style and clerical reforms contributed immensely to this culture of discipline and sacralization. He used them to increase priests', and subsequently popular, suspicion of mimicry

[8] On the Catholic Church's disciplinary catechesis, see Dilwyn Knox, "Disciplina: le origini monastiche e clericali del buon comportamento nell'Europa cattolica del Cinquecento e del primo Seicento," in *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Paolo Prodi and Carla Penuti (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 1994), 63–99; Wolfgang Reinhard, "Disciplinamento sociale, confessionalizzazione, modernizzazione: Un discorso storiografico," in *Disciplina dell'anima,* 101–23; Patrizi, "Carlo Borromeo…", 33, 55.

and acting, especially in secular stage spaces, thus carving out more space for Christian intervention in this sphere. And yet, although his reforms touched nearly every aspect of daily life, they ultimately failed to decisively eradicate what he viewed as heretical theatrical practice.

This failure marks a critical moment in the development of secular theater by exposing the widening gap between the growing secular marketplace and the values professed by the Tridentine Catholic Church.[9] The Church recognized that the failure to adequately control secular theatrical practice signaled a loss of power and a loosening grip on the masses, which would entail a shift in moral values away from the pressing need for the repentance and prayer that kept Satan at bay. As the *commedia* tradition expanded, professional troupes could be found performing in streets, in or at the borders of forests, in private houses, in ticketed theaters (for the most elite troupes), or in pop-up stage banks. *Commedia* swiftly spread, cutting across geographical, class, and even language barriers.[10] Borromeo feared that the establishment of a legitimate secular theatrical market could infiltrate and mar public perception of moral rights and wrongs. He especially feared thematic content that included violent and physical humor, profane and lewd behavior, and representations of mythic creatures.[11] Borromeo's antitheatricalist insistence on the perils of theater was not a knee-jerk reactionary effort against a growing secular

[9] See Rosalind Kerr, *The Rise of the Diva on the Sixteenth-Century Commedia Dell'arte Stage* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 19. Kerr's book examines professional theater's emergence amidst various economic changes in the 16th and 17th centuries. See also Matt Cawson, "Corporeality and Subversion in Post-Renaissance Italy: The Inquisition and the Commedia Dell'Arte," *Platform* 7, no. 1 (March 2013): 26–41; Louise George Clubb, "Giambattista Della Porta, Dramatist," in *Giambattista Della Porta, Dramatist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 72-73, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400874927.

[10] See Emily Wilbourne, *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of the Commedia Dell'arte* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), especially the Introduction, "The Tragedies and Comedies Recited by the *Zanni*," and Chapter 1, "The Commedia dell'Arte as Theater."

[11] On thematic content, see Wilbourne, *Seventeenth-Century Opera*, 3-4 and 186 n.6.

market but was instead a slow, calculated move that allowed him to align his reforms with the Tridentine Church's endeavor to sanctify its flock. As much as Borromeo despised theater, he found a way to appropriate theatrical principles as a means to squash theatrical practice. In other words, he meditated on the sonic and visual stimuli of preacherly transmission and struck a balance between their affective (theatrical) pull and their usefulness for spiritual instruction. By positioning the priest as the "animarum curator" [guardian of souls] under a new set of instructions, he simultaneously elevated acting—especially when rooted in language—to the level of a spiritual medium of salvation, and reinforced the notion that the Church, under Borromeo's new disciplines and educational practices, was the only safeguard against the evils of spectacle.[12]

Acting and the Priest

Borromeo drew heavily from ancient tracts on rhetoric to construct his philosophy on sermons and acting principles. The sixteenth century was saturated with Ciceronian teachings. This interest is reflected especially in Pietro Bembo's writings on rhetoric, especially his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525). Bembo's discussions and debates about language were deeply Ciceronian. He aimed to raise the Italian language to the status of Latin while providing new guidelines for use largely based on Ciceronian oratorical teachings.[13] In Book 1, he likens his contemporary Italian to the Roman's Latin; the Romans had Greek as their erudite language yet used their native tongue—Latin—for writing, "quale Cicerone" [as Cicero had done], just as modern

[12] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, I.4, p. 3.

[13] See Martha Feldman, "Currents in Venetian Literary and Linguistic Theory: The Consolidation of Poetry and Rhetoric," in *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 123-155. Feldman discusses various Renaissance treatises on the *questione della lingua*, especially regarding sound and music.

Italians should also use their own "volgar lingua."[14] He expands on this in Book 2, asserting Ciceronian principles of oratorical persuasion as the basis for a new Italian poetics, a model he also sees done in Petrarchan poetry and Boccaccian prose.[15] Bembo highlights sound, rhythm, and variation as the essential rhetorical principles to produce "la Gravità et la Piacevolezza" [seriousness and agreeableness or lightness], both of which are required, in good writing, to effectively persuade.[16] These principles come directly from Cicero's discussion of effective delivery in, especially, his *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *De oratore.* In these sections, Cicero systematically goes through every quality of a good orator, including variation in rhetorical style, bodily and facial gestures, and tone of voice.[17] Crucially, Cicero's orator aims to persuade while Bembo's writer, and subsequently Borromeo's preacher, begin to embrace persuasion in terms of manipulation.

In his *De oratore,* Cicero praises voice for carrying the greatest share "for effectiveness and distinction in delivery."[18] He ends the treatise describing how the orator's trained voice, and the rhetoric that he applies to it, "adds charm to the delivery" and leaves only the perception of the delivery with the hearers.[19] The orator's voice and speech, if trained well, do not distract from the orator's arguments but instead charm the audience into accepting the argument's impression as a memory. In the thesis of the *De oratore,* Cicero writes that

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[14] Pietro Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua* (Venice: Giovan Tacuino, 1525), 1.4, https://archive.org/details/ita-bnc-pos-0000003-001/page/n196/mode/2up.

[15] Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua*, 2.37-38.

[16] Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua*, 2.36-37.

[17] On delivery, see Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, Mass.: Havard Univ. Press, 2004), 3.11.19-3.15.27, pp. 189-201; Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De oratore. 2: Book III. De fato. Paradoxa stoicorum. De Partitione oratoria*, trans. H. Rackham, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007), 3.56.213-end.

[18] Cicero, *De oratore,* 3.60.224, p. 179.

[19] Cicero, *De oratore*, 3.60.227, p. 183.

> […] there is to my mind no more excellent thing than the power, by means of oratory, to get a hold on assemblies of men, win their good will, direct their inclinations wherever the speaker wishes, or divert them from whatever he wishes. […T]he wise control of the complete orator is that which chiefly upholds not only his own dignity, but the safety of countless individuals and the entire State.[20]

Borromeo, taking inspiration from the sixteenth-century Ciceronian institution, more explicitly refers to the voice's force at the end of his *Instructiones.* In its final chapter, titled "Della voce e del movimento del corpo," Borromeo provides a long list of rules for how a preacher should manipulate his voice and body to best win the attention of his flock. The level of situational detail in the *Instructiones* is quite astounding. Take, for example, just four of his thirty-six rules:

> 7. Si guardi dall'eccessiva lentezza, come di chi stenta a trar fuori la parola; e parimente dal difetto contrario della precipitazione, per cui ciò che si dice, si dimentica appena detto, senza fermarsi nulla nella mente degli uditori […].
> 8. Nell'esordio vuol tenersi una voce alquanto dimessa e pacata, ché una voce canora ed elevata nuocerebbe alla modestia dell'esordio ed a tutto il seguito della predica.
> […]
> 17. Nell'esordio dee parlare con voce pacata simile a quella dei discorsi famigliari.
> 18. Nella narrazione dee cambiar tuono di voce secondo i fatti e le loro circostanze che si narrano. Nel raccontare imprese di valore la sua loquela sia spedita; nell'esporre avvenimenti grandiosi dev'essere assai aperta e grave.
> […]
> 20. Nei rimproveri, che fanno eziandio parte dell'epilogo, adoperi un tono di voce bassa, frequenti incisi, lunghe pause e grande varietà d'espressione.[21]
>
> [7. Beware of excessive slowness in speech, as in those who struggle to get their words out. And beware equally of the opposite defect of haste, whereby what is said is forgotten as soon as it is said, without anything remaining on the listeners' minds […].
> 8. At the start of a sermon, a somewhat modest and calm voice should be used, as a singing and elevated voice would be detrimental to the modesty of the opening and the rest of the sermon.
> […]

[20] Cicero, *De oratore,* 1.8.30, 34. See also Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, Mass.: Havard Univ. Press, 2004), 1.2.2, p. 5.

[21] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, XX.7, 8, 17-18, 20, pp. 45-47. For the original Latin, see Borromeo, *Instructiones*), XX.7-8, 17, 18, 20, pp. 45-47.

> 17. In the beginning, the preacher should speak in a calm voice, similar to that of colloquial speech. (*et quotidiano sermoni proximam*).
> 18. When narrating, the tone of the voice must change according to the facts and their narrated circumstances. In recounting feats of valor, let his voice be quick; in explaining grandiose events, let it be very open and serious (*plenis faucibus, et sedatissimâ voce*).
> […]
> 20. In reproaches, which are also part of the sermon's epilogue, use a low tone of voice, frequent asides, long pauses, and a great variety of expressions.]

If the preacher speaks too quickly or too slowly, with too much or too little volume, too severely or too familiarly, he might lose his grip on the congregants. The congregants might also distort the preacher's messages due to inattentiveness or misunderstandings. Much of this echoes Cicero's *Orator*, where he outlines styles of oration. These include plain, middle, and high speech styles, each increasing in complexity to allow the orator the rhetorical variety necessary to be understood by any audience.[22]

To more clearly explain the power of the preacher's voice, Borromeo creates an analogy between it and a rooster's voice. Each voice calls out with instructions: the preacher's voice calls its listeners to piety, and the rooster's voice calls its hearers to awaken to the morning sun—here a representation of divine, purifying light. The Bible frequently depicts the rooster's crow as a revelatory sign: in *Matthew* 26:34, Peter sees the truth only after the rooster's call. Borromeo explains that the rooster's voice sounds differently depending on the hearer's relationship with sin. When the hearer is already on the path of enlightenment, the rooster's voice sounds sweet and it shakes ("scuotere") the hearer out of a sinful lethargy ("letargo del peccato"); conversely, a hearer immersed in the slumber of sin ("immerse in profondo sopore") hears a raucous voice

[22] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Brutus; Orator*, trans. G. L. Hendrickson and H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007), 23-29.75-101, pp. 361-379. See also Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*, 123–155, esp. pp. 138-140 for a discussion of stylistic variety.

("una voce rauca"), necessarily harsher to wrench the hearer from a sinful sleep.[23] Medieval bestiaries frequently associated the preacher with the rooster, as the bird perceives the difference between light and dark, announcing the light as a preacher does in his sermons. It understands the rhythms of life and, as a being of watchfulness—it guards its flock of hens—it aids mankind in recognizing these rhythms by performatively beating its wings and scratching itself in regular intervals.[24] Like the rooster, the preacher regularly, instructively performs for his flock and guards them against sin.

With the rooster imagery, Borromeo also illustrates to the preacher the precarious nature of his sermons. Despite the rooster's potential for good, it can just as easily signify pride. According to legend, the rooster lays an egg and, in awe of itself, decides to bury it for incubation. The egg represents the poisonous outcome of the rooster's pride. The legend explains that a toad must perceive the poison in the egg, sit on it, and cause it to hatch a monstrous basilisk.[25] In other words, if the preacher becomes prideful of his own homiletic abilities, his

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[23] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, XVIII.8, p. 44.

[24] See Cynthia White, "*Potianes ad sanandum*: Text as Remedy in a Medieval Latin Bestiary," in *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Explorations of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Fundamentals of medieval and early modern culture 19 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), esp. p. 262; John A. Moore, "Understanding Nature: Form and Function," *American Zoologist* 28, no. 2 (1988): 513; Kevin K. Birth, "The Regular Sound of the Cock: Context-Dependent Time Reckoning in the Middle Ages 1," *KronoScope* 11, no. 1–2 (2011): esp. pp. 128, 134-135, https://doi.org/10.1163/156852411X595305; Mortimer J. Donovan, "The 'Moralite' of the Nun's Priest's Sermon," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 52, no. 4 (1953): esp. pp. 501-503.

[25] See Ricardo Piñero Moral, "Aesthetics of Evil in Middle Ages: Beasts as Symbol of the Devil," *Religions* 12, no. 11 (November 2, 2021): 13-14, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12110957; Jesse Elvin, "Responsibility, 'Bad Luck', and Delinquent Animals: Law as a Means of Explaining Tragedy," *The Journal of Criminal Law* 73, no. 6 (December 2009): 534, https://doi.org/10.1350/jcla.2009.73.6.607; Esther Cohen, "Law, Folklore and Animal Lore," *Past & Present*, no. 110 (1986): 34-35. The basilisk is also synonymous with the Devil and is evocative of the serpent that tempted Eve in the garden. For more on the basilisk, the Devil, and pride, see Moral, "Aesthetics of Evil in Middle Ages," 14.

pride might poison his sermons and produce dire outcomes for his congregants.[26] The *Instructiones* repeatedly warns the preacher to be as educated as possible, to truly know, comprehend, and live what he preaches.[27] This is evocative of part of Cicero's arguments in the *De oratore* about an orator's knowledge: "For excellence in speaking cannot be made manifest unless the speaker fully comprehends the matter he speaks about."[28] Borromeo explicitly associates the preacher's erudition and mastery of theology with the spiritual health of his congregants:

> Così formato il predicatore, cioè provveduto di scienza, di vita esemplare, di santi costumi, assiduo nella meditazione delle cose celesti può dirsi ministro idoneo del Vangelo, talché se ne debba sperare gran frutto nel popolo, di cui procura la salute coi tre mezzi ricordati da san Bernardo, colla parola, coll'esempio e colla preghiera.[29]
>
> [Once the preacher is thus formed, that is, equipped with knowledge, exemplary life, holy conduct, and assiduous in the meditation of heavenly matters, he can be considered a suitable minister of the Gospel, such that great fruit may be hoped for in the people, whose salvation he pursues through the three means mentioned by St. Bernard: through word, through example, and through prayer.].

For Borromeo, the preacher's words and examples directly influence the congregants' state of being, so he must be careful not to confuse or bore them: "21. Eviti i termini ambigui, che alla stessa sentenza danno un doppio senso. 22. Non sia troppo conciso, cosicché gli animi degli uditori rimangano sospesi ed incerti; non oscuro che a prima giunta non intendasi ciò che vuol dire" [21. Avoid ambiguous terms that give a sentence a double meaning. 22. Do not be too

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[26] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, IV.17-18, p. 28.

[27] For select examples, see Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, II.5, p. 25; III.1, 2, 5, 7, 13, 19, 20, 26-27, pp. 26-27; VI.5, 14, p. 31; X, pp. 34-36.

[28] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore 1: Books I – II*, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007), 1.11.48-49, p. 37.

[29] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, IV.16, p. 28.

concise, so that the minds of the listeners are left suspended and uncertain; not so obscure that at first glance it is not understood what is meant.].[30] Especially regarding the rooster's proclivity to sin, Martha Feldman details animal myths surrounding the rooster that paint it as a highly sexualized, fetishized masculine animal, occasionally also associated with *commedia dell'arte* characters.[31] Crucially, she stresses that fowl, in various animal myths, serve as metaphors for human variability between "a stable social self and an alien other."[32] I argue that the preacher similarly exists in this borderland theatrical space where he must balance producing socially acceptable and spiritually sound performances against the perceived tendency of theatrical acts wrenching performers (and hearers/observers) into sin.

For Borromeo, sin and theater were inextricably linked. He even went so far as to preach from the altar instead of from the pulpit so as not to contaminate his body with a space associated with theatricality.[33] Yet if we think of the altar—and mass itself—as the locale and act of religious theater, Borromeo instead further contaminated the religious space with oral theatricality. His *Instructiones*, published alongside the decrees of the Third Provincial Council of Milan (10 May 1573), acknowledged and embraced the emotional and spiritual needs of churchgoers by preferencing the vernacular Italian as the language of preaching:

> 16. Predicando poi ai contadini, le similitudini prese dal campo, dalla vigna, dal frumento, dalle viti, dal lino, dalla canapa, dagli alberi, sterpi e simili oggetti di agricoltura, fanno cappello.
> 17. Parimenti con altre condizioni di persone convien adoperare le similitudini più confacenti alla loro arte, professione o mestiere; conciossiaché avendo essi le

[30] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, XIX.21-22, pp. 44-45.

[31] Martha Feldman, *The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015), 4, 24-27, 30, and 209.

[32] Feldman, *Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds*, 4.

[33] Teresa Megale, "Animated Pulpits: On Performative Preaching in Seventeenth-Century Naples," *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, March 10, 2018, 131, https://doi.org/10.13128/JEMS-2279-7149-22840.

> cognizioni spettanti ai loro impieghi e stato, ove loro si parli un linguaggio conforme all'arte che professano, o al genere di vita che tengono, più facilmente si ammaestrano nelle cose spirituali.[34]
>
> [16. When preaching to peasants, analogies drawn from the countryside, vineyards, wheat, vines, flax, hemp, trees, brushwood, and similar objects of agriculture are fitting.
> 17. Likewise, with other groups of people, it is necessary to use analogies that are more suited to their art, profession, or trade; because they possess the knowledge relevant to their jobs and status, when they hear language consistent with the art they practice or the way of life they lead, they more easily learn about spiritual matters.]

While Latin was the language of the Mass as performance, Italian was the language of preaching, advancing the immediacy with which congregants understood and internalized the preacher's wisdom.[35] The preacher could multiply his efficacy by adopting the local idioms of his congregants. Indeed, Borromeo obsessively pushed the importance of affect in the *Instructiones*, greatly emphasizing *pathos* over *logos* as the key to capturing the hearers' attention and "moving" the affections of their souls: "A quel modo adunque che per tutte le membra del corpo scorre il sangue, così in tutte le parti della predica procuri d'innestarvi alcunché di commovente; perciò faccia uno studio indefesso di quegli argomenti che valgano a muovere gli affetti […]" [Just as blood flows through all the limbs of the body, so in all parts of the sermon you should strive to graft something moving; thus, make an unceasing study of those arguments that can stir

[34] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, III.16-17. See also Carlo Borromeo and Catholic Church, Province of Milan, Archdiocese of Milan, *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis: a Carolo cardinali S. Praxedis archiepiscopo condita, Federici card. Borromaei archiepiscopi mediolani ivssv: unique diligentius collecta, & edita.* (Mediolani: Ex officina typographica quon. Pacifici Pontij, 1599), 476, https://archive.org/details/actaecclesiaemed01cath/page/4/mode/2up?q=profano.

[35] See also Elisabetta Patrizi, "Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, in the Midst of Religious Disciplining, Pastoral Renewal and Christian Education (1564-1584)," *History of Education & Children's Literature* III, no. 1 (2008): 50. Here, Patrizi discusses Borromeo's insistence on pastoral preaching in vernacular.

the emotions. […].].[36] These tendencies contributed to a growing affinity between priests and theatricality over the next century.[37] For example, Paolo Aresi, in his *Arte di predicar bene* (1611), cites Borromeo's *Instructiones* and takes it a step further, explaining that without great affect in the preacher's sermon, "farebbe la predica come cadavero senza sangue, fredda, e priva di vita" [it would render the sermon like a cadaver without blood, cold and lifeless].[38] On the parallels between preachers and actors, Teresa Megale reports that the famous seventeenth-century actor and playwright Giovan Battista Andreini even wrote that "i gesuiti sono i comici della Germania" [the Jesuits are the actors of Germany] in a letter to the ducal secretary at the Mantuan court (and playwright) Ercole Marliani.[39] This effectively emphasized the ongoing struggle for attention between priests and actors.

Borromeo wasn't ignorant of this struggle even in his time. He meditated deeply on the sonic and visual stimuli that preachers transmit to their congregants. He preoccupied himself with explaining the functions of these stimuli and contemplated how to strike a balance between their affective (theatrical) pull and their spiritual instruction. Between his collected homilies and his *Instructiones*, he instructed preachers that their sermons acted as spiritual nutrients for their

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[36] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, III.31, p. 27.

[37] See Gabriele Frasca, *La letteratura nel reticolo mediale: la lettera che muore* (Bologna: L. Sossella, 2015), especially p. 323, where Catholic preachers are compared to the best actors.

[38] Paolo Aresi, *Arte di predicar bene* (Venice: Appresso Bernardo Giunti, Gio. Battista Ciotti, & Compagni, 1611), 160. For more of Borromeo's legacy, see Andrea Battistini, "Forme e tendenze della predicazione barocca," in *La predicazione nel Seicento*, ed. Maria Luisa Doglio and Carlo Delcorno, Collana di studi della Fondazione Michele Pellegrino (Bologna: Il mulino, 2009), 23–48.

[39] Megale, "Animated Pulpits…," 132. See also: Giovanni Battista Andreini et al., eds., *Comici Dell'arte: Corrispondenze*, (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1993), esp. p. 142. For more on Merliani's biography and playwrighting, see Albi Rosenthal, "Monteverdi's 'Andromeda': A Lost Libretto Found," *Music and Letters* 66, no. 1 (January 1, 1985): 1–8, https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/66.1.1.

congregations, working to "spice," or bring to life their relationship with God.[40] Looking at the world, he tells preachers that "Tutto il mondo è fatuo e scipito, corrotto e putrido, incapace della grazie e della dottrina di Dio, è ottuso e stupido; tocca a voi, o discepoli, di condurlo, di mettergli innanzi questi cibi […]; a voi di comandarlo, di preservarlo dalla corruzione, di renderlo docile" [The whole world is fatuous and insipid. It is up to you, oh disciples, to lead it, to put these foods before it […]; up to you to rule it, to preserve it from corruption, to make it docile].[41] He explains that preachers' words are the salt of the Earth ("il sale della terra"). Essentially, all material things are "unsalted" and without spiritual flavor which can generate idleness in humans, leaving them open to sinful temptations of worldly pleasures: "con ripetute ammonizioni risvegli que' tanti che vivono nell'ozio una vita mole perciò stesso facilmente peccaminosa" [with repeated admonitions awaken all those that live a life of idleness, a cumbersome life that is therefore easily sinful].[42] The honesty and goodness of the preacher's words—his salt—act as a food that spiritually awakens whoever consumes it. In a 1562 oration given to the Accademia delle Notti Vaticane, Borromeo remarks on the power of preachers' words, citing *Matt.* 4:3-4:

> O che rari cibi sono questi, Signori Accademici, quanto sono gustevoli! Come giovano, come dilettano! Certamente ora abbiamo noi conosciuto per esperienza, che verissima fu quella sentenza di Cristo Salvatore nostro, quando nel deserto tentato dal Demonio, che egli diceva: "Si filius Dei es, dic, ut lapides isti panes fiant (Matth. IV.3)," gli rispose: "Non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo, quod procedit de ore Dei (Matth. IV.4)."[43]
>
> [Oh, what rare foods are these, Academic Sirs, how tasty they are! How they aid, how they delight! Certainly now we have known from experience that the words of

[40] Carlo Borromeo, "*Omelie* e documenti vari," in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione,* 51.

[41] Borromeo, *"Omelie* e documenti vari," in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione,* 51.

[42] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione,* XII.10, p. 38. Compare the latin: *"*Moltorum otiosam vitam, ac volupteriam ita facile peccatis expositam, reprehendet quam sapissime."

[43] Borromeo, "*Omelie* e documenti vari," 51.

> Christ our Savior were very true when, in the desert, the Demon tempted him saying: "If you are the son of God, say that these stones become bread (Matt. IV.3)," and he answered: "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. IV.4).]

Borromeo highlights the nutritiousness of God's Word compared to the hunger for and consumption of earthly goods. He also stresses how demonic figures tempt humans toward desirable "foods" that please the senses instead of nourishing the soul. A preacher, therefore, should prioritize constructing sermons to be delicious for the ears and hearts, especially considering that "gli uomini d'ordinario non peccano già per ignoranza d'intelletto, ma per corruzione di cuore" [ordinary men don't sin out of ignorance of intellect but through corruption of the heart].[44] Essentially, while ignorance of intellect does indeed lead to sin, the greater threat to the common person is the corruptibility of the heart, where desires and beliefs are formed. Crucially for Borromeo, the congregation physically—aurally—consumes the preacher's sonic theatrical output as spiritual nourishment that can guide them from within. If the preacher can reach and instruct the hearts of his congregants, he can also instruct their intellects and aid their souls.

Control and Delivery

A cautious man, Borromeo didn't differentiate between good and bad theater. He instead condemned all of it for the betterment of his congregants' spiritual wellbeing. Taking up arms against the theater, he turned to preaching as his ultimate weapon. He believed he could change more lives for the better if he could perfect the art of preaching. With his *Instructiones*, he aimed

[44] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, III.30, p. 27.

to document his experience and his advice for his contemporaries and for posterity in a handbook for preachers on how to most effectively give a sermon.[45]

Borromeo believed in the potential for preaching, though he was realistic enough to recognize the idealistic nature of his aspirations. Thinking of the average preacher, the *Instructiones* repeatedly stresses that preachers should preach only what they know and understand well. He specifies, in Chapter One, "Di quelli ai quali corre l'obbligo di predicare la parola di Dio," that only those preachers trained and erudite in theological teaching should preach:

> A chierici inferiori al diacono non permetta mai di predicare; meno ancora a quelli che sono ignoranti, inetti, viziosi o scaduti nella pubblica stima per qualche loro antico vizio o diletto. Nol permetta a quei che s'immischiano in negozii secolareschi, i quali […] sono giudicati incapaci di tal ministero.[46]
>
> [Never allow clerics below the rank of deacon to preach. Even less so those who are ignorant, inept, vicious, or have fallen in public esteem due to some past vice or crime. Do not allow it for those who meddle in secular affairs, who […] are judged most incapable of such ministry.]

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[45] Borromeo was not the first preacher to do so. For a select few examples, see Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), especially Chapter 1: "*'The Voice Most Eagerly Listened To'*: The Public Career and Critical Fortune of Bernardino of Siena"; Larissa Juliet Taylor, *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, A New History of the Sermon 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), especially Chapter 1: "The Catholic Sermon," and Chapter 5: "The Social History of Preaching: Italy," in which Taylor speaks specifically of Carlo Borromeo, but also of Federigo Borromeo, Paleotti, Bernardino, and other priests, bishops and cardinals, especially those who came before and who were contemporary with Carlo; Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction before the Council of Trent*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, v. 117 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2004), which gives an extended discussion of preaching practices as religious instruction before the Council of Trent (see especially Chapter 1: "Franciscan Preaching as Religious Instruction").

[46] Borromeo, *Instructiones,* in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione,* I.12, p. 24. See also Benjamin W. Westervelt, "The Prodigal Son at Santa Justina: The Homily in the Borromean Reform of Pastoral Preaching," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 32, no. 1 (2001): 109–26, https://doi.org/10.2307/2671397. Westervelt gives an example of a homilist who was unable to write about particular sins due to his lack of knowledge. He was, therefore, restricted to speaking about sin only generally.

In the interest of upholding his standards, he frequently criticized contemporary preachers. For example, he faulted the well-known preacher Francesco Panigarola's sermons for being too convoluted, and so tasked him with rewriting them to be more easily accessible to his congregation.[47] Instruction was at the forefront of his mind; if preachers misunderstood what they taught at mass, and if they preached it ineffectively, everyone would be worse off.

Borromeo's *Instructiones* becomes especially interesting in the context of acting. He speaks explicitly against theater in his work: "Dica egli dunque parole di somma esecrazione contro gli spettacoli, i giuochi e simili divertimenti disonesti che sanno del pagano e ripugnano alla santità del cristianesimo; ne dipinga le tristissime conseguenze e le disgrazie che ne derivano a tutto il popolo cristiano" [He should speak with utmost condemnation against spectacles, games, and similar indecent entertainments that have a pagan influence and are contrary to the holiness of Christianity. He should describe the very sad consequences and the misfortunes that result from them for entire Christian community].[48] He continues with a long list of advice against theatrical outlets, such as dances, masks, parties, and costumes.[49] Despite his antitheatrical rhetoric, he still remained rooted in ancient teachings on oratorical—acting—practice.[50]

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[47] Taylor, *Preachers and People*, 136.

[48] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, XIII.2, p. 38.

[49] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione* XIII.4-6, p. 38.

[50] Borromeo wasn't alone in using anti-theatrical rhetoric in the context of a poetics of theatricality. See, for example, Bernardo Pino da Cagli's short treatise *Breve considerazione intorno al compimento de la comedia de' nostri tempi* [1571], in which Pino da Cagli advocates for the reduction of theater to simple oration of scripts: Bernardo Pino da Cagli, *Breve considerazione intorno al compimento de la comedia de' nostri tempi* [1571], in *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg, vol. 2, 4 vols. (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1970), 629-49. See also Esther Schomacher, "Sex on Stage: How Does the Audience Know? (Dovizi Da Bibbiena, La Calandra, III.10; Shakespeare, Henry V, V.2)," in *Poetics and Politics*, ed. Toni Bernhart et al. (De Gruyter, 2018), 69-100,

The priest's role requires that each of his actions, relations, and words become models of behavior, thought, and action for his congregants and his city. His role becomes a mirror to which the community turns for direction. Most importantly, the priest must be wary about how he expresses his emotions and his words. The congregation may easily and quickly mimic what the priest expresses, for better or for worse. Cicero, explaining delivery in the *De oratore*, explains that the face, first and foremost, reflects the inner emotions:

> For delivery is wholly the concern of the feelings, and these are mirrored by the face and expressed in the eyes […]. […Delivery], which gives the emotion of the mind expression, influences everybody, for the same emotions are felt by all people and they both recognize them in others and manifest them in themselves by the same marks.[51]

Delivery, which is the combination of voice, words, and gesture, gives the mind's thoughts and emotions expression and so influences both hearers and viewers—the audience. The priest is a role model for his congregation, which wants to be like their model, so when they look into the mirror—the preacher and his actions—to evaluate and model their own actions, they mimic what the reflection shows them. Ideally, the spectacle of the preacher's virtues reinforces and strengthens the physical and aural spectacle of the sermon–act.

To achieve this, the preacher will modify his rhetorical style based on any given situation so long as it helps him reach the hearts of his listeners. This is a classic Ciceronian move, where Cicero implores orators to "choose the style of oratory best calculated to hold the attention of the audience, and not merely to give them pleasure but also to do so without giving them too much of it […]."[52] The priest must know and employ the linguistic style—high, medium, or low—best

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110536690-005, in which Schomaker discusses early modern drama's perceived effects on spectators.

[51] Cicero, *De oratore*, 3.59.221-223, pp. 177-179.

[52] Cicero, *De oratore*, 3.25.97, p. 77.

suited to his congregation. He must ask himself which one will most effectively influence them and which will give the most pleasure to their ears without giving too much of it, as too much of a good thing becomes repulsive and distracting. Borromeo, echoing Cicero, explains that

> 17. […] con altre condizioni di persone convien adoperare le similitudini più confacenti alla loro arte, professione o mestiere; conciossiaché avendo essi le cognizioni spettanti ai loro impieghi e stato, ove loro si parli un linguaggio conforme all'arte che professano, o al genere di vita che tengono, più facilmente si ammaestrano nelle cose spirituali.
> 18. Intanto, il sacerdote si tenga provveduto di molta materia predicabile per adattarla poi alle varie circostanze di persone e di luoghi.[53]
>
> [17. […] with different types of people, it is necessary for the preacher to use analogies that are more relevant to his congregants' art, profession, or trade. Since the congregants are knowledgeable about their own fields and status, speaking to them in a way that aligns with their profession or way of life makes it easier for them to grasp spiritual matters.
> 18. Meanwhile, the priest should ensure he has plenty of preaching material to adapt to the diverse circumstances of different people and places.]

The priest must be capable of imitating those to whom he preaches in language and idiom. Borromeo's work is ultimately about language, especially what kind of language the priest should speak and, above all, how he should speak. The more recognizable the priest appears to his congregants, the better he might draw them in and under his influence.[54] The congregation subsequently trusts the preacher because he will have shown that he can speak their language, literally and figuratively. He knows their language and is, therefore, one of them.

Beyond linguistic style, Borromeo spent ample time instructing preachers on the most effective methods of spiritual instruction and fighting to squash secular theatrical practices. He believed that all holy days and feasts should be observed with solemnity and so abhorred

[53] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione,* III.17-18, p. 27.

[54] See also Borromeo *Instructiones,* in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione,* III.28, p. 27; and XVIII.3, p. 44, which provide scenarios in which the priest might alienate his congregation for being too unlike them in either appearance or speech.

extraneous secular activity, believing that it sullied religious life.[55] He attempted to achieve his goals by working in two separate but parallel arenas: the secular and ecclesiastical spheres. Reaching the secular sphere meant blurring the boundary between it and the ecclesiastical one while maintaining control of both. He went about this in two ways: 1) he highjacked traditions like carnival—which already blurred the line between sacred and holy festivities—to infiltrate secular spaces while simultaneously reforming public education and the implications of the rite of confession, as we'll see below; and 2) he focused on perfecting the methods of preaching by emphasizing delivery practice, relying heavily on ancient tracts on rhetoric to increase the likelihood of successfully controlling congregants through sermons.

Discipline extended, for Borromeo, to every aspect of daily life; he viewed the preacher's job similarly to the Archbishop of Braga, Bartolomé de los Mártires (1514-1590), who took very seriously the preacher's status as shepherd. Borromeo met the Archbishop at the Council of Trent in 1563 and greatly admired his teachings.[56] The following year, at Borromeo's insistence, de los Mártires's *Stimulus pastorum* (1564) was published. In it, the Archbishop depicts the preacher as an unyielding and ever-watchful shepherd who stands guard through dark nights, rain, and cold to ensure the safety of every sheep, even the seemingly useless ones ("non

[55] On Borromeo's relationship with theater and post-Tridentine thought, see Michael A. Zampelli, "Trent Revisited: A Reappraisal of Early Modern Catholicism's Relationship with the *Commedia Italiana*," *The Journal of Religion and Theater* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 130. See also John M. Headley, John B. Tomaro, and Folger Shakespeare Library, eds., *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century* (Washington: London: Folger Shakespeare Library; Associated University Presses, 1988), 67-84, and Robert L. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 71.

[56] Raul De Almeida Rolo, "Bartolomé de los Mártires," Gran Enciclopedia Rialp - Sagrada Teología, 1991, https://apps.idteologia.org/?r=sagradaTeologia/view&id=39; Elisabeth Reinhardt, "Bartholomäus a martyribus, «Stimulus Pastorum». Zur Spiritualität des Hirtenamtes, hrsg. von Marianne Schlosser," *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia* 28 (September 30, 2019): 553–54, https://doi.org/10.15581/007.28.37629.

utilis").[57] De los Mártires's emphasis on complete dedication to the congregants' personal and spiritual lives clearly echoes in Borromeo's approach to his own preaching, which held true to the Tridentine Council's desire for the priest to first and foremost embrace the role of the preacher even before his own career aspirations or worldly desires.[58]

Michel De Certeau calls Borromeo's religious approach "quasi infantile" [almost childlike], proposing that the saint attended to his flock in a more paternal manner than a militant one, even given his strict reforms.[59] He worked to transform and sanctify every aspect of his episcopate to better reach the individual on an intimate and continual basis. His influence extended even to the education of children, as we can see in the treatise *Tre libri dell'educatione christiana dei figliuoli* (1584), written by Silvio Antoniano (1540-1603) at Borromeo's invitation, with the aim of continuing both ecclesiastical and secular education.[60] Borromeo's expanded educational reach aligned with Pope Pius IV's Bulls in November ("*Injunctum nobis*") and December of 1564 ("*In Sacrosancta beati Petri*"), which extended to the entire "ecclesia

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[57] Bartholomæum Martyribus, *Stimulus pastorum ex sententiis patrum concinnatus* (Rome: Apud Hæredes Iulii Accolti, 1572), https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=uGHsrQSyCQ0C&pg=GBS.PP1&hl=en: "Studeat cor nostrum terrenorum pastorum imitation succendi, qui hiemalas noctes imbribus geluque constricti ducunt per vigilias, ne vel una ovis, et forte non utilis, pereat. Quam si insidiator ore mordaci momorderit, quomodo satagunt, quibus cordis anhelant aestibus, in quas voces (ut eruant captum pecus) angustia stimulante prosiliunt, ne a domino gregis exigatur, quidque per incuriam perierit?"

[58] Massimo Marcocchi, "Il Concilio di Trento e la Riforma della Chiesa," *Humanitas* 69, no. 3 (May 2014): 504.

[59] Michel De Certeau, "Carlo Borromeo, santo," in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 20 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 1977), https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/santo-carlo-borromeo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/santo-carlo-borromeo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/.

[60] On the "comunità cristiana," see Dilwyn Knox, "Disciplina: le origini monastiche e clericali del buon comportamento nell'Europa cattolica del Cinquecento e del primo Seicento," in *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Paolo Prodi and Carla Penuti (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 1994), 85-92.

docens" [teaching church], ensuring that priests and public teachers alike remained obedient to the Roman Catholic Pope and the Tridentine formula: "salus animarum suprema lex esto" [let the salvation of souls be the supreme law].[61] In the introductory letter to Antoniano's treatise, addressed to Borromeo, he thanks the saint for his work in the ecclesiastical and secular camps and claims that this treatise will continue Borromeo's educational aspirations, since

> di niuna cosa più trionfa il Demonio, né maggior guadagno fa, che della negligenza de' padri intorno al governo de' figliuoli, ponendo per lo più maggior pensiero, e più cura nel governo d'animali bruti, nel culto de' campi, nel bonificare le possessioni nelle fabriche, e negl'ornamenti delle veste, che nella educatione de' figliuoli, onde nascono tante miserie al mondo, et si vive con tanto poco timore, et con tanta offesa di Dio […].[62]
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> [The Devil triumphs in nothing more, nor gains greater profit, than from the negligence of parents regarding the upbringing of their children, often devoting more thought and care to the management of livestock, the cultivation of fields, the improvement of possessions, the construction of buildings, and the embellishment of clothing than to the education of their children. Hence arise so many miseries in the world, and people live with so little fear and with such offense to God.

Antoniano reflects the visceral fear of the eternal consequences of poor religious education and discipline. Indeed, throughout his treatise, he continually mentions the Devil, painting him as the ever-watchful adversary ready to pounce on the errors of the uneducated. For this reason, drawing on Borromeo for inspiration, Antoniano likens children to "buone piante" [good plants]

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[61] On Pope Pius IV and the Council of Trent, see Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 1881), 96-99. See also Patrizi, "Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan…", 39; and Marcocchi, "Il Concilio di Trento…", 504.

[62] Silvio Antoniano, *Tre libri dell'educatione christiana dei figlioli* (Verona: Appresso Sebastiano dalle Donne, & Girolamo Stringari, Compagni, 1584), n.p., https://books.googleusercontent.com/books/content?req=AKW5QafcUyhysnQ_jixqdzYcFhk0WbNvaB1Xt_9vo9hD_D0PRRnOf4jnS6U6uQQkWjw4mq34sZ1RQWJlH3OodPBFH3fQOI1DTurHVIzWOlbsbZiMa_h3IAwfx78E1CaLhn0YwsR5_jxjiOMFr0tfD_bWFZraP0A_sA8Y8wP6yzV9PlUFSChbvyvKxn78XmqEMLl-lhLn1y4gKH81c-BghuvPzWS8hRGTjMu1O00YbpYH6ow2rENeIAAH9LwDEOfIqMV-8Dx_NkAOs9OPJ6TVslHJZMOhLwuheQhCkHqvi7l7E3bQ0YxviTY.

that must be carefully nurtured from the earliest age. This sentiment also reflects in Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversatione* (1574), where he reiterates the need for good educational models for lay people: "Ma i veri catolici non possono negare, che la conversatione de' regliosi non sia grandemente fruttuosa, perciocché con la dottrina ci tengono diritti nella buona via, et con la sola gravità esteriore ci danno essempio di timore et di reverenza" [But true Catholics cannot deny that the company of the religious is highly beneficial, for they keep us on the right path with their teachings, and by their outward gravity alone, they set an example of fear and reverence].[63]

Embodying this spirit of "fear and reverence," Borromeo transformed Milan itself into a sort of religious theater. In other words, he was able to take virtually any liberty regarding the aesthetic portrayal of the city, at least insofar as religious structures and ornaments were concerned. Beyond the altar and the classroom, his *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis Ecclesiasticae* (1577) presents detailed guidelines for religious architecture, with rules ranging from the site of a new church and its external and internal architecture, decoration, and format to the designs for sepulchers and cemeteries.[64] He didn't limit himself to liturgical reform but viewed the city itself, and its residents, as extensions of the Church in need of care and oversight. Throughout the *Instructiones fabricae*, Borromeo adamantly warns against anything even hinting at incorrect or heretical practices. Chapter XVII, "Sacred Images and Pictures," stands out for its stern warnings to bishops to observe carefully every image in and around the church, and its

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[63] Stefano Guazzo, *La civil conversatione* (Venice: Presso Altobello Salicato, 1575), 285-286, https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_T9T0SZWjavkC/page/n299/mode/2up?q=veri+catolici. See also Giorgio Patrizi, *Stefano Guazzo e la "Civil conversazione"* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1990), 376-377.

[64] Carlo Borromeo, *Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae, 1577*, trans. Evelyn Carole Voelker, PhD Diss. (New York: Syracuse University, 1977), https://archive.org/details/charlesborromeos00voel/page/n11/mode/2up.

reminder that artists will be subject to severe penalties and fines ("gravis poena mulctave proposita est") should they depart from prescribed rules and regulations.[65] Borromeo feared how even the most minute mischaracterization of visual representations might affect viewers, especially those lesser educated.[66] For Borromeo, stepping away from strict, disciplined tradition could have dire consequences for viewers, guiding their attention away from piety towards more nefarious thoughts and, presumably, actions:

> Likewise, nothing false ought to be introduced in the painting or carving of holy images, neither anything that is uncertain, apocryphal, and superstitious […]. Similarly, whatever is profane, base or obscene, dishonest or provocative, whatever is merely curious and does not incite to piety, or that which can offend the minds and eyes of the faithful [all this] should be avoided.[67]

It appears that many of the distractions from pious thought might bleed into representations from the secular world. Even the frames that might surround a painting had to be stripped of any distracting nuance: "[They] should not be profane, extravagant, [or] unconventional."[68] Borromeo felt so strongly about identifying and removing these heretical images that he concluded the *Instructiones fabricae* with a final warning to bishops that "Nothing whatsoever should be made, displayed, inscribed, represented, or expressed, that is either profane, deformed, extravagant, crude, or obscene […]."[69]

Borromeo despised any secular contamination in the ecclesiastical sphere, but his zeal to be a *curator animarum* drove him to extend his reach into that "contaminated" space. In order to

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[65] Borromeo, *Instructiones fabricae*, 228. For the Latin text, see Carlo Borromeo, *Instructinum fabricae ecclesiasticea et supellectilis ecclesiasticae libri duo*, ed. M. L'Abbé and E. Can Drival (Paris: J. Lecoffre, 1855), 72, https://books.google.hr/books?id=5swHAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=hr#v=onepage&q=DE%20SACRIS%20IMAGINIBUS%20PICTURISVE&f=false.

[66] Borromeo, *Instructiones fabricae,* 228-229.

[67] Borromeo, *Instructiones fabricae*, 229.

[68] Borromeo, *Instructiones fabricae*, 229.

[69] Borromeo, *Instructiones fabricae*, 450.

squash immoral behavior, the preacher had to reach every individual in his flock. If he could control the religious theatrics in the ecclesiastical space, he could—and indeed had a moral obligation to—control the theatrics of the secular world, from quotidian life to "gli spettacoli, i giuochi e simili divertimenti disonesti che sanno del pagano e ripugnano alla santità del cristianesimo" [the spectacles, games, and similar dishonest activities that reek of paganism and are repugnant to Christian sanctity].[70] Theatrical spaces, especially—but not exclusively—secular ones, were especially repugnant to Borromeo, who discerned the Devil in almost every scene. He made his stance quite clear: theatrical and acted performances "valde cum paganorum institutis convenientes, atque diaboli astu inventae omni officio a populo Christiano exterminandae sint, quâ maximâ potest, regliosâ contention aget" [are very much in line with pagan customs, and devised by the cunning of the Devil, and should be exterminated from every office by the Christian people, to the greatest extent possible, with religious zeal.].[71]

Borromeo understood that plays were an important part of sixteenth-century life, so he approached the secular sphere's traditions by frequently writing to religious officials about the diabolical impetus behind theatrical profanities. Most notably, he fought tooth and nail against the annual carnival celebrations in Milan, having been scandalized to see his city return so quickly to carnivalesque activities—especially on holy days—after the plague of Milan (1575-1576). In his *Sentimenti di S. Carlo Borromeo intorno agli spettacoli*, Giovanni Battista Castiglione collects and comments on Borromeo's correspondences, opinions, and edicts.[72] In it,

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[70] Borromeo, *Instructiones*, in *L'oralità, la narrazione, la comunicazione*, XII.2, p. 37. See also Thomas Brian Deutscher, *Punishment and Penance: Two Phases in the History of the Bishop's Tribunal of Novara* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 33.

[71] Borromeo, *Instructiones verbi Dei*, XII.6, p. 30.

[72] See Giovanni Battista Castiglione, *Sentimenti di S. Carlo Borromeo intorno agli spettacoli; a sua altezza riverendissima Monsignor Cristoforo de' Migazzi Arcivescovo di Vienna, e Principe del S. R. I. ec.* (Bergamo: Appresso Pietro Lancellotti, 1759). See esp. pp. 94-

we see that in 1579, Borromeo issued an edict cancelling all festive events on all Sundays and any holy day, calling instead for the continued and expanded use of public holy orations "per questi pubblici bisogni […] e qual che serve a disviar affatto, di nuovo introdotte maschere, conviti, giostre, balli, spettacoli, e tante altre profane invenzioni del Demonio, con migliara [*sic.*] di dissoluzioni, che ne vanno appresso in questi tempi […]" [for these public needs […] and whatever serves to divert absolutely the masks, banquets, jousts, dances, spectacles, and other profane inventions of the Devil, along with thousands of dissolutions which follow in these

102. For Borromeo on post-plague Milan and theater, see: Claudio Bernardi, *La drammaturgia della settimana santa in Italia*, (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1991), esp. pp. 255-257; Edoardo Zorzan, "'Pareva Milano fosse diventata un cielo'. Politica e narrazione urbana durante la Peste di San Carlo," *Griseldaonline*, July 28, 2021, 33-49, https://doi.org/10.6092/ISSN.1721-4777/12719; William J. Bouwsma, *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550-1640*, The Yale Intellectual History of the West (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Kenneth Richards, *The Commedia Dell'arte: A Documentary History* (Oxford: B. Blackwell for Shakespeare Head Press, 1990), esp. pp. 11-54; Bernadette Marjorana, "Commedia dell'Arte and the Church," in *Commedia dell'arte in Context*, ed. Piermario Vescovo, Daniele Vianello, and Christopher B. Balme (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 133–48, esp. pp. 144-145. https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=5330491; Angelo Turchini, "Il governo della festa nella Milano spagnola di Carlo Borromeo," in *La scena della gloria: drammaturgia e spettacolo a Milano in età spagnola*, ed. Annamaria Cascetta and Roberta Carpani, La città e lo spettacolo 4 (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1995), 509-44. For a collection and reading of Borromeo's writings on theater, see Ferdinando Taviani, *La Commedia dell'Arte e la Società Barocca* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1970). For Borromeo on musical reform, especially as it concerns nuns' singing and performing in Milanese female monasteries, see Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*, especially chapter 3: "From Social Disciplining to Spiritual Recreation," 58-89, in which Kendrick explains Borromeo's growing and changing views on musical and theatrical practice, as well as Borromeo's (largely failed) legacy in the younger Federigo Borromeo; and see Robert L. Kendrick, *The Sounds of Milan, 1585-1650* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), where, though he does not always directly discuss Carlo, he analyzes the perception of music and sound in Milan in the period immediately following Borromeo's death.

times].[73] Punishment for breaking his anti-theater edict was as serious as ex-communication, not only for the actors but also for anybody in the audience.[74]

With this edict, Borromeo attempted to separate holy days from holidays in his attempt to sanctify the city.[75] Carnival in Milan followed the Ambrosian calendar and therefore had—and still has—an extended Carnival season. This was unnerving for Borromeo, as carnival already signaled a period of inversion where, as Bakhtin puts it, "The behavior, gesture, and discourse of a person are freed from the authority of all hierarchical positions (social estate, rank, age, property) defining them totally in noncarnival life, and thus from the vantage point of noncarnival life become eccentric and inappropriate."[76] This eccentricity allowed for a rupture, however temporary, in the Church's paternal oversight of its flock. The subsequently blurred hierarchical structures simply wouldn't do for Borromeo's Tridentine discipline. Despite his efforts, though, carnival was never truly expunged from Milan, primarily because it remained an integral part of timekeeping for the Church's calendar. His success came instead through his severe disciplinary actions, which moved to redefine holidays, residing in the secular realm, within the framework of sacred events. Behind the shield of *salus animarum*, Borromeo could justify penetrating the most intimate parts of the private sphere.

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[73] From one of Borromeo's published letters, written on 22 February 1579, in G. B. Castiglione, *Sentimenti di S. Carlo Borromeo*, 94. See also p. 96, where Borromeo gives an account of the distractions of profane music and performance.

[74] G. B. Castiglione, *Sentimenti di S. Carlo Borromeo*, 94.

[75] Martha Feldman expands on this issue, in the context of 17th- and 18th-century *opera seria*, in chapter 4 of her book, titled "Festivity and Time": see Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 141-185, especially 144-152 and 157-165.

[76] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 123. See also pp. 122-138.

On an even more intimate level, Borromeo wrote his short *Avvertenze* […] *ai confessori della città, e diocese sua* (1574) as a means to further probe, chastise, and convert his congregants on an individual level.[77] While this treatise allowed priests more sway on the individual by weaponizing the rite of confession, it also allowed for public spectacle in the form of exposure and humiliation for the greater good of the people's souls. We can break down his instructions into three essential pieces: 1) the priest must deeply interrogate the penitent to truly know them and to root out any hidden sins, lies, or half-truths; 2) the priest can, feeling satisfied with the interrogation, submit the penitent to the humiliation of public penitence to serve as an example for all would-be sinners; 3) the priest reserves the right to postpone absolution until the penitent has adequately reformed his or her ways. The interrogation clause, under the section titled "Interrogationi da farsi nel principio della confessione," essentially turned the priest into an Inquisitor before the actual confession began. The priest probed for confessions and accusations of heresy: "Interroghi, se sa alcuno heretico, o sospetto di heresia, o altra simile cosa, quale abbia da denunciare per vigore de nostri editti, o del Padre Inquisitore […]" [Interrogate whether anyone knows of a heretic, or is suspected of heresy, or any similar matter, which they are obligated to report under the force of our edicts, or those of the Inquisitor].[78] This move weaponized Pope Paul IV's 1559 Bull, *Cum Apostolatus officio*, which ordered priests to verify the penitent's knowledge or act of heresy, and to pass the information to the Inquisition.[79]

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[77] Carlo Borromeo, *Avvertenze di Monsig. Illustriss. Cardinale di S. Prassede Arcivescovo di Milano ai confessori della città, e diocese sua*, in *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis* (Mediolani: Ex officina typographica quon. Pacifici Pontij, 1599), 760-777, https://archive.org/details/actaecclesiaemed01cath/page/4/mode/2up?q=profano.

[78] Borromeo, *Avvertenze…*, 764.

[79] Pope Paul IV, "Paulus IV," in *Magnum bullarum romanum*, vol. 1 (Luxembourg: Henrici-Alberti Gosse & Soc. Biblop. & Typograph, 1742), 840-843, https://books.googleusercontent.com/books/content?req=AKW5QacHil1bYjXpvxZXxsBbuee3qS0VY7VI2WZrEGpxG3kHZ3KM_CCbhvn3T-WVyFOZf-

Having extracted the penitent's sins, the confessor could then threaten deferral of absolution to ensure the sinner's reflection and spiritual rehabilitation. To obtain absolution, the sinner might undergo a humiliating penitence, ranging from standing vigil in the Churchyard to wearing sackcloth or any other punishment that might "macerare e mortificare la carne" [macerate and mortify the flesh].[80] This simultaneously guaranteed a public show of both the Church's control over even secular actions and its singular, conditional power over the public's absolution and ultimate salvation in the face of the "Diaboli laquei" [snares of the Devil] that insidiously bound them.[81]

While these direct strikes on the secular sphere were useful in shaping the motions of daily life to Borromeo's liking, the saint never forgot that direct education formed the foundations of his reformational philosophy. For Borromeo, this meant the sermon. The ancients had already drawn a connection between successful delivery of an oration and acting. Quintilian, in his *Istitutia oratoria* [*The Orator's Education*], outlines the progression of acting skills from plays to orations: "Tragic and comic poets pay greater attention to characters, because they use many different ones. The same was true of those who wrote speeches for others, and is true of declaimers today."[82] Quintilian explains that declaimers frequently act as advocates ("advocati") and that to adequately advocate for someone, the declaimer must be capable of speaking "differently on behalf of different people, according to whether they are distinguished of humble,

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SFt0C01EXyoVmAxvZcAx1R7m6ryRSvE5nyqv9zfyXMFWyKiiM0VxSG1ndo5kt_d7Lopk4Z-XoM6Cc8_JTcN349bhlTiTvpTRknKp7yV9mfzSQq-WKs3t_ds1H59eE2jAl93_Wl393Igh2XoNQYOEC1GFezLkRARPHqIIVm0TGLq7NXdehgLQYagXGPNU38CO0nqf4b. See also: Patrizi, "Carlo Borromeo*…"*, 51-52; and Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 45.

[80] Borromeo, *Avvertenze…*, 769.

[81] Borromeo, *Avvertenze…*, 762.

[82] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, 11.1.38, p. 29.

unpopular or liked, and also to take account of differences in their attitude and their previous life."[83] The orator must be capable of varying his appearance—changing his voice and affect—depending on his audience to most effectively persuade them.

In Chapter 3 of Quintilian's work, on delivery, he drives home the connection between acting and oration:

> *Pronuntatio* is called *actio* by many people. It seems to have acquired the first name from its voice-element, the second from its element of gesture. Cicero in one passage calls *actio* a "sort of language," and in another "a kind of eloquence of the body." None the less, he divides *action* into two elements, voice and movement, and these are also the elements of *pronuntatio*. […]
>
> The thing itself has an extraordinary force and power in oratory. Indeed, it matters less what sort of thing we have composed within ourselves than how we utter them, because people are affected according to what they hear. […]
>
> Stage actors demonstrate this.[84]

In sixteenth-century theater, these acting principles could potentially instigate dangerous emotions in audiences based on simulations of fictional or heretical characters, alongside the actor's obfuscation of his God-given identity behind that of a fictional role. Indeed, Cicero spoke clearly about the weaponization of eloquence in the wrong hands:

> For eloquence is one of the supreme virtues—although all the virtues are equal and on a par, but nevertheless one has more beauty and distinction in outward appearance than another, as is the case with this faculty, which, after compassing a knowledge of facts, gives verbal expression to the thoughts and purposes of the mind in such a manner as to have the power of driving the hearers forward in any direction in which it has applied its weight; and the stronger this faculty is, the more necessary it is for it to be combined with integrity and supreme wisdom, and if we bestow fluency of speech on persons devoid of those virtues, we shall not have made orators of them but shall have put weapons in the hands of madmen.[85]

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[83] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education,* 11.1.42, p. 31.

[84] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, 11.3.1-4, pp. 85-87. See also Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3.59.222, p. 177-179, where he speaks of the orator's countenance and gestures; and Cicero, *Orator*, 17.55, p. 347, where he discusses delivery as a language of the body that consists of voice and gesture.

[85] Cicero, *De oratore*, 3.14.55, pp. 43-45.

Borromeo contemplated the dangers of theater in these terms. A certain eloquence in secular acting had a great power too spiritually dangerous to allow. At the same time, these dangerous principles could be applied to a preacher's sermon—a preacher "with integrity and supreme wisdom," to use Cicero's words—to affect his congregation in a predetermined manner beneficial to the congregation's spiritual wellbeing.

Immoral Theater

For Borromeo, immoral theater was characterized by profane, secular, or heretical subject matter, actors who lied about their identities while portraying roles, and lascivious dances and music that could potentially distract from meditation on things more morally pertinent. He knew theater could shape societal realities and believed the Church was entering an era of war with *commedia*, which he likened to the Devil himself. In a public letter written on 1 February 1574, in which he condemns any and all forms of spectacle, he laments that, in Milan, "ha prevalso il Demonio, che si sono introdotte risse, inimicizie, giuochi, balli, commedie, spettacoli, conviti, crapule, e ogni sorta di dissoluzioni, e offese di Dio. […] La Chiesa geme per li peccati loro, essi trionfano con gli spettacoli, con li quali trionfa di loro il Diavolo" [the Devil has prevailed, as fights, enmities, games, dances, plays, spectacles, banquets, revelry, and all kinds of dissolute behavior and offenses against God have been introduced. […] The Church mourns for their sins, while they triumph with spectacles, through which the Devil triumphs over them].[86] In his 1578 letter to Gabriele Paleotti, Archbishop of Bologna, he clarifies:

> […] io giudico che siano [gli spettacoli] ancora ordinariamente più perniciosi ai costumi, ed alle anime, che non sono quelli seminarii di tanti mali, i balli, le feste, e simili spettacoli, perché le parole, atti, e gesti disonesti, e lascivi, che

[86] Castiglione, *Sentimenti di S. Carlo Borromeo,* 75.

> intervengono in simili commedie, come sono più latenti, così fanno negli animi degli uomini più gagliarda impressione […].[87]
>
> [I judge that plays are ordinarily more harmful to morals and souls than those breeding grounds of so many evils, such as dances, parties, and similar comedies, because the indecent and lascivious words, actions, and gestures that occur in such plays, as they are more subtle, make a stronger impression on men's minds.]

Much of Borromeo's rancor stems from the theater's insistence on giving into Satan's pomp.[88] Michael A. Zampelli calls this war between Church and *commedia* a "potentially fatal arrhythmia," highlighting the distinctly opposed theatrical and rhythmic natures of the two spaces.[89] *Commedia* exposed the human inclination to distraction and play, while Borromeo preoccupied himself with the rhythms of liturgical life and meditation. For Borromeo, focusing at all on *commedia*'s rhythm led to sin and was time better spent in the folds of liturgical rhythms.

Commedia—secular theater—calls for play, imaginative thought, and a pause from the difficulties of duty, while liturgical practice—a form of sacred theater—demands concentrated meditation on God and the immortal soul, repentance of sin, and penitence. According to Cicero, the rhythm of oratorical delivery can exert a profound influence on audiences, so the orator must mold it through style variation "like the softest wax. […] thus the style of our oratory follows the line of thought we take, and changes and turns to suit all the requirements of pleasing the ear and influencing the mind of the audience."[90] The pleasure of the orator's rhythm grasps the audience's attention. Cicero explains through Crassus that even the uneducated who comprise an

[87] Castiglione, *Sentimenti di S. Carlo Borromeo*, 90.
[88] See Kerr, *The Rise of the Diva*, 16-18.
[89] Zampelli, "Trent Revisited…," 132.
[90] Cicero, *De orator*, 3.45.177, p. 141.

audience will keenly discern the rhythm of words since humans are naturally endowed with the capacity to embody them:

> For what proportion of people understand the science of rhythm and metre? yet all the same if only a slight slip is made in these, […] the audience protests to a man. […] but nothing is so akin to our own minds as rhythm and words—these rouse us up to excitement, and smooth and calm us down, and often lead us to mirth and to sorrow.[91]

He suggests that rhythm is perhaps more important to poetry and music but concedes its importance in oratory, because if the orator alters the rhythm he provides, his hold over the audience may break.

Borromeo wrote explicitly about rhythm, dance, and music in his short treatise *De choreis, et spectaculis in festis diebus non exhibendis*.[92] In Chapters One and Two, Borromeo differentiates between acceptable and sinful types of dancing. The chapters are quite short, but Borromeo references many Bible verses and other texts that largely expand their meaning. In Chapter One, "Choreas per se non esse malas" [Dances are Not Inherently Evil], Borromeo clarifies that when bodies and music move to a measured rhythm ("ad numerum temperatus"), they can be used piously.[93] He uses 2 *Samuel* 6:5-14 as an example: "[…] while David and all the Israelites made merry before the LORD with all their strength, with singing and with citharas, harps, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals. […] Then David, girt with a linen apron,

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[91] Cicero, *De oratore,* 3.50-51, 196-197, p. 157. See also Cicero, *Orator*, 20.66-67, p. 355.

[92] Carlo Borromeo, Juan de Mariana, and Daniele Concina, *De choreis, et spectaculis in festis diebus non exhibendis accedit collectio selectarum sententiarum ejusdem adversus choreas, et spectacula ex ejus statutis, edictis, institutionibus, homiliis*, in *De spectaculis theatralibus: Christiano cuique tum laico, tum clerico vetitis dissertationes duae; accedit dissertatio tertia de presbyteris personatis*, Editio secunda: cui S. Caroli Borromei Opusculum de choreis & spectaculis &c.ejusdemque seectae sententiae huc spectantes adjectae sunt. (Rome: Apud Simonem Occhi, 1754), 327–60.

[93] Borromeo, *De choreis, et spectaculis*, 332.

came dancing before the LORD with shouts of joy and to the sound of the horn.[94] Similarly, *Exodus* 15:20 depicts music and dancing to celebrate the drowning of Pharaoh in the Red Sea.[95] In both examples, music and dancing are used to praise God and thus are acceptable forms of spectacle. Borromeo's choice to use *Samuel* is crucial to his overarching narrative of the priest's paternal role over his congregation. The story of David in the two books of *Samuel* repeatedly emphasizes the father's necessary involvement in his children's faith and education. It questions what happens when the political—the secular; in this case, the appointment of a king of Israel—is introduced into that relationship. 1 *Sam*. 12:14-15 encapsulates the risk of this contamination, and also echoes in Borromeo's desire, as Archbishop, to righteously lead the spiritual lives of his congregants as a paternal figure:

> If you fear the LORD and worship him, if you are obedient to him and do not rebel against the LORD'S command, if both you and the king who rules you follow the LORD your God – well and good. But if you do not obey the LORD and if you rebel against his command, the LORD will deal severely with you and your king, and destroy you.[96]

Borromeo didn't want to repeat the mistakes of Eli, Samuel, Saul, and even David, all of whom, at some point, left their sons (and people) to their sins. Crucially, Borromeo's reference to David remembers David's continual repentance, which allowed him to remain in God's good graces.[97] Remorse, repentance, and obedience stand at the center of Borromeo's education. In his

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[94] I take all Bible verses from the Vatican's standard English/Latin online Bible. *The New American Bible* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__P7V.HTM.

[95] *The New American Bible,* https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__P1W.HTM.

[96] *The New American Bible,* https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__P76.HTM.

[97] For scholarship on the Book of Samuel with a focus on David's humility and subsequent divine exaltation, see Justin Jackson, "The Bows of the Mighty Are Broken: The 'Fall' of the Proud and the Exaltation of the Humble in 1 Samuel" 46, no. 2 (2021): 290–305, esp. pp. 303-305. On the theme of children and heirs in the Book of Samuel, which also addresses David's role, see Lowell K. Handy, "The Character of Heirs Apparent in the Book of Samuel," *Biblical Research* 38 (1993): 5–22.

discussion of good dances in the *De choreis, et spectaculis,* we can see his insistence on adhering to good rhythms of liturgical practice, not unlike the rooster in the *Instructiones*.

Borromeo distinguishes good from evil dances in Chapter 2, "Chorearum alterum genus bonum, alterum malum" [One Kind of Dance is Good, the Other Evil]. He immediately provides four bible verses to illustrate that evil dances align with heretical and libidinous rhythms.[98] His first example, *Ecclesiasticus* 9, references the dangerous charms of lascivious dancers. In *Eccl.* 9.4, the reader is warned, "With a singing girl be not familiar, lest you be caught [*ne forte pereas*: lest you perish] in her wiles."[99] The entire chapter discusses the perils of falling to carnal pleasures, yet Borromeo focuses here, emphasizing the double act of hearkening to a lewd dance and subsequently falling in with its insidiously seductive charms. Borromeo uses *Tobias* 3 to uphold *Eccl*. Here, Sara prays to God to deliver her from accusations of lust and murder. The verse that stands out is *Tobias* 3.17: "Never have I joined myself with them that play: neither have I made myself partake with them that walk in lightness."[100] Borromeo's concept of dance extends beyond its literal meaning. The *Tobias* example implies that any activity pointing to self-pleasure or frivolity comprises a damning rhythm.[101] Borromeo's subsequent two examples, *Job* 21 and *Isaias* 3, explicitly reference performative episodes that offended God, who ultimately punished them. In *Job 21*, a whole city wraps itself in dancing and music-making not for God's

[98] Borromeo, *De choreis, et spectaculis*, 333.

[99] *The New American Bible*, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__PMB.HTM. For the Latin, on the same website, see https://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata_vt_ecclesiasticus_lt.html#9.

[100] See Douay-Rheims, trans., "Douay-Rheims Latin Vulgate Old Testament Bible," Vulgate, 2005, https://vulgate.org/ot/tobias_3.htm. I use the Douay-Rheims version of *Tobias* because the Vatican's revised version of that book differs drastically from the the *Vulgate'*s, which Borromeo references.

[101] The Latin for "lightness" is "levitate," which also translates as "frivolity."

glory, but for pleasure.[102] *Isaias* 3 explains the downfall of women who have performatively used their beauty, jewels, and movements to hold sway over others.[103] Most pertinently is their punishment (*Isaias* 3.17-24), in which God strips them of their beauty—hair, jewelry, fine clothing, perfume—to reveal their true, hideous nature.

Ultimately, music and dance present two dangers for Borromeo: they produce bodily pleasures, which detract from meditation on the divine, and even potentially good dances can be evil if not done under a watchful eye. Borromeo's examples all point to his decree that good dance is only possible "[…] cum voce, et musicis instrumenis, in sacris ædibus […]" [with voice and musical instruments, in sacred buildings].[104] Done in a holy place under the direction of holy men, dance can be beneficial. Otherwise, as Borromeo points out in Chapter Five, dance's association with lust and mortal sin will apply to anybody who seeks dances outside of the Church's purview.[105] Borromeo's worry again falls back on the idea that the preacher is a paternal figure for his people, as he makes explicit in Chapter Eight, where he states that those entrusted with the welfare of others do wrong ("male faciunt") when they allow such things to occur.[106]

Borromeo understood the battle between *commedia* and the Church in these terms. He hated theater and acting so fervently that he demonized even religious theater, including oratories and *sacre rappresentazioni*. In the *Acta Ecclesia Mediolanensis* (1599), Borromeo condemns theatrical representation of religious material, insisting instead on solely orated sermons. He holds that the Passion of Christ should not be performed in sacred or secular places, "[…] sed

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[102] *The New American Bible*, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__PF6.HTM.
[103] *The New American Bible*, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__PNM.HTM.
[104] Borromeo, *De choreis, et spectaculis*, 333.
[105] Borromeo, *De choreis, et spectaculis*, 335.
[106] Borromeo, *De choreis, et spectaculis*, 336.

docte, et graviter eatenua a concionatoribus exponatur, ut qui sunt uberes concionum fructus, pietatem, et lacrymas commoveat auditoribus" [but rather it should be expounded skillfully and seriously by preachers, so that the abundant fruits of the sermons may move the audience to piety and tears].[107] Religious stories have a better chance of provoking morally sound responses from their viewers if pious orators present them carefully and reverently.

Over the course of the next century, writers of performed verse would sometimes provide written warnings to readers and spectators, instructing them to be wary of what they heard and saw. Take, for instance, *I trionfi dell'innocenza* (Palermo, 1685), in which the librettist warns audiences that the voices read and heard may shock with their offensiveness and licentiousness, but that spectators should remember that the author's pen was guided by the Muses and his ideas by the Church:

> Avverti, che tutte quelle voci, che addobbate dagli ornamenti dell'Arte, e dall'Iperboli delle Muse, ti rassembrassero o licentiose, o profane, ammettele nel tuo sano intendimento con quei sensi medesimi, co' quali l'ha proferito l'Auttore, dichiarandosi egli, che per diporto maneggia la Penna in Parnasso, e per obligo crede quanto li comanda a Santa Cattolica Chiesa a Roma.[108]
>
> [Be aware that all those voices, adorned with ornaments of art and the hyperbole of the Muses, which might seem licentious or profane to you, should be received in your sound understanding with the same intentions with which the author has expressed them, declaring himself to be handling the Pen in Parnassus for amusement, and believing, out of duty, in what the Holy Catholic Church of Rome commands.]

Girolamo Bartolomei takes similar precautions in his *Dialoghi sacri musicali intorno a diversi suggetti* (Florence, 1657). He writes in his preface that none of the songs in his collection should

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[107] Borromeo, *Acta Ecclesia Mediolanensis*, 4-5.

[108] See D. Giuseppe Salina (composer) and Giovanni Battista Del Giudice (attributed librettist), *I trionfi dell'innocenza riportati dal gloriosissimo patriarca de' monaci, S. Benedetto nell'avvolgersi tra le spine. Dialogo a 5 voci, e 4 stromenti. Da cantarsi nella Ven. Chiesa dello Spirito Santo di Palermo de' RR. PP. Casinensi, in occasione dell'Oratione delle Quarant'Hore, in quest'Anno 1685* (Palermo: Appresso D. Cillenio Hesperio, 1685), 4.

be staged, but instead only sung musically "se venghino addolciti da proporzionata armonia" [if they are sweetened by well-proportioned sonority].[109] He proffers that producing staged theater of any sort requires far too much effort and care to generate simple human delight. To avoid mistakes in staging these works that might negatively affect a congregation, he instead focuses on perfecting the lyrics to ensure that the words, "nel contenuto loro in breve giro di parole ristretto […] possano con aggradevole dilettazione eccitarne una divota pietade" [in their content, in a short turn of phrase […] can excite a devout pity with pleasant delight].[110] He makes sure even to restrict the length and content of his songs to avoid any rhetorical or musical excess that might rouse the audience's emotions in a way that might distract from devotional thoughts. The authors intend to prepare the spectator for what's to come, providing psychological armor against any spiritually damaging content.[111]

Should an audience witness and internalize some performed mistake or error in speech, the perversion might have dire mortal and eternal repercussions, especially when that perversion is unexpected or not immediately noticeable. Borromeo even goes so far as to as to accuse theater of being the cause of plagues past and present. In the *Liber memorialis* (1579), he states that "[…] le mostruose pazzie dei spettacoli, giuochi, e vostre carnevali antepassati, hanno avuto

[109] Girolamo Bartolomei, *Dialoghi sacri musicali intorno a diversi suggetti* (Florence: Nella staperia di Gio. Antonio Bonardi, 1657), x.

[110] Bartolomei, *Dialoghi sacri musicali*…, x. All songs in this collection have God, the saints, and demonic temptation as their focus.

[111] See also Massimo Oldoni, "Gli 'irregolari' in piazza e la grande paura del medioevo spettatore," in *Diavoli e mostri in scena dal Medio Evo al Rinascimento,* ed. M. Chiabò and F. Doglio (Rome: Centro studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1988), 72. Here, Oldoni shows how public life was rife with the fear of social and public subversion, which were potential signs that some "*mostrum*"—qua demon—was sewing discord in the community. Compare also the many songs in Girolamo Bartolomei, *Ghirlanda di vari fiori in honore del beato servo di Dio Hippolito Galantini* (Florence: Nella stamperia di Pietro Nesti, 1630). Here, Bartolomei provides songs that warn listeners about demonic temptation.

non picciola parte in provocare Dio a flagellarci con la peste […]" [the monstrous follies of past spectacles, games, and your carnivals have played no small part in provoking God to punish us with the plague].[112] While Borromeo became adamant about the nefarious nature of theater and music post 1576, he was not always completely against musical production. According to Robert L. Kendrick, Borromeo was actually very active in the musical and theatrical world before the plague. He received several musical dedications, had been active in the search for and appointment of several singers and *maestri di capella*, and had even spoken about the usefulness of religious music at the Tridentine council.[113] In a plaintive letter to his beloved city Milan after the plague of 1575-1576, he pleads with its people to see reason by banishing any distracting events from their streets and from their lives:

> Gli antichi pagani, in tempo che incrudeliva la pestilenza, cominciarono a introdurre sì fatte giuochi e spettacoli; volete voi ad una certa imitazione loro nella estinzione della peste, che è tutta grazia di Dio; ritenere una simile usanza di cose sì esecrabili, e che tanto spiacciono alla sua divina bontà? Nol fate, figlioli, nol fate. Restituite pur una volta a Dio, ed all'onor suo questo tempo di Settuagesima e Sessagesima, e Quinquagesima: tempo consacrato a servitù di sua Divina maestà, tempo misterioso il quale così tirannicamente con le sue invenzioni il Demonio e coi suoi allettamenti il mondo sì ha già usurpato.[114]
>
> [The ancient pagans, during times with the plague was raging, began to introduce such games and spectacles. Do you really want to imitate them by continuing these abominable practices, especially when it is only by God's grace that the plague is eradicated? Don't do it, my children, don't do it. Instead, return this time of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima to God and His honor. This period is meant to be dedicated to serving His Divine Majesty, but the Devil with his inventions and the world with its allurements have tyrannically usurped it to their own purposes.]

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[112] Excerpt from Borromeo's *Liber memorialis editus a S. Carolo An. 1579*, found in the Appendix of Borromeo *De choreis, et spectaculis*, 357. The Appendix section is titled "Appendix seu collectio selectarum sententiarum S. Carolo Borromæi" [Appendix or collection of selected sayings of St. Charles Borromeo]. The contents of the Appendix are in both Italian and Latin.

[113] See Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*, 69.

[114] Borromeo, *Liber memorialis*, in *De choresi, et spectaculis*, 358.

Borromeo directly likens the theater stage to a diabolical space whose invented seductions directly defy God and the periods of time meant to be set aside for Him. Theatrical production was even enough to produce madness both in its actors and viewers by seducing them and filling them with unreason. In the same letter to Milan, he explains his desire:

> […] vediamo ormai estinte le profane memorie del Paganesimo, delle quali sì è servito il Demonio ad occupare in questi tempi, e per dir così, ad incantare i cuori degli uomini, e a fargli impazzir talmente, che né anche i più savi, secondo il Mondo, abbiano vergogna di far pubblica professione di pazzia carnevalesca.[115]
>
> [We now see the profane memories of Paganism, which the Devil has indeed used to occupy this time and, so to speak, enchant the hearts of men, causing them to act so foolishly that even the wisest, according to worldly standards, are not ashamed to make a public display of carnival madness.]

The Perils of Acting and Masks

Borromeo associated *commedia* with a sort of madness (*pazzia*), which he equates with the function of masks. To curb their use, he banned them in 1579. In his eyes, they were tools with which an actor would simultaneously obfuscate a God-given form and emulate the first actor, Satan, who donned the mask, or costume, of a serpent:

> Siano ormai perpetuamente bandite le maschere, con le quali pare, che egli uomini studino non solo di trasformarsi; ma di scancellare in un certo modo quella figura, che Dio ha data loro; anzi alcuni vanno tanto innanzi in questa brutta pazzia, che rappresentano quelle metamorfosi antiche con trasformarsi in bestie.
>
> Maledette ed esecrande maschere, oltre ogni altro rispetto, anche perché ci rappresentano la memoria dall'antica nostra rovina, la quale ci procura il Demonio, che s'immascherò da serpente.[116]
>
> [Let masks be perpetually banned, with which it seems men not only strive to transform themselves but also, in a certain way, to erase the image that God has given them. Indeed, some go so far in this ugly madness that they mimic those ancient metamorphoses by transforming themselves into beasts.

[115] Borromeo, *Liber memorialis,* in *De choreis, et spactaculis,* 358.
[116] Borromeo, *Liber memorialis,* in *De choreis, et spactaculis,* 358.

> Cursed, execrable mask, for many reasons, but especially because they remind us of our ancient downfall, which the Devil caused when he masked himself as a serpent.]

The study of transforming oneself into something or someone else requires actors to open their minds as mediums of expression for the roles they play. That is, actors need to double themselves by allowing a foreign expression to show through them to an audience. This doubling causes a perversion of the true self, at once protecting the true identity from contamination and temporarily subjugating it in favor of the foreign expression.

This notion is not unique to Borromeo but can be found in several treatises against the dangers of theater between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Philip Stubbes confirms Borromeo's theory in his *Anatomy of the Abuses in England in Shakespeare's Youth* (1583), where he recounts the story of a dancing actress and the Devil: "*Mira collusion* sayth another, *saltat diabolus per puellam*. It is strange iugling, when wee thinke the maide doth dance, and it is not so, but the devil in her, or by her."[117] For Stubbes, acting and dancing are so vile to God that the performer opens herself up to being the means through which the Devil can express himself. By acting, she allowed the demon to perform through her for the audience. The story later resurfaces in the Jesuit Giovanni Ottonelli's invective against the theater, titled *Della christiana moderation del theatro* (1648). Ottonelli paints the scene more vividly than Stubbes. The actress dances around, and

> Sempre vi è vicino il Zanni, che fa gesti osceni, e dice parole brutte per muovere a riso il popolo spettatore, onde contro quei salti, e quei tripudii, si può dire con Chrisostomo, *His tripudiis Diabolus saltat; his a Demonum ministris homines*

[117] Phillip Stubbes, *Anatomy of the Abuses in England in Shakespeare's Youth. A.D. 1583*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London, E.C.: The New Shakespeare Society, 1877), 84.

> *decipiuntur*. Nella dissolutione di questi salti tripudanti se ne sta saltando il Diavolo stesso, conforme a quella scrittura, *Pilosi saltabunt ibi.*[118]
>
> [Zanni is always close by, making obscene gestures and saying ugly words to move the populace attending these base shows. Hence, against those leaps and jubilations, one can say with Chrisostomo, *The Devil dances with these dances; men are deceived by these ministries of demons*. In the dissolution of these jubilant leaps, the Devil himself is leaping, in conformity with that writing, *The hairy one will dance there*].

Ottonelli expresses the insidious doubling of the actress with the Devil and qualifies the *commedia* character Zanni, associated with cunning tricks, as further tempting the spectators to think obscene thoughts. What happens to the actress is not, crucially, demonic possession. A demon does not take control of her body nor is an exorcism required. More simply, a demon uses her and the medium of acting to express itself. The clearest explanation of this can be found in William Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragedy* (1633): "The effect of Stage-plays is, that they breed in the hearts of their Actors and Spectators an inward disesteeme, a valient antipathy, an implaceable enmity against the practicall power of grace and holinesse; against all pious and religious men."[119] The demon can use the performance as fertile ground for sewing discord in the actors' and spectators' hearts and minds. Prynne goes on to accuse playwrights and actors of using their eloquence to sweeten the poison of words, easily circumventing auditors and finding their audiences' souls.[120]

Ottonelli and Stubbes view actors as living in a state of abject immorality, unwittingly living and performing amongst demons who profit from their depravity. They express a tension

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[118] Giovanni Domenico Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro*. *Libro primo. Detto la qualità delle comedie,* vol. 1, 5 vols. (Florence: Nella Stamperia di Luca Franceschini, & Alessandro Logi, 1648), 159.

[119] William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragedie* (London: E. A. and W. I. for Michael Sparke, 1633), 542-543.

[120] Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragedie*, 791.

between an actor's identity and demons who supposedly take advantage of it through the stage role. The ancients perceived this tension in two ways. In Plato's case (*Ion* 536b), it is experienced as a lucid possession. Socrates says to Ion: "One poet is suspended from one Muse, another from another: the word we use for it is 'possessed,' but it is much the same thing, for he is *held*. [… For] it is not by art or knowledge about Homer that you say what you say, but by divine dispensation and possession […].[121] The "possession" here implies more an influence than an actual physical possession; the Muse plants inspiration in the poet and uses the poet as a conduit for expression, though the poet retains his lucidity and autonomy. Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1413b) discusses the tension as the animation of the role through proper use of style for the given moment.[122] Both cases imply that the successful actor will assimilate his or her interiority to the role's affects. For Plato (*Republic* 605d), this is a natural process, as humans naturally imitate and feel the emotions of others—participate in them spontaneously—when exposed to them: "[…] you see the best of us, I imagine, listen to Homer and any of the other tragic poets representing the grief of one of the heroes as they pour forth a long speech in their lamentation, even singing and beating their breasts, and, you know, we enjoy it, we surrender ourselves to it and suffer along with the characters […]."[123] Plato also warns of the dangers of imitating bad things (*Republic* 395d):

> […] they must imitate those things which are appropriate for these people form earliest childhood: brave, temperate men, pious, free, all such things, but they must not do anything contrary to liberty, not be good at imitating it, nor anything else

[121] Plato, "Ion," in *The Statesman, Philebus, Ion*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Repr. [der Ausg.] 1925, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006), 536b, p. 429, https://www-loebclassics-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/LCL164/1925/pb_LCL164.v.xml. See also Claudio Vicentini, *La teoria della recitazione: dall'antichità al Settecento*, 1. ed, Biblioteca (Venezia: Marsilio, 2012), 23-25.

[122] Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric*, trans. John Henry Freese, Repr (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006), 1413b, pp. 419-421.

[123] Plato, *Republic*, trans. Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 605d, p. 433, https://www-loebclassics-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/LCL276/2013/pb_LCL276.iii.xml.

> which is classed as shameful, in order that they may gain no enjoyment of the reality of their imitation of it.[124]

The danger of imitation arises when the actor cannot manage the interior tension between him- or herself and the role's influence, at which point the actor's soul might be tainted by the role's influence. Plato asserts that humans can only adequately imitate one thing at a time, explicitly referencing actors and rhapsodists: "But if he were to try dabbling about with many [imitations], he would fail to distinguish in any of them in any way. […] Nor can they be rhapsodists and actors at the same time."[125] Aristotle similarly discusses, in the *Poetics*, that while an actor must completely feel and embody the role's characteristics, he must also be critical and aware of what is happening to himself, lest he lose himself in them: "Hence poetry is the work of a gifted person, or a manic: of these types, the former have versatile imaginations, the latter get carried away."[126]

Ottonelli explains more generally how comedy, in particular, breeds sin within actors and spectators alike:

> Il demonio a' nostri tempi cava grosso guadagno da' mercenarii recitamenti, non solo perché molti comici osceni, e comiche poco modeste, peccano mortalmente, vituperando il christiano theatro con molte parole sconcie, e con molti gesti libidinosi: ma anche perché molti spettatori deboli di virtù commettono gravi peccati di oscenità, almeno col pensiero nel theatro, e poi altrove con più gravi maniere per la ricordanza: e questo altro non è, che ingrossare il capital peccaminoso per maggior guadagno di Satanasso; ché però addolcisce molto l'esca della commedia, per allettar infino gli svogliati.[127]
>
> [In our times, the Devil gains much profit from mercenary performances, not only because many obscene comic actors and immodest comic actresses commit mortal sin, insulting the Christian theater with many lewd words and lustful gestures, but also because many spectators, weak in virtue, commit serious sins of obscenity, at

[124] Plato, *Republic,* 395d, p. 259.
[125] Plato, *Republic*, 394e-395a, p. 257.
[126] Aristotle, "Poetics," in *Aristotle:* Poetics. *Longinus:* On the Sublime. *Demetrius:* On Style., ed. and trans. Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1455a, p. 89, https://www-loebclassics-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/LCL199/1995/pb_LCL199.v.xml.
[127] Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro, Libro primo,* 49.

> least in their mind while in the theater, and then later in more grievous acts of memory. This only serves to increase the capital of sin for the greater profit of Satan, who thus sweetens the lure of comedy to attract even the indifferent.]

The theatrical stage becomes, in essence, a diabolical pulpit from which sin is disseminated among the spectators. The comic actors themselves do the tempting, so the demons need only attend and partake in the action as it suits their needs. The comics insidiously plant seeds of obscene thoughts in the spectators' minds, which continue to grow there even after the spectacle ends. All this sin becomes fruit for the demons to later reap. A demon might even go so far as to take over an actor's role should he or she be unable to perform: "Non voglio tacere ciò, che narrano alcuni; e lo racconta anche Beltrame, che nel principiar una comedia un recitante morì repentinamente, e che subito un demonio prese la forma di quel recitante morto, e seguitò egli la comedia" [I do not want to silence what some say; and Beltrame also tells of time when, at the beginning of a show, a performer suddenly died, and a demon immediately took the form of that dead performer and continued the show in his stead].[128] To protect its gains, the demon doubles as the actor and performs.

Rebuking the sinful tendencies of the comedy, Ottonelli alludes to "christiano theatro," which he characterizes as any form of theater that does not result in forms of vice in the actors or the spectators. He outlines his definition of the "christiano theatro" in the *Proemio* and the first chapter of his six-book-long treatise, characterizing any theater as heretical if it lacks an educational function.[129] In Chapter One, Ottonelli leans heavily on St. Crisostomo, paraphrasing the saint's vituperations as one of his central theses: "Mai cesserò dalla predicatoria funtion,

[128] Giovanni Domenico Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro. Libro secondo. Detto la solutione de' nodi*, vol. 2, 5 vols. (Florence: Appresso Gio. Antonio Bonardi, 1649), 48-49.

[129] Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro, Libro primo,* 1-7.

perché con essa curerò il morbo de' vitiosi, e confermerò la santità de' virtuosi. […] Se voi, oh comici osceni, sarete perseveranti nelle oscenità, io mi servirò di più pungente, e penetrante spada; ne mi poserò, sin tanto che non mandi in dispersione a fatto le diaboliche dissolutioni theatrali" [I will never cease from the preaching function, because with it I will cure the disease of vicious men, and I will confirm the sanctity of the virtuous. […] If you, oh obscene comics, will persevere in obscenities, I will use a more stinging and penetrating sword; I won't stop until I totally destroy the diabolical theatrical dissolution].[130] Ottonelli expands on this theme by examining and upholding Borromeo's stark opinions and rules on theater. He admits that comics may be good Christians. They may attend mass regularly, say their prayers, and, by all accounts, live pious lives. Yet by partaking in theatrical activities, they nevertheless fall into mortal sin: "Non basta dire i comici sono christiani. Aggiungo di più. Non basta che faccino delle opere buone, e dicono delle sante orationi: bisogna, che si astengano da tutti i peccati mortali, se vogliano la salute" [It's not enough to say comic actors are Christians. I'll add more. It's not enough that they do good works and say holy prayers: they must abstain from all mortal sin if they want salvation].[131]

At its core, the heresy of acting begins when actors obfuscate their true, God-given identities in favor of their roles. Prynne puts it well, in his *Histrio-Mastrix*:

> Now this counterfeiting of persons, affections, manners, vices, sexes, and the like, which is inseparably incident to the acting of playes; as it transformes the actors into what they are not so it infuseth falsehood into every part of soule and body, as all hypocrisie doth; in causing them to seeme that in outward appearance which they are not in truth: therefore it must needs bee ocursed hellish art of face-painting, which the P. Fathers, with others much condemne, even from this very ground;

[130] Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro, Libro primo*, 6.

[131] Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro, Libro primo*, 11-29, quote on p. 21.

> because it sophisticates and perverts the workes of God, in putting a false glosse upon his creatures.[132]

For Prynne, plays make counterfeiters of actors. By "putting a false glosse" on God's creation, they blatantly mock God's design, and thus also God Himself. Prynne emphasizes the transformative aspects of acting. Actors might pretend to transform themselves for the duration of the play, but in doing so they actually transform their souls by infusing them with falsehoods. The actors become perverse beings, physically in their hypocritical costuming and spiritually in sin.

Borromeo earlier characterizes this doubling as a monstrosity and a heresy. For him, acting imitates the ancient mythic transformations of men into beasts. He holds that this bestial state manifests in an ugly madness that occurs the instant a mask, whether real or metaphorical, covers the actor.[133] Debased, the actor descends to the level of beasts, similar to the way in which G. Pico della Mirandola conceives man's potential descent on the "ladder of being" in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man.*[134] The masked actor fractures him- or herself in two, accentuating the friction between reason and unreason. According to Borromeo, this unreason inherent in the mask undermines the traits inherent in a good Christian: "Abominevoli maschere, sotto le quali si fanno lecito gli uomini di dir parole disoneste, e sporche, di far gesti, e atti pieni d'impudicizia. Scellerate maschere, oppugnatrici di onestà, inimiche della gravità, e rovina d'ogni custodia, che dentro e di fuori dee avere l'anima d'un buon cristiano" [People wear abominable masks, under which they allow themselves to speak dishonest and filthy words, and

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[132] Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix.*, 159-160. See also p. 327, where Prynne discusses how actors and spectators alike defile their eyes and souls.

[133] Borromeo, *Liber memorialis*, in *De choreis, et spectaculis*, 358.

[134] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1995), 17-19.

to make indecent gestures and acts. These wicked masks oppose honesty, attack dignity, and ruin all the safeguards that a good Christian's soul should have, both inside and out].[135] Masks, for Borromeo, represent a mockery of faith, undermining the Church at every turn.

According to Ottonelli, an actor named Cecchino wrote that actors and spectators with enough intellect will understand the difference between jokes and reality. Ottonelli counters, explaining that "sono scherzi, e giuochi pericolosi, e perniciosi alle anime; […] è facile il passaggio da gli scherzi, e da' giuochi alle cose serie, e peccaminose" [they are perilous jokes and games, and pernicious to souls; […] it's easy, the passage from jokes and games to serious, sinful things].[136] Ottonelli expands on the repercussions of these jokes and games much later in his treatise, where he relies heavily on Tertullian's *De spectaculis* (ca.197-202).[137] He reports the story of a Christian woman who, having gone to the theater one day, returned home possessed by a demon. When confronted by a priest, the demon responded that its possession was perfectly legal, as the woman was in its house ("casa sua"). Ottonelli continues with a long explanation of the story, essentially concluding that the woman unwittingly partook in the Devil's games in the Devil's house—the theater—and so fell prey to him.[138] This story also appears in Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*, where he comes to the same conclusions.[139] Neither Ottonelli nor Prynne make the claim that demonic possession is a real threat of theater, for actors or audience members. This story serves more to highlight the extreme risk to the soul in attending a theatrical event not sanctioned by the Church.

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[135] Borromeo, *De choreis, et spectaculis,* 358.

[136] Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro. Libro secondo,* 7.

[137] See Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. T. R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 290-291, https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.tertullian-de_spectaculis.1931.

[138] Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro. Libro secondo,* 241-242.

[139] Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragedie,* 10-11.

Examining the effects on the performer, Ottonelli relates the tale of a man who witnesses a demon watching a singer perform: "Una sera viddelo [un cantante,] tutto attento ai' suoi lascivi canti, per dar diletto ad altri: e vidde avanti lui un fiero, grande, peloso, e cornuto Diavolone, che con gl'occhi di fuoco, e con la faccia ardente saltava festoso col corpo, e applaudeva sommamente all'indegnissimo impiego dell'osceno Cantore […]" [One evening, he saw a singer, who was entirely focused on his lascivious songs meant to entertain others. Then he saw in front of him a fierce, large, hairy, and horned Devil, who, with fiery eyes and a burning face, was joyfully jumping around and enthusiastically applauding the obscene singer's disgraceful performance].[140] The singer, having passed along his obscenities effectively, shortly thereafter, and quite suddenly, died, and was damned to Hell for his performing. The Devil in this and in many aforementioned depictions, is himself a quintessentially theatrical character. He often appears costumed, so to speak, as some animalesque, hideous figure who theatrically jumps around, laughs, and dances. The authors cleverly parallel the actors they denigrate with the theatrical actions of the demons they illustrate. At the same time, many of the demons, like the Devil in Ottonelli's example, are phantasmatic projections witnessed by potentially only one person. This expands the demonic stage to the inner theater of the mind and soul, where the spiritual teachings and protections of the Church require attention to ensure salvation.

[140] Ottonelli, *Della christiana moderatione del theatro. Libro primo,* 151.

Chapter 2

Hearing Demons:
Sounds and Subversion in Demonic Stage Space

"[…] and what seem'd corporal melted
As breath into the wind."[1]

Demonic voices hold a profound significance, serving as enigmatic tools of imitation. The artistry embedded in a demon's vocalization becomes a potent influence, adept at manipulating and altering the very essence of its interlocutor's identity. Rooted in the Christian milieu of the era, where treatises, popular tales, and scriptural traditions teemed with narratives of demonic powers, the auditory realm emerges as a focal juncture at which listeners are allured and ensnared. In the realm of sound, the boundaries between the self of a demon and that of its human interlocutor blur and fluctuate, creating a complex theatrical interplay that shapes the listening and hearing experience.[2] In that landscape, demons are, in effect, actors. In what follows, I argue that the theatricality of these demons makes a profound commentary on the fluidity of agency, the power of sound, and the enduring dialogue between the diabolical and the

[1] Shakespeare, "Macbeth," in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, I.iii.81-82, p. 860.

[2] See Massimo Oldoni, "Gli 'irregolari' in piazza e la grande paura del medioevo spettatore," in *Diavoli e mostri in scena dal Medio Evo al Rinascimento*, ed. M. Chiabò and F. Doglio (Rome: Centro studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1988), 57–80 (at pp. 57-58). Quoting John of Salsbury's famous phrase, "totus mundus agit histrionem," he avers that if we took away the actual theater, the fictional scene would most likely be indistinguishable from reality. See also Claudio Pogliano, "Teatro, mondo, sapere: un percorso di lettura sulle origini della modernità," *Belfagor* 55, no. 1 (2000): 9–30. See also "Prologue — A Force Within: The Importance of Demonic Possession for Early Modern Studies," in Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), xiii-xix. Here, Kallendorf briefly goes over the early modern suspicions of external forces and their threat to subjectivity.

human, where the sonic plane becomes a stage for spiritual conflict and introspection. Humans perceive sound (or music) and can interpret the words and/or text associated with it. While a demon can produce a sound, the temptation—its most important action—truly begins with seducing the victim's mind into believing that the sound is a sentence.

Demonologist Zaccaria Visconti presents three main types of language in his treatise *Complementum artis exorcisticae* (1600), found in the collection of demonological texts *Thesaurus exorcismorum.* His three types include 1) the language of God which "speaks" in Creation; 2) the language of humans which speaks in words (voice); and 3) the language of spirits (both good and bad angels) which speaks in and to the mind.[3] This puts into question the substance of the demonic voice: is it something that one can physically hear if language in words (voice) pertains only to humans? And similarly, can one physically hear it if it speaks only in and to the mind? Angels and demons can compress air to create an aural noise, but does that count as a voice?

Visconti continues by saying that spirits speak to humans in two ways: 1) via the local word [*verbo locali*] in the human body, and 2) through the manipulation of the imagination, or the impression of sensible things [*impressionem rerum sensibilium*].[4] According to Girolamo Menghi's Italian *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* (1576), in the first method, the demon speaks

[3] See Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric,* 109. See also, Zaccaria Visconti, *Complementum artis exorcisticae,* in Girolamo Menghi et al., *Thesaurus exorcismorum atque conjurationum terribilium, potentissimorum, efficacissimorum, cum practica probatissima: Quibus spiritus maligni, demones maleficiaq[ue], omnia de corporibus humanis obsessis, tanquam flagellis fustibusque fugantur, expelluntur, doctrinis refertissimus atq[ue] uberrimus: Ad meximam exorcitarum commoditatem in lucem editus & recusus: Cujus authores, ut & singuli tractatus, sequente pagella consignati, inveniuntur* (Cologne: Impensis Lazari Zetzneri, 1608), 761. "Loquuntur etiam inter se Spiritus verbo mentis: Nam triplex est verbum, operis, oris, & mentis: verbo operis, loquitur Deus: Verbo oris, loquuntur homines, & verbo mentis, loquuntur Spiritus."

[4] Visconti, *Complementum artis exorcisticae,* 761-762.

directly to the mind and in the mind, without the use of any intermediary tool such as sound or voice.[5] The demon, in this instance, has no actual need for sonorous speech ("suonoroso parlare") because it can communicate directly to the human mind almost like when one whispers into someone's ear. The second and more pertinent method of demonic language refers to the demon's ability to take different colors and figures and place them into a person's mind to lead him or her to wrong conclusions. Menghi explains that this process happens in the air, comparing it to how the sun makes things visible to us: the sun imbues the air with light, which allows us to see color and form, just as one sees images in a mirror only when the sun's rays are present to carry them. In a similar fashion, the demon acts like a mirror in that it, like the sunny light, can carry these same images to us: "gli demoni possono qualunque figura, colore, e forma gli piace trasporre nell'animalistico nostro spirito, e per tal modo, e via ci pongono molti negotii nell'animo, persuandoci molti consegli, e mostrandoci molte cose […]" [demons can transpose any shape, color, and form that pleases them in our animalistic spirit. And in this way, they put many questions in our souls, persuading us with much advice, and showing us many things].[6] The demon intercepts these colors and forms to transpose them [*trasporre*] into new, deceptive images, which it then places in our mind.

Menghi's reference to what occurs in the air (*aria*) also exemplifies the importance of how people understood sound transmission in the Renaissance. "Aria" is a highly multivalent word, used not only to refer to air but also to breath, the soul, and a song called "aer" (later

[5] Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcista,* (Venice: Appresso Fioravante Prati, 1595), 151.

[6] Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 152. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

called “aria”), as Ottaviano Petrucci termed it in his early sixteenth-century musical *frottole*.[7] The musical *frottola* was a popular form frequently circulated through oral transmission and sung and performed by *cantimbanchi* and *improvvisatori*, known for being practitioners of orally transmitted poetry.[8] Crucially, this humble vernacular poetry eventually took on the term “aer” (eventually “aria”). Jack Westrup explains, referencing Giulio Caccini’s *Le nuove musiche* (1602), that while “aria” of course means “air,” it also implies the connection between poetry and music.[9] Interestingly, early *frottola* (and *aria*) composers would make little attempt to express textual content, a practice followed by the early performing improvisers of these pieces, who would improvise with “lively spontaneity,” as Haar puts it, to evoke the sense of *aria*.[10] We should note that “aria” began to imply the prominence of a single voice—eventually the solo singing we might expect in seventeenth-century and later operas—typically accompanied by other voices and/or instruments. Singers aimed to transcend the printed page with embellished and ornamented delivery—prepared or improvised—that might reach a more mystical,

[7] See, as one example, his “Aer de versi latini,” in Ottaviano Petrucci, *Strombotti, ode, frottole, sonetti, et modo de cantar versi latini e capituli. Libro quarto.* (Venice: Petrutius, 1507), xxxvi. The major sources of 15th-century *frottole* come from Petrucci’s 11 books of musical compositions published between 1504 and 1514. The *frottola* is also found printed in subsequent decades, extending its life and ensuring its integration into later forms. For a comprehensive history of the *frottola*, see Don Harrán and James Chater, “Frottola,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.10313. James Haar also lays out the history of the *frottola* and its connection to madrigal and aria forms in James Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), esp. ch. 2, “The Puzzle of the Quattrocento,” pp. 22-48; see esp. pp. 22-25, 33, 42, and 44-48.

[8] Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance*, 44, 87, and 94-95.

[9] For a succinct history of the term “aria,” see Jack Westrup et al., “Aria,” *Oxford Music Online*, 2001, 1–23, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43315.

[10] See Harrán and Chater, “Frottola,” 7; and Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance*, 87.

suprasensual expressive power, as Martha Feldman puts it.[11] Feldman reports how the organist and madrigalists Girolamo Parabosco, in his *Lettere amorose* [Love Letters] (1545) praises this skill as performed by the exceptionally talented poet-singer Gaspara Stampa. He ends his letter to her by asking, "What shall I say of that angelic voice, which sometimes strikes the air ("l'aria") with its divine accents, making such a sweet harmony that it not only seems to everyone who is worthy of hearing it as if a Siren's… but infuses spirit and life into the coldest stones and makes them weep with sweetness?"[12]

The improvisatory style—or at least the semblance of improvisation—remained as the sixteenth-century madrigal tradition flourished. In this form, the (composed) *aria* melody might be passed between voices, giving everyone a chance to be the *improvisatore*; and later, in the *madrigale arioso* [song-like madrigal], the predominance of the declamatory melody grew to even newer heights with a greater emphasis on producing intimate relationships between text and sonic output.[13] These "song-like" madrigals evoked the oral tradition of reciting *ottave* [octave stanzas] from Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, and mimicked solo improvisation with

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[11] Martha Feldman, "The Courtesan's Voice: Petrarchan Lovers, Pop Philosophy, and Oral Traditions," in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Bonnie Gordon and Martha Feldman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 114-118.

[12] Quoted and translated in Feldman, "The Courtesan's Voice…", 115; compare the original Italian in Girolamo Parabosco, *Lettere amorose* (Venice: Appresso Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1547), 24-25, https://books.googleusercontent.com/books/content?req=AKW5Qafb1_U_ftByS1vmnWKzCNTm-ZO9-smCinveyNuD_eorodcF3oEchdp3s_J2Hxk9kHFOo4xcuwj8eQECTnWad8JCmdTW7hNPayCJ-wziRAOEyEcxkQCHugCP8nqai6EEKCIN6XB2qWCpVJ-MumpUrX5Jrk4b6NKhwfleKIYUrH0GJrUaJj7Zg9TCJZkA0KtkjsFRhFkelSYJ6_ZrL-koKNCa7JUF94EWU6r7s44aMMyFdIi-NaSFRKcwAsxX75xgerNuU-gZCcpNx6oesuiCCdDix-CukdWquvmSlIgajwPZgJC1D28.

[13] Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance*, 98, 114; Jack Westrup et al., "Aria," 2.

explicitly composed ornamentation in the treble voice of a four-voice texture.[14] The aria was quickly recognized as a form that brought a special kind of rapture to the ears and soul. Indeed, according to Gary Tomlinson, voices were thought to permeate the already porous boundary between body and spirit.[15] In his *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528), Castiglione praises the power of solo singing to instrumental accompaniment (*aria*):

> Allor il signor Gaspar Pallavicino, Molte sorti di musica, disse, si trovan, così di voci vive, come d'instrumenti; però a me piacerebbe intender qual sia la miglior tra tutte […]. Bella musica, rispose messer Federico, parmi il cantar bene a libro sicuramente, e con bella maniera; ma ancor molto più il cantare alla viola, perché tutta la dolcezza consiste quasi in un solo; e con molto maggior attenzion si nota, ed intende il bel modo e l'aria, non essendo occupate le orecchie in più che in una sol voce […].[16]
>
> [Thus spoke Signor Gaspar Pallavicino: "Many kinds of music exist, both in singing and in instruments; yet I would like to understand which might be the best among them […]." "It seems to me," responded Sir Federico, "that beautiful music is solo singing with a viola [instrumental accompaniment] because almost all of the sweetness consists in one alone, and one notices and understands with much greater attention the beautiful manner and air [aria], their ears unhindered by more than one voice […].

Castiglione highlights the fusion of text and music in the aria. He makes special note of the hearer's heightened auricular reception and subsequent comprehension of the unincumbered musical transmission. Shortly thereafter, he explains the profound, potentially positive effects of this type of music on the soul, using the melancholy elderly as example beneficiaries.[17] Haar

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[14] Feldman, "The Courtesan's Voice…", 112-113.

[15] Gary Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 202-203.

[16] Baldassarre Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* (Florence: Per li heredi di Philippo di Giunta, 1528), Book 2, p. 63.

[17] Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano*, 63-64. See also James Haar, "The Courtier as Musician: Castiglione's View of the Science and Art of Music," in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, ed. Paul E. Corneilson (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1998), 25-28.

highlights Castiglione's specific admiration for the improvisatory style of *cantare alla viola* (aria singing) and the wide dispersion of this skill among the trained and untrained in music.[18]

The aria became the epitome of solo vocal performance, often associated with improvisatory and attention-grabbing qualities and, perhaps more crucially, its potential effects on the hearer's state of mind. Just as an aria fuses text with music and sends it through the air (*aria*) to its hearer's ear, a demon might similarly manifest a voice as material sound, filling the air with it and carrying it to human ears.

Tasso's Demons: Voice and the Human Ear

Torquato Tasso exemplifies sonic diabolical temptation in canto V of his *Gerusalemme liberata,* in which Gernando undergoes demonic temptation and subsequent possession. At the end of Canto IV, the enchantress Armida has just finished a miraculous performance, painting herself as a beautiful and humble damsel in distress who needs brave knights to accompany her on her journey. The knights must now decide which of them will lead a small group of elected knights on this digressionary mission. Armida's goal with her performances was twofold: 1) to seduce, with her voice and body, more than the ten proposed knights—"né solo i dieci a lei promessi aspetta | ma di furto menarne altri confida"— ["not content | with the promised ten among her paramours, | but of the thrall of others confident"], and, in doing so, 2) to sow discord among the knights' camp.[19] Her performance is successful. The knights begin to argue over who will assume the leadership role (previously held by Dudone, who was killed in canto III) (*GL*, V.6-

[18] Haar, "The Courtier as Musician…", 24-25.

[19] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata,* (Torino, Italy: Einaudi, 2014), 131: Canto V, oct. 1. All translations of the *Gersualemme liberata* are taken from Torquato Tasso, *The Liberation of Jerusalem,* trans. Max Wickert, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

15). Armida's performance and pleas enflame the pride already present in the knights' hearts. Her seductive manipulations produced the conditions for demonic temptation and infiltration.

The envious desire for leadership proves even more powerful than Armida's seductions, especially for the prince of Norway, Gernando. In a rebuke of any other's claim to leadership,

> […] chiede a prova il principe Gernando
> quel grado, e bench'Armida in lui saetti,
> men può nel cor superbo amor di donna
> ch'avidità d'onor che se n'indonna.
> […]
> Ma il barbaro signor [Gernando], che sol misura
> quanto l'oro o 'l domino oltre si stenda,
> e per sé stima ogni virtute oscura
> cui titolo regal chiara non renda,
> non può soffrir che 'n ciò ch'egli procura
> seco di merto il cavalier contenda,
> e se ne cruccia sì ch'oltra ogni segno
> di ragione il trasporta ira e disdegno.[20]
>
> [[…] But there Prince Gernand in contention stood | for the command, in whose proud heart, although | Armida's darts fly, woman's love means less | than greed for Honour, his supreme mistress.
> […]
> But the barbarian prince, who deems secure | only those honours gold and force can own, | and who considers every feat obscure | unless a kingly title makes it known, | cannot for anything he craves endure | to admit the claim of knightly worth alone. | The very notion goads him, quite insane, | to spasms of distemper and disdain.]

He allows his pride and anger to overtake and cloud his reasoning faculties. At this precise moment, a demon sees an opportunity to attack:

> Tal che 'l maligno spirito d'Averno
> ch'in lui strada sì larga aprir si vede,
> tacito in sen gli serpe ed al governo
> de' suoi pensieri lusingando siede.
> E qui più sempre l'ira e l'odio interno
> inacerbisce, e 'l cor stimola e fiede;

[20] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 135-136: Canto V, octs. 15, 17.

e fa che ‘n mezzo a l’alma ognor risuona
una voce ch’a lui così ragiona […].[21]

[Now the malign infernal Fury sees | this broad highway of access to his soul, | silently creeps into his breast to seize his throne of thought by flattery’s control, | and thenceforth makes his bitter wrath increase, | upon his hatred’s fire heaping coal | and letting in his inmost soul resound | one voice that rings with echoes all around […].]

The demon silently and seamlessly unifies himself with Gernando, using Gernando’s blinding pride and anger as a wide-open entrance. From the seat of Gernando’s reason, the demon whispers its own distorted reasonings to exacerbate further the anger and pride already present. Over the next four octaves, the demon’s statements act as Gernando’s inner voice. I here provide the entire demonic inner monologue to illustrate how Tasso views and shapes its inflammatory statements in sonorous language:

«Teco giostra Rinaldo: or tanto vale
quel suo numero van d’antichi eroi?
Narri costui, ch’a te vuol farsi eguale,
le genti serve e i tributari suoi;
mostri gli scettri, e in dignità regale
paragoni i suoi morti a i vivi tuoi.
Ah quanto osa un signor d’indegno stato,
signor che ne la serva Italia è nato!
Vinca egli o perda omai, ché vincitore
Fu insino allor ch’emulo tuo divenne,
che dirà il mondo? (e ciò fia sommo onore):
“Questi già con Gernando in gara venne”.
Poteva a te recar gloria e splendore
il nobil grado che Dudon pria tenne;
ma già non meno esso da te n’attese:
costui scemò suo pregio allor che ‘l chiese.
E se, poi ch’altri più non parla o spira,
de’ nostri affari alcuna cosa sente,
come credi che ‘n Ciel di nobil ira
il buon vecchio Dudon si mostri ardente,
mentre in questo superbo i lumi gira
ed al suo temerario ardir pon mente,

[21] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 136: Canto V, oct. 18.

che seco ancor, l'età sprezzando e 'l merto,
fanciullo osa agguagliarsi ed inesperto?
E l'osa pure e 'l tenta, e ne riporta
in vece di castigo onor e laude,
e v'è chi no 'l consiglia e ne l'essorta
(o vergogna comune!) e chi gli applaude.
Ma se Goffredo il vede, e gli comporta
che di ciò ch'a te déssi egli ti fraude,
no 'l soffrir tu; né già soffrirlo déi,
ma ciò che puoi dimostra e ciò che sei».[22]

['Rinaldo tilts at you: what can he do, | boasting his list of champion knights of yore? | Let him who seeks to match himself with you | list servant peoples who their tribute pour. | His scepters let him show, and let him view | your living crown next those his dead kin wore. | How he presumes, this lord of low degree! | this lordling, born in servile Italy! |

'Whether he wins or loses now—for he | did not win until he dared against you stand— | what will the world say? His best praise shall be: | "This man was once a rival to Gernand!" | The noble rank that Dudon held surely | would give you glory. Yet to just as grand | a glory your assuming it gives birth; | but he, by seeking it, degrades its worth. |

'And, granting one who breathes no more nor speaks | may still sense something of our doings, how | do you suppose that good old Dudon's cheeks | would flame with wrath in Heaven, should he look now | on this proud fellow knowing that he seeks, | presumptuous aspirant, to disendow | both age and worth? A boy! A novice green, | who as his would-be equal dares to preen! |

'And yet he dares this and aspires, and reaps | not chastisement for impudence but acclaim, | for some here urge him on even as he leaps | and give him odds (to our whole nation's shame!). | If Godfrey sees not, and his justice sleeps, | how this man you of honour due defrauds, | suffer it not, no, suffer not that far. | Show now what you can do, and who you are.']

The language is at once vividly musical and profoundly accusatory. The demon paints Rinaldo unflatteringly, tending to the pride and insecurities that Gernando already harbors by drawing exaggerated and fantasized comparisons between Gernando, Rinaldo, and Dudone. The repeated use of the verb "osare"—to dare—works to further enrage Gernando and to heighten his sense of self-importance. The frequent interjections and the exceedingly long, uninterrupted phrases give the demon's statements a colloquial, almost stream-of-consciousness feel that one might expect in

[22] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 136-137: Canto V, octs. 19-22.

either an inner monologue or between two gossiping friends. The final octave proves the most moving. The demon convinces Gernando that Rinaldo is defrauding not only him but also Goffredo, and that Gernando must stop this at all costs to avoid undue suffering and shame.

The demon successfully unifies its voice with Gernando's reason:

> Al suon di queste voci arde lo sdegno
> e cresce in lui [Gernando] quasi commossa face;
> né capendo nel cor gonfiato e pregno,
> per gli occhi n'esce e per la lingua audace.
> Ciò che di riprensibile e d'indegno
> Crede in Rinaldo, a suo disnor non tace;
> superbo e vano il finge, e 'l suo valore
> chiama temerità pazza e furore.
>
> E quanto di magnanimo e d'altero
> e d'eccelso e d'illustre in lui risplende,
> tutto adombrando con mal arti il vero,
> pur come vizio sia, biasma e riprende,
> e ne ragiona sì che 'l cavaliero,
> emulo suo, publico il suon n'intende;
> non però sfoga l'ira o si raffrena
> quel cieco impeto in lui ch'a morte il mena,
>
> ché 'l reo demon che la sua lingua move
> di spirto in vece, e forma ogni suo detto,
> fa che gl'ingiusti oltraggi ognor rinove,
> esca aggiungendo a l'ingiammato petto.
> […]
>
> Or quivi, allor che v'è turba più folta,
> pur, com'è suo destin, Rinaldo accusa,
> e quasi acuto strale in lui rivolta
> la lingua, del venen d'Averno infusa […].[23]

> [These inward promptings his disdain ignite | that like a shook torch flares out uncontrolled. | His swollen heart cannot contain its spite; | his eyes overflow with it; his tongue grows bold. | Whatever word that may Rinaldo smite | with foul dishonour he will not withhold. | Falsely he makes him out as proud and vain, | and calls his courage frantic and insane. |
>
> Bright as the other's magnanimity, | or dignity, or fame, or valour shines, | clouding its truth with crafty evil, he, | as if it were a vice, blames and maligns, | and in such manner speaks that publicly | the knight, his rival, can well read the

[23] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 137-139: Canto V, octs. 23-26.

> signs. | Nor is his wrath then quenched, nor checked his breath | whose blind momentum beckons him toward death, |
>
> for the evil demon who supplants his sense | now moves his tongue and mouths his every sound, | hourly shows him new unjust offense | to add new fuel to his burning would.
>
> […]
>
> Now here he still, when crowds were densest, slurred | Rinaldo's honour (so his doom ordained) | and he his tongue like a sharp dart bestirred, | with dripping venom of Avernus stained.]

The sounds of the demon's words push Gernando past the breaking point. Gernando cedes his tongue to this inner voice, controlled now by the demon, and allows it to publicly slander Rinaldo.[24] Gernando aligns himself so closely with this (foreign) inner voice that the situation escalates explicitly to demonic possession. The demon controls Gernando's tongue and the words that issue from it.[25] The demon quite literally becomes the "venen d'Averno" [venom of Averno] that tips the arrow of Gernando's tongue. Now that the demonic inner voice has unified with and manifested through Gernando's voice, for which the tongue is a kind of synecdoche, it germinates in other ears and instigates chaos beyond Gernando's body.[26]

We should notice that its voice becomes an unseen tool that reaches out to and lures its interlocutors into a certain state of mind.[27] In the Renaissance, voice was likened to a physical

[24] The argument and subsequent duel between Gernando and Rinaldo is largely based on honor. See Daniel Javitch, "Tasso's Critique and Incorporation of Chivalric Romance: His Transformation of Achilles in the Gerusalemme Liberata," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 13, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 515–27, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02923023.

[25] Brian Levack provides an in-depth discussion of the symptoms of demonic possession and frames them as highly theatrical. See Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 6-15.

[26] Compare also the false dreams and words infused in Argillano's mind: Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 253-256: Canto VIII, octs. 59-68. See Tobias Gregory, "Tasso's God: Divine Action in 'Gerusalemme Liberata,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2002): 584-585, https://doi.org/10.2307/1262318.

[27] Levack, discussing early modern exorcism, discusses how the possessed individual actually became the central prop in the drama of the ritual. See Levack, *The Devil Within*, 142.

material—stone, marble, wood—that could be crafted and worked for a purpose.[28] Actors craft their voices into tools that bridge the ontological divide between the imaginary play space of the stage and the "real" space of the audience. Alfred Gell discusses these types of crafted tools—"art, music, dances, rhetoric, gifts, etc."—as physical and psychological "technologies" that intervene in social relationships as pre-prepared extensions of the body. According to Gell, these technologies are employed "in order to secure the acquiescence of other people in their intentions or projects."[29] Sarah Nooter would call Gell's "technology" a prosthesis since it becomes "both an extension of the ability and a displacement of identity by way of a new persona."[30] The voice works as a fabricated prosthesis that extends the sounder's identity in some preconceived way, crafted to build a physical relationship with an interlocutor. In the Tasso example above, the demon does precisely this. It uses its incendiary, whispered monologue to manipulate Gernando's perception of reality. George Webb, in his 1699 treatise *The Araignment of the Tongue*, likened the voice to an arrow shot by the tongue, as did William Gearing in his 1663 treatise *A Bridle for the Tongue; or, A Treatise of Ten Sins of the Tongue*.[31] Like an arrow, the

[28] See Bonnie Gordon, "The Castrato Meets the Cyborg," *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 94–122, https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbr015, 106, 112.

[29] Alfred Gell, "Technology and Magic," *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 2 (1988): 6-7.

[30] Sarah Nooter, "The Prosthetic Voice in Ancient Greece," in *The Voice as Something More: Essays toward Materiality*, ed. Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 278.

[31] See George Webbe, *The Araignement of an Unruly Tongue Wherein the Faults of an Evill Tongue Are Opened, the Danger Discovered, the Remedies Prescribed, for the Taming of a Bad Tongue, the Right Ordering of the Tongue, and the Pacifying of a Troubled Minde against the Wrongs of an Evill Tongue. By George Web, Preacher of God's Word at Stepleashton in Wiltshire.* (London: G. Purslowe for Iohn Budge, 1619), Ch. IV, pp. 52-57. https://www.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2248574227/fulltextPDF/A838185C83554A0BPQ/1?accountid=14657&tocViewMode=tocViewModeSearchOther. Here, Webbe explains that the tongue shoots arrows at any ear that can hear it. He focuses on the negative things the tongue can shoot out, including Envy, Hatred, Mockery, and Defamation. See also William Gearing, *A Bridle for the Tongue, or, A Treatise of Ten Sins of the Tongue ... Shewing the Nature of These Sins ... with the Causes and Aggravations of Them, and Remedyes against Them: Together with*

voice shoots from the voicing body towards some recipient. The voice first disengages from its source, and then the materiality of the sound itself, epitomized by the tongue and separate from the semantic content it holds, bridges the physical gap between the sounder and the hearer. Once the bridge is forged, the semantic material invades the hearer. Bonnie Gordon explains that the materiality of the voice also becomes apparent when a vocalization cannot be reproduced.[32] The absence of the extinguished voice leaves a physical hole, like a perceptible scar, where the voice-material once hung in the air. Webb compares the tongue to a sword piercing the air with sound, explaining that "no distance can defend from the stroke of an evill tongue. A sword can hurt only the bodie, but an evill tongue, both body, goods, and name."[33] This hurt can leave an invisible, open wound on the hearer. Webb's explanation of the "evill tongue" resonates especially well with Tasso's scene about Gernando's possession. The demonic voice—its metaphorical "evill tongue"—led to the possession of Gernando's actual tongue and used it to affect all within earshot.

The tongue in particular stands out as the performative intermediary between angelic and human speech.[34] Both angels and humans can use the human tongue to perform some interiority, whether or not the interior expression is driven by a demon, in the case of possession, or by the

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Many Considerations, Rules, and Helps for the Right Ordering of the Tongue: Diverse Common Places Succinctly Handled, and Diverse Cases Cleared. (London: R. H., 1663), 16, 21-22, 25, 30, 109, 131, 141, 305, 441-442, and https://www.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2248561287/fulltextPDF/B258416189484D90PQ/1?accountid=14657&parentSessionId=mA4qgb4wDM5umkb7v2s0zmoarTbUXGKwLfZKHTpIdYQ%3D&tocViewMode=tocViewModeSearch.

[32] Bonnie Gordon, *Voice Machines: The Castrato, the Cat Piano, and Other Strange Sounds* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2023), 8-10.

[33] Webbe, *The Araignement of an Unruly Tongue*, 44-45.

[34] See Carla Mazzio, "Sins of the Tongue," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe,* ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 62-64. Mazzio here discusses the tongue as the locus of external performance of identity.

human him- or herself in physical speech. In his *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari* (1622), Girolamo Giovannini exhaustively examines the linguistic and aural aspects of human and animal voices. In it, he explains the tongue's ontological place:

> [Gli] angeli [possono] intendere, e parlare con Iddio, tra se, e con noi spiritualmente, ma senza discorso; gli animali poi, non intendono, ma sentono, e volendo non possono dirci gli affetti suoi, se non usano gli instromenti del corpo; ora l'huomo trovandosi umbelico delle creature, e in mezzo tra gli angeli, e gl'irrazionali, dee partecipare degli uni, e degli altri, convenendo con quelli, e allongansi da questi nel parlare della mente, e nel parlare del corpo, accostandosi a questi, e dilongandosi da quelli […].[35]
>
> [The angels can understand and speak with God amongst themselves, and can do so with us spiritually, but without speech. Then animals: they do not understand speech but feel and hear and, though wanting, cannot tell us their affections without using their bodily instruments. Humans, finding themselves at the center of all creatures and in the middle between angels and irrational beings, must participate in both groups. In rational thought, which takes place in the mind, they must emulate the angels; with physical, bodily speech, they must approach it emulating angelic rational thought as much as possible, moving away from animalistic tendencies.]

Giovannini's text closely echoes Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's "ladder of being" from his *Discorso sulla dignità dell'uomo* (1496).[36] Pico places humans and their actions at the center of this ladder, and explains their ability to either ascend to a higher place by emulating divine reasoning or descend to a bestial existence by following animalistic and material desires. Giovannini places the tongue specifically at the center of this cosmological and ontological ladder. The tongue, specifically its ability to vocally express thought, differentiates humans from angelic beings and animals. Humans cannot speak with their minds the way angels can, and so

[35] Giovannini, *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari*, 10.

[36] For commentary on Pico's work, and specifically on the ladder, or chain, of being, see Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man: A New Translation and Commentary*, ed. Francesco Borghesi, Michael Papio, and Massimo Riva (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 83-85.

are like animals and must use their bodies to express emotion and thought. At the same time, unlike animals, humans can use their tongues to verbally translate their minds' speech into vocal expression. Like Pico, Giovannini implies that humans can choose to be more like one than the other. In other words, one can be more like the good angels by nurturing and maintaining reason but will fall to a bestial state by abandoning it. Even Erasmus, in his *Lingua*, explains that "[…] the tongue and the genitals were the two most rebellious organs, but the tongue had to be curbed with more care than the genitals." In other words, the tongue is a precarious organ that can easily fall astray of its owner's intentions.[37] In Gernando's case above, he relinquished his reason, and thus also his tongue, leaving it available to the demonic being that can use it to verbalize its own speech.

Giovannini clearly lays out the anatomical and physiological aspects of voice production in his *Discorso*.[38] While his contemporaries knew well the anatomical and physiological structures of the vocal mechanism, they theorized voice as little invisible "spirits" ("spiriti") that issue from a mouth and traverse the air.[39] Giovannini differentiates between sound and voice. He

[37] See Desiderius Erasmus, "The Tongue / *Lingua*," in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. Elaine Fantham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 367. Useful for thinking positively about the tongue is Pierpaolo Polzonetti, "Tartini and the Tongue of Saint Anthony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67, no. 2 (August 1, 2014): 429–86, https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2014.67.2.429.

[38] Girolamo Giovannini, "Come si faccia la voce, e le lettere; e descrivesi tutte le parti della gola, e della bocca," in *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari, che si fanno in cielo dal grandissimo Iddio, da gli Spiriti beati, e da' Santi; nel Centro della Terra dalle Anime del Purgatorio, del Limbo, & dell'Inferno; e nel Mondo da gli Huomini, da Demoni, da gli Animali, e da altre Creature irragionevoli. Scritto all'Illustriss. Signore, Il Sig. Flippo Capponi Fiorentino, Da F. Ieronimo Giovannini da Capugnano Bolognese, Maestro nell'Ordine de' Predicatori.* (Venice, Italy: Appresso Barezzo Barezzi, 1622), 20-23.

[39] Bonnie Gordon takes a deep dive into knowledge and theorization of voice and vocal anatomy. See Gordon, *Voice Machines*, 55-61 (where Gordon discusses sound and echoes), 67, and 71-78. This is only small selection of many insightful passages in her book.

specifies that all voice is sound, but sound is not always voice.[40] Voice, in other words, must issue from a mouth. He defines voice in speech as "voce articolata, over mezzo della lingua mandata fuori con varietà, e i Latini direbbero, 'Loquela est vocis per linguam dearticulatio'" ["articulated voice, or middle of the tongue sent out with variety, and the Latins would say, 'Speech is the disarticulation of voice by the tongue'"].[41] When the "spiriti" rise up from the lungs, they hit the tongue and lips, which disarticulate them into separate "spices" ("spetie"), or phonemes, forming coherent speech to be received by a hearer.

This physical, shaped sound (voice) could alter a hearer's reality and being. Discussing accents and dialects, Giovannini references Aristotle's "tabula rasa" (*De Anima* III.iv.720-727), where Aristotle likens intellects to blank slates ready to be inscribed with experience.[42] For Giovannini speech (voice) powerfully defines the inscriptions on this blank slate: "il favellare è come un'arte la qual s'apprende […] udendo altri, ricevendo in noi quegli accenti, e quegli somigliantamente isforzandoci di farli nostri ancora" ["speaking is like an art learned […] by hearing others, receiving within ourselves their accents, and similarly forcing ourselves to make them our own"].[43] He mentions that ancient Romans sent their children to Tuscany to absorb their language and to Greece to study, believing that a different people's way of life, language, speech, and customs could differently shape reasoning capabilities.[44] As a material object, sound uniquely influences these changes. According to Aristotle, perceiving subjects only potentially understood a material object's form: when the subject can decipher and understand the form of

[40] Giovannini, *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari*, 12.
[41] Giovannini, *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari*, 12
[42] See Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, *Aristotle's* De Anima*: In the Version of William of Moerbeke and the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. W. Stark, trans. Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007), 420-424.
[43] Giovannini, *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari*, 31.
[44] Giovannini, *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari*, 26-29.

the object, the object can inscribe on (fuse with) the intellect of the perceiving subject. The vocal apparatus (tongue, lips, teeth, pallet) gives form to the material sound it emits. This form takes shape in syllables, accents, and language, which can potentially be deciphered by those who understand the given language. According to Aristotle, "in material things, each intelligible object exists only potentially. Hence in them is no intellect, for the mind that understands such things is an immaterial potency."[45] The voice's text is in and of itself something to be deciphered, like a phrase in a book, and has no intellect of its own. Thus, a hearer, unable to decipher the speech, cannot give the voiced text an intelligible form in the intellect. The voice, by contrast, imbues the speech (voice, sound) with an intentional form that actually penetrates the ear and enters the hearer's mind. So even if the hearer cannot decipher the material object (here, voice in speech), and thus cannot inscribe the form of the object on the intellect, the material object does not remain outside of the perceiving subject. When the voiced sound enters the subject's ear, desired or not, the form of what it voices also enters the hearer and potentially inscribes itself on the intellect of its own volition.

Much of the fear over demonic communication revolves around modes of listening and hearing, which typically begin with semantic meaning and end with sonic statements. In the case of Gernando's possession in the *Gerusalemme liberata*, Tasso hints at the sonic nature of the demon's voice but specifies that Gernando hears it in his soul ("e fa che 'n mezzo a l'alma ognor risuona | una voce ch'a lui così ragiona"). Tasso leaves us wondering whether the voice is sonorous or a silent message manifested in Gernando's mind. In his *Sermon 288*, St. Augustine explains that the word precedes the voice in the heart and mind. It has a meaning with no semantic attachment until it is internally translated into semantic and rhetorical terms and

[45] Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, *Aristotle's* De Anima III.iv.727, p. 421.

eventually uttered through a voice as a communicative act. He explicitly states that vocal utterances with no signifiers are empty sounds and not words.[46] Yet he does not say that these empty sounds have no effect on the listener, only that they cannot be classified as words. Both examples concern interactions of either human–human or (God–)angel–human.[47] Between humans, conversation works through the internal (conscious) creation of meaning and its subsequent translation into spoken language. Good angels are, in essence, the voice of God, as they receive God's messages and transmit them intelligibly through speech to their intended recipients. Conversely, demons, as fallen angels, have removed themselves from God and no longer function as his vessels. When demons voice something, there is not always a word behind the sounds, though there is still intent and meaning insofar as the objects of their voicings are consumption, death, ensnarement, and/or impediment.

A demonic voice, as a replication of the human voice, negates the essence and connotations of the human voice. This replication is the inverse of the voice, or its reverse. It is the reflection of thought, emotion, instinct, or desire, made manifest in the aural sphere, and it does not signify life but rather death, like the irresistible Siren's call that leads to self-

[46] Augustine, "Sermon 288: On the Birthday of John the Baptist (On the Voice and the Word)," in *The Works of Saint Augustine (4th Release). Electronic Edition. Sermons, (273-305A) on the Saints. Volume III/8.*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, vol. 26 (Hyde Park, New York: New York City Press, 1994), 112, http://pm.nlx.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/xtf/view?docId=augustine_iv/augustine_iv.26.xml;chunk.id=div.aug.sermons.v8.189;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.aug.sermons.v8.189;brand=default.

[47] Angels have no objective other than to arrive, deliver God's Word verbatim, and promptly depart. Their performances have no goal other than to give their audience an actor with a mouth and a message. The word 'angel' expresses the being's action rather than the being itself: 'angel' comes from the Greek *ánghelos*, which translates in Latin to "messenger." See Ludovico M. Sinistrari, *Demonialità*, ed. C. Carena (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 1986), Ch. 40, p. 52. Sinistrari includes his sources: Sts. Ambrogio, Ilario, Augustine, Gregario Magno, Isidoro. See also Armando Maggi, *In the Company of Demons: Unnatural Beings, Love, and Identity in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 148

destruction. If voice opens the door to meaning or is the vehicle for meaning, the demonic "voice" lacks this interiority, since it is hollow.[48] On the other hand, the demonic voice is an absence of sound that a victim imbues with meaning and physicality upon recognizing its absence, like the invisible wounds left by Webb's "evill tongue." Armando Maggi explains that a demon can impress its image in its victim's mind, where the image then crosses into memory, meaning that a demon can signify its presence through its perceived absence, having already been in some way consumed by the victim.[49] Additionally, the demon's empty sounds may be a clamor of voices, screams, and curses meant to deafen, distract, or confuse its victim. In this case, the sounds are themselves void of meaning, but they still work sonically against the victim.[50]

In Renaissance demonology, demons are traditionally completely incorporeal beings.[51] In order for humans to physically perceive them, demons must manifest themselves using some material element. People believed that demons used air to physically manifest themselves since the nature of spirit is closest to that element.[52] The famed demonologist and priest Francesco

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[48] See Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin, "The Clamor of Voices," in *The Voice as Something More: Essays toward Materiality*, ed. Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 4-5 and 8-9, which are helpful for thinking about the "hollowness" of voice.

[49] Armando Maggi, *Uttering the Word: The Mystical Performances of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, a Renaissance Visionary* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 123-124.

[50] In Maggi's *Uttering the Word*, he references how demons did precisely this to St. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi. He suggests that the demon's articulated language then resounds in the saint's head as if it were her own voice. See Maggi, *Uttering the Word*, 121.

[51] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica I*, Q. 50, Art. 2 "Whether an angel is composed of matter and form?", *Sed contra*. "quod primae creaturae *sicut incorporales et immateriales intelliguntur*." I quote from the Aquinas Institute's "Opera Omnia Project" online: Aquinas Institute, Inc., 2020, https://aquinas.cc/.

[52] See Armando Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 34-35.

Maria Guazzo (1570-ca.1640) gives a simple explanation for how these incorporeal beings manifest themselves. In his *Compendium maleficarum* (1605), he explains how angels can possibly make typically non-speaking things speak, proposing that "the Angel creates a voice from the air about the animal. The same would be true in the case of inanimate objects, such as fire, water, earth, air, or corpses, which likewise could easily be made to appear to speak."[53] Angels are given permission from God, "the author of all speech," to manifest these voices. Similarly, Giovannini explains in his *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari* that demons can also use animals as voice machines: "il demonio si servì [il serpente] di lui, movendolo a fare i moti, e quei moti corporali, che si veggono in una persona mentre parla. Il serpente spira, e respira come l'huomo, e perciò ha dell'aere nella bocca, Satanasso con la sua forza mosse quel aere articolandola, e ne formò delle parole […]" [The devil used [the serpent], moving it to make the movements and those bodily motions seen in a person while speaking. The serpent breathes in and out like a man, and therefore has air in its mouth. Satan, with his power, moved that air, articulating it, and formed words from it […].][54] God similarly grants permission to demons to tempt mankind, as most demonological treatises eventually explain. And since demons are angelic beings, they also have the same ability to manifest these voices using compressed air.[55]

Tasso gives an excellent account of a clearly sonorous demonic vocal communication in canto XIII of the *Gerusalemme liberata*. The episode here doubles as an example of demonic

[53] See Francesco Maria Guazzo, "Chapter XV: Whether Witches have Power to Make Beasts Talk," in *Compendium maleficarum: The Montague Summers Edition*, ed. Montague Summers, trans. E. A. Ashwin, Dover ed (New York: Dover, 1988), 53.

[54] Giovannini, *Discorso sopra tutti i parlari,* 82.

[55] See Steven Connor, "Edison's Teeth: Touching Hearing," in *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity*, ed. Veit Erlmann, Wenner-Gren International Symposium Series (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 157, where Connor qualifies sound as something paradoxically material and immaterial simultaneously.

vocal performance from a constructed stage space. Canto XIII tells of the knight Tancredi's encounter with the demonic theater of distorted images and sounds.[56] Tancredi, still burdened by the weight of having killed Clorinda, ventures into the forest to confront the demons who have driven away all his fellow crusaders. He advances forward and finds

> Al fine un largo spazio in forma scorge
> d'anfiteatro, e non è pianta in esso,
> salvo che nel suo mezzo altero sorge,
> quasi eccelsa piramide, un cipresso.
> Colà si drizza, e nel mirar s'accorge
> ch'era di cari segni il tronco impresso,
> simili a quei che in vece usò di scritto
> l'antico già misterioso Egitto.[57]
>
> [At last a spacious clearing greets his eye, | shaped like an amphitheater, quite without | all trees, but amidst it, soaring high, | one cypress like an obelisk stands stout. | There he directs his way, and by and by | sees various symbols mark its trunk about, | like those which once in place of written signs | were in ancient Egypt's mystic shrines.]

Tancredi steps onto the "amphitheater" stage, which sets in motion a sort of diabolical drama. He becomes at once a spectator and an active player in the drama. He reads the inscriptions on the cypress tree, which caution him against committing violence in the grove:

> «O tu che dentro a i chiostri de la morte
> osasti por, guerriero audace, il piede,
> deh! se non sei crudel quanto sei forte,
> deh! non turbar questa secreta sede.
> Perdona a l'alme omai di luce prive:
> non dée guerra co' morti aver chi vive».[58]

[56] In "'*Non basta il suono, e la voce'*. Listening for Tasso's Clorinda," Jane Tylus also calls this canto a "theatre of distorting and discombobulating sights and sounds," in *Acoustemologies in Contact: Sounding Subjects and Modes of Listening in Early Modernity*, ed. Emily Wilbourne and Suzanne G. Cusick (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2021), 286.

[57] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 404: Canto XIII, oct. 38.

[58] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 404: Canto XIII, oct. 39.

['O thou, who in these cloisters of the dead | hast placed thy foot with daring hardihood, | be not as cruel as thou art strong. Ah, dread | to trouble this our secret solitude! | Have pity on the souls deprived of light. | No living hand against the dead should smite.']

This declamatory statement asks Tancredi to have pity on the dead and to leave. The anguished "deh!" emphasizes the suffering of the dead supposedly buried in this sacred space. This "deh!" is also reminiscent of various madrigal settings of poetry, which frequently employ it with an erotic charge. Fittingly, Tancredi's feelings for the living Clorinda were exceptionally erotic, as was their final duel in which he killed her by thrusting his sword into her. The "deh!" here attacks Tancredi on both a physically sexual and psychologically emotional level with its potential double-meaning. Sonically, its allusion to a real cry miraculously echoes the wind for Tancredi to hear:

fremere intanto udia continuo il vento
tra le frondi del bosco e tra i virgulti,
e trarne un suon che flebile concento
par d'umani sospiri e di singulti,
e un non so che confuso instilla al core
di pietà, di spavento e di dolore.[59]

[[He] heard the wind continuously moan | through fronds and brush behind the forest's screen, | as if a grieving choir rose to intone | funeral sighs, and sobs, and cries of teen, | that moved his mind he knew not how, and fed | his heart with mingled pity, grief, and dread.]

The scene is in full swing. Although Tasso does not explicitly say that these noises are demonically created, we cannot ignore the coincidence of the written plea followed by lamenting noises that fill the knight with "pity, fear, and grief." Demons carefully choose their temptations and manifest themselves accordingly.[60] In this instance, assuming the lamenting winds are

[59] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 404-405: Canto XIII, oct. 40.

[60] See Tobias Gregory, "Tasso's God: Divine Action in 'Gerusalemme Liberata,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2002): 583-584, https://doi.org/10.2307/1262318.

demonic manifestations, they attack Tancredi's grief, still fresh from losing Clorinda in the previous canto. In a susceptible state of mind, the lamenting sounds become Tancredi's inner lament.

Despite the warning inscription and sounds, Tancredi knows that he must fell the tree to break the enchantment over the forest. Ending the enchantment would effectively end the demonic spectacle. He deafens himself to his own fear and grief, drawing his sword with the intention of felling the tree, which is clearly the source of the forest's enchantment. As he strikes the tree, it oozes blood, a visual rebuke to his assault, in addition to the lamenting winds. Perturbed, he continues chopping the tree. At last comes a *colpo di scena* when

> Allor, quasi di tomba, uscir ne sente
> un indistinto gemito dolente,
> che poi distinto in voce: — Ahi! Troppo — disse
> — m'hai tu, Tancredi, offeso; or tanto basti.
> […]
> Dopo la morte gli aversari tuoi,
> crudel, ne' lor sepolchri offender vuoi?
> Clorinda fui, né sol qui spirto umano
> albero in questa pianta rozza e dura,
> ma ciascun altro ancor, franco o pagano,
> che lassi i membri a piè de l'alte mura,
> astretto è qui da novo incanto e strano,
> non so s'io dica in corpo o in sepoltura.
> Son di sensi animanti i rami e i tronchi,
> e micidial sei tu, se legno tronchi. —[61]
>
> [[He] hears the gashed wood, like a tomb, exhale | a dolorous and a muffled groan or wail, |
> then words distinct: 'Alas! Too much', it cried, | 'have you, O Tancred, wronged me! Now let be! | […] Would you assail (ah, cruel and perverse!) | your dead foes in their very sepulchers? |
> 'I was Clorinda, not the only soul | lodged here in rough, hard plants. No, one and all, | Frankish or pagan knights, the great war's toll, | whose human shapes lie fallen by the wall, | these new and strange enchantments here control, | held by

[61] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 405-406: Canto XIII, octs. 41-43.

these shapes—should I say tombs?—in thrall. | These branches and these trunks can feel. If you | hew down their wood, you murder what you hew.']

A voice manifests in a pained groan, bodiless and indistinct except for the hard wood of the tree from which it seems to issue forth. It claims to be the same Clorinda that Tancredi had just killed. Not only does it imply that his attempt at baptizing her failed, but it also claims that it and many others, regardless of their faith, have been separated from their physical bodies in death and have been confined within the trees. Every branch and trunk in the forest teems with the essence of these lost spirits, much like in the Forest of the Suicides in canto 13 of Dante's *Inferno*.

When the demon manifests its voice, the sound seems to come from the tree, yet the location of the demon's voice is still far from clear. For one, the demonic "body" is never truly seen. Only the tree, as a sounding "body" or object, is initially visible to Tancredi; the tree seems to conceal the voice's origin, which presents an initial discomfort and forces Tancredi to fantasize about the originating being. Mladen Dolar argues that the acousmatic voice, or the voice whose origins are not seen, acquires a certain authority and surplus meaning in proportion to its perceived omnipresence.[62] He goes on to claim that all voices are acousmatic, one of the more controversial aspects of his theories on voice. Here, I refer to the acousmatic voice in a more delimited sense, as one whose sounding body is unseen, as Tasso's demonic voice which emerges, "indistinct," from within the tree ("quasi di tomba, uscir ne sente | un indistinto gemito dolente"). Even though the demonic voice sounds as if it comes from the tree, it doesn't remain there. As a material thing, the sound travels invisibly in the air, filling the space and striking open ears. Dolar says that the acousmatic voice is "an excrescence which doesn't match the

[62] Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, Short Circuits (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 61-62, and more generally pp. 60-71. See also Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 17-29, https://philpapers.org/archive/ZUIAAT.pdf.

body," which aptly describes what happens to this acousmatic demonic voice.[63] It issues forth from the tree and contributes to the embodied simulations in the hearer (Tancredi). Dolar's discussion of acousmatic voice points to the semi-revelation of a secret, intimate, interior body. The ambiguous demonic voice exists inside and outside of the tree and, once aurally manifested and heard, inside and outside of Tancredi's ears. This raises more questions about the nature and function of the voice's transference to its interlocutor's ears and mind. The ambiguity surrounding the substance (or lack thereof) of demonic voice is tantalizing. It leaves open the interpretation of who perceives the demonic utterance and when, and then how the vocal landscape,—including the *internal* vocal landscape—is perceived and manipulated.

This demonic voice tells Tancredi that assaulting the forest would make him a murderer of these tormented souls. Despite his skepticism regarding the illusions before him, Tancredi resigns himself to defeat and flees from the scene:

> Qual l'infermo talor ch'in sogno scorge
> Drago o cinta di fiamme alta Chimera,
> se ben sospetta o in parte anco s'accorge
> che l' simulacro sia non forma vera,
> pur desia di fuggir, tanto gli porge
> spavento la sembianza orrida e fera,
> tal il timido amante a pien non crede
> a i falsi inganni, e pur ne teme e cede.
> E, dentro, il cor gli è in modo tal conquiso
> da vari affetti che s'agghiaccia e trema,
> e nel moto potente ed improviso
> gli cade il ferro, e 'l manco è in lui la tema,
> Va fuor di sé: presente aver gli è aviso
> l'offesa donna sua che plori e gema,
> né può soffrir di rimirar quel sangue,
> né quei gemiti udir d'egro che langue.
> Così quel contra morte audace core
> nulla forma turbò d'alto spavento,
> ma lui che solo è fievole in amore

[63] Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 61.

falsa imago deluse e van lamento.
Il suo caduto ferro intanto fore
portò del bosco impetuoso vento,
sì che vinto partissi; e in su la strada
ritrovò poscia e ripigliò la spada.[64]

[As sometimes a sick man who meets in dreams | a dragon or Chimera girt with fire, | though he suspects or partly knows what seems | so real is mere semblance, will retire | in panic, so much fear breeds what he deems | a simulacrum horrible and dire; | even so the terrified lover does not trust | the fierce illusion's truth, yet flee he must. |

The heart within the breast is so unmanned | by warring thoughts, it turns to ice and reels. | At the rage of sudden passions, from his hand | his sword drops; fear is the last thing he feels. | Crazed and distraught, he sees before him stand, | his wounded love, in tears, at whose appeals | he cannot bear to see that quick blood flow | or hear that languid sufferer's sighs of woe.

And so his heart, that boldly would have passed | the gates of death, that at no horror quails, | weakened by love, falls credulous prey at last | to lying shows and insubstantial wails. | His fallen sword meanwhile a sudden blast | of wind flings from the wood. His courage fails | and he leaves, defeated. Later, by his way, | he finds the sword and took it where it lay.]

Tancredi, in part, knows that this is a chimera—a simulacrum—of Clorinda's voice.[65] Yet he gives the voice a body and agency when he assigns it Clorinda's form. Tancredi allows the demonic actor to take control of the scene and to evoke his grief, guilt, and fear ("tal…ne teme e cede"). By accepting the voice as truth, despite any hesitation, he allows it some level of control over his emotional and psychological state. The voice affects his heart, freezing it with varied tormenting passions, and Tancredi goes momentarily insane ("Va fuor di sé"). By deserting his sword, he abandons his duty, civility, and his reason before the sound/sight of the demonic simulacrum.[66] He literally sees Clorinda's agonized body in front of him, associating the voice's

[64] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 406: Canto XIII, octs. 44-46.

[65] See Troy Tower, "Naming Trees in the *Gerusalemme liberata*," *Romance Studies* 31, no. 3–4 (November 2013): 141 and 146, https://doi.org/10.1179/0263990413Z.00000000041.

[66] See Elissa B. Weaver, "Lettura dell'intreccio dell'*Orlando furioso*: il caso delle tre pazzie d'amore," *Strumenti Critici: Rivista Quadrimestrale di Cultura Letteraria* 11 (October 1977): 390.

cries and the tree's blood with Clorinda's voice and blood. He gives in to the voice's simulation and flees the forest–amphitheater in desperation.[67] The demonic spectacle in the forest persists.

Much of this episode echoes Ariosto's *Orlando furioso,* where Orlando sheds his armor after discovering that Angelica loves Medoro. Ariosto's Orlando goes insane because of, and for the sake of, love. The "mad" Orlando becomes a symbol of man's tendency to self-deception in pursuit of personal gain, and of the dangerously infectious quality of love on human reasoning faculties, showing how it can lead even a heroic knight to strip himself of his civility and reason—Orlando's armor; Tancredi's sword. Tasso's Tancredi goes mad in part because of his love for Clorinda. But Tasso shifts the discourse and paints Tancredi's grief and desperation in the face of lost love as a sinful weakness and as a distraction from duty. Here, his unchecked emotions become fodder for demonic temptation.

Indeed, immediately preceding canto 13, Tancredi contemplated and then attempted suicide due to his deep despair at having killed Clorinda. Speaking to himself, he cries:

> Asciutte le mirate? or corra, dove
> Nega d'andare il pianto, il sangue mio. —
> Qui tronca le parole, e come il move
> suo disperato di morir desio,
> squarcia le fasce e le ferite, e piove
> da le sue piaghe essacerbate un rio;
> e s'uccidea, ma quella doglia acerba,
> co 'l trarlo di se stesso, in vita il serba.[68]
>
> [And do you look dry-eyed? Now let my blood run forth where tears refuse to flow." —Here he cuts short his words, and as he is moved by his desperate desire for death, he rips open bandages and wounds and a river rains down from his exacerbated injuries; and he would have killed himself except that the bitter pain, by causing him to faint, keeps him alive.]

[67] Tower, "Naming Trees in the *Gerusalemme liberata*," 143.
[68] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*: Canto XII, oct. 83.

The demons in canto 13 attack precisely this unbridled passion that would lead him to suicide. Peter the Hermit aptly puts it when he chastises Tancredi in canto 12 for his suicidal tendencies. He says to Tancredi:

> Rifiuti dunque, ahi sconosciente!, il dono
> del Ciel salubre e 'ncontra lui t'adiri?
> Misero, dove corri in abbandono
> a i tuoi sfrenati e rapidi martìri?
> Sei giunto, e pendi già cadente e prono
> Su 'l precipizio eterno; e tu no 'l miri?
> Miralo, prego, e te raccogli, e frena
> quel dolor ch'a morir doppio ti mena. —[69]
>
> [Do you refuse (ungrateful man!) the life-giving gift of Heaven, and take offence at it? Wretch, where are you running? Abandoned to your unbridled and ruinous agonizing? You are there and hang an already fallen probe above the eternal precipice. And do you not see it? See it, I pray thee, and recollect thyself, and bridle that sorrow that is leading on to a double death.]

The "morir doppio"—double death—references, of course, a self-willed death which would mean Tancredi's eternal damnation. In the Christian tradition, desperation is a mortal sin likened, by Aquinas, to sloth, as a "sluggishness of the mind which neglects to begin good" and "(2 Cor. 7:20): *The sorrow of the world worketh death*. But such is sloth; for it is not *sorrow according to God*, which is contrasted with sorrow of the world. Therefore it is a mortal sin."[70] Tancredi, in desperation, turns completely away from both his duty as a crusading knight and human being. While Peter the Hermit pulls him temporarily away from suicidal ideations, Tancredi's sorrow remained sinful even as he entered the forest of Saron to end its incantation.

Modes of aural perception become increasingly important within the context of demonic communication. Demonically produced sound frequently exists apart from a visible source and cause. To hear without the visual presence of a sound-producing body is destabilizing. It forces

[69] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata, XII.88.*
[70] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae II-II, q.35. a.1, 3.*

the hearer to elicit what Brian Kane calls, in his modern interpretation of modes of listening, a "sonic body" that acts as a surrogate body for the acousmatic sound. The surrogate reduces the uncanny sensation associated with experiencing a truly acousmatic sound.[71] The creation of the sonic body encourages the hearer to focus on sound as an object. The hearer thus minimizes—or even obfuscates completely—the source and cause of the sound in favor of the sound-as-body. If one of a demon's primary goals is to coax its victim into an illusionary stage space, then acousmatic sound is a powerful tool with which to 1) draw attention away from the sources and cause of the sound (the demon and its noxious intentions) and onto the produced sound; and 2) use the elicited sonic body as a canvas on which to construct both sonorous and visual illusions that can pull the victim further into the demonic stage-space.

According to Menghi's *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica,* sound "va successivamente insino all'orecchio dell'audiente, il qual all'hora intende il concetto della mente di colui che parla" ["it reaches the ear of the listener, who then understands the concept of the speaker's mind"].[72] Whether the demonic voice is actually heard "out loud" or spoken in the mind almost becomes irrelevant, as the hearer still experiences the imagined voice (spoken in the mind). Moreover, the imagined sound further widens the gap between the sound and the sound's source, allowing the sonic body even more room for autonomy. Explaining the perilous nature of demonic modes of speech, Menghi says that "[G]li demoni parlano con noi, cioè secretamente, e talmente, che noi non possiamo sentire, conoscere, e vedere quando il diavolo ci tenta, onde venghi tal tentatione, o battaglia" [Demons speak to us secretly and in such a way that we cannot

[71] Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 8-9.

[72] Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 153.

hear, know, or see when the devil tempts us, or where such temptation or battle comes from.][73] Demonic vocal expression, whether sonorous or in the mind, applies sound as a tool for manipulation. The demonic voice tempts its hearers into a tendency to move toward its constructed stage space and into its illusions and temptations.

In Tasso's example, Tancredi falls headlong into this illusion. The demonic voice persists in the forest and in Tancredi's mind and heart. Simply leaving the amphitheater space doesn't negate the effects of having heard the demonic voice. It endures with him, echoing in the body and mind. When Tancredi exits the forest, he regains his senses, but retains the fear, desperation, and pain that the voice instilled in him:

> […]
> E poi che giunto al sommo duce unio
> gli spirti alquanto e l'animo compose,
> incominciò: — […]
> Di più dirò: ch'a gli alberi dà vita
> spirito uman che sente e che ragiona.
> Per prova sollo; io n'ho la voce udita
> che nel cor flebilmente anco mi suona.
> Stilla sangue de' tronchi ogni ferita,
> quasi di molle carne abbian persona.
> No, no, più non potrei (vinto mi chiamo)
> né corteccia scorzar, né svellar ramo. —[74]
>
> [Returned to tell his general what he knew, | he, when his mind had some control retrieved, | spoke thus: […]
> 'There is more: each of these trees a human soul | makes feel and speak and live. I know it, for | I've proved the truth: I heard its voice make dole | that in my heart re-echoes evermore. | Blood is distilled out of each wounded bole, | as if sift flesh were pulsing at its core. | No, I have lost. I nevermore can bear | to pluck a bough or pierce a tree-bark there.']

[73] Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*, 151.
[74] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 407: Canto XIII, octa. 47, 49.

Despite having regained his senses, Tancredi still believes the voice's lies; the demonic voice still exists and resounds in him ("n'ho la voce udita | che nel cor flebilmente anco mi suona.").[75] Tasso here exemplifies the enduring power of sound on the human mind. Like a planted seed, it sprouts and digs roots into the hearer.[76] Tasso's language at once exudes sonorousness and exemplifies how sound used in a theatrical context can impede comprehension of reality by constructing seemingly real illusions.

Tasso's examples of demonic possession and communication highlight the complex interplay between the human interlocutor and the demonic utterance. Kane and Dolar explain the voice as a split subject, which helps us to explain the insidious and powerful nature of the demonic voice directed at a human victim, especially when understood through early modern theological conceptions of conscience and reason. An utterance comprises two parts: 1) the statement, which contains semantic signifiers and thus linguistic meaning, and 2) the enunciation, or the aphonic voice, the "other" of the "Other" (statement), where the uttering subject actually resides. The enunciation is the elusive origin of the address. Kane, who examines the psychoanalytic voice via Dolar, Cavarero, Lacan, Husserl, and Heidegger, discusses the importance of what Dolar calls "acousmatic silence," or a silence whose origin is unseen.[77] This silence exists underneath the semantic statement of speech, present like an unseen

[75] Lanfranco Caretti points out the similarity here between Tancredi's words and Dante's in *Purg.* II, 114: "«che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona»." See note 49 in Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 407.

[76] Christopher Geekie discusses Tasso's desire to capture the sound of war in language to better affect his readers. See Christopher Geekie, "'Cangiar la lira in tromba': Metaphors for Poetic Form in Torquato Tasso," vol. 72, 2017, 256–70, http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsbl&AN=vdc.100108203433.0x000001&site=eds-live&scope=site.

[77] For an excellent, extended discussion of the "psychoanalytic voice," see Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 208-222; and Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 22-23. Dolar's essay on Kafka's short story "The Burrow" is also enlightening. In it, Dolar uses the badger in Kafka's story to explore

necklace string that holds together semantic "beads."[78] In this sense, the enunciation might be likened to the conscience, or the driving force behind the statement, which demands linguistic meaning.

In the Christian tradition, conscience is the application of knowledge, which resides in the mind, to an action.[79] What this knowledge is and how it is bound with conscience requires an understanding of human intellect's involvement in the initial stages of reasoning. According to Aquinas (*ST* I, Q.79), human intellect is both active and passive: passive in that it receives information, as understanding is itself a passive act ("intelligere est pati quoddam"); and active insofar as it makes received sensory information intelligible ("faceret intelligibilia in actu") when it abstracts the material conditions of the received information. He likens the active intellect to light ("comparavit intellectum agentem lumini*"*) that aids in illuminating and illustrating the phantasms that it receives and abstracts ("quasi illustrando phantasmata"). It then impresses the intelligible species onto the passive intellect, which receives and retains them ("ad rationem enim potentiae passivae pertinent, conservare, sicut et recipere").[80] Although all souls contain this light, each varies in its luminescence and thus in its natural capacity to understand and reason. The intellect's luminescence is bound up in the memory of experiences, insofar as the intellect

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the nature of acousmatic sound—sound unseen and, in this case especially, pervasive. Dolar theorizes that sound and experiencing sound present an "ontological opening," of sorts, and that at the edge of this opening, prior assumptions of reality are shaken. See Mladen Dolar, "The Burrow of Sound," *Differences* 22, no. 2–3 (December 1, 2011): 112–39, quote from p. 129, https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-1428861.

[78] Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 23.

[79] Aquinas, *ST I-II*, Q. 19, Art. 5, S.C. See also Aquinas, *ST I*, Q. 79, "The Intellectual Powers," especially Arts. 1-7 and 12-13 for an extended treatise on human intellectual and reasoning capabilities, and how these interact with conscience. For an explanation of memory, understanding, and will, which compliments Aquinas's text, see Augustine, *On the Trinity. Books 8-15*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially Bk. 10, Ch. 11, pp. 57-59.

[80] Aquinas, *ST I*, Q. 79, Art.7, Co.

can understand that it once understood ("ita intelligit suum intelligere"). The notion of memory is stored in the intellect as the memory of an act of understanding something, while the memory of the sensible thing itself is then stored in the corporeal organ, as the organ can retain some external species (sensory experiences) without understanding them ("organorum corporalium, in quibus conservari possunt aliquae species absque actuali apprehension"). Beyond the containment of experiential memories is the possession of things naturally known without the progressive motion of reasoning investigation ("scilicet naturaliter notorum absque investigatione rationis"), namely the "immovable principles" ("principio immobili"). Aquinas differentiates these natural principles into "speculative" principles ("principia speculabilium") and "practical" principles ("principia operabilium"), where the speculative principles direct the person towards contemplation—or truth as such—and practical principles incite ("instigare") to action by what is good "under the aspect of truth" ("sub ratione veri"). The conscience resides here, in the practical principles. Conscience is a naturally infused practical principle ("naturaliter indita") called synderesis, or the inborn knowledge of and disposition to moral action.[81]

[81] Synderesis directly connects to natural law and is thought of as the inborn human connection with the divine. It continuously points towards good and away from evil, infallibly, yet how conscience reacts to synderesis depends on moral knowledge and practical reasoning, both of which can be erroneous. The conscience judges whether an action is in line with the dictates of synderesis. On synderesis, see Tobias Hoffmann, "Conscience and Synderesis," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies (Oxford University Press, 2012), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195326093.013.0020, especially p. 258 accompanied by his useful charts on pp. 259-260 and 262. For more on synderesis and conscience, concepts which have received relatively less scholarly attention than natural law and metaethics, see Peter Eardley, "Medieval Theories of Conscience," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2021 (Stanford University: Metaphysics Research lab, 2021), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/conscience-medieval/; Anthony Celano, "Chapter 7: The Relation of Prudence and Synderesis to Happiness in the Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's Ethics," in *The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Jon Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 125–54; M. W. F. Stone, "Conscience in Renaissance Moral Thought: A Concept in Transition?," *Renaissance Studies* 23, no. 4 (2009): 423–44; Michael G. Baylor, *Action and Person: Conscience in Late Scholasticism and the Young*

The split voice-subject—enunciation (conscience) vs. statement—carries with it the fragile balance between the uttering subject's authenticity or inauthenticity of action. Here, the line between obedience and responsibility is exceedingly thin.[82] This puts the human subject at high risk of falling to demonic influence. The "statement" is essentially a command whose semantic string demands that it be obeyed. To remain an authentic and autonomous subject, the addressee of a statement must recognize that statement as foreign lest he or she mistake it for their own statement. In other words, given the ambiguous and invisible nature of voice, a demon's victim might actively produce an inner response to the demon's words without being aware of the original speaker's (the demon's) utterance in the mind. This would result in a sort of unification with the demon's utterance.

The demonic entity acts like the foreign statement. It communicates with its victims via signs that transfer meaning. The ambiguous nature of the demonic voice—whether or not it is aurally perceptible—has no bearing on the quality of the statement, as the victim *hears* the communication internally, externally, or in both ways. The demonic statement speaks through temptation and entices human desire to crave what is stated. Because the demon can adequately mimic the deepest desires of its victim, it can produce a statement that mirrors the victim's desires. The hearer gives in to the desire and becomes an obeying subject by unifying his or her 'I' with the outside voice. This obeying victim, a new sort of hybrid 'I' made of self and Other, loses authenticity by choice. The victim can deafen him- or herself to the demon's summons by

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Luther, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, v. 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1977); Pekka Kärkkäinen, "Synderesis in Late Medieval Philosophy and the Wittenberg Reformers," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 20, no. 5 (September 2012): 881–901, https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2012.718866. See also Aquinas, *ST*, I, Q.79, Art. 12, Co.; I, Q.79, Art. 13, Co.; I-II, Q.19, Art.5, Co.; and I-II, Q.19, Art.6, Co.

[82] See Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 99, and Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 215.

unifying instead with his or her inner enunciation (conscience). This allows the human to avoid dissolving into the identity of the outside demonic influence while allowing space for authentic and autonomous action. Should the human instead mistake the demon's utterance for his or her own inner voice, the demon will have achieved a sort of aural possession. Its impregnating call will have successfully converted the hearer's will to its influence. The demonic voice would become the victim's voice.

Saintly Silence, Demonic Clamor: Hagiographies in Text and Musical Performance

Many early modern texts include interactions with demons desperate to aurally coax victims into their stage space. Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* falls within a larger body of works that deal with and apply theories about the implications of demonic speech. Much of this literature concerns the saints' lives and the credibility of their hagiographies. There was a tendency during the Counter-Reformation for Protestants to discredit, and for Catholics to maintain, the authority of the accounts of their lives.[83] Popular texts included the hagiographies in Voragine's *The Golden Legend* and the Italian Dominican friar Domenico Cavalca's works.[84] Equally interesting are the accounts of demonic temptation in Cesarius of Heisterbach's *The Dialogue on Miracles* (c. 1220-1235), which contains fascinating, if at times absurdly literary and fantastic, examples of both sonic and visual demonic attack; and the Bolandists' *Acta Sanctorum*, especially the

[83] See Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, and Archibald Robertson, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. IV, 2 (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1892).

[84] See Domenico Cavalca, *Opere di Domenico Cavalca. Postillate e recate a miglior lezione coll'aiuto di manoscritti e delle migliori stampe*, ed. Bartolommeo Sorio and A. Racheli, vol. 1, Biblioteca Classica Italiana. Secolo XIV., 8: Opere di Fra Domenico Cavalca (Trieste: Lloyd Austriaco, 1858).

account of St. Margarita and her vision of the Devil.[85] Very frequently, and as in Tasso's *Liberata*, hagiographers depict demonic communication in clear theatrical, noisy terms, associating noise with the demonic, unlike the music of the angels. These works place some emphasis on the demons' utterances and soundings and their effects on human ears.

The account of St. Margarita explicitly paints the Devil as an actor on the stage singing and dancing distractingly. The Bollandists write that the Devil came to the saint immediately following her conversation with God:

> [St. Margarita] began to gradually withdraw from the joy which she had felt. No wonder, for our adversary comes, flapping his feet and hands in the manner of a dancing actor [*histrionis chorizantis*], and the spoils were held by the thief with the victory of one returning from war. And she said to her confessor, I see our enemy dancing with great joy.[86]

A simple translation of the Latin word "*chorizantis*"—"dancing"—does not evoke the complete sensory experience that St. Margarita describes. Its etymological roots in *chorus* evoke dancing and singing performances on a specific material and vocal level similar to the Latin *choriambus*, a metrical foot consisting of two short syllables between two long ones, and to *chorocitharistes*, a zither player who accompanies a dance. St. Margarita immediately recognizes the sounds and actions for what they are: a demonic attempt to distract her from her faith. Recognizing him, she

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[85] See Cesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. Von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929); and Bollandists, "Feb. III. CAPVT XI: Variæ B. Margaritæ reuelationes, victoria de diabolo, mors, miracula," in *Acta Sanctorum: The Full Text Database* (Cambridge [England]: Chadwyck-Healey, 1999), 353–57, http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/cat/bib/4601676.

[86] Bollandists, "Feb. III. CAPVT XI: Variæ B. Margaritæ," 353-7. Translation mine. Latin: "His expletis sermonibus, cœpit illa paullatim, quam senserat, lætitia subtrahi. Nec mirum. Nam aduersarius noster venit, & saltem pedibus & manibus plaudens more histrionis chorizantis, [videt dæmonem histrionice saltantem,] & raptoris capta præda cum victoria redeuntis de bello. Quæ cum suo diceret Confessori, Hostem nostrum video cum magna lætitia saltant."

evades temptation and distraction, and a voice from heaven ("*audita est statim vox de cælo*") chastises the demon for its attempts and then consoles the saint.[87]

Similarly, Girolamo Bartolomei's short sung dialogue, *Vittoria di S. Antonio* (1657), paints the theatrical and noisy qualities of demons. St. Anthony cries to heaven in the face of demonic hoards that descend on him:

Antonio: Come restar vincente
Que' fra battaglia vale,
Che di forza è perdente?
E come puote infante
Pugnar contro gigante?
Tale spirto infernale
Appo l'huomo mortale;
Questi imagin di doglia,
Gioco d'instabil sorte,
Del tempo, e della morte
Una continua spoglia;
Quegli leon vegghiante,
Ch'a divorar s'aggira,
Tigre insana nell'ira,
Dragon foco spirante:
Quale dunque poss'io
(Pover d'arte, ed infermo)
Contro mostro sì rio
[…]
Ecco venir lo sento
L'Inferno a farmi guerra;
Ecco trema la Terra,
Qual suol, se fero vento,
Ch'imprigionato serra,
Mormorator s'adiri
Col carcer duro, e per uscir s'aggiri
[…].[88]

> [How can these men remain victorious in battles that are by force lost? And how can an infant fight against a giant? Such an infernal spirit applies to mortal man. These images of pain, a game of unstable fate, of time, and of death, a continuous spoil. Those watchful lions prowl to devour; a tiger

[87] Bollandists, "Feb. III. CAPVT XI: Variæ B. Margaritæ," 357.
[88] Bartolomei, *Dialoghi sacri musicali…*, 352-354.

> insane in anger; a dragon spitting fire. What then can I do as a shield, poor in art and sickly that I am, against such terrible monsters? […] Listen! I feel and hear Hell coming to make war on me. Behold! The earth trembles, as it does if the fierce, murmuring wind, imprisoned, grows angry at its hard prison and wanders around to get out.]

Especially here, and elsewhere in the sung dialogue, Bartolomei emphasizes the extravagant demonic forms, the desperation they cause in humans, and their incessant sounds and murmurs that grow ever angrier and more chaotic. Bartolomei's St. Anthony strongly echoes St. Athanasius's account of St. Anthony the Great's life (written between 356 and 362). In Athanasius's account, he explicitly qualifies demonic temptation as theatrical and noisy:

> But the demons as they have no power are like actors on the stage changing their shape and frightening children with tumultuous apparitions and various forms: from which they ought rather to be despised as shewing their weakness. […The] inroad and the display of the evil spirits is fraught with confusion, with din, with sounds and cryings such as the disturbance of boorish youths and robbers would occasion. From which arise fear in the heart, tumult and confusion of thought, dejection, hatred towards them who live a life of discipline, indifference, grief, remembrance of kinsfolk and fear of death, and finally desire of evil things, disregard of virtue and unsettled habits.[89]

The demonic sounds rob their hearers of the ability to concentrate. Demonic sound enters the hearer's ear and shakes from the inside, stunning reason. Athanasius ascribes "no power" to demons but likens them to actors on the stage. He implies that the demon's ability to act—in sound and visuals—can manipulate its victim's mental state. The demon can thus irreparably damage its victim's soul. "For the demons do all things—they prate, they confuse, they

[89] St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni [Life of St. Antony," in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Par. 28, p. 204 and par. 36, p. 206. See also, for reception history and relevance in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries: Aza Goudriaan, "Athanasius in Reformed Protestantism: Some Aspects of Reception History (1527–1607)," *Church History and Religious Culture* 90, no. 2 (June 1, 2010): 257–76, https://doi.org/10.1163/187124110X542392.

dissemble, they confound—to deceive the simple. They din, laugh madly, and whistle; but if no heed is paid to them forthwith, they weep and lament as though vanquished."[90]

This noisy language of distractions works easily to establish an *intesa* (agreement) between the hearer and the demon. The demon tempts with an utterance, and if the victim accepts the temptation, the two interlocutors form the first conscious link between themselves. Yet the demon doesn't always limit itself to tempting its direct interlocutor: "For [those who visited Anthony] heard tumults, many voices, and, as it were, the clash of arms. At night they saw the mountains become full of wild beasts, and him also fighting as though against visible beings, and praying against them."[91] This account shows us that the stage space extends as far as the visible and sonic radii allow. Demons can manipulate the sonic sphere completely, using sound like a physical object, just as they can choose who sees them when they take visible form.

Demons challenge the very terms of what is and isn't real, which only emphasizes their theatrical nature. Like actors, they perform many roles, including as angels, priests, or other holy men and women, or even as Jesus Christ himself:

> Very often also without appearing they imitate the music of harp and voice, and recall the words of Scripture, too, while we are reading they immediately repeat many times, like an echo, what is read. They arouse us from our sleep to prayers; and this constantly, hardly allowing us to sleep at all. At another time they assume the appearance of monks and feign the speech of holy men, that by their similarity they may deceive and thus drag their victims where they will.[92]

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[90] St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni," Par. 26, p. 203.

[91] St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Anoni," Par. 51, p. 210.

[92] St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Anoni," Par. 25, p. 203. See also, for example, in St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni," Par. 39, pp. 206-207: "Once they came in darkness, bearing the appearance of a light, and said, "We are come to give thee a light, Antony."; and Par. 40, p. 207: "At another time, while I was fasting, he came full of craft, under the semblance of a monk, with what seemed to be loaves, and gave me counsel, saying, 'Eat and cease from thy many labours. Thou also art a man and art like to fall sick.'" Cesarius of Heisterbach's *The Dialogue on Miracles, vol. 1,* Ch. 5: "Of Demons," 313-390 also contains several literary examples, first- and second-hand accounts of demons taking the guise of priests, monks, and nuns.

Ironically, demons might first call their victims to practice a holy life. They can insidiously use words and sounds normally associated with the Christian faith to coax their victims into a false sense of security. They "do this not for the sake of piety or truth, but that they may carry off the simple to despair; and that they may say the discipline is useless, and make men loathe the solitary life as a trouble and burden, and hinder those who in spite of them walk in it."[93] This powerful temptation potentially corrupts the victim's view and practice of Christianity. In effect, the victim becomes the demon's disciple and potentially even an agent of corruption in others.

Cesarius of Heisterbach gives a fantastic account, in his *Dialogue on Miracles*, of a demon who used the cadaver of a monk to sing and deceive a whole monastery of clerics. The monk had such a sweet singing voice that many likened it to a harp. The song created a sonic link between the singer and the hearer. A visiting monk then heard this voice and immediately recognized it as a demonic imitation of a human voice. He exorcized the demon and watched as the now putrefied body of a long-dead monk fell to the floor.[94] The intended moral, which Heisterbach provides in a short dialogue between the discerning monk and his novice, explains that the souls and bodies of those who submit to demonic attack in life are exceedingly tortured in hell. This short postlude dialogue warns of the eternal repercussions of acquiescence to demonic temptation, but the narrative more subtly accomplishes the task of highlighting the dangers of demonic temptation itself. The demon's acting abilities allow it to possess the cadaver of a monk and use it like a puppet, making it appear intact and alive. The demon uses the cadaver

[93] St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni," par. 25, p. 203.

[94] Heisterbach, Book XII, *Punishement and Glory of the Dead,* Chapter IV "Of a cleric whose body a devil quickened instead of a soul," in *The Dialogue on Miracles*, 292.

as a tool to enact its imitation. The demonic ventriloquism provided the demonic voice with so much credibility that the demon gained the trust (and pleasure) of the entire monastery.[95]

Discerning an evil spirit can be a complicated act, as the recipient of a spiritual communication or utterance must be actively and astutely in tune with their conscience. Demons always have a tell, revealing their true nature in some manner despite their seemingly expert skill in mimicry and performance. Ignatius of Loyola dedicates an entire section to "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits" in his *Spiritual Exercises* (1522-1524). In it, he explains that demons' illusions ultimately result in distraction, confusion, fear, anxiety, and/or any other kind of negative or nefarious thoughts, much like Tancredi's reaction to the demonic voice in Tasso's *Liberata*.[96] In his fourth, fifth, and eighth rules for discernment, Ignatius makes special mention of how human thoughts may in reality be intrusive demonic utterances that we mistake and accept as our own:

> 4. It is a mark of the evil spirit to assume the appearance of an angel of light. He begins by suggesting thoughts that are suited to a devout soul, and ends by suggesting his own. For example, he will suggest holy and pious thoughts that are wholly in conformity with the sanctity of the soul. Afterwards, he will endeavor little by little to end by drawing the soul into his hidden snares and evil designs.
>
> 5. We must carefully observe the whole course of our thoughts. If the beginning and middle and end of the course of thoughts are wholly good and directed to what is entirely right, it is a sign that they are from the good angel. But the course of thoughts suggested to us may terminate in something evil, or distracting, or less good than the soul had formerly proposed to do. Again, it may end in what weakens

[95] Compare also Pietro Vagni's opera *Aglae penitente e Bonifazio martire* (Rome, 1693), where a demon tricks Aglae, St. Boniface's ex-lover, into believing that it is a messenger bearing the news of Boniface's death. Aglae believes the demon's illusions—its manifested form and its words—and falls into sin. Only when Penitence descends from heaven to aid her does she see the error in her ways and dedicate her life to cleaning the dark stains of sin on her heart. See Pietro Vagni, *Aglae penitente e Bonifazio martire. Oratorio dedicato all'Illustriss. e Eccellentiss. Signore D. Francesco Pio di Savoia Prencipe di S. Gregorio* (Rome: Per il Bernabò, 1693). For the demonic temptation, see pp. 21-28.

[96] See also Levack, *The Devil Within*, 20, 58-63. Here, Levack discusses the demon's power of illusion.

> the soul, or disquiets it; or by destroying the peace, tranquility, and quiet which it had before, it may cause disturbance to the soul. These things are a clear sign that the thoughts are proceedings from the evil spirit, the enemy of our progress and eternal salvation.
>
> […]
>
> 8. […Spiritual solace or communication] may come from our own reasoning on the relations of our concepts and on the consequences of our judgements, or they may come from the good or evil spirit. Hence, they must be carefully examined before they are given full approval and put into execution.[97]

The demonic utterance is only a (false) simulacrum of true holiness and cannot lead to righteousness. Angelic interventions, conversely, are silent. Or rather, their noise comforts and calls with sacred harmony as opposed to noxious discord. Giovanni Andrea Gilio, in his 1550 treatise titled *Trattato de la emulatione che il Demonio ha fatta a Dio ne l'adoratione, ne' sacrificii e ne le altre cose appartenenti alla divinità,* explains that "Questa è la differenza tra le apparitioni angeliche, e le diaboliche. Quelle sono consolatrici, sante, e buone, e a confermatione de la fede. Queste sempre triste, spaventevoli, in dannatione de l'anima, e hanno sempre mal fine" [This is the difference between angelic and diabolical apparitions: the angelic ones are consoling, holy, good, and a confirmation of the faith; the demonic ones are always sad, frightening, and damning of the soul, and always have a bad end].[98] Potential victims can use

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[97] Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, trans. Louis J. Puhl (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1951), 148-150. See esp. pp. 141-149. For a broad examination of Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*, see Philip Endean, "The Spiritual Exercises," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester, 1st ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521857314.

[98] Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Trattato de la emulatione che il Demonio ha fatta a Dio ne l'adorazione, ne' sacrificii e ne le altre cose appartenenti alla divinità* (Venice: Appresso Francesco de' Franceschi, 1563), 29, http://digital.onb.ac.at/OnbViewer/viewer.faces?doc=ABO_%2BZ223165500. See also St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni," par. 35, p. 205: "The vision of the holy ones is not fraught with distraction: 'For they will not strive, nor cry, nor shall anyone hear their voice.' But it comes so quietly and gently that immediately joy, gladness and courage arise in the soul."

deafness and silence to counter the noisy, nefarious simulations that make up demonic performance, especially by emulating the saints' lives: "[God] stayed the mouths of demons: and it is fitting that we, taught by the saints, should do like them and imitate their courage. For they when they saw these things used to say: […] 'But I was as a deaf man and heard not, and as a dumb man who openeth not his mouth, and I became as a man who heareth not.'"[99] Following legitimized examples of holy figures would heighten awareness of the spiritual world and help protect against the insidious diabolical utterance.

An actual theatrical example of this concept is the 1634 opera *Il Sant'Alessio*, with text written by Prelate Giulio Rospigliosi (the future Pope Clement IX) and music composed by Stefano Landi. As a priest and former professor of theology, Rospigliosi immersed himself in the reality of the demonic and wrote "real" demons and their modes of communication into *Il Sant'Alessio*. Performed in the Barberini papal court under Pope Urban VIII, the opera's subplots converge on asceticism as a central theme, especially as a tool to dispel diabolical temptation.[100] A theatrical version of St. Alexis's hagiography, the opera follows the young saint as he abandons his family, his wife, and all worldly goods to anonymously follow Christ in poverty and solemn prayer.[101] Rospigliosi depicts demons plotting to tempt Alexis away from his ascetic life, portraying actual demonic temptation as well as angelic intervention on Alexis's behalf. The

[99] St. Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni," par. 27, p. 203.

[100] This was the inaugural opera at the Teatro Barberini. See Silke Leopold, "Rome: Sacred and Secular," in *The Early Baroque Era: From the Late 16th Century to the 1660s*, ed. Curtis Alexander Price, 1. North American ed, Music and Society (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1994), 59-63.

[101] See Anna Maria Pedullà's introduction in Anton Giulio Brignole Sale, Anna Maria Pedullà, and Antonella Staiano, *La vita di S. Alessio descritta e arricchita con divoti episodi dal marchese Antongiulio Brignole Sale: in Genova, sotto la cura di Gio. Domenico Peri, 1648*, Manierismo e Barocco 18 (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2014), viii-xviii. Here, she explains the history and adaptations of St. Alexis's legend.

temptation scene closely echoes Ignatius of Loyola's rules for the discernment of spirits. The forces of good and evil speak to Alexis's mind and theatrically manifest, in the opera, as an actual demon and angel, providing spectators with a vivid and sonorous exemplum of the saint's private, inner process of spiritual purification. Rospigliosi's later opera *Il palazzo incantato* (1642) does something similar: Christian knights are trapped in a labyrinth that, in a strong way, represents their inner spiritual misgivings. To exit the labyrinth, they must recognize and defeat their own proclivity to err and sin.

Rospigliosi's poetry avoids the *marinismo* style popular in the seventeenth century in favor of clear rational engagement between characters.[102] Despite this, as Robert L. Kendrick points out, he still manages to present *Il Sant'Alessio'*s character Demonio in three distinct linguistic registers: those of the "official" tempter, the deceptive pious hermit, and the emotional planner of future temptation plots.[103] Landi's musical responses to Rospigliosi's linguistic settings for Demonio then exemplify the demon's fickle nature next to the constant (both musically and spiritually) Alexis by providing three distinct musical voices. These voices also show the demon's opportunistic ability to vary its utterances depending on its needs and desires as an actor/tempter. Here, I will focus on Alexis's expression of turmoil in Act II, scene 5, and the temptation scene in Act II, scene 6 in order to show Landi's and Rospigliosi's approach to dramatically depicting demonic communication and a saintly rebuke of demonic temptation.

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[102] See Margaret Murata, *Operas for the Papal Court, 1631-1668*, (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981), 78.

[103] Robert L. Kendrick, "What's So Sacred about 'Sacred' Opera? Reflections on the Fate of a (Sub)Genre," *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 9, no. 1 (2003): sections 4-5. Kendrick also references the demonologist Antonio Rusca's *De inferno et statu daemonorum* (1621), which strangely allows demons to have human emotions.

In the scene immediately preceding the demonic temptation (II.5), St. Alexis sings a long soliloquy in which he unpacks his agitated thoughts. He can hardly bear to witness his family's grief in his absence, so he contemplates revealing himself to them and breaking his vow of asceticism:

> Alessio, che farai?
> Userai crudeltade
> a chi come ben sai,
> vuol il ciel, vuol il mondo,
> che tu mostri pietade?
> Che fo? devo scoprirmi,
> o pur m'ascondo?
> Ah, silenzio crudele,
> cagion d'aspre querele.
> Io già me n' volo a far palese il tutto.
> Fermo che sol chi giunge all'ultime ore
> con immutabil core
> delle fatiche sue raccoglie il frutto.
> Tu, che per dio cercar, fuggisti il mondo,
> or per sentiero incerto
> volgi di nuovo (ah folle)
> al mondo il piede?
> Chi sì mal ti consiglia?
> […]
> Ah, quale io provo
> nel teatro del cor dura battaglia.
> O dio clemente,
> il tuo favor mi vaglia.
> […]
> Ma chi sarà costui,
> che con luci serene
> maestoso in sembiante a me ne viene?[104]
>
> [Alessio, what will you do? Will you show cruelty to those who, as you well know, heaven and the world want you to show mercy? What do I do? Do I have to reveal myself, or do I hide? Ah, cruel silence, cause of bitter complaints! I want to make it all obvious, bearing in mind that only those who reach the last hours of life with an immutable heart of their labors reach the fruit of Heaven. You, who sought God, who fled the world, and are now on an uncertain path: do you turn your foot (ah

[104] See the score and libretto: Stefano Landi and Giulio Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio* (Rome: Appresso Paolo Masotti, 1634), 96-99 https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2033982.

> insanity!) to the world again? Who advises you so poorly? […] Ah, what a hard battle I now experience in the theater of my heart! O merciful God, your favor weighs me down. […] But who is this, who comes to me with serene eyes and a majestic countenance?]

While *versi sciolti*—irregular alternations of hendecasyllabic and septenary verses—are frequently used in recitative and other prose-like settings of various genres, here they serve to accentuate Alexis's sense of inner turmoil. Punctuation ornaments the septenary verses, especially in the first nine verses. It renders Alexis's thoughts choppy, almost frantic. The enjambement and the relatively un-punctuated hendecasyllables that follow then leave room for Alexis's thoughts to run in an uninterrupted, worried fugue about his chances of reaching heaven. He quickly falls back into a septenary pattern where he again questions himself and his choices in an agitated vacillation of thoughts. He wavers between upholding his promise to God and giving in to material temptation. Although he has good intentions, sacrificing his piety to save his family from grief would ultimately remove him from a state of grace. This is precisely the psychological opening that Demonio will attack in the following temptation scene.

Landi's composition underscores the chaotic nature of Alexis's words and internal state [Figure 1]. Throughout the aria, he fluctuates between quick, undulating phrases, slow, beseeching ascents, and virtuosic leaps. The emotional climax of the aria rings in with "Ah" in the second system, followed by a rapid descent into "quale io provo nel teatro del cor dura battaglia." The battle in his heart is both a metaphor for his emotional state and a literal battleground where he will wage spiritual war with Demonio. This dramatic phrase foreshadows the spiritual exercise that Alexis will soon undergo. Ignatius of Loyola states that to achieve spiritual purification, one must "meditate on two standards. The one Christ, our supreme leader

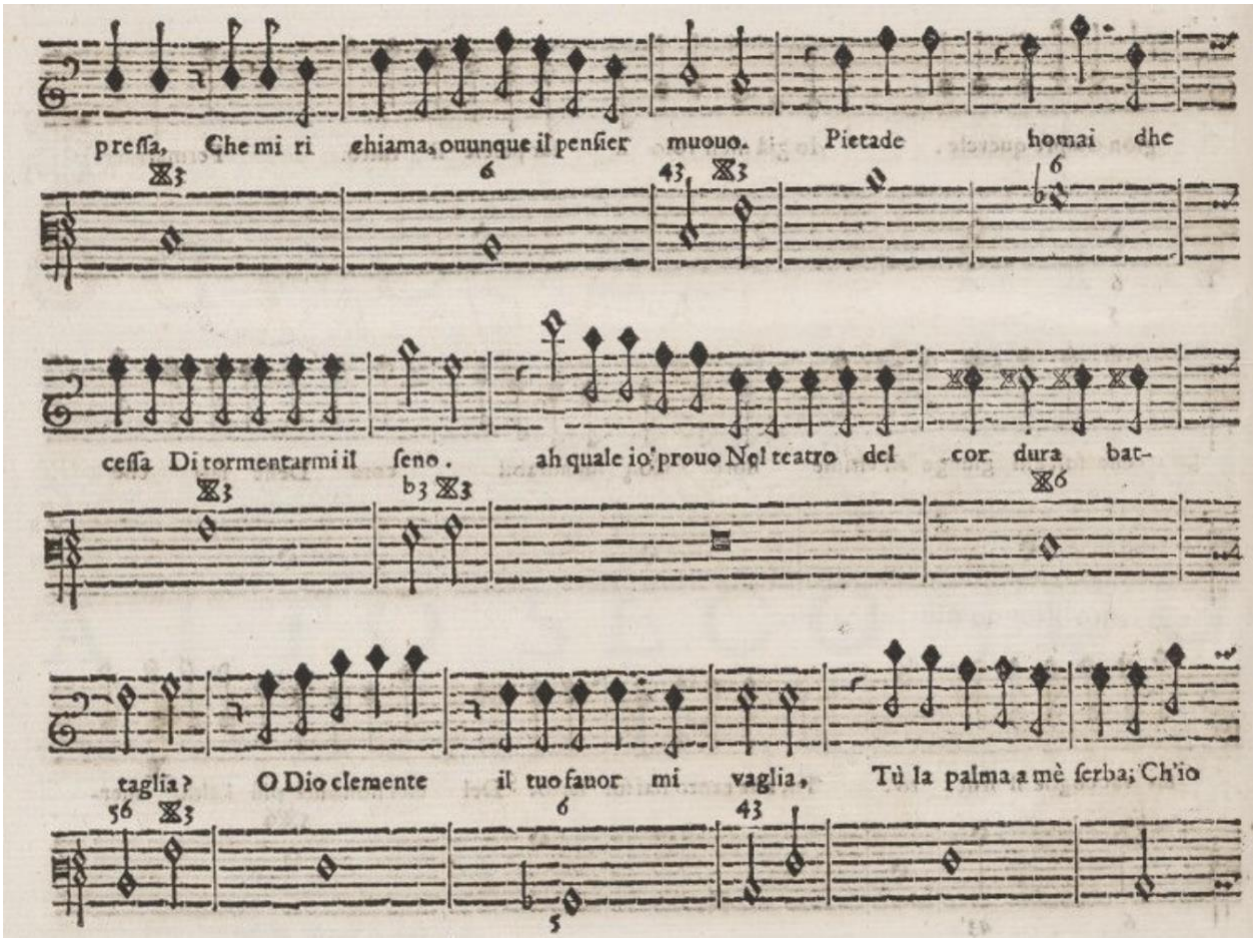

***Figure 1**: Excerpt from St. Alexis's aria "Alessio, che farai?",* Act II, scene 5

and lord, the other of Lucifer, the deadly enemy of our human nature."[105] In this inner theater, Alexis will listen to and contemplate the good—his conscience, aided eventually by angelic intervention—and the bad—Demonio's temptations—before ultimately choosing which path to follow.

The curtain lifts on Alexis's "teatro del cor" and the dialogue between Alexis's conscience and the demon begins [Figures 2 & 3]. The scene description explains that

> In questa varietà di pensieri viene incontrato dal Demonio, il quale sotto habito di vecchio Eremita procura con diverse ragioni d'indurre il Santo a scoprirsi a' Parenti. Egli però restando più confuso, che persuaso, non lascia di dubitare, che sia illusione dell'Inferno, onde chiede a Dio, che in tanto bisogno non l'abbandoni.[106]

[105] Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 60.
[106] Landi and Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio*, 99.

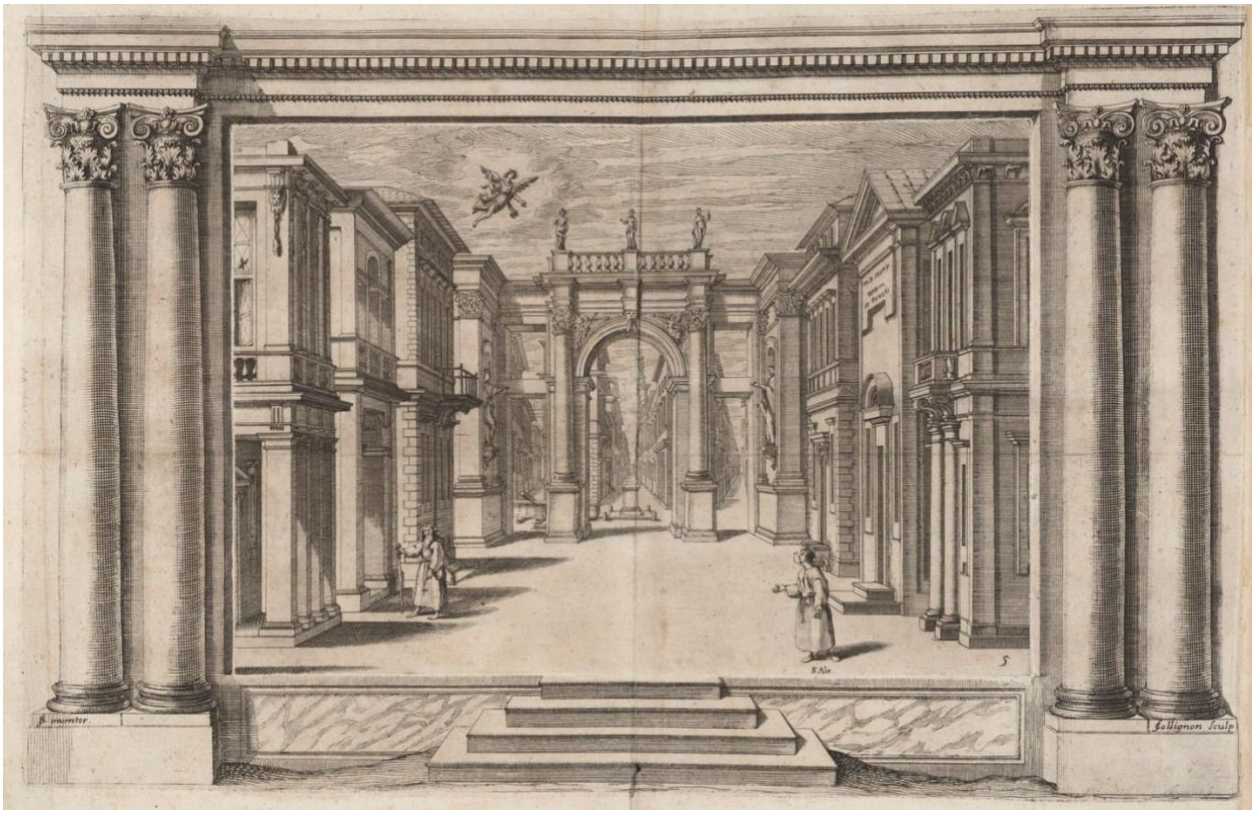

Figure 2: *Demonic temptation of St. Alexis. Demonio, disguised as a holy hermit, departs as an angel appears to aid St. Alexis.*

Figure 3*: Close-up of Demonio disguised as the holy hermit.*

> [While in this jumble of thoughts, Demonio approaches. Under the guise of an old hermit, he tries with various reasonings to convince the saint to reveal himself to his family. Alexis, however, more confused than convinced, doesn't allow himself to doubt that this is an illusion from Hell. He therefore asks God not to abandon him in such need.]

The text is explicit that this is a demonic illusion. We can read this in two ways: 1) we are meant to experience the visual and aural manifestation of what actually plays out in the theater of Alexis's heart and soul. In other words, the following temptation scene occurs internally between Alexis's conscious mind, his conscience, and a demonic utterance that speaks in his mind. Conversely, 2) Alexis might actually see a physical manifestation appear in front of him, which then tempts him verbally. The image plates in the 1634 score hint that a seventeenth-century audience may have more readily had the second understanding while watching the opera. As Figures 2 and 3 show, Demonio seems to be a physical being disguised as a holy hermit. They (and Alexis) see him on stage singing and tempting. Even the angel, which arrives post temptation to aid Alexis, literally descends from above the stage on some machinery.[107] What's more, the audience would have been hit with the major contrast between Demonio's appearance in Act 1, scene 4, where he is in his "demonic" form, and this humble disguise. [Figures 4 & 5]. Additionally, hermit-Demonio interacts with a passerby immediately following the temptation, which clearly happens outside of Alexis's mind and heart. Still, we cannot discount that while

[107] Landi and Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio*, 105. The stage directions for the angel read as follows: "Viene l'angelo volando dal cielo, e al fine della scena in verso al cielo sparisce."

***Figure 4**: Demonio and a choir of demons in Hell plotting their temptations.*

***Figure 5:** Close-up of Demonio in his "true" demonic form.*

this temptation visually occurs in the world, the demonic voice still finds its way into Alexis's mind, where the true battle plays out.

Demonio enters the scene and greets Alexis:

Demonio Umil servo, ed indegno
del ciel son io,
che da' riposte orrori
di lontane pendici
erme sì ma felici,
sol per giovarti, Alessio, a te ne vegno.

Sant'Alessio Qual mia ventura, o quale,
dio di somma pietade,
da' solitari chiostri
pur oggi agl'occhi miei fa' che ti mostri?[108]

[Demonio: A humble servant and unworthy of heaven, I, who from the hidden horrors of distant slopes—a hermit, yes, but happy—come to you, Alexis, only to benefit you.
Alexis: What fortune of mine, oh god of supreme mercy, or which one from the solitary cloisters even today makes you show yourself to my eyes?]

The demon's colloquial speech and humble entreaty have their desired effect. Alexis accepts this supposedly pious hermit into his presence as a blessing from God, hoping that in His mercy He has sent a messenger to aid him in his choices. Landi has the demon sing virtuosic leaps in succession ("Erme sì…vegno") [Figure 6], which evokes a sense of grandiosity and disorientation.[109] This, coupled with the more florid and tender opening line of the recitative, exhibits the demon's persuasive capabilities. Demonio responds to Alexis with a long aria in which he sympathizes with Alexis's plight, blames him for his family's misery, claims that God Himself is unhappy with him, and eventually suggests that Alexis abandon his holy path:

Demonio Dio messagger mi manda.
Io la sua mente, Alessio, a te rivelo
perché di folle zelo
ripieno il cor ardente;

[108] Landi and Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio*, 99-100.

[109] Bonnie Gordon says that the demon sounds more "extravagant" than Alessio, whose voice instead always ascends towards Heaven. See Gordon, *Voice Machines*, 163.

per dio cercar da dio ne vai lontano,
onde tu soffri e t'affatichi invano.
Poiché, mentre dolente
la consorte abbandoni, a lui non piaci.
E qual legge t'insegna aspro e crudele
con promesse fallaci
ingannar nobil donna a te fedele?
E qual torbida cura
della mente il seren così t'oscura,
che sì vaga consorte,
mentre per te si duole,
tu, tiranno crudele,
condanni a morte?
Non l'approva la terra, il ciel no 'l vuole,
l'aborrisce natura.
[…]
E senso hai di pietade?
E spirto in te s'accoglie
di mansuete voglie
come di dio la legge impera e vuole?
[…]
Torna, deh torna alla tua sposa amante,
porta alla cara madre omai riposo;
rendi te stesso al genitor doglioso.
Frena il desir errante,
ché suol vana costanza
sol di perfidia aver nome e sembianza.
E saggio è quello, in cui,
vinto il proprio voler, cede all'altrui.
Credi, vanne, obbedisci.
Vago degl'antri foschi.
Ti lascio in tanto,
e me ne torno a i boschi.[110]

[Demonio: God sends me a message. I will reveal His mind to you, Alexis, because, filling your burning heart with crazy zeal, you go far from God in your search for Him, where now you suffer and toil in vain. Because while you abandon your wife in sorrow, He does not like you. And what harsh and cruel law teaches you, with false promises, to deceive a noble woman faithful to you? And what murky care of the mind so darkens you, that you condemn to death such a lovely wife while she grieves for you? Earth does not approve of it; Heaven does not want it, so; nature abhors it. […] And do you have any sense of mercy? And does the spirit in you welcome meek desires as the law of God reigns and wills? […] Come back, oh! come back to your loving wife, and bring rest now to your dear mother; return

[110] Landi and Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio*, 100-103.

> yourself to your grieving parents. Curb this errant desire, for vain constancy only desires the name and appearance of perfidy. And wise is the one in whom, having conquered his own will, yields to the will of others. Believe, go, obey! I wander into the dark caves. I'll leave you now and go back to the woods.]

Much as in Gernando's possession scene in Tasso's *Liberata*, the demon's language here is inflammatory and profoundly accusatory. He paints Alexis's zeal and passions as unflattering and sinful. The demon, disguised as the "holy" hermit, claims to have received his messages directly from God, which only amplifies the gravity of his onerous accusations. The actual temptations, starting with "Torna, deh torna," are direct commands to Alexis. The repetition of

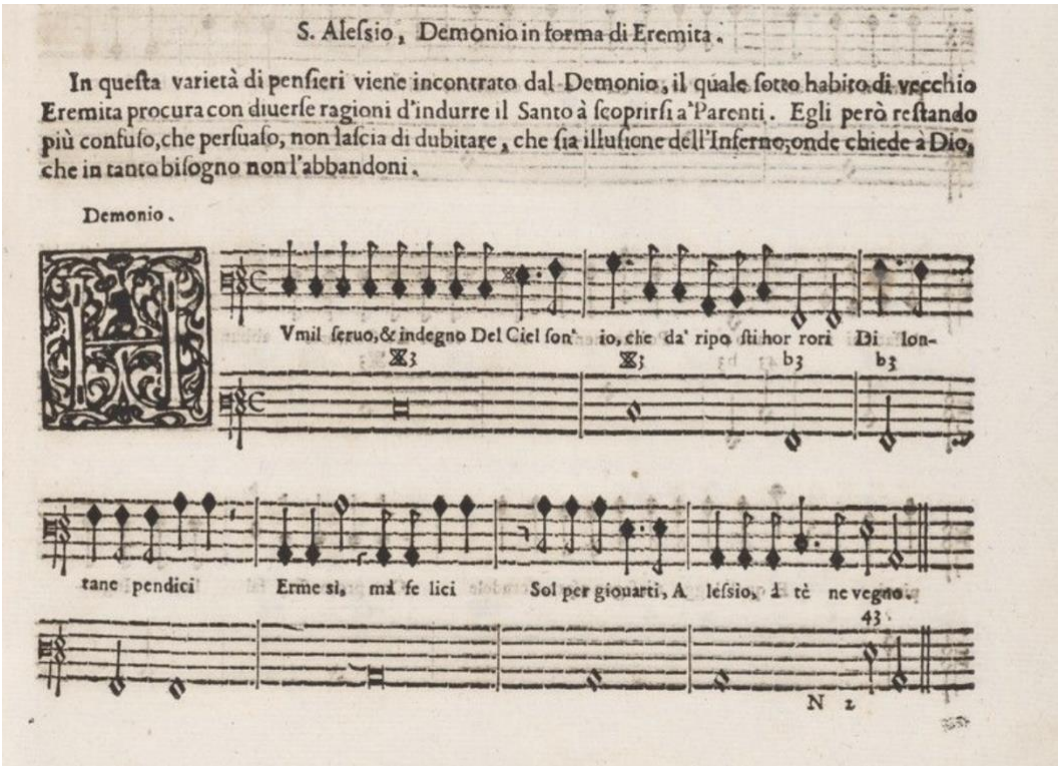

***Figure 6**: Excerpts from Demonio's aria, "Dio messagger mi manda"*

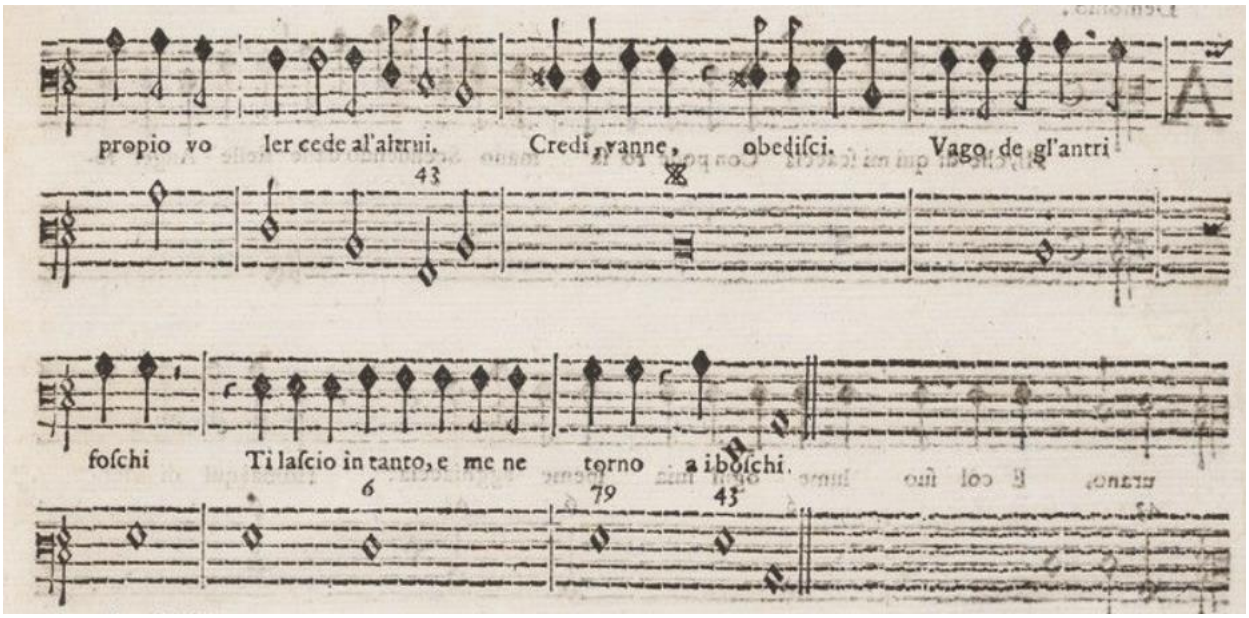

***Figure 7:** Excerpt from the end of Demonio's aria, "Dio messagger mi manda"*

"torna" accompanied by the emotional expression "deh" highlights the urgency in the "hermit's" voice. Demonio's insistence only grows with his string of grave commands, "believe, go, obey!" Landi's music responds well to this [Figure 7]. Coming immediately after a lyrical passage and

cadence, the declamatory command "Credi" rises up in pitch and intensity to "vanne." The commas between the words imply a lift—a quick breath or short pause that a singer would tend to make—that gives the individual words greater weight. The short rest before "obedisci" also adds emphasis and tension to the rising line. This final command exposes Demonio's impatience and inability to rein in his own zeal. The two quick semiminims—musical notes equivalent to the modern quarter note—on the first two syllables of "obedisci" would catapult the singer's voice to the dramatic minim—equivalent to the modern half note—on "-di-" before the eventual descent to "-sci." We might venture to say that the demon's actual "voice" begins to show through. Fittingly, too, as this is the end of his temptation before he absconds to the woods with a virtuosic vocal leap down to the deep depths of his range on "boschi."

Unlike Tasso's Gernando, Alexis remains in touch with his reason. In his contemplation of the infernal utterances, he doesn't abandon himself but instead probes how they make him feel, similar to what Ignatius of Loyola suggests in his fifth rule of spiritual discernment:

Sant'Alessio Attonito, e confuso
rimango a questi detti,
né par, ch'ad obbedirlo
il cor m'affretti,
temendo dall'inferno esser deluso;
ch'ad ogni passo ordisce un nuovo inganno
degli abissi il tiranno.
Dunque, a me porgi aita
…eterna fede
con pietade infinita
doni stabil soccorso a chi lo chiede.[111]

[Saint Alexis: I remain astonished and confused at these words, nor does my heart seem to rush to obey them, fearing to be deluded by Hell, since that tyrant [Satan] plots a new deception at every step. Therefore, give me help!... eternal faith with infinite mercy, give steady aid to those who ask for it!]

[111] Landi and Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio*, 103-104.

Alexis manages to recognize the nefarious intentions behind the hermit's message and prays for direct help from Heaven. In the following scene, an angel appears and confirms Alexis's fears. The saint successfully shakes loose from the demonic voice as the curtain falls on his heart's theater. The demon later plots his revenge but never has the chance to enact his plans, since Alexis dies. Demonio falls back into Hell and Alexis is taken up to Heaven for his firm piety.

Given Alexis's deeply intense devotion and insistence on asceticism, Rospigliosi characterizes the saint's experience as "più tosto ammirabile che imitabile" ["more admirable than imitable"].[112] In other words, Rospigliosi recognizes that the average spectator more than likely won't be capable of pulling off the same level of intense virtue or the impractical life of asceticism as St. Alexis. In Kendrick's words, "the removal of Alessio from the stage well before any emotional catharsis is reached contributes further to his removal from the level of human emotions, a realm shared by all the other characters, demons included."[113] Rospigliosi takes Alexis out of the equation to signal his unique nature and status as a true saint and, in doing so, confirms the impracticality of dismissing human emotions to such a degree. The character of personified Rome hints at this in the opera's Prologue:

> Roma: e de' congiunti suoi
> gl'aspri lamenti
> faran, con meste note,
> ch'alcun bagni di lacrime le gote.[114]
>
> [Rome: and the bitter lamenting of his family, with their sad notes, will make some people's cheeks wet with tears.]

[112] Landi and Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio*, 105.
[113] Kendrick, "What's So Sacred about "Sacred" Opera? ...," section 6.2.
[114] Landi and Rospigliosi, *Il Sant'Alessio*, 19.

Rospigliosi places the spectators alongside Alexis's family, effectively removing the possibility of saintly imitation. He instead intends for spectators to emulate the saint's intellectual virtues. They should use his spiritual exercises and contemplation as a more accessible model to emulate since strict imitation of his path would more than likely lead to folly.

Giovanni Andrea Gilio. Simulation, Emulation, and Spectacle

Imitation and emulation are often intertwined with broader cultural anxieties about authenticity and the boundaries of the self. A unique interplay emerged between the two concepts, particularly in the context of a demonic influence and the aspiration to lead a virtuous life. Emulation represented a more positive form of imitation. It was a virtuous endeavor, especially when applied to emulating the lives of the saints and holy figures. Emulation in this context entailed aspiring to replicate the exemplary virtues, piety, and moral conduct of these revered individuals. It was seen as a path to spiritual enlightenment and salvation, as individuals sought to embody the qualities and virtues of the saints. By emulating their lives, people aimed to draw closer to divine grace and live a life in accordance with God's will. Conversely, demons engaged in imitation (simulation), often impersonating religious figures or saints, thus luring unsuspecting victims into sinful or malevolent activities. This deception was seen as a means for demons to corrupt souls, leading individuals away from the righteous path. As such, imitation, especially when associated with demonic activities, carried a negative connotation, reflecting the dangers of succumbing to temptation and counterfeit spirituality. Simulation had the capacity to blur the line between reality and fiction. The very act of imitation could be seen as a form of deceit, raising concerns about moral and spiritual integrity. The distinction between imitation and emulation in the realm of the spiritual was significant, as it highlighted the moral and ethical dimensions of these concepts. While imitation was associated with deceit and demonic influence, emulation

represented a virtuous and earnest pursuit of spiritual growth and moral improvement. This duality underscored the complex and often precarious nature of religious life in Renaissance Europe, where discernment between genuine devotion and deceptive imitation was a central concern for individuals seeking to navigate the spiritual challenges of the time.[115]

Simulation implies a replication of something that isn't actually there, which, according to Gilio, potentially makes a mockery of God's creation with a flawed attempt at replicating nature.[116] Gilio continuously stresses that the Devil "emulates" God, but in doing so, he underscores the theological understanding of evil as a distortion or corruption of what is inherently good. He highlights the idea that even in their rebellion, demons ultimately attempted to mimic (imitate) aspects of divine perfection, albeit in a twisted and destructive manner, in order precisely to deceive. This concept serves to emphasize the contrast between the goodness and righteousness of God and the malevolence and perversion associated with demonic entities, illustrating the eternal struggle between good and evil in Christian theology. To illustrate his point, Gilio uses the example of false idols that demons inspire humans to create and worship: "I simulacri degli huomini gentili, opere delle loro mani, hanno occhi, orecchie, bocca, naso, mani, e piedi: ma non veggono, non sentono, non odorano, non parlano, non toccano, non caminano" ["The simulacra of men, works of their own hands, have eyes, ears, mouth, nose, hands, and feet.

[115] See Gli Accademici dello Spirito Santo, *Il martirio di S. Maurelio Vescovo, e martire proettore della città di Ferrara. Oratorio da cantarsi nella Chiesa dello Spirito Santo, e diedicato dalla detta Accademia al merito impareggiabile dell'Eminentiss. e Reverendiss. Sig. Card. Gioseppe Renato* (Ferrara: Per Bernardino Pmatelli, 1695). This oratorio focuses on the distinctions between saintly acts and the effects of demonic temptation, and acts as a template for viewers on how to emulate the saint.

[116] Gilio, "Proemio," in *Trattato de la emulatione*…, n.p. Gilio's text is at times reminiscent of Torquato Accetto's discussions of simulation in his *Della dissimulazione onesta* (1641). See, for example, Torquato Accetto, *Della Dissimulazione Onesta*, ed. Salvatore S. Nigro, Biblioteca Einaudi 4 (Torino: Einaudi, 1997), 24.

Yet they do not see, nor do they hear, nor smell, nor speak, nor touch, nor walk"].[117] Like all demonic illusions, they appear real but are false. Demons might imitate holy things—mass, images, music—but they can only twist them into corrupted versions of their original counterparts.[118]

Gilio refers to these idols and illusions (imitations) as superstitions ("superstitioni"). Superstition, in this context, denotes the erroneous belief in and practice of rituals, customs, or behaviors that appear to be religious but are actually based on false or distorted interpretations of faith. When individuals, whether out of ignorance or vulnerability, fall for these superstitions, they risk unwittingly engaging in practices that align with the demonic rather than the divine.[119] Superstitions that involved demonic imitation often transformed into elaborate and insidious performances, which could easily ensnare the unwary. These performances were characterized by their dramatic and theatrical nature, designed to captivate and manipulate individuals' beliefs and emotions. One way in which superstitions evolved into performative spectacles was through the staging of false miracles or supernatural phenomena.[120] Demons carefully choreographed these displays to create a sense of wonder, drawing in the curious who believed they were witnessing authentic divine manifestations. Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park explain how some considered wonder to be a religious emotion in the early modern era, considering that a true wonder is effected by God and is supernatural, as only He can enact wondrous things outside of the scope of natural laws.[121] Indeed, demons were thought to frequently enact

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[117] Gilio, *Trattato de la emulatione…,* 11-12.

[118] Gilio, *Trattato de la emulatione…,* 19.

[119] On "superstitioni," see Gilio, *Trattato de la emulatione…,* 34.

[120] Gilio, *Trattato de la emulatione…,* 20-45. In these chapters, Gilio examines myriad examples of false miracles performed by demons.

[121] Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books Distributed by the MIT Press, 1998), 45.

spectacular wonders meant to trick viewers into believing them to be miraculous (supernatural) wonders rather than simply preternatural ones within the scope of nature.[122] Even if only partial, the relationship to actual theater is quite striking. Wonder, in particular, abounds in theatrical spaces. Indeed, sovereigns would intentionally include them in court theater to dramatize their histories and advance their political agendas. For instance, they would elicit emotions of wonder through various stage marvels with the intention of drawing parallels between this wonder and the "unparalleled wonderfulness" of the one responsible for the wondrous production—namely, the sovereign.[123] Similarly, regarding Gilio's superstitions, they often insidiously incorporated rituals and ceremonies steeped in symbolism and mysticism, further enhancing their performative aspect. The promoters of superstitions, typically demonically tempted individuals, were often charismatic leaders or intermediaries with the divine, such as priests or mystics. They would assume personas that exuded authority and mystique, enhancing the theatricality of their performances in their respective theatrical spaces. The demonic entity,

> già precipitato nelle sempiterne tenebre, volse emulare anchora […] il grande Iddio, [quindi] elesse sacerdoti, pontefici, e aruspici, che gli havessero a offrire le vittime, e l'hostie sopra gli altari, con gli incensi e stormenti [*sic.*] musici, come si faceva al grande Iddio nel Tempio di Gierosolima, ma egli aggiunse a le sue superstitioni, i giuochi, e gli spettacoli, ne' quali per il più s'ammazzavano gli uomini.[124]
>
> [already plunged into eternal darkness, wanted to emulate again […] the great God. Therefore, he elected priests, pontiffs, and soothsayers, who all had to offer him victims, and hosts on the altars with incense and musical instruments, as was once done for God in the Temple of Jerusalem. But the demon added games and spectacles to his superstitions. In them, men were mostly killed.]

[122] Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature,* 121 and 162.
[123] Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature,* 100-101, 107.
[124] Gilio, *Trattato de la emulatione…,* 16.

These "giuochi, e … spettacoli" ("games and spectacles") could involve religious objects, incense, and music, all designed to create a sensory and immersive experience that heightened the illusion of authenticity. The participants, whether willing or unwilling, became part of these rituals, contributing to the overall theatricality of the superstition.

For Gilio, the dangers of demonic imitation and superstition appear most strongly when the medium is voice, which carried significant implications. Those who sought to promote superstitions or engage in deceptive religious practices were often skilled orators who could use their eloquence and charisma to captivate their audience.[125] Through persuasive and captivating speech, they could manipulate the emotions and beliefs of their listeners, leading them to accept and participate in superstitious rituals or practices that were, in fact, rooted in deception. The aspect of vocality made it easier for individuals to be drawn into insidious performances, as they were swayed by the charismatic words and promises of those leading these practices. Gilio explains how demons could imitate God's messages to prophets by feeding words to false oracles:

> Quanti phitoni, e quante phitonesse sono hoggi, ne' quali parla espressamente il demonio, e se non fosse, che io desidero la brevità, io direi cose di questi tali, che farei stupire chi le leggesse. […] E s'allhora si trovava l'oracolo d'Apollo solo, hora non è città, né castello, né villa, dove non ne siano, i quali rispondano a viva voce ne le sorti, ne' sogni, et in tutti gli altri modi, ingannando questo, e quello.[126]
>
> [How many pythons, and how many pythonesses, are there today through which the devil expressly speaks? And if it weren't for the fact that I desire brevity, I would say things about them that would amaze anyone who read them. […] And if in that time there was only Apollo's oracle to be found, now there is no city, no castle, no villa, where there are none. With loud voices they speak in fortunes, in dreams, and in all other ways, deceiving this one and that one.]

[125] Rhetoric and oratory were always under some suspicion because of their capacity to persuade, manipulate, and corrupt. See Jenny C. Mann, "The Binding Figures of Eloquence in Early Modernity," *Shakespeare Studies* 49 (2021): 63-64

[126] Gilio, *Trattato de la emulatione…,* 21, 29.

Through persuasive rhetoric, these individuals could manipulate their audience's emotions and beliefs, convincing them of the legitimacy of the superstition. As these superstitions became increasingly elaborate and captivating, thanks to the "games and spectacles," they posed a significant danger to the unwary who might be drawn into a world of deception and spiritual manipulation. The performative nature of these superstitions played a crucial role in this process, as it created an illusion of authenticity that could be difficult for individuals to discern from genuine religious experiences. In essence, these insidious performances exploited human fascination with the mystical and the extraordinary, using theatricality to ensnare those seeking deeper spiritual connections but who, in reality, were falling victim to elaborate deceptions rooted in demonic imitation.

Chapter 3

Constructing the Body Politic in the Medicean Musical *Intermedi* of 1589

Disruptions on the Stage

On May 1st, 1589, Act III of Girolamo Bargagli's comedy *La pellegrina* barely ends before a beautiful sorceress descends onto the stage from a cloud in a golden chariot drawn by two fire-breathing serpents. She clearly belongs to the next musical *intermedio*—the fourth in a series of six—, but her disruptive, unanticipated entrance marks her as a figure of disorder.[1] In his *Descrizione dell'apparato, e degl'intermedi* (1589), Bastiano de' Rossi, the Medici theater commentator and member of the *Accademia della Crusca*, explains that as she descends in her chariot from the heavens, the sorceress

> […] prende un liuto, ch'ella v'ha dentro [il carro] e a qual suono, e all'armonia di lire grandi, e di bassi, di viole, di liuti, d'un violino, d'arpe doppia, bassi di tromboni, e organi di legno, che sonavano dentro, [… ella] cominciò soavemente a cantare, e nel suo canto a chiamare, e costringere i demoni della region più pura dell'aria, appellata fuoco, a dire, quando il mondo doveva godere supreme felicità, ed essi vengono in uno stante […].[2]

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[1] On the disruptive nature of diabolical figures, see Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 555-559.

[2] Bastiano Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato, e degl'intermedi. Fatti per la commedia rappresentata in Firenze. Nelle nozze de' Serenissimi Don Ferdinando Medici, e Madama Cristina da Loreno, Gran Duchi di Toscana.* (Florence: Per Anton Padovani, 1589), 49. See also Giuseppe Pavoni, *Diario descritto da Giuseppe Pauoni: delle feste celebtate nelle solennissime nozze delli serenissimi sposi, il sig. don Ferdinando Medici, & la sig. donna Christina di Loreno gran duchi di Toscana: nel quale con breuita si esplica il torneo, la battaglia nauale, la comedia con gli intermedii, & altre feste occorse di giorno in giorno per tutto il dì 15. di maggio, MDLXXXIX; alli molto illustri, & miei patroni offeruandiss. li signori Giasoni & Pompeo fratelli de' Vizani* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1589), 17-19 for another description of the intermedi. Specifically, on 17-18, Pavoni takes care to note the terrifying nature of the dragons: "frenava come le redine due Draghi molto spaventevoli, che alcuna volta gettavano fuoco per le bocche loro."

> [[…] picks up a lute, which she has in her chariot, and to whose sound, and to the harmony of large lyres, and of basses, of violas, of lutes, of a violin, of double harps, basses of trombones, and wooden organs, that were sounding within, [she] began to softly sing, and in her song to call and force the demons of the purest region of air, called fire, to decree when the world was to enjoy supreme happiness. And these spirits came in an instant[…].]

Rossi's language is one with the sorceress's seductive nature. His written account of the *intermedi* was meant to seduce its readers as much as the sorceress's body and voice were meant to seduce the audience's ears and draw down the airy demons. The lilting syllables and frequent alliteration paint a seductive, pleasing sound in the language.[3]

The sorceress picks up a lute and, using her power, sings and plays to invoke the fire spirits from the heavens.[4] These spirits comply with the sorceress's enchantment and appear suddenly up in the clouds, seemingly from nowhere, to sing and perform about Jove's imminent blessings:

> si cominciò a vedere una nugola in aria di forma tonda, ma a bozzi, come veggiamo le vere nugole, e pareva un monte di fuoco, senza che segno di creatura umana vi si vedesse: e comparita improvvisamente in iscena: perciocché (non solo questa, ma niuna altra sospesa macchina di tanto spettacolo) non si vide mai da che fosse retta; infino che non fu nel mezzo di essa scena, si stette chiusa, e arrivata al mezzo s'aperse, e fecesi un semicircolo: ne mi par punto da domandare, ne da scrivere eziandio, se con meraviglia di chi la vide, e non solamente potette nascer la maraviglia nel vedere così gran macchina aprirsi in aria, ma nel vederla così carica di persone, vestite d'abito, che per oro, e per artificio risplendeva fuor d'ogni stima […].[5]
>
> [a round cloud began to appear in the air, but it was lumpy, as we see real clouds, and it seemed a mountain of fire with no sign of any human creature there. And it suddenly appeared on stage, such that (not only this, but no other suspended machine of such a spectacle) nobody could ever see how it was kept upright. It remained closed until it reached the middle of the stage, where it opened and formed

[3] See, on affective text expression and musical thinking, Gary Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 33-57.

[4] James Saslow notes that most of the audience would have perceived them as angels rather than spirits, given their crimson wings. See James M. Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589: Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 155.

[5] Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato*, 50.

> a semicircle, and I don't think it's the point to ask, nor even to write, if to the amazement of those who saw it. And not only could marvel arise in seeing such a great machine open up in the air, but also in seeing it so full of people, all in costume, which with gold and artifice shone beyond all esteem.]

Rossi notes the marvelous and unexpected surprise of the floating clouds filled with spirits playing instruments. It shocked the audience, as nobody could fathom how the stage machinery floated, let alone held so many bodies and instruments. The sorceress's regal attire and marvelous flying machine draw attention, and the awestruck spectators could only wait for her voice. Her aria, set to music by the famous composer Giulio Caccini, invokes the heavenly spirits so that they can tell her when Jove will shower the earth with splendors. She wants them to foretell the coming of the new Golden Age, which coincides with the Medici wedding that will take place in the coming weeks between Christine de Lorraine and Grand Duke Ferdinando de' Medici.[6] The idea is that this wedding will bring prosperity and goodwill, so much so that Hell will soon receive fewer sinners.

As the spirits disappear into their clouds, a hellscape bursts open:

> Richiusa e sparita la Nugola, la scena in uno stante fu coperta tutta di scogli, d'antri, caverne, piene di fuochi, e di fiamme ardenti, e pareva, che, serpeggiando per l'aria mandassero il fumo al Cielo. Coperta la scena di questo orrore, s'aperse il palco, e uno via molto maggiore ne dimostrò: perché, in aprirsi, aperse l'inferno, e uscinne due schiere di furie, e diavoli spaventosi […].[7]
>
> [The cloud having closed and disappeared, the scene in an instant was entirely covered with rocks, holes, and caverns, full of fires and ardent flames. And it seemed that, twisting through the air, they were sending their smoke to Heaven. The stage, covered in the scene of this horror, opened up and revealed a much greater road, because, by opening, Hell opened, and two throngs of furies and frightful devils came out.]

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[6] See Saslow's description of the intermedi, in *The Medici Wedding of 1589*, 32. Christine was the granddaughter of Catherine de Médicis. See also Tim Carter, *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 19-20.

[7] Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato, e degl'intermedi,* 51-52.

The sudden appearance of a Hellmouth onstage may have shocked and terrified an audience, especially thanks to innovations in stage machinery. We needn't look further than Nicola Sabbatini's *Pratica di fabricar scene, e machine ne' teatri* (1638) to glimpse the extraordinary lengths to which early musical theater producers went to bring stage works to life.[8] There were no literal jaws of Hell in this production, but if the stage is already a mouth—a *bocca della scena*—into which an audience looks, that outer mouth suddenly ("in uno stante") cleaves apart to reveal inside it a gaping, earthen mouth that peers into the bowels of Hell. The Hellmouth vomits out numerous demons in horrifying garb [Figure 8]:

> Nella prima schiera due furie, con un abito tirato, e stretto, finte ignude, di carnagione arsiccia, e affumicata. Avevano le mani, e 'l volto imbrodolato di sangue, con poppacce vizze, sporche, lunghe, e cadenti, tra le quali era avviticchiata una serpe, che con diversi giri le circondava. I crini serpentelli, i quali spesso, e rabbiosamente scotevano, perché serpeggiavan lor su pel viso […]. Da man ritta aveano quattro brutti, e deformi Diavoli, con zampe acquiline, e simili le mani alle zampe. L'aliacce grandi, e vestiti d'un drappo di seta a scoglio di serpe, e le cose nere, e vellute. […E] in capo, con una zazzera affumicata, avevano due acute, e terribilissime corna. Allato a questi, due femmine, simili quasi alle dette Furie, ma vestite […] in istrana guisa, [… ed erano] orribili più che la morte. Altrettanti, [c'erano] e Diavoli, e Furie a rincontro, differenti, per la varietà de' colori degli abiti, e per la maschera, e per gli strumenti da tormentare […].[9]
>
> [In the first row two furies, with a pulled and tight costume made to look naked, with a dry and smoky complexion. Their hands and faces were drenched in blood with withered, dirty, long and sagging breasts between which a snake was coiled, which surrounded them in various circles. They often and angrily shook their snake hair so that it wriggled on their faces […]. On the right hand they had four ugly and deformed devils with hawklike paws, and hands similar to the paws. The

[8] Nicola Sabbattini, *Pratica di fabricar scene, e machine ne' teatri* (Ravenna: Stampatori Camerali, 1638). See especially Chapters 17, 22, and 23 in Book Two, respectively "Come si debbano aprire e serrare le aperture del palco," "Come si possa fare apparire un'inferno," and "Altro modo come si possa mostrare un inferno," 78-79, 84-85.

[9] Bastiano Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato, e degl'intermedi*, 52-53. The manifestations of these diabolical monsters resonate with their literary and artistic counterparts. Some manuscripts of the *Commedia* also contain traditional medieval illuminations of demons. See Robert Durling's commentary of the Malebranche in Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, ed. Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 327.

> large wings, and clothed in a silk drape in the shape of a serpent, and the things black and velvet. […] And on their heads, with a smoked mop, they had two sharp and terrible very terrible horns. Next to these were two females, almost similar to the said furies, but dressed […] in a strange way, […they were] more horrible than death. Likewise, there were many other devils and furies, different in the variety of their costumes' colors, their masks, and their torturing instruments.]

The demons then lament that the imminent Medici wedding will defeat them and save the souls of those loyal to the Medici. Hell closes as they finish their lamenting chorus, and the *intermedio* ends.

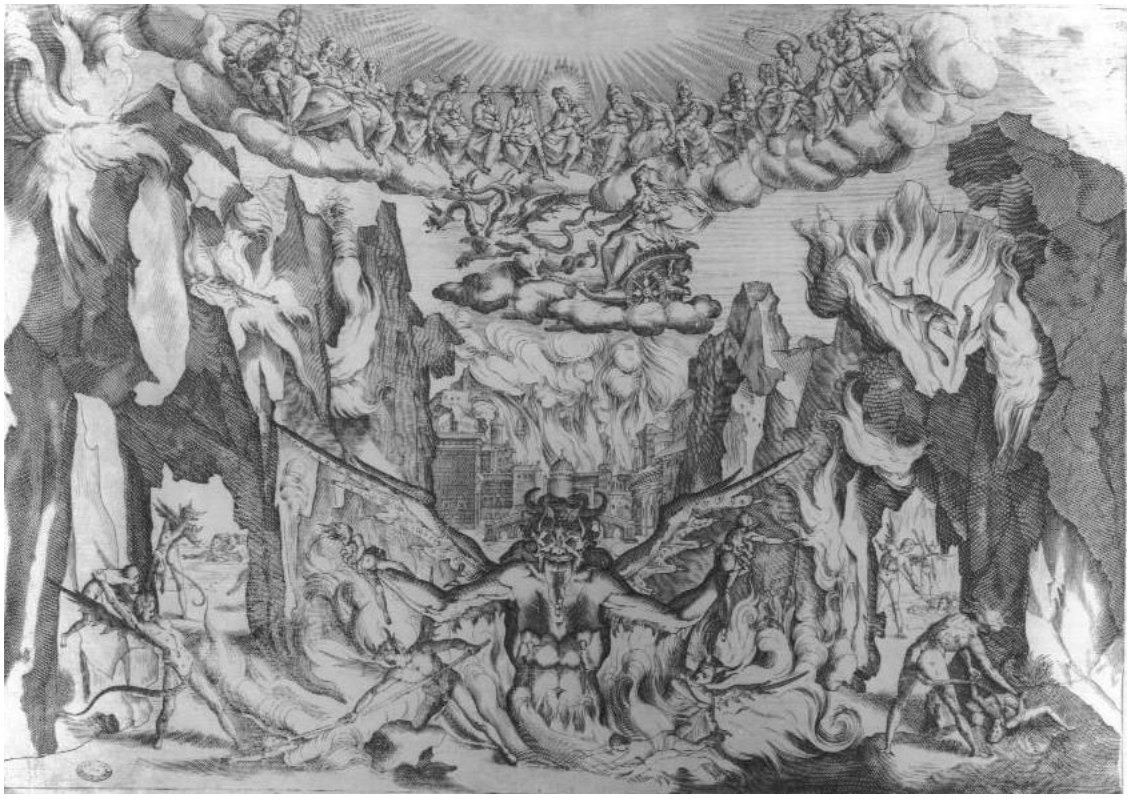

***Figure 8**: Epifanio Alfiano, Stage Design for the Fourth Intermedio of* La pellegrina *(1589)*

The ending leaves us with a sense of inconclusion, since we know that Hell isn't yet closed and Jove hasn't yet arrived. The *intermedio* leaves us with the knowledge that harmony, unity, and protection will only manifest when Jove blesses the imminent union of Heaven and Earth, or rather, Ferdinando and Christine. The sorceress's invocation of Jove positions her as an

integral figure on which the coming union hinges. She makes the audience aware of the problem that Hell faces and sets in motion the god's arrival.

In what follows I argue how the sorceress and her *intermedio* become the foundation for a deeper political discourse painting Ferdinando de' Medici as an ethereal, salvific Jove figure destined to pull Tuscany into a new and prosperous era.[10] I will occasionally reference the other five *intermedi* to support my claims. The 1589 *intermedi* were designed and produced by Count Giovanni de' Bardi, and were written and set to music by such figures as Giulio Caccini, Cristofano Malvezzi, Giovambattista Strozzi, and Jacopo Peri.[11] The themes of the six *intermedio* are as follows:

I. Music of the Spheres. Harmony descends from the heavens and sings. The Heavens open up to reveal heavenly spirits and planets creating celestial harmonies.

II. A musical contest ensues between the Muses and the Pierides. The muses defeat the Pierides with their superior harmonies.

[10] According to Lanfranco Caretti, sixteenth-century scholars frequently, mistakenly used the false derivation *Iupiter* (Jove) from *Iuvans pater* (God). See Caretti's note 42 in Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* (Turin: Einaudi, 2014), 112.

[11] Sixteenth-century Florence was a hub for the liberal arts. When Ferdinando became Grand Duke in 1587, he opened his court to eminent musicians, poets, literary scholars, and noblemen, creating a space rich with humanistic discussion and production. He strategically associated himself with prominent musicians and poets to further his social and political image in Tuscany and abroad. Over the course of his dukedom, Ferdinando hosted numerous important figures, including Claudio Monteverdi, Torquato Tasso, and Giambattista Marino, among many others. See, for instance, Tim Carter and Richard A. Goldthwaite, "3. The Musical World," in *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, 205-210, especially Section 2: "Music at the Medici court," 219-252; Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, 156-15; Warren Kirkendale, "The Myth of the 'Birth of Opera' in the Florentine Camerata Debunked by Emilio de'Cavalieri: A Commemorative Lecture," *The Opera Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (October 1, 2003), 633-634, https://doi.org/10.1093/oq/kbg090; and Nino Pirrotta and Nigel Fortune, "Temperaments and Tendencies in the Florentine Camerata," *The Musical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1954): 183.

III. At Delphi, Apollo descends to kill a python that has been terrorizing the country. He is successful, and his successes are celebrated in song and dance.

IV. A sorceress summons fiery demons to invoke Jove, who will foretell the New Golden Age. Hell opens to lament its inevitable closure.

V. Amphitrite and Triton appear from the waves to greet the newlyweds. Arion sings sweet harmonies with his harp. Pirates, jealous of his musical virtue, toss him into the sea. A dolphin saves him.

VI. The gods appear in the clouds to witness and participate in Jove's blessings. Jove unleashes golden rain onto the world as gods and mortals joyfully sing and dance.

Typically, plot elements of *intermedi* don't add up to anything that makes sense narratively. What counted most were opportunities for spectacle, shock, and awe. Producers were aware of which stories might provide the best opportunities for marvel and weren't afraid of sacrificing a certain amount of narrative sense across the entire lineup of *intermedi.* In this instance, the *intermedi* are thematically linked by the important message of harmony, union, and order introduced and maintained by divine influence. The third *intermedio* in particular supports the sorceress's *intermedio,* foreshadowing the arrival of some deity to rid the world of a great evil—an allusion to the coming of Jove to close the doors of Hell. In the subsequent intermedio, the sorceress sets this prophecy in motion, manifesting the third *intermedio*'s myth which will culminate in the final *intermedio*.

Act I of *La pellegrina* began after the first *intermedio*:

Act ————I————II————III————IV————V
Intermedio ——i————ii————iii————iv————v————vi

Set in Pisa, *La pellegrina* follows Drusilla, a French bride to a Pisan prince. He leaves her in France, thinking her dead by some accident. Drusilla disguises herself, travels to Pisa to find him, and becomes a sort of *dea ex machina*, bringing about political and social stability in her new home thanks to her piety and virginity. This parallels Christine's journey from France to Florence: a pilgrimage to find her husband and aid in constructing a new Tuscany, all the while breaking geographical boundaries by delineating the radius of Medici influence extending from Florence to France.

* * *

I read the sorceress as a hybrid character, embodying elements of Armida from Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* and of the multi-formed goddess Hecate, very similar to what we find in Vincenzo Cartari's *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi* (1556). The sorceress shares her sonically and physically seductive and alluring qualities with Armida while exhibiting Hecate's associations with witchcraft, magic, and the underworld. Like Armida, who enchants the Christian knights with her voice and words upon first meeting them, as soon as the sorceress appears in the fourth *intermedio* for *La pellegrina*, she sings an aria to enchant her hearer's—characters' and the audiences'—minds. She also contains clear embodiments of the *Venere vulgare* (vulgar or earthly Venus), like Armida, and the *Venere celeste* (celestial Venus) from the Neoplatonic tradition. Interpretations of the 1589 singing sorceress typically note her seductive qualities and label her as a typical example of a *maga* (sorceress) or *strega* (witch), or discuss the machinery behind her flying chariot.[12] Indeed, her strikingly beautiful physical appearance

[12] See, for example, Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589*, 32, 62, 84-85, 95, 104, and 127; Aby Warburg, "The Theatrical Costumes for the Intermedi of 1589. Bernardo Buontalenti's

immediately associated her with other sorceresses like Tasso's Armida, Ariosto's Alcina, and Homer's Sirens. These characterizations are hardly surprising as, according to Richard Wistreich, singing's good magic was most often associated with men—think Orpheus and his voice's role in the mission to rescue Eurydice—while female singing overwhelmingly enchants men to their deaths, whether metaphorically or literally.[13] Indeed, the literary trope of the sorceress, especially when she uses her voice, primarily portrays women who perform dark magic and who have nefarious agendas against heroes. The male counterpart is the sorcerer, generally divided into two categories: the good sorcerer—sometimes *mago*, or magus—and the evil necromancer. Again turning to Tasso, we find both figures, each the antithesis of the other. The necromancer Ismeno, born Christian but turned pagan, uses his incantations to summon and deal with demonic entities, while the good Mago d'Ascalona, a convert from paganism to Christianity, draws his magic from a deep knowledge of nature's inner workings with help from no demon or spirit.[14]

At first blush, given the traditional natures and expectations of sorcerers and sorceresses, Ferdinando's sorceress appears to align more with the evil archetype—she's a woman, she's a

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Designs and the Ledger of Emilio de' Cavalieri," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. David Britt, Texts & Documents (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 399 and 402; Nina Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court: The 1589 Interludes for* La Pellegrina, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 118-120; and A. M. Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539-1637*, Da Capo Press Music Reprint Series (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976), 84-86.

[13] Richard Wistreich, "'Inclosed in this tabernacle offFlesh': Body, Soul, and the Singing Voice," *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, no. 8 (2017): 3, https://doi.org/10.24379/RCM.00000124.

[14] See, on the Mago di Ascalona: David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 94-96 and Matteo Residori, "Il Mago d'Ascalona e gli spazi del romanzo nella «Liberata»," *Italianistica: Rivista di Letteratura Italiana* 24, no. 2/3 (1995): 453–71.

sorceress, and she invokes spirits and demons. I want to push beyond this negative view to highlight how the sorceress and her *intermedio* were crucial for realizing Ferdinando's desire to shape public opinion around a strong and unified Medici state. I argue that Ferdinando's producers used the trope of a diabolical sorceress as a template on which to rewrite her narrative, thus fashioning Ferdinando as a sort of orphic auteur who could appropriate mythic power to at once align it with the political power of the Medici court and use it to promote a sense of both protections against external threats and maintenance of order and stability at home. I show how they used the sorceress trope to rewrite the famously sinister and seductive enchantress Armida, who is bent on destroying the Christian body politic, as a positive force bent on unifying the Medicean body politic by catalyzing, in the *intermedi*, the holy union between Heaven (Jove/God) and Earth (Tuscany/Florence), paralleling the imminent union of Ferdinando and Christine. I will investigate the unique nature of the sorceress's *intermedio*, which communicates the political differently than other Florentine *intermedi* at the beginning of the operatic tradition. Concurrently, I will investigate the images and actions of the sorceress and the hellscape, both of which drive home Ferdinando's political agenda at the center of the theatrical event.

Ferdinando's Agenda: The Body Politic and the Missing Body

To achieve his goals in the theater, Ferdinando first had to manage his appearance by looking and playing the part of public statecraft with splendor. He worked to assimilate his rule to a sacred realm of authority beyond earthly confines, conceiving his power as divine rather than humanly manipulated.[15] Ferdinando and his staff, therefore, structured the wedding festivities—

[15] See Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 522-523; Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589,* 34; and Samuel Berner, "Florentine Society in the Late Sixteenth

including lavish parades, soccer matches, naval battles, comedies, and musical *intermedi*—around the concept of the *theatrum mundi*, with Ferdinando at its center. Giulio Camillo's famous treatise *L'idea del teatro* (1550) proves useful for understanding Ferdinando's agenda to define and control the body politic. Camillo's theater outlines a Neoplatonic spectacle of reality, from its basis in natural elements to the human concepts of art and philosophy. He saturated his theatrical construction of the world with divine numerology and hermetic mystery. His theatrical construction contains a central pyramid that Richard Bernheimer calls "unrelated [to] and in universal relation," that is, it symbolizes God.[16] Everything revolves around it, like in the Christian vision of a concentrically-circled Heaven. Camillo shifted the theological and philosophical interpretations of the theater to a dynastic one, placing Francis I, for whom Camillo's theater was constructed, in God's position. Camillo relied on the ideology that dynastic right is itself divinely ordained. This link between the metaphysical and the physical (God and king) created a fusion momentously consequential for theater's practical use. Camillo stresses at the outset of his treatise that we attain the divine, invisible realm by way of the visible: "[…] non potendo la lingua nostra giunger alla espression di quello [il mondo sopracceleste] se non (dirò così) per cenni e per similitudini, a fine per lo mezzo delle cose visibili sagliamo alle invisibili" [Our language cannot reach the expression of that [the supercelestial world] except (so to speak) through hints and similes, in order that by means of

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and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Studies in the Renaissance* 18 (1971): 204, https://doi.org/10.2307/2857083.

[16] On the Theatrum mundi, see Saslow, "Introduction," in *The Medici Wedding of 1589*, 1-20; David A. Katz, "*Theatrum Mundi*: Rhetoric, Romance, and Legitimation in *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*," *Studies in Philology* 115, no. 4 (2018): 722-723; and Richard Bernheimer, "Theatrum Mundi," *The Art Bulletin* 38, no. 4 (December 1956): 228, https://doi.org/10.2307/3047670.

visible things we may ascend to the invisible].[17] By theatrically placing the sovereign in a celestial position, a parallel appears between the real divine and the sovereign, especially when the sovereign is represented as and amongst enigmatic emblems and *imprese*, since "delle cose di Dio non si dee se non con enigmi far publicare parole" [regarding the things of God, one should speak only in riddles].[18]

We must remember that the Medici court had begun introducing a divine-right kingship theory previously absent in the Florentine court.[19] To complicate matters, the influence of Ficinian Neoplatonism saturated Florentine court entertainment, especially by the end of the sixteenth century. Giovanni Bardi worked with the Medici family to steep the 1589 wedding entertainments in arcane knowledge of the hermetic tradition. Bardi and Bernardo Buontalenti, the chief artisan and architect of the 1589 festivities, went to extraordinary lengths to saturate the *intermedi* with *imprese* and other recondite symbols that defined characters, objects, and ideologies on stage, frequently related to the arcane divine.[20] An *imprese* represents its author's

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[17] Giulio Camillo, *L'idea del teatro* (Florence: Appresso Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550), 8, https://archive.org/details/lideadeltheatrod00cami/page/n3/mode/2up.

[18] Camillo, *L'idea del teatro*, 8.

[19] Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court*, 42. These divine right theories were nothing new. As Thomas Greene notes, political writer Fra Tolomeo in 1280 underlined the divine influence of kingships. See Thomas M. Greene, "Magic and Festivity at the Renaissance Court: The 1987 Josephine Waters Bennett Lecture," *Renaissance Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (1987): 637, https://doi.org/10.2307/2862445. Nina Treadwell also notes Greene and Tolomeo in *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court*, 42. Even Dante, referencing the Holy Roman Emperor, stressed that "the authority of temporal Monarchy descends without mediation from the fountain of universal authority. And this fountain, one in its purity of source, flows into multifarious channels out of the abundance of its excellence." See Dante Alighieri, *The* De Monarchia *of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 205-206: Book III.16.8, https://heinonline-org.proxy.uchicago.edu/HOL/Page?handle=hein.beal/demonda0001&id=1&size=2&collection=cow&index=cow.

[20] For a comprehensive look at *imprese*, see Mario Praz, "Impresa," in *Enciclopedia italiana* (Rome: Istituto Treccani, 1929-1939), vol. 18, 938-940. See also the introductory essays in Cesare Trevisani, La impresa *(1569) e selezioni da* La impresa *(1567) e* Rime *(1571)*, ed.

ethos through a combination of visual and verbal elements meant to enlighten the viewer. According to Armando Maggi, they are meant to be shared with others, at which point the *impresa*'s message may be appreciated by a "universal audience." [21] Referencing Giovio's *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose*, he explains that the *imprese* may first astound and amaze viewers before prompting a prolonged exegesis of its meaning.[22] Most pertinently, perhaps is Torquato Tasso's intervention in his *Il conte overo de l'imprese* (1594). He explains that an *impresa* concerns primarily some future outcome or resolution that originates in the past and is brought about by the depictions in the representation.[23]

Bardi and his theater producers often placed these symbols out of the audience's sightline, as the symbols' presence and the creators' intentions alone could enact any talismanic properties.[24] For Greene, the presence of these talismanic *imprese* supports the Platonic ethos that undergirds the overarching structure of the intermedio series. Following Ficinian metaphysics, the representative function of the *imprese* creates affinities with real celestial bodies and actualizes what the *intermedi* are dramatically representing. Presumably, these highly involved symbolic gestures further linked Ferdinando with the divine, which the six *intermedi* continually call down from the heavens in the forms of personified Harmony and Virtue, celestial spirits, Apollo, and Jove. Each of these mythic stories works to further associate

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Armando Maggi et al., (Ravenna: Longo editore, 2019), 8-65; and A. Maggi, "Memoria ed immagini emblematiche nel 'Funerale fatto nel Duomo di Torino' di Luigi Giuglaris," *Studi Secenteschi* 39 (January 1, 1998): 111–24.

[21] See Armando Maggi, "Cesare Trevisani's non-*impresa*," in La impresa *(1569) e selezioni da* La impresa *(1567)…*, 60.

[22] Maggi, "Cesare Trevisani's non-*impresa*," 61. See Monsignor Giovio, *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (Lyons, Guglielmo Roviglio, 1559), 48.

[23] Maggi gives an extended explanation of Tasso's work on *imprese* in "Cesare Trevisani's non-*impresa*," 59-61. See Torquato Tasso, *Il conte overo de l'imprese*, in *Dialoghi*, vol. 2, ed. Giovanni Baffetti (Milan: Rizzoli, 1998), 1123-1124 and 1135.

[24] Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 368.

Ferdinando with both divine power and authority and to highlight his benevolent and fair nature. At the same time, these stories may very well have been selected for their spectacular value for viewers. The surplus of the spectacle itself worked to amaze and astound viewers with overwhelming multimedial excess and to exhibit Ferdinando's sheer spending power. If Ferdinando is associated with these divine, mythic entities, then he must also express his miraculous qualities in spectacular form. This in turn positions him as a subject rather than an object, both as mythic virtue or divinity and as divinely ordained sovereign.[25] Ironically, much of this court audience missed many of the deeply interwoven Neoplatonic and classical allusions, often mistaking spirits and gods for anything from demons to human beings.[26] Yet they would not have missed the general message of divine intervention associated with the Medici wedding.

Camillo stresses that humans must strive to climb (intellectual) hills to see visions of places farther aloft in the celestial and supercelestial realms.[27] Ferdinando's spectators, like the intellectual spectators in Camillo's theater, look up to the stage and witness Bardi's and Buontalenti's symbols and celestial bodies that descend from and remain in the "celestial" part of the visual stage space—in the air below the ceiling. Camillo pushes beyond Aristotle's desire to attain knowledge of the celestial sphere, urging his readers to witness and join the supercelestial (the divine): "non dobbiamo star contenti di fermarci ne' cieli, anzi col pensiero ci dobbiamo inalzare a quella altezza, donde sono discese le anime nostre […]" [we should not be content to stop at the heavens; rather, with our thoughts, we must rise to that height from which our souls

[25] See Martha Feldman's discussion of sovereigns and spectacle in light of Bataille in Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 280-283.

[26] See Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. David Britt, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 369.

[27] Camillo, *L'idea del teatro*, 11-12.

have descended].[28] Intellectuals became active spectators in the theater who strove to see, comprehend, and imitate the divine, which, in the 1589 *intermedi,* was the invisible Jove somewhere above the stage space.[29] By taking pleasure in and imitating the divine images and sounds, spectators enter into sympathetic relations with them, just as the staged images and sounds create sympathies with the real celestial bodies they represent. In his discussion of the Renaissance Magus, Gary Tomlinson explains that creating these sympathies enacts an "emanative hierarchy" that, once synced, would resonate as a complete harmonic body.[30] Throughout Tomlinson's discussion, he heavily relies on Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (1531) to comprehend the Renaissance view of magic. Agrippa says, in Book I.35, that

> inferiors through their superiors, come to the very Supreme of all. For so inferiors are successfully joined to their superiors, that there proceeds an influence from their head, the First Cause, as a certain string stretched out, to the lowermost things of all, of which string if one be touched, the whole doth presently shake, and such a touch doth sound to the other end, and at the motion of the inferior, the superior also is moved, to which the other doth answer, as strings in a lute well tuned.[31]

In their sympathetic gesture, the spectators strive towards and unify themselves with the highest, invisible body (Jove) and subjugate themselves to the resulting hierarchy.

Ferdinando's 1589 wedding festivities worked as a microcosm for the larger "theater world" of physical and social action: the theatrical parades, processions, sports matches, and

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[28] Camillo specifically references Aristotle and Cicero, both of whom desire only to reside in the celestial sphere to understand its workings. Camillo, *L'idea del teatro*, 12.

[29] Camillo, *L'idea del teatro*, 14.

[30] Gary Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 48-52.

[31] Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, Book 1, Chapter XXXVI, "How by Some Certain Natural, ad Artificial Preparations We May Attract Certain Celestial, and Vital Gifts," in *Three Books of Occult Philosophy. The Foundation Book of Western Occultism*, ed. Donald Tyson, (Woodbury: Llewellyn Publications, 2017), 110-111.

naval shows revolved around and culminated in the actual theater in the newly constructed Medici Theater in the Uffizi Palace. In other words, the theatrical metaphor for harmonious unity presented in language and symbols on the stage grew with state control over a larger social and political theater.[32] Here in the Uffizi Theater, this metaphor could come as close as possible to the illusion of perfect order and splendor, with Ferdinando at its center.

The illusion of perfection was particularly important in Renaissance theater and integral to Ferdinando's theatrical-political agenda. As Angelo Ingegneri explains in his 1598 treatise *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche*, theater must represent things "non come sogliono essere in effetto [ma quali dovrebbero] convenevolmente essere," or rather, as nature would have been, had it not been in some way impeded ("impedita") by the accidents of the "real world."[33] Ingegneri posits that all aspects of virtue and excellence should shine visibly in the prince's staged body, which should appear "il più bello, il più alto e 'l meglio formato di tutti" [the most beautiful, tallest, and best formed of them all].[34] According to Ingegneri and such contemporary theater treatises as Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio's *Discorso over lettera intorno al comporre delle commedie e delle tragedie* and his *Discorso over lettura intorno al comporre dei romanzi* (1554) and Leone de' Sommi's *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche* (ca. 1568), physical representation on stage was paramount to

[32] In his book *Monteverdi's Musical Theater*, scholar Tim Carter alludes to Ferdinando's political use of theater in a discussion of sixteenth-century precedents to early opera: Tim Carter, *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 19-20.

[33] Angelo Ingegneri, *Della poesia rappresentativa & del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche* (Ferrara: Stampatori Camerali, 1598), 68.

[34] Ingegneri, *Della poesia rappresentativa,* 68. Useful here is Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, Theory and History of Literature, v. 57 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), xii-xiii and 5.

theatrical and political efficacy.[35] The theatrical representation of a body reflected a corrected and perfected image of reality by placing in evidence a role's ideal characteristics and movements with complete precision. In conjunction with what Aristotle in his *Poetics* calls the character's "*hēdusmenos logos*," or language made sensuously attractive with rhythm and melody, an actor could use these perfections to better imprint specific passions and sentiments onto the audience's souls.[36] Aristotle later discusses inducing false inferences in spectators through these wonder-induced passions.[37] His *Rhetoric* states that visual marvels are compounded by aural ones: "The arousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions has nothing to do with the essential facts, but is merely a personal appeal to the man who is judging the case […]. [Persuasion] may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions."[38] Meeting these requirements for the late Renaissance stage could substantiate the

[35] For Sommi and Cinzio, see, respectively: Leone de' Sommi, *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*, ed. Ferruccio Marotti (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1968), 17-18, 35, 43-48; Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio, *Discorso over lettera intorno al comporre delle commedie e delle tragedie* (Milano: G. Daelli, 1864), vol. II, 57, 91; Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio, *Discorso over lettura intorno al comporre dei romanzi* (Milano: G. Daelli, 1864), 75-77, 181. See also Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, ed. D. A. Russell, vol. IV, V vols., Loeb Classical Library 124–127, 494 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001), Book IX.

[36] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics*, ed. John Baxter and Patrick Atherton, trans. George Whalley (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 67-69: 1449b, §17, 25. See Olivia Bloechl who, though her work focuses primarily on eighteenth-century French tragicomic operas, references this very issue: Olivia Bloechl, *Opera and the Political Imaginary in Old Regime France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), "Introduction," 1-21. See also John T. Kirby, "Aristotle on Metaphor," *The American Journal of Philology* 118, no. 4 (1997): 524.

[37] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 133-315: 1460a, §63, 15-20. The poet and actors can convince a reader or spectator that for some true action B, an action A must have happened, even if action A is actually false. For a list of the passions, which Aristotle defines as "movable," or able to be manipulated by outside forces, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, 956-957: 1105b-1106a, §5.

[38] Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, The Modern Library Classics (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 1325,1329-1330: 1354a, §1, 15 & 1356a, §2, 10-15.

theatrical event enough to function as the foundation for the remaining perceptions and recognitions. That is, the recognition, or transaction, between the actor–role and the spectator was perceived as real.[39] Giovambattista Strozzi, the poet for many of the 1589 *intermedi,* also concedes, in his posthumously published *Orazioni e altre prose* (1635), that even those (staged) things we know to be false can strategically make us feel and think certain ways: "Non è vero, che le cose false, e conosciute ancora per tale, non persuadano almeno qualche cosa. […G]enerano non solo diletto, ma dolore, e altro, e rapiscono talora l'animo nostro dovunque vogliono" [It is not true that false things, even when recognized as such, do not persuade at least something. They generate not only pleasures but also pain and other emotions, and sometimes they captivate our minds wherever they wish].[40] For the audience, what was represented onstage became perceptually, visually, and sonically real. For Ingegneri's prince–character, or in our case, Ferdinando de' Medici, his perfected theatrical body double would be a proxy for audience perception and, ideally, opinion of his nascent rule.

La pellegrina's musical *intermedi* opened and closed the weeks-long festivities and were the ultimate theatrical spectacles of the entire constellation of 1589 celebrations. Ferdinando, though, is never visually represented onstage in any way. Instead, the musical *intermedi* equate him with the absent god Jove, who will later come to unite Heaven and Earth with a shower of

[39] See Richard McKeon's note on the perception of the "real" in Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, 90 and 92. Useful for thinking through this concept in modern terms are Bruce A. McConachie, *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre*, Cognitive Studies in Literature and Performance (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 50-52; and See Susan Bennet, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 140.

[40] Giovambattista Strozzi, *Orazioni et altre prose del Signore Giovambattista di Lorenzo Strozzi* (Rome: Nella stampa di Lodovico Grignani, 1635), 129. Strozzi goes on to warn that the less educated especially should be sheltered from depictions of staged, false idols, lest they actually believe that these false gods exist.

blessings, a metaphor for the divinely sanctioned union between Ferdinando and Christine. The Medici capitalized on Ferdinando's mythical absence. Nina Treadwell outlines how, for the entire performance, Ferdinando's ducal box was moved further back in the hall, right in front of a hidden chamber from which music would issue forth during the production. This had the double function of improving his party's view of the stage and placing him out of sight and behind most spectators.[41] Treadwell argues that positioning Ferdinando out of sight associated him further with an invisible, omniscient, quasi-divine being. Like the symbolic images used on stage, Ferdinando was a hidden yet all-seeing power. He oversaw and exerted his authority over both the audience and the production. A concealed chamber behind Ferdinando's box functioned to amplify the miraculous effects of off-stage sounds. Ferdinando, already hidden from the audience and strategically placed in front of the chamber, thus became the *de facto* source of the mysterious sounds, as if he had produced them himself, compounding his (and by extension his family's) role as a god-like body.

In an unexpected turn, the production's musical and performative efficacy in promoting Ferdinando's power hinged on the body, voice, and actions of the disruptive sorceress, who also happened to come at the center of the play and *intermedio* series. Her body and, by extension, her voice would prove integral to constructing a narrative of Medicean power under Ferdinando's rule. Her constructed narrative paved the way for Ferdinando's ultimate association with Jove and for the eventual closing of Hell to those who resided in Ferdinando's and Christine's Tuscany.

[41] Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court*, 43.

Making and Unmaking with Sound and Speech

The sorceress from the fourth *intermedio* of *La pellegrina* is portrayed as a powerful and alluring figure who ultimately manages to shut out Hell's influence by unifying Jove/Heaven and Earth. Yet, like the enchantress Armida from Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata,* she uses her voice and alluring figure in a seductive manner to enrapture her viewers and listeners. Tasso's *Liberata* was highly regarded and widely read in courtly circles. The character Armida was well-known and widely popular in the literary and cultural landscape. Readers rightly saw her as a complex and intriguing figure combining beauty, power, and seduction in a single body. In the Renaissance, a sorceress was often depicted as a powerful, enchanting figure who wielded magic and supernatural powers. These characters were typically seen as both fascinating and dangerous, embodying the potential to disrupt the natural order and societal norms. Sorceresses were often portrayed as temptresses, using their charms and spells to manipulate and control others, frequently challenging—or rather creating the illusion of challenging—the boundaries between human and divine, as well as the natural and supernatural. In Tasso's *Liberata,* Armida is a quintessential sorceress. She is a beautiful and seductive enchantress sent by pagan forces to sow discord among Christian knights. Armida's magic and allure are central to her character; she uses her powers to enchant and capture the knights, particularly Rinaldo, whom she imprisons in her magical garden. This garden is a paradisiacal space filled with enchantments designed to ensnare the senses and will of those who enter it. Armida's sorcery is not just about casting spells; it involves psychological manipulation, seduction, and the creation of illusions that obscure reality and distract from the knights' holy mission. Her role as a sorceress in the *Liberata* serves multiple functions. On one level, she represents the dangers of earthly desires and temptations

that can lead the righteous astray. On another, her eventual transformation and redemption in the narrative reflect the possibility of conversion and the triumph of divine grace over sin.

In the context of the Medici wedding, the sorceress character likely draws on this rich tradition of the sorceress as both a seductive and transformative figure. By evoking Armida, the intermedio creators could tap into contemporary cultural understandings of the sorceress while also exploring themes of unity, transformation, and the reconciliation of opposites. The use of Armida as a model for the sorceress allows for a nuanced portrayal that resonates with the audience's familiarity with Tasso's work, while also allowing for reinterpretation and the infusion of new meaning within the context of the Medici's political and cultural ambitions. By reinterpreting Armida in the sorceress as a positive force promoting unity, Ferdinando could tap into this cultural resonance, using echoes of a familiar character to convey his message in a way that would resonate with his audience. Additionally, by reclaiming the character Armida from her negative portrayal in Tasso's work, Ferdinando could demonstrate his cultural authority and literary sophistication, elevating his cultural status and that of his court. Using an Armida figure in the fourth *intermedio* was a highly calculated move, designed to capitalize on cultural familiarity and convey a specific message about Ferdinando's brand of Medicean harmony.

Subtly rewriting the Armida figure through the sorceress, Ferdinando and his producers also managed to strike back at both Tasso and the Este court in Ferrara, with whom the Medici had for years waged what David Quint calls "a precedence war" rooted in an "arms vs. letters" campaign for cultural dominance. According to Quint, the Este based their precedence on their long-held feudal rule and military feats. In contrast, the Medici based theirs on their city's literary prominence, claiming that Florentine nobility didn't belong to lineage but to virtuous

deeds, including intellectual achievements.[42] The Medici apparently won this "precedence war" when crowned Grand Dukes of Tuscany in 1569, a victory that only intensified tensions between the two states. Ferdinando used the theater space to push back tactfully on this issue, at once claiming a position of cultural erudition and impressing his wedding audience, comprised of Europe's elites, with an extravagant show of wealth and power through the arts and technological prowess.

Ferdinando's wedding audience would have been familiar with Tasso's body politic from the *Liberata*. At the poem's outset, God elects the knight Goffredo as the head of the Christian army's body politic. He sends his right hand, the Archangel Gabriel, to deliver this message to Goffredo:

> Disse [Dio] al suo nunzio [Gabriele]: – Goffredo trova,
> e in mio nome di' lui: perché si cessa?
> perché la guerra omai non si rinova
> a liberar Gierusalemme oppressa?
> Chiami i duci a consiglio, e i tardi mova
> a l'alta impresa: ei capitan fia essa.
> Io qui l'eleggo; e 'l faran gli altri in terra,
> già suoi compagni, or suoi ministri in guerra. –[43]
>
> [Said God unto His messanger: 'Go find | Godfrey, and ask him in My name: What need | for more delay? Why is the fight declined | by which enslaved Jerusalem shall be freed? | Let him call his chiefs to council and remind | the truants of their task. For he shall lead: | I elect him here; on earth, through their election, | they, once peers, shall fight by his direction.'][44]

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[42] David Quint, "The Debate Between Arms and Letters in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*," in *The Italian Renaissance*, ed. Harold Bloom, Bloom's Period Studies (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004): 353-355. Tasso contributed to the "war" on behalf of Ferrara in his *Il Nifo ovvero del piacere,* where he insulted the low-born status of the Medici. In his *Il Forno,* Tasso declares that the Este have just as much right as the Medici—more, even—to the title of "serenissimo."

[43] Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* (Turin: Einaudi, 2014), 17: Canto I, oct. 12.

[44] All translation of Tasso's *Liberata* are, unless otherwise stated, taken from Torquato Tasso, *The Liberation of Jerusalem*, trans. Max Wickert (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

We can draw a parallel between Gabriel and the sorceress, both right hands to a divinity who initiate the construction of a body politic: Goffredo as head for the Christian knights, Ferdinando for Tuscany. In Tasso's ontology of the body politic, God is the head of the spiritual body politic—the agent—whereas Gabriel is his right hand—the position of action. He elects Goffredo head, or agent, of his army's body politic. Tasso explains more plainly in a letter to Scipione Gonzaga that the *Liberata* is like a "membra d'un corpo, del quale è capo Goffredo, Rinaldo destra; sicché in un certo modo si può anco unità d'agente, non che d'azione" [members of a body, of which Goffredo is the head and Rinaldo the right hand; thus, in a certain way, one can also speak of the unity of the agent, not just of the action].[45] Peter the Hermit urges the knights to attach themselves to it, exclaiming,

> Deh! fate un corpo sol de' membri amici,
> fate un capo che gli altri indirizzi e frene,
> date ad un sol lo scettro e la possanza,
> e sostegna di re vece e sembianza.[46]
>
> [Ah, let one body knit your limbs in awe! | Make one sole head lend them its light and force; | to one sole man sceptre and power bring: | grant him the place and image of a king.']

The Christian knights comply:

> L'approvàr gli altri [cavalieri]: esser sue parti denno
> deliberare e comandar altrui.
> Imponga a i vinti legge egli a suo senno,
> porti la guerra e quando vòle e a cui;
> gli altri, già pari, ubidienti al cenno
> siano or ministri de gl'imperii sui.
> Concluso ciò, fama ne vola, e grande
> per le lingue de gli uomini si spande.[47]

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[45] Torquato Tasso, *Lettere di Torquato Tasso*, ed. Gio. Rosini, vol. 3 (Pisa: Presso Niccolò Capurro, 1826), 40.

[46] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 22: Canto I, oct. 31, ll. 5-8.

[47] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 23: Canto I, oct. 34.

> [Displayed before his men he stands, and they | in him find high command meetly disposed. | Nodding to their salute and the display | of martial pomp, face quiet and composed, | pleased by the modest and affectionate way | that in a great field, the tremendous crew | muster next day before him in review.]

By relinquishing themselves as parts of the body, the knights cede agency to Goffredo as the head of the unified corpus. With this control, Goffredo can go forth and effectively overcome the pagan threat, liberate the Holy City, and maintain Christian peace.[48]

In the sorceress's *intermedio*, the sorceress is like the angel Gabriel, as she is the right hand of Jove (God). She is Jove's earthly intermediary, bridging the gap between the unseen divine and the material world. Thanks to her actions, Jove's agency can be enacted. Both the sorceress and Armida enchant, even if their intentions differ. Armida enchants with her words, capable of speaking falsities into existence that can seduce the Christian knights away from Goffredo. The sorceress enchants with her voice, singing her intentions into actions that unite the divine and material realms. They are two sides of the same *Venere*, one who lifts up (*celeste*), the other who drags down (*vulgare*). As an intermediary between the spiritual and earthly realms, the sorceress maintains a hold over both the divine and the infernal, and so retains a certain ambiguity as to which one she personifies until the actions of the *intermedio* series fully play out.

Both characters maximize their efficacy in unifying or dismembering their respective body politics through theatrical means. They must effectively convince their spectators of their respective narratives to complete either action. Their magical efficacy depends on how they manipulate their viewers' visual and auditory faculties, especially in the musico-theatrical case, where they persuade by enrapturing, dazzling, and confounding even strict verbal meaning. By

[48] Rinaldo, as the right hand, or "action" (*azione)* of the body politic, plays an integral role in facilitating Goffredo's victory. Armida eventually tears Rinaldo from the Christian army (body), but he escapes her enchantment and re-attaches himself to Goffredo. Armida, having failed to dismember the Christian army effectively, offers herself in servitude to Rinaldo.

examining Armida's and the sorceress's magic, we gain insights into how baroque theater worked and how it effectively convinced viewers of a given narrative.

In the *Liberata,* Tasso's enchanting figures deceive with their voices. When Armida first goes to the Christian camp, she enchants even the most awake mind into a deep slumber. She speaks falsities into apparent reality:

> […]
> e far con gli atti dolci e co 'l bel viso
> più che con l'arti lor Circe o Medea,
> e in voce di sirena a i suoi concenti
> addormentar le più svegliate menti.[49]
>
> [to gain by her fair looks and gestures sweet | more than Medea or Circe by their arts. | Out of her siren throat such music creeps | that the most watchful mind is lulled and sleeps.]

She enchants more effectively than either Circe or Medea, using her seductive qualities much as sirens do in the *Odyssey*. With her "concenti," or the sweet sonorities that she produces, she makes not the knights' bodies fall asleep but their minds. She uses her song to silence the knights' intellects, rendering them without reason. When Tasso associates the richly connotated word "concenti" with both Armida's and the Sirens' voices, he highlights the mysterious pull of her voice away from human reason. "Concenti" here denotes the sweet yet penetrating and reverberating tones whose undulations shake and displace each listener's fantasy. The term "concenti" also evokes harmonies, concerti, and many kinds of sounds. As a descriptor for Armida's voice, "concenti" highlights its mystery, which can only be described with a loaded term encompassing a vast array of musical sounds and productions. Wistreich explains that during the Renaissance, voice, especially when used in a musical way, was believed to have the potential to imprint itself in its listeners' minds and effect physical and psychological changes in

[49] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 125: Canto IV, oct. 86.

them depending on the intent of the voicer.[50] Armida seduces with her concenti and then, unlike the sirens that drown their victims, puts their reason to sleep. Her seductive and sonorous speech pulls her listeners into a state of extreme suggestibility.

Similarly, as soon as the sorceress appears in the fourth *intermedio* for *La pellegrina*, she sings an aria to ensnare the audience's faculties. Her song has a double objective: to ensnare the audience's attention with her voice and to enact her invocation of Jove. Her aria calls forth fiery celestial spirits that can call down Jove from supercelestial divine space. Enchanting with her voice, she sings:

> Io, che dal ciel cader farei la luna,
> A voi, ch'in alto sete,
> E tutt'il ciel vedet' e, voi commando,
> Ditene quando il sommo eterno Giove,
> Dal ciel in terra ogni sua gratia piove.[51]
>
> [I, who from heaven can bring down the moon, | to you, who are seated on high, | and who see all the heavens, I command you, | reveal when the great, eternal Jove | from heaven will rain down his grace to earth.]

Here, the sorceress claims that she can and will bring down the moon, addresses her desired interlocutors, and tells them how they can avoid her wrath. Simone Cavallino, who attended the 1589 production, relates a visceral reaction to the sorceress's scene:

> [la maga] cantava sola, e in tal guise che tutte l'orecchie eran' attente ad ascoltarla, e sparita quella [nuvola] ne comparse un'altra la quale era serrata e come fu nel mezo s'aprì e restò con tre parti tutti in musica e quel che rendea più stupide le

[50] Wistreich, "'Inclosed in the tabernacle of flesh' …," 16-18.

[51] Rossi reproduces the aria's text with minor variations: "Io che dal ciel cader farei la luna, | A voi, che in alto sete, | E tutto 'l ciel vedete, Eroi, commando, | Ditene quando senza 'nvidia alcuna | Il Cielo in terra ogni sua grazia aduna." See Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato*, p. 50. I use the text from the score: D. P. Walker, ed., *Les fêtes du mariage de Ferdinando de Médicis et de Christine de Lorraine, Florence 1589* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de le Recherche Scientifique, 1963), 156.

> genti, era che non si vedea come quella macchina potesse star nell'aria senza vedersi come era guidata, e cantato per un pezzo sparì […].[52]
>
> [[the sorceress] sang alone, and in such a way that all ears were attentive to listening to her, and once that [cloud] disappeared another one appeared which was closed, and when it was in the middle of the stage, it opened and revealed three sections, each filled with musicians. What amazed the audience most was that you couldn't see how that machine could stay in the air without seeing how it was driven. After singing for a while, the cloud and its musicians disappeared [...].]

Cavallino highlights the stupefying effects of the sorceress and the stage machinery. In Bastiano Rossi's official Medici commentary, he continually stresses that between the comedy and the various *intermedi*, no time was permitted to process any singular stage-marvel before it disappeared and was replaced by a new one. The rapid changes in scenery left little time to remember what had just come onto and left the stage. The disorienting nature of these rapid visual changes gave power to the scenes' sonic aspects over the spectators.[53] While the revolving scenes engender a certain instability, sound here is a stabilizing anchor. The eyes seek the sound's source and anchor themselves to it. Cavallino notes the audience's reaction to the sonic sphere, explaining that when the sorceress begins to perform, "tutte l'orecchie eran' attente ad ascoltarla" [all ears were attentive to hear her]. Tasso capitalized on the same concept when constructing Armida:

> Fra sì contrarie tempre, in ghiaccio e in foco,
> in riso e in pianto, e fra paure e spene,
> inforsa ogni suo stato, e di lor gioco
> l'ingannatrice donna a prender viene […].[54]

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[52] Simone Cavallino, *Raccolta di tutte le solennissime feste nel sponsalitio della serenissima gran duchessa di Toscana, fatte in Fiorenza il mese di maggio 1589* (Rome: Paolo Baldo stampatore camerale, 1589). See also Treadwell, "Music of the Gods…," 45.

[53] Useful is Nino Pirrotta, "The Orchestra and Stage in Renaissance *Intermedi* and Early Opera, in *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque: A Collection of Essays* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), 210-216.

[54] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 127: Canto IV, oct. 93, ll. 1-4.

> [In such a contrary humours, ice and fire, | laughter and tears, 'twixt fear and hope, she makes | all anxious where they stand and does not tire | of her false game…]

Armida knew that with these variations, she could induce a strong sense of uncertainty (*inforsa*) in the knights about their own states of being. The politics here are all about power. The sorceress ensnared the audience's faculties, and the grandiose machinery awed them and showed Ferdinando's wealth and power. The bedazzling and disorienting nature of the scene was a calculated move. It allowed Ferdinando's theater creators to force the audience into a state of mind where the sorceress's subsequent actions might be more persuasive and effective.

The aria's poetry, by Giovambattista Strozzi, balances strong declamatory moments with florid passages. The combination grants it an air of enchantment that projects the sorceress's entrance and appearance.[55] The poetry points to the commandingly enchanting nature of the sorceress's aria. The frequent vocatives imply dramatic pauses meant to clarify intent, highlight the direct address to self or others, and create silent spaces that hold the ears in anticipation of the continued declaration. The aria is freely declamatory, given its mixture of hendecasyllables with a single septenary. The mixed meters function differently than strictly metered arias, which composers typically set to music more syllabically. The brief switch in meter seems to function as a rhythmic shock that aurally hooks the addressees' attention—of both the celestial spirits and the audience—before shifting back to a more commanding and dignifying hendecasyllable.

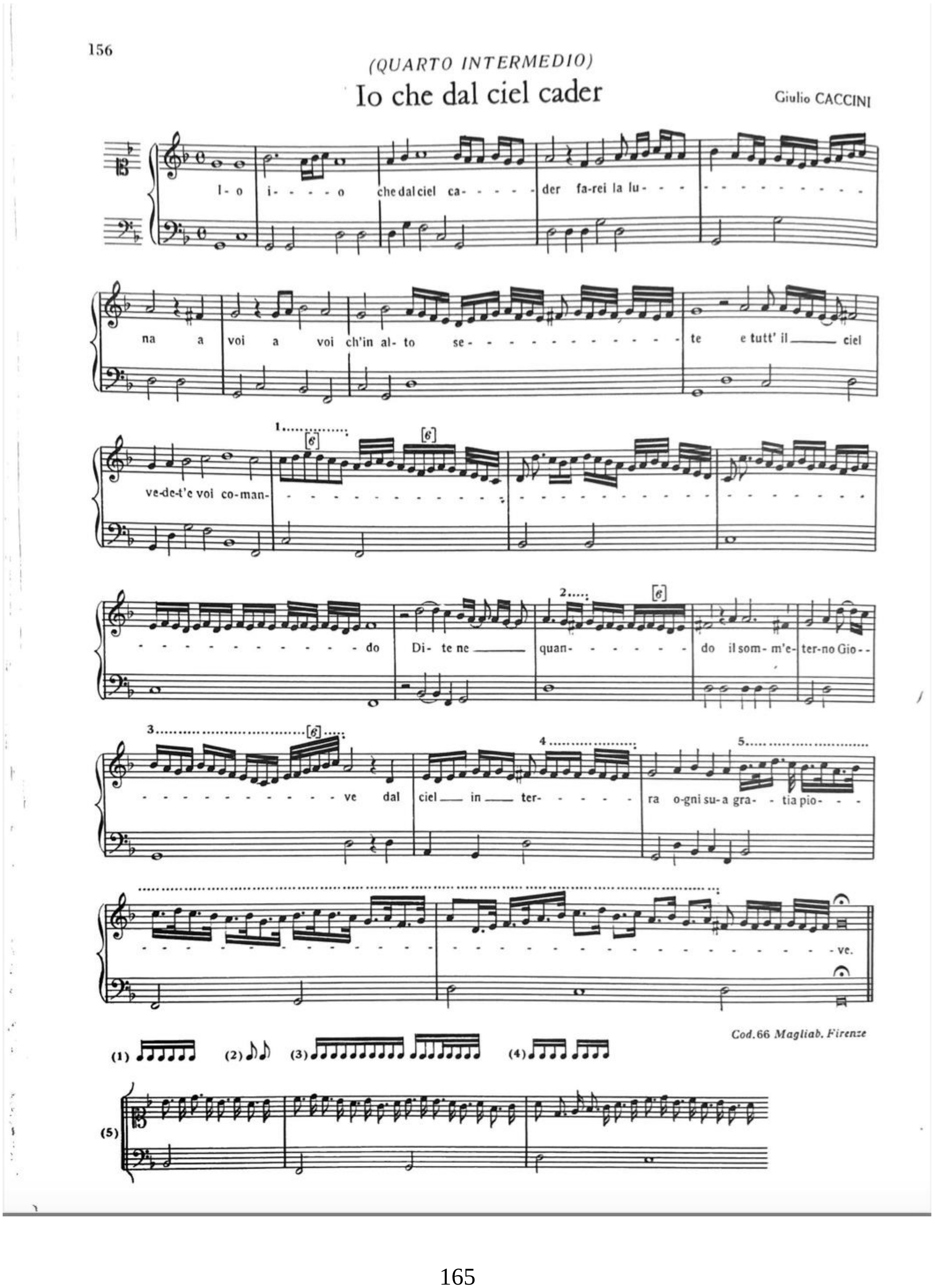
Caccini's music for the sorceress's aria accentuates the declamatory nature of the poetry [Figure 9], highlighting the sorceress's commanding sense of urgency as she threatens to bring down the moon lest Jove be summoned to consummate his divine union with Earth. Caccini accentuates the first "a voi" with a rising half-step—moving up a half tone—(from $F^{\#}$–G) and by

[55] Rossi reports that her song was accompanied by several instruments, "di lire grandi, e di bassi, di viole, d'arpe doppia, bassi di tromboni, e organi di legno."

following the quick quarter note on the word "a" with an arresting half-note block chord on "voi." The second "a voi" carries an authoritative urgency, climbing a minor third (G–B^{b}) with "a" rising anxiously on two eighth notes. Only this time the line does not rest but charges forward with a chain of single-syllable, block-chord half-notes on "voi ch'in alto," asserting the sorceress's invocation (mm. 7-8).[56] She finishes her line with a florid melismatic *passaggio*—a long string of notes sung on one syllable of text—on "sete." The ornamentation is sudden. Its delicate and florid nature stands in shocking contrast with her assertive rhetoric in the same bar. The pattern presents itself throughout the entire aria, mimicking the rapidly shifting marvels staged by the entire production.

[56] Caccini and other composers at the time learned much of how to do these things from the polyphonic madrigalists such as Wert, Marenzio, and Rore. Caccini's preface to the *Nuove musiche* tries to take credit for all of this, even if he knows it's not true. For a discussion of oral and musical monodic traditions, see Martha Feldman, "The Courtesan's Voice: Petrarchan Lovers, Pop Philosophy, and Oral Traditions," in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Bonnie Gordon and Martha Feldman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 105–23. See also the General Introduction and myriad musical examples in Gary Tomlinson, ed., *Italian Secular Song, 1606-1636* (New York: Garland Pub, 1986).

Figure 9*: Musical score of Giulio Caccini's*, "Io che dal ciel cader farei la luna" Forth Intermedio of *La pellegrina* (1589)



Each declamatory section uses a commanding speech-like pattern. The florid passages, by contrast, are magical incantations, not unlike Armida's *concenti,* which, in Renaissance Italian, was akin to sounding together or sonorous harmonies. Ornamented by Caccini, they exploit the attention gained from the declarations that precede them. In these moments, the sorceress weaves her spell. As Caccini was wont to do, the long *passaggi* fall exclusively on penultimate syllables, typically where in the poetic line, often on unimportant words such as "sete" (mm. 8-9) and "quando" (mm. 16-17). In *Le nuove musiche* (1601), Caccini says, as most dutifully did at the time, that, as a good rhetorician, language still comes first, then sound: music was firstly "favella, e 'l ritmo, e il suono per ultimo, e non per lo contrario, a volere che ella possa penetrare nell'altrui intelletto, e fare quei mirabili effetti, che ammirano gli Scrittori […]" [speech, and rhythm, and sound last of all, and not the other way around, so that it can penetrate the intellect of others and produce those marvelous effects that writers admire].[57] And indeed, he does this in the aria.[58] As if to further aid the listener, Caccini always concludes his florid passages with a rest. These rests emphasize the sorceress's intent by creating silent spaces to be filled (mm. 4, 6, 9, 15, 17, 19). The acoustics in the theater probably also warranted these pauses

[57] Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche di Giulio Caccini detto Romano* (Florence: Appresso i Marescotti, 1601), https://imslp.org/wiki/Le_nuove_musiche_(Caccini,_Giulio), 4. Page numbers here refer to the unnumbered pages of the text. In *Le nuove musiche,* Caccini speaks vehemently against excessively florid passages, especially when they obscure the meaning of the text. For him, text was perhaps the most important element of vocal music. Ficino and Bembo had already made clear that the universe was sonorous, which was still the thinking in the late sixteenth century.

[58] See also Olga Termini, "The Role of Diction and Gesture in Italian Baroque Opera," *Performance Practice Review* 6, no. 2 (1993): 146-147, https://doi.org/10.5642/perfpr.199306.02.07,. General practice in the late sixteenth century still called for textually driven music, especially during opera's nascent years, though as Termini points out, this would begin to shift in the seventeenth century.

so as not to muddy the perception of the sorceress's voice, which ultimately worked in favor of the intended vocal and literary effects.[59]

The three most important melismatic passages occur on "commando" (mm. 10-14), "Giove" (mm. 18-19), and "piove" (mm. 21-23). They mark the moments of incantation and further draw Ferdinando's courtly audience into the sorceress's sonic grasp. The ornamenting sextuplets—a rhythm involving playing six sixteenth notes within a single beat—, which only appear briefly in these melismas (mm. 11, 16, 19), add to the swirling sensations of the line. They mark moments of enchantment, while the rest of the florid passages maintain the sense of enchantment by extending the voice beyond the body like an arrow tipped with magical intention.[60] "Giove" is clearly important as the highest deity in the sorceress's pantheon, and he highlights the implications of her commands. "Piove," rain," as the final word in the aria, brings the incantation harmonically to a close, back to the starting note G, while musically painting the word with alternating dotted sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The longest melisma following "commando" ends with two beats of silence. The space is filled with the burden of the word, which encapsulates the intent of the entire aria: enchantment and command of the spirits' attention. The sound of the passage, spanning four whole measures, also fills the space. Three

[59] Scholar Roberto Ciancarelli suggests that baroque theater strategically managed movements and sounds of actors, props, and machines to demarcate the actor's space from the theater-space. This functioned to better grab the audience's attention. See Roberto Ciancarelli, *Sistemi teatrali nel Seicento: strategie di comici e dilettanti nel teatro italiano del XVII secolo*, (Rome: Bulzoni, 2008), 127-133. In these pages, Ciancarelli briefly discusses another play performed at the 1589 Medici wedding: *La pazzia di Isabella*, performed by the famed Isabella Andreini. It was performed at the end of the weeks-long festivities, and Bardi's *intermedi*, the same for *La pellegrina* at the start of the festivities, were reproduced for it.

[60] See Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, Short Circuits (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 14-16, where Dolar argues that voice is the vehicle for meaning, or something that points towards meaning but inevitably vanishes as a simple mediating element between speaker and hearer.

descending octave lines—a distance spanning two notes that share a letter but with different frequencies—paint the sorceress's demand that the spirits descend from the heavens to address her. This courtly circle of fiery spirits resides in the upper echelons of the heavenly spheres and comprises the noblest divine beings. They mirror Ferdinando's wedding audience of sovereigns, nobles, and diplomats, who also yield to the sorceress's command to submit to her—and Jove's—power.

To judge by his *Le nuove musiche*, Caccini intended to maintain the integrity of the aria's text in the melismatic passages, but the "commando" passage seems to go against his own intentions. The melisma is well over sixty notes long and spans four measures. While melismas would eventually become exponentially longer in the seventeenth century, even a modest one such as this has the potential to obscure the word it represents.[61] Before the melismatic passage begins, the sorceress only sings "com-," and the melisma begins on "-ma-," of "commando." Caccini introduces the word in a decomposed, incomplete form of syllables that temporarily undoes the text's speech.[62] The individual syllables drawn out in melismas do not function as words by themselves but as temporary fragments of linguistic sounds that can only form meaning together. Michel de Certeau suggests the natural human imperative to discover and decipher the meaning behind linguistic fragments of sounds.[63] Since syllabic sounds alone lack meaning, their continued utterance traps interpretation "and drives them to delirium."[64] Caccini's melismatic

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[61] See for example Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 15. Bianconi discusses madrigals by Sigismondo D'India in *Musiche a due voci* (1615) and the extreme lengths of the melismas.

[62] See Michel de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias," *Representations* 56 (October 1, 1996): 29–47, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928706, 41.

[63] Certeau, "Vocal Utopias," 31, 34.

[64] Certeau, "Vocal Utopias," 34. While Certeau's discussion concerns glossolalia, or non-language disguised as language, Caccini's melisma on "commando" does eventually complete the rhetorical puzzle when the melismatic line ends. See also Martha Feldman and Judith T.

line creates an asynchronicity between text and music.[65] It is like a signifier temporarily bereft of a sensible verbal sign. It dissolves the conventional linguistic referent of "commando," leaving the musical line to instead paint the word's intention.[66] The musical similarity to textual meaning draws the audience's attention into the musical line. Lawrence Kramer suggests that an extended emphasis on a long vocal line can create a temporary indifference and imperviousness to the text, even if the text is heard.[67] Attention instead shifts in favor of a sense of wonder and magic regarding the musical line itself.[68]

Artfully used, the sounding mouth enchants the ears and mind and can influence the hearer's sense of the world. Both the sorceress and Armida effectively express their theatricality through the musicality of their idioms, Armida with sonorous behavior and the sorceress with sung text. The asynchronicity between text and music in the sorceress's aria echoes Armida's variations in temperament:

> Stassi tal volta ella in disparte alquanto
> e 'l volto e gli atti suoi compone e finge

Zeitlin, "The Clamor of Voices," in *The Voice as Something More: Essays toward Materiality*, ed. Martha Feldman and Judith T. Zeitlin (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 10-11.

[65] On asynchronicity, see Calcagno, *Signifying Nothing*, 463 and 473. On the concept of "songfulness" and "overvocalization," or music's (song's) tendency to disintegrate textual meaning, see Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), especially Chapter 3: "Beyond Words and Music: An Essay on Songfulness," 63-64; and Kramer's *Music and Poetry, the Nineteenth Century and After*, California Studies in 19th Century Music 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 132. Kramer is writing in the context of nineteenth-century *Lieder*, but his reflections on voice, text, and meaning are considered broadly.

[66] See Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, 48-52, where he discusses music's imitative properties. See also Foucault's *The Order of Things*, inspirational for a discussion on signs: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 58-63: "III. Representation of the Sign."

[67] Kramer, *Musical Meaning*, 64.

[68] See for instance Susanne K. Langer, "Language," in *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art* (New York: The New American Library, 1959), 83-138, esp. 118-19, where she discusses "wordless cognition."

quasi dogliosa, e in fin su gli occhi il pianto
tragge sovente e poi dentro il respinge;
e con quest'arti a lagrimar intanto
seco mill'alme semplicette astringe,
e in foco di pietà strali d'amore
tempra, onde pèra a sì fort'arme il core.
Poi, sì come ella a quei pensier s'invole
e novella speranza in lei si deste,
vèr gli amanti il piè drizza e le parole,
e di gioia la fronte adorna e veste;
e lampeggiar fa, quasi un doppio sole,
il chiaro sguardo e 'l bel riso celeste
su le nebbie del duolo oscure e folte,
ch'avea lor prima intorno al petto accolte.
Ma mentre dolce parla e dolce ride,
e di doppia dolcezza inebria i sensi,
quasi dal petto lor l'alma divide,
non prima usata a quei diletti immensi. […][69]

[Sometimes a short way off from them she stands, | and gathers all her features and her frown | in one great mask of grief, while in her glance | wild woe wells upward, quickly forced back down; | tempering her darts of love in pity's flame. | Weapons thus hardened put all hearts to shame. |
Then, as if fleeing such thoughts, desperate | to rouse new hope within herself, she guides | back to her swains her steps and words, a great | joy painted on her face, while nothing hides | her eyes that, like a double sun, dilate | in one bright glance, one heavenly smile that glides | over those clouds of sorrow, dark and dense, | that she herself has raised to wound their sense. |
But as she sweetly speaks and sweetly smiles, | and makes their spirits drunk with double pleasure, | as if she tore their souls out, she beguiles | men never used to joys so out of measure.]

Tasso emphasizes the efficacy of her sounds in conjunction with her physical appearance. She strategically sobs or is silent, laughs and speaks, and leads with her speech as much as with her physical attributes ("vèr gli amanti il piè drizza e le parole"). The double pleasure ("doppia dolcezza") of words and laughter is what ultimately lulls her listeners into a state of complacency ("inebria i sensi, | quasi dal petto lor l'alma divide").[70] The sorceress's declamatory and florid

[69] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 126: Canto IV, octs. 90-92.

[70] See also Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, canto IV, oct. 32, which explains how desire travels through the mind.

passages and the sextuplet ornamentations serve the similar purpose of enrapturing her listeners. Tasso describes well the power of sounding words on those who hear them:

> […]
> Esce da vaghe labra aurea catena
> che l'alme a suo voler prende ed affrena.[71]
>
> [For from her lovely lips fall golden chains | with which she binds all hearers and constrains.]

He also explains the nefarious power of Armida's speech, alluding to a Hercules myth in which Hercules civilizes barbarians with eloquent speech imagined as golden chains issuing from his mouth into barbarian ears.[72] Like Armida, who speaks in "dolci e care note" to seduce her listeners, the sorceress's musicality also binds the audience's ears and minds with sweet sonorities.[73]

The sorceress's musical competence imbues her with the power to manipulate hearers' minds and temperaments and to control the gaps between celestial and infernal realms. Using Agrippa and Ficino, Tomlinson briefly argues that Renaissance enchanters could use musical competence and skill to both loosen the body–soul connection (like Armida, who "quasi dal petto lor l'alma divide") and invoke certain spirits to control.[74] The sorceress's aria works to

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[71] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 124: Canto IV, oct. 83, ll. 7-8.

[72] See Lanfranco Caratti in Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 124 n. 83.

[73] For "dolci e care note": Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 124: Canto IV, oct. 85, l. 1: "Rendé lor poscia, in dolci e care note, | grazie per l'alte grazie a lei concesse, | mostrando che sariano al mondo note | mai sempre, e sempre nel suo core impresse […]." Goffredo also frequently exhibits the power of his speech, using it to keep his army together. Tasso best describes the power of his sounding voice in Canto VIII, where Goffredo asks God to help him quell a rebellion. Goffredo receives divine inspiration and successfully calls his army to heel with a speech. Tasso describes his voice: "Tal si mostra a coloro e tal ragiona, | né come d'uom mortal la voce suona […]." See Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 259: Canto VIII, oct. 77, ll. 7-8.

[74] Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, 50, 64-65. Tomlinson primarily uses Agrippa. In this instance, he makes recourse to Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, 566-568, 605-606, where he discusses controlling spirits. Also useful is Ficino's letter "De musica" ("On Music"), to Antonio Canigiana. Tomlinson doesn't make recourse to it, but it is helpful for

achieve both goals. Within the *intermedio*, her incantation overcomes the celestial spirits and draws them down to her, initiating the Heaven-Earth connection. From the audience, her singing acts as a conduit that first catches their minds and then draws their ears and eyes to the heavenly chorus of singing celestial beings. She completes an action that is opposite to that of Armida, who in the *Liberata* reads incantations that draw her victims' ears and eyes to her before dragging their reason down to the animal level, literally transforming them into fish:

> Ella d'un parlar dolce e d'un riso
> Temprava altrui cibo mortale e rio.
> Or mentre ancor ciascuno a mensa assiso
> bene con lungo incendio un lungo oblio,
> sorse e disse: «Or qui rideo». E con un viso
> ritornò poi non sì tranquillo e pio.
> Con una man picciola verga scote,
> tien l'altra un libro, e legge in basse note.
> Legge la maga, ed io pensiero e voglia
> Sento mutar, mutar vita ed albergo.
> (Strana virtù!) novo pensier m'invoglia:
> salto ne l'acqua, e mi vi tuffo e immergo.
> Non so come ogni gamba entro s'accoglia,
> come l'un braccio e l'altro entri nel tergo,
> m'accorcio e stringo, e su la pelle cresce
> squamoso il cuoio; e d'uom son fatto pesce.[75]

> ['With lovely smiles and dulcet speeches she | sweetens a food else fatal and malign. | Then, while placed round her table, all made free | to quaff in long droughts long in oblivion's wine, | she rose and cried, "Now wait!" and presently | came back with a face less tranquil and benign. | A slim wand in her hand, she proceeds to raise a book with her left, and softly reads. |
> 'The sorceress reads. I feel my thought and will | change, change my life, my home, and all the rest. | New modes of thought (strange power!) seize me till | I leap into the waves, dive down, possessed. | Both legs (I know not how) draw in and fill, | then one arm, then the other one, my breast, | I stretch and shrink, scales over me, I swish | lithe fins; and of a man I'm mad a fish.]

understanding how sound affects the mind. Marsilio Ficino, "Letter 92: *De Musica* (On Music)," in *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. by members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, vol. 1, 7 vols. (London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 1975), 142-3.

[75] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 319-320: Canto 10, octs. 65-66.

Where Armida drags those who hear her to an animal state, Ferdinando's producers intended the sorceress's voice to raise the audience into a metaphorical intellectual connection with the superior divine.

Iconography and Theatrical Spaces

Theatrical spaces—visible and invisible—played important roles in manifesting Ferdinando's microcosm of the larger 'theater world' of physical and social action. On the stage, the fourth *intermedio* creates a second microcosm: it presents an ontological system with an invisible Jove out of sight above the stage's ceiling, in the supercelestial sphere; the celestial sphere in the upper (airy) portion of the visible stage, behind the clouds; the earthly realm on the ground; and Hell below the stage. The fourth *intermedio*'s sorceress belongs to none of these spaces, remaining in her chariot between Earth and the visible celestial sphere. She can ascend or descend into either and has some measure of control over both celestial and infernal spirits, given both her invocation aria, in which she states her power to control the moon and invoke the fiery spirits, and the eventual closure of Hell. Her power to mingle in and between the infernal, earthly, and celestial realms accentuates the initial uncertainty about her allegiance to good or evil. Given her recognizable status as a magical being, she will clearly interact with the celestial or infernal realm. Before she acts, there is no discernable hierarchical structure on stage. The audience must sit in suspense as they await her directions on how to intellectually proceed with their viewing. How she interacts with theatrical spaces directly impacts the audience's experience and interaction with the stage space.

Florentine audiences would have expected some sort of sorceress (*maga*) or witch (*strega*) figure to appear in at least one of the *intermedi*. She would typically fail in her wicked plans or raised the dead to make a prophesy. The Florentine *intermedi* drew heavily on

Hellenistic and Romance literature to portray these figures and depicted them either as seductive or hideous. They took the forms of classical goddesses, literary witches, or hordes of *streghe*. The *intermedi* in 1566, for a comedy presented to celebrate the day of Saint Stefano, showed a naked Venus, derived specifically from Apuleius's *Golden Ass,* descending to Earth from the heavens, and Ceres and Diana leading around a band of infanticidal witches; a 1569 *intermedio*, for a comedy celebrating the presence of the Archduke of Austria, depicted the witch Erichtho, taken from Lucan's *Pharsalia* and Dante's *Inferno IX;* and in 1585, the witch Fiesolana appeared.[76] In the past, these figures typically symbolized either an evil to overcome or a passing mythological or literary figure.

Because previous sorceress figures typically aligned with the infernal, audiences would have most likely expected immediate diabolical action from the 1589 sorceress.[77] Buontalenti's image shows the sorceress descending through the clouds in an ornate chariot drawn by two writhing, winged serpents. The sorceress's clothing, which Rossi describes in detail, evokes beauty, wealth, and power: golden chariot, bare feet, head high, beautiful face, green velvet dress, a long blue veil, hair spread over her shoulders, a whip in one hand, dragons harnessed in

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[76] *Descrizione dell'apparato della comedia et intermedii d'essa, recitata in Firenze il giorno di S. Stefano l'anno 1565 nella gran sala del palazzo di sua Ecc. Illust. nelle reali nozze dell'Illustriss. & Eccell. S. il S. Don Francesco Medici principe di Firenze, & di Siena, & della Regina Giovanna d'Austria sua consorte* (Florence: Appresso i Giunti, 1566), 10-14, 19-21; Giovanni Passignani, "Eritone maga," in *Descrittione dell'intermedii fatti nel felicissimo palazo del gran duca Cosimo, & del suo illustriss. figliuolo principe di Firenze, & di Siena: per honorar la illustris. presenza della Sereniss. Altezza dello eccellentissimo arciduca d'Austria, il primo giorno di maggio, l'anno MDLXIX* (Florence: Appresso Bartholomeo Sermartelli, 1569), n.p.; Bastiano Rossi, *Descrizione del magnificentiss. apparato. E de' maravigliosi intermedi fatti per la commedia rappresentata in Firenze nelle felicissime nozze degl'illustrissimi, ed eccellentissimi signori il Signor Don Cesare d'Este, e la Signora Donna Virginia Medici* (Florence: Appresso Giorgio Marescotti, 1585), 21-25. On the classical sources used in the 1589 Medici *intermedi*, see Robert C. Ketterer, "Classical Sources and Thematic Structure in the Florentine Intermedi of 1589," *Renaissance Studies* 13, no. 2 (1999): 192-222.

[77] See Passignani, "Eritone maga," in *Descrittione dell'intermedii fatti*, n.p.

the other, and a turban balanced on her head.[78] Green velvet confirms her association with wealth and power, as it was typically reserved for aristocrats and costumes for divinities and supernatural beings.[79] The image shares particular similarities with images of the sorceress Medea, who also flies in a golden, serpent-drawn chariot. Her billowing gown, relaxed posture, exposed feet, and free-flowing hair accentuate her persona as a potentially subversive character. The billowing dress possibly evoked, to use Aby Warburg's term, a "sprightly woman," one then perceived as quick to overextend her place in society due to unbridled liveliness.[80] Similarly, her free-flowing hair and bare feet may have suggested sexual lasciviousness, frequently associated with both witches and more mythic characters, including Medea, Venus, and Diana.[81] Her turban

[78] Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato,* 49.

[79] Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589,* 61-62.

[80] In a discussion of Florentine goldsmithing, Aby Warburg talks about stylizing female clothing. He explains that while, especially in fifteenth-century Florence, there was a draw towards antiquarian stylization in female figures, mythic female figure such as Medea, the Amazon, and Ariadne, who all wear billowing dresses. This image figured in the origins of the Florentine "nymph" in the Italian Renaissance. This "nymph" at once retained associations with Victory (Nike) as seen on Italian triumphal arches and translated, as clothing on a "real-life" woman, as a "woman in sprightly motion." See Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* 168. Warburg also points out that the convincing and terrifying nature of the papier-mâché dragon claws and heads came from the talented work of Valerio Cioli, who was famous then for his restorations of antique art (p. 498). For more on Brunelleschi's influence on Buontalenti and Bardi's intermedi, see Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori scritte da giorgio vasari [1550]*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1871), 193-199. For more on Cioli's influence, work, and association with Buontalenti, see Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua per le quali si dimostra come, e per chi le belle arti di pitture, scultura e architettura, lasciata la rozzezza delle maniere graca e gotica, si siano in questi secoli ridotte all'antica loro perfezione,* ed. F. Ranalli, vol. 3, 5 vols., (Florence: V. Batelli Compagni, 1846), 504-507.

[81] Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici*, 49-57. See also: Rebekah Compton, *Venus and the Arts of Love in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 42 (the eroticized nymph with hair spread on her shoulders), 121n.46, 176 (unkempt and free hair as a sign for venereal disease), 210-211 (sexualization of Venus's wet hair); Evelyn Welch, "Art on the Edge: Hair and Hands in Renaissance Italy," *Renaissance Studies* 23, no. 3 (2009), esp. 246-247.

recalls the Renaissance trend of depicting sybils and performing women as wearing turbans.[82] Amy Brosius discusses the connection between the depiction of female performers and the turban and the turban's association with arcane knowledge and supernatural influence.[83] The Medici frequently incorporated mythological scenes and characters into their theatrical productions, often associating themselves with authority beyond the earthly realm, reinforcing a sense of absolute power that could exist at the ideological level.[84]

Bardi and Buontalenti went to extravagant lengths to fill the *intermedio* series with myriad magnificent costumes and characters. There are very few actual mythological allusions

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[82] Amy Brosius, *"Il suon, lo sguardo, ll canto":* Virtuose *of the Roman* Conversazioni *in the Mid-Seventeenth Century,* PhD Diss. (New York University, Department of Music, 2009), 280-288. Early modern artists frequently depicted the Cumaean Sybil from Virgil's *Aeneid* with a turban, the most prominent example being Michelangelo's Cumaean Sybil on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. See also her article: Amy Brosius, "'*Il suon, lo sguardo, il canto*': The Function of Portraits of Mid-Seventeenth-Century Virtuose in Rome," *Italian Studies* 63, no. 1 (2008 Spring 2008): 17–39, https://doi.org/10.1179/007516308X270119.

[83] Amy Brosius*, "Il suon, lo sguardo, il canto,"* 286-287. Virgil's Sybil herself is a vehicle for performance. Her body and her voice become windows through which Apollo can perform his enigmatic prophesies. Virgil's Sybil, in Book VI.42-51, becomes a conduit for Apollo's voice and performs his message with an inhumanly booming voice and writhing body. All this while standing in a cave, a stage in its own right. In Virgil: "Excisum Euboicae latus rupis in antrum, | quo lati ducunt aditus centum, ostia centum; | unde runt totidem voces, responda Sibyllae. | Ventum erat ad limen, cum virgo. 'Poscere fata | tempus' ait; 'deus, ecce, deus!' Cui talia fanti | ante fores subito non voltus, non color unus, | non comptae mansere comae; sed pectus anhelum, | et rabie fera corda tument; maiorque videri, | nec mortale sonans, adflata est numime quando | iam propiore dei." See Virgil, *Opera P. Virgilii Maronis. Pauli Manutii Annotationes Brevissimæ in Margine Adscriptæ. Homeri Loca Magis Insignia, Quæ Virgilious Imitatus Est. Georgii Fabricii Chemnicensis Obseruationes Virgilianæ Lectionis* (London: Excudebat H. Middletonus, impensis I. H[arrison], 1580), 259-260: Book VI.42-51, https://www.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2240860417/pageLevelImage?imgSeq=1&imgSeq=1.

[84] See Nicholas Scott Baker, "For Reasons of State: Political Executions, Republicanism, and the Medici in Florence, 1480–1560," *Renaissance Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2009): 448-449, https://doi.org/10.1086/599867, and note 19 on 449, where he touches on the construction of the social imaginary with respect to the ruling class as bound with myths, legends, and ideologies. See also Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court,* 4-5, where she discusses the intermedi as a means to solidify the perception of the prince's power as mysterious and to transmit the concept of "prince-as-god" and "nascent absolutism"; and Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589,* 34.

outside of iconographic depictions. Bardi instead emphasized the many characters' praise of the new Duke and Duchess. Characters used their songs and lyrics to spout ducal praise instead of clearly identifying themselves, so Bardi and Buontalenti focused on the spectating eye to convey character meaning. They tasked themselves with devising clear visual symbols easily accessible to their erudite audience. Aby Warburg suggests, in his critical work on the costumes for the 1589 *intermedi,* that their enthusiasm for finding ancient attributes resulted in a confusion of "arbitrary and unnatural combinations" that may have taken spectators even farther from the intended mythical *concetti*.[85] Certainly, spectators did mistake some characters for others. For example, some mistook the fiery celestial spirits (Neoplatonic *daemons*) in the fourth *intermedio* for angels.[86] Yet small misunderstandings such as these hardly distorted intended meaning. Especially in *intermedi* one, four, and six, Bardi desired to immerse spectators in the Neoplatonic experience of glimpsing the divine; if the nature of each character had been completely transparent, viewers would have had no intellectual incentive to work towards greater understanding.

The 1589 sorceress embodies these character confusions not only for the ambiguous nature of her allegiance to good or evil but also for symbolic representation. Sixteenth-century mythological iconography was by no means cut and dry. According to Vincenzo Cartari's *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi,* multiple mythological and literary figures often depict single characters: "non si meraviglia di vedere gli dei degli antichi tanto intricati insieme, e che un medesimo dio mostri sovente diverse cose, e che diversi nomi significhino talora una medesima cosa" [it is not surprising to see the gods of the ancients so intertwined, with the same god often

[85] Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* 365.

[86] See Pavoni, *Diario descritto da Giuseppe Pavoni,* 18. Pavoni wrote a first-hand account of the 1589 wedding festivities.

representing different things, and different names sometimes signifying the same thing].[87] A single representation can show many different things, and different names can mean the same thing, as when Jove means at once fire and air, or Juno air yet also earth.[88] The 1589 sorceress figure is no different. Take, for instance, her dragon-drawn chariot. This particular chariot alludes to both the witch Medea and the goddess of grain and fertility Ceres, which further complicates the sorceress's ambiguous nature: at once possibly vindictive, callous, and evil; and fertile, generous, and nurturing.[89] Indeed, Ceres herself is multi-faced, able to be Terra personified and a Fury (*Erinne*) when her daughter Persephone is stolen, and is sometimes associated with Hera/Juno.[90] The sorceress also shares physical traits with Venus: her free-flowing hair, loose dress with no belt or tie, veils, and beauty.

> aveva [Venere] intorno, non altro, che un sottilissimo velo, il quale non copriva, ma solamente adombrava, quelle belle parti tanto soavi, le quali stando nascoste quasi sempre, e il soave vento leggiermente soffiando talhora lo alzava un poco gonfiandolo, perché si vedesse il bel fiore della giovinezza, talhora lo ristringeva, e accostava alle belle membra in modo, che quasi più non appariva. Il bel corpo tutto

[87] Vincenzo Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi, nelle quali si contengono gl'idoli, riti, ceremonie, e altre cose appartenenti alla religione de gli antichi* (Lione: Apresso Bartholomeo Honorati, 1581), 180.

[88] Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi*, 180.

[89] Cartari references Medea in relation to Diana and other goddesses. He uses two main sources: Seneca's *Medea*, in which Medea invokes Hecate's moon form, causing an eclipse; and from Apollonius's *Argonautica*, when Selene (Moon) exalts over Medea's pain and exile, angry at her for having in the past used her enchantments to draw her from the heavens. In Cartari, see Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi*, 101-102; for the *Argonautica* text, see Apollonius of Rhodes, *The Argonautica*, trans. R. C. Seaton (London: Heinemann, 1912), 299; for more on Medea, see Corey Hooper, "Medea," *Psychological Perspectives* 64, no. 2 (April 3, 2021): 211–21, https://doi.org/10.1080/00332925.2021.1959218 and Katerina Philippides, "The Incantation in Seneca's Medea and Its Dramatic Time," *Logeion*, no. 8 (2018): 155–70, both of whom discuss Medea's power over the moon; and Nancy Tuana, "Medea: With the Eyes of the Lost Goddess," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 68, no. 2 (1985): 253–72, where she equates Medea with Hecate and quotes Medea's powers in Ovid.

[90] Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi*, 191-192.

> era bianco: si che facilmente si poteva dire, che fosse sceso di cielo, e il sottile velo era ceruleo, che tale è il colore del mare, onde uscì prima questa Dea.[91]
>
> [[Venus] had nothing else around her than a very thin veil, which did not cover, but only overshadowed, those beautiful and sweet parts, which, being almost always hidden, and the gentle wind blowing lightly at times raised it a little, inflating it, so that the beautiful flower of youth was seen. Sometimes she narrowed it, and brought it close to the beautiful limbs in such a way that it almost no longer appeared. The beautiful body was all white, so that one could easily say that it had descended from the sky, and the thin veil was cerulean, which is the color of the sea, from which this Goddess first emerged.]

Venus was a charged symbol, representing the duplicitous nature of love: concupiscible and divine. As a Venus figure, the sorceress retains her ambiguous nature and her potential threat to or enlightenment of the audience that witnesses her.

In his chapter on Venus, Cartari explicitly mentions that "fanno ancora alcuni, tirando pure le favole alle cose naturali, che Venere, Giunone, la Luna, Proserpina, Diana, e alcune altre siano una dea sola" [Some still maintain, by drawing the myths to natural things, that Venus, Juno, the Moon, Proserpina, Diana, and a few others are all the same goddess].[92] These goddesses are all associated with the various faces of Hecate. Cartari outlines Hecate's iconography and basic mythology in his long chapter on Diana, where he links all the goddesses to Hecate.[93] The depiction of Hecate as a hybrid character reflects the Renaissance fascination with classical mythology and the blending of different cultural influences. The 1589 sorceress in *intermedio* four, like Hecate, can potentially show many faces depending on her actions. She controls the moon, can set in motion Hell's closure, and enchants with her voice.

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[91] In his chapter on Venus, Cartari periodically describes the different appearances of Venus. The differences in her iconography are negligible and often hinge on what she holds or what clothing she wears. See Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 450-451.

[92] Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei*, 444.

[93] Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 80-105.

Hecate is sometimes said to be the daughter of Jove. From him she has complete authority over all the elements and infinite power because she, as the embodiment of the moon itself, governs all elements below herself.[94] The moon, being the closest celestial sphere to Earth, strongly influenced the material world. So, as a Hecate figure, the sorceress would literally be the best personification of Jove's divine intermediary—his right hand—in the material realm. Hecate was also associated with Ceres. The ancients prayed to her in the same way and asked of her the same things as they did of Ceres. Likewise, she could transform into a horrible form should she be angered.[95] Referencing Hecate's so-called three faces, or personifications, Cartari avers that this is perhaps on a fiction given by Orfeo, who only wished to qualify her three possible beings: on Earth, typically Diana; in Hell, Persephone; and in the heavens, Luna (the moon).[96] On the moon specifically, Cartari quotes Prudentius's *Contra rationem Symmachi*, granting Hecate power over the heavens and Hell, at once benevolent and demonic.[97] Like the 1589 sorceress, Cartari and Prudentius mention that she occasionally holds a whip, a prop rarely seen in the hands of gods or goddesses, and thus a symbol of power and control.

Cartari glosses Hecate as both a trickster, called a demonic being bent on tricking mortals into believing in many gods, and a benevolent goddess who receives her light from Jove.[98] This simple duality best reflects the 1589 sorceress's potential allegiances in the fourth *intermedio*. Especially with the sorceress's physical appearance, we can view her as primarily manifesting

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[94] Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 89.
[95] Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 91.
[96] Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 91.
[97] Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 94. The longer passage in Prudentius's work goes further, calling Hecate identical to Proserpina, Diana, and the Furies. See Prudentius, "Contra Orationem Symmachi, Liber I," in *Prudentius*, trans. H. J. Thomson, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), 377-379.
[98] Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 94-5.

Venus, one of Hecate's faces which is itself a duality: the *Venere vulgare* (vulgar/earthly Venus) and the *Venere celeste* (celestial/divine Venus). In his chapter on Venus, he explains that

> Fu Venere secondo le favole la Dea della libidine, e della lascivia, come ch'ella mandasse nel cuore dei mortali i libidinosi desiderii, e gli appetiti lascivi, e che a questi non l'aiuto suo si desse il desiderato compimento. […Fu] anco una Venere celeste, dalla quale veniva quel puro, e sincero amore, che in tutto è alieno dal congiungimento dei corpi.[99]
>
> [According to the fables, Venus was the Goddess of lust and lasciviousness, as if she sent libidinous desires and lascivious appetites into the hearts of mortals, and these were not given the desired fulfillment by her help. [... She] was also a celestial Venus, from which came that pure and sincere love, which in everything is alien to the union of bodies.

The allusion to the two Venuses creates a clear connection between the 1589 sorceress and Armida, who respectively embody the *Venere celeste* and the *Venere vulgare.* One's purpose is to lift the soul to union with the divine; the other's is to drag it down to an animal state and divide it. The implications of their differences would not have been lost on Ferdinando's audience. The sorceress's actions post-entrance would define which Venus she represented. Of course, in the end, the sorceress embodies more the *Venere celeste,* though the reference to the *Venere vulgare* alone gives power to the more diabolical features that appear in the fourth *intermedio,* such as the Hellmouth and the demons that issue from it. Indeed, if Ferdinando wants to be theatrically imagined, through Jove, as wielding the divine strength to rule and protect Tuscany, he must first create the theatrical circumstances in which he can show his capacity to forestall potential threats.

[99] Cartari, *Le imagini dei dei*, 443, 452. Cartari certainly made recourse to Marsilio Ficino's love philosophy, especially where Ficino theorizes on the two Venuses. See Marsilio Ficino, *Sopra lo amore o ver' convito di Platone* (Florence: Per Néri Doreláta, 1544), 39-42: II.7; 102-115: V.8; 135-150: VI.5-8, https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-rbsc_marsilio-ficino_PA4279S8F51544-16012/page/n3/mode/2up?q=venere+vulgare.

The Venere vulgare *and the Hellscape*

Cartari calls Venus the Goddess of persuasion, "la dea del persuadere."[100] The *Venere vulgare* adeptly persuades—or enchants—her victims by exciting and seducing their imaginations with her beautiful body and words before she "devours" them, in a manner of speaking:

> dicono, che da Venere ella piglia l'appetito concupiscibile, che la move alla libidine, e ai lascivi desiderii […]. [Chi] va dietro sempre a lascivi piaceri, rimane spesso spogliato, e privo di ogni bene, perciocché perde le richezze, che sono dalle lascive donne divorate, debilita il corpo, e macchia l'anima di tale bruttura, che niente le resta più di bello.[101]
>
> [they say that from Venus she takes the concupiscible appetite, which moves her to lust and lascivious desires [...]. [He] who always pursues lascivious pleasures often remains stripped and deprived of all good, because he loses the riches which are devoured by lascivious women, debilitate the body, and stain the soul with such ugliness that nothing remains for it that is beautiful.]

In the *Liberata*, Tasso immediately introduces Armida as a seductress strikingly similar to the *Venere vulgare*:

> Argo non mai, non vide Cipro o Delo
> d'abito o di beltà forme sì care:
> d'auro ha la chioma, ed or dal bianco velo
> traluce involta, or discoperta appare.
> Così, qualor si rasserena il cielo,
> or da candida nube il sol traspare,
> or da la nube uscendo i raggi intorno
> più chiari spiega e ne raddoppia il giorno.
> Fa nove crespe l'aura al crin disciolto,
> che natura per sé rincrespa in onde;
> stassi l'avaro sguardo in sé raccolto,
> e i tesori d'amore e i suoi nacsonde.
> Dolce color di rose in quel bel volto
> fra l'avario si sparge e si confonde,
> ma ne la bocca, onde esce aura amorosa,
> sola rosseggia e semplice la rosa.
> Mostra il bel petto le sue nevi ignude,
> onde il foco d'Amor si nutre e desta.
> Parte appar de le mamme acerbe e crude,

[100] Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei*, 454.
[101] Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei*, 444, 448.

parte altrui ne ricopre invidia vesta:
invida, ma s'a gli occhi il varco chiude,
l'amoroso pensier già non arresta,
ché non ben pago di bellezza esterna
ne gli occulti secreti anco s'interna.
Come acqua o per cristallo intero
trapassa il raggio, e no 'l divide o parte,
per entro il chiuso manto osa il pensiero
sì penetrar ne la vietata parte.
Ivi si spazia, ivi contempla il vero
di tante meraviglie a parte a parte;
poscia al desio le narra e le descrive,
e ne fa le sue fiamme in lui più vive.[102]

[Never did Argos, Cyprus, Delos see | form of such fair deportment and address. | Like gold her hair one moment gleams, lovely | through her veils, then unveiled glitters from each tress. | So, when the sky is clearing, glad and free, | now through a radiant cloud the sun shines less, | now bursts that cloud and spreads its piercing ray | more brightly and redoubles all the day. |

The breeze new-curls some errant tresses' maze, | the rest by nature curl like waves of light. | But inward-gathered is her close-kept gaze | and hides love's treasures and her own from sight. | A tint of roses in her fair face plays, | sprinkled on ivory, mingling with the white; | but on her mouth, warm with love's breath, there glows | alone in simple ruddiness the rose. |

Her beauteous breast displays its naked snows | that feed love's flame that they themselves have brought. | Partly her budding unsucked bosom shows, | partly lies hid, in envious garments caught— | envious, yes—but though all paths they close | to sight, they cannot quite bar amorous thought, | that, not content with outward beauties, traces | an inward path to hidden, secret places. |

As through clean water or clear glass, whose state | parts not nor ruptures, rays dart from the sun, | so Mind will in her daring penetrate | the veiled, forbidden regions, and, these won, | roam through them freely, there to contemplate | the truth of countless marvels, one by one; | then tell its pictured story to Desire, | kindling in him an ever-livelier fire.]

Already in the first two lines, Tasso compares Armida's beauty to Venus, placing it beyond that of the goddess. Like Venus, Armida hides and reveals her body as will benefit her desires; she knows men's minds and can easily inflame their desires. Those unwary men who look at her won't resist losing their gazes in her beauty to contemplate the sensual "secrets," physical or

[102] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata,* 108-109: Canto IV, octs. 29-32.

otherwise, that she keeps hidden. Armida captures these gazes and heightens the sensual experience so that her victims will only further fall into her clutches.

Her visually-driven seductions are so dangerous precisely because she can manipulate and manifest them depending on the desires of her victims. Beyond seducing with her body, she creates theatrical spaces that work similarly to seduce her victims, not unlike the stage designs and stage machinery seen for Ferdinando's 1589 wedding celebrations. Armida uses art to construct space, putting art itself—a form of imitation or performance—under direct suspicion. Her art is mobile and unreliable:

> Di natura arte par, che per diletto
> l'imititrice sua scherzando imiti.[103]
>
> [All seems art made by Nature, everywhere | miming what mimes her but herself to please.]

She creates a seductive space—her garden—that never lacks sensory pleasure but that truly, like the *Venere vulgare*, devours whoever enters it. A particularly large and colorful parrot (*pappagallo*) sings there with human speech. It sings without understanding what it says, yet performs as if it did. Just as the art of Armida's garden imitates life, so the parrot imitates the human voice and, in so doing, emulates Plutarch's famous saying about a man who catches a nightengale: *vox es, et prœterea nihil.*[104] The levels of false reality continue to compound. The garden inundates its inhabitants with all these sensory elements from every direction and continuously works to overload its inhabitants' sensory limits.[105] When the parrot finishes, the

[103] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata,* 476: Canto XVI, oct. 10, ll. 3-4.

[104] The phrase is known most famously in our time thanks to Mladen Dolar, who used it as the title of his book on voice: *A Voice and Nothing More.*

[105] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata,* 478: Canto XVI, oct. 14-15.

other birds continue the song in a chorus, agreeing with and approving the song-speech. The birds' song is in essence an incantation.

Ironically, Ferdinando's producers actively strove to seduce the audience with miraculous stage marvels, though not for nefarious reasons. The visual and aural seduction was meant to break down the fourth wall and distort spatial distinctions to envelope the viewers in theatrical metaphors. Stage productions did not oppose breaking the fourth wall in order to turn the audience space into a space of theatrical imagination. These spatial distortions occurred commonly enough in the presence of Hellmouths and diabolical figures. In early German theaters, onstage demons sometimes directly announced to audiences that any disruptors would be thrown into the Hellmouth, even further queering spatial distinctions between the stage, the audience, and Hell.[106] Similarly in Florence, a 1567 *intermedio* for *Carnevale* celebrations provided a visceral viewing experience. At the beginning of the evening's performance, a giant, serpentine head appeared on stage with sharp teeth and fire shooting from its mouth, out of which also came demons celebrating the reentrance of sin into the world. According to theater commentator Alessandro Ceccherelli, this was a blatant warning for the audience: the theater producers knew that the audience would be tempted to mimic the sinful acts, thoughts, and sentiments that would appear in the comedy, so the Hellmouth stood as a preemptive reminder that humans often fall victim to seduction, and Hell will always be waiting for them with open jaws.[107] Hell was open and ready to capitalize on the reentrance of evils into the world; the

[106] See Hans Rudolf Velten, "Devils On and Off Stage: Shifting Effects of Fear and Laughter in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Urban Theatre," in *Dramatic Experience: The Poetics of Drama and the Early Modern Public Sphere(s)*, ed. Katja Gvozdeva, Tatiana Korneeva, and Kirill Ospovat, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004329768, 255.

[107] Alessandro Ceccherelli, *Descrizione di tutte le feste, e mascherate fatte in Firenze per il carnovale, questo anno, 1567: e insieme l'ordine del battesimo della primogenita dell'illust. &*

audience was at real risk. The Hellmouth that appeared in the fourth *intermedio* of 1589 closed for good, at least to all residing peacefully under Ferdinando's and Christine's rule. And yet its appearance still generated the same sort of visual seduction as described in Armida's garden, prompted primarily by the extravagant stage machines and design.

The fourth *intermedio*'s Hellmouth scene highlights Ferdinando's desired connection with the divine. Through Jove, it eventually shows Ferdinando's far-reaching power. Yet to attain that power, the sorceress must first invoke the celestial spirits and Jove. Agrippa notes that "evil spirits are overcome by us through the assistance of the good, especially when the petitioner is very pious and devout, and sings forth sacred words […] which conjurations, or adjurations, in as much as they are done by name and power of religion, and divine virtue, those evil spirits are afraid of."[108] The moment the sorceress invokes the heavenly spirits instead of the infernal ones, she marks herself as a potential agent of (Medici-driven) good. The celestial spirits, driven by her incantation and piety, set in motion the arrival of Jove and the infernal lament. As for Ferdinando himself, the scene proffers that as Grand Duke he can stave off not only human enemies but the infernal hoards.

The demons lament their inability to take more souls since Jove plans to rain his blessings down on the Medici wedding:

> Miseri abitator del cieco Averno,
> Giù nel dolente regno
> Null'altro scenderà, che 'nvidia, e sdegno:
> Sarà l'orror, sarà 'l tormento eterno.
> Duro carcere inferno,
> A te non più verrà la gente morta,
> Chiudi in eterno la tartarea porta.[109]

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eccell. S. principe di Firenze, e Siena, con gl'intermedii della commedia, et dell'apparato fatto per detto battesimo. (Florence: n.p., 1567), 18.

[108] Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, 566.

[109] Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato*, 52.

> [Miserable inhabitants of blind Averno, | down in the sorrowful kingdom | nothing else will descend except envy and disdain: | it will be horror, it will be eternal torment. | Hard hell prison, | no more dead will come to you, | close forever the hellish door.]

This new narrative also showcases Ferdinando's benevolence toward his people. It only subtly hints at his ultimate power to reopen Hell to the unvirtuous ("Null'altro scenderà, che 'nvidia, e sdegno"). Only the envious and disdainful might still slip through Hell's jaws. In his *Orazioni et altre prose*, Giovambattista Strozzi praises Ferdinando for this benevolence. He writes that princes should not follow Machiavelli's insistence on being feared, averring instead that princes should primarily try to be loved, and feared only when absolutely necessary:

> Il Politico Fiorentino in quel suo libro, che porta in fronte il nome di *Principe*, ma dentro a se opere di tiranno contiene, vuole che il principe più si faccia temere, che amare. […Io] concedo, e volentieri, che i principi siano simiglianti a Dio, e partecipi dell'interminata potenza divina: ma non concedo già, che per tal rispetto debbano principalmente procurar d'esser temuti: anzi si deduce il contrario; imperochè veggendo essi d'esser instrumento animato, che per universal benefizio è stato loto conceduto il governo de' popoli. […] Prendasi pure il timore per la paura, che si ha della pena, o per la riverenza, che si porta quella tremenda maestà.[110]
>
> [The Florentine Politician in his book, which bears the name of *Prince* on its cover, but contains within itself the works of a tyrant, wants the prince to be feared rather than loved. [...I] grant, and willingly, that the princes are similar to God, and participate in the infinite divine power: but I do not grant, that for this respect they must mainly try to be feared: indeed, the opposite is deduced; because, seeing that they are an animated instrument, the government of the people has been granted to them for universal benefit. […] Let us also take the fear for the fear we have of the punishment, or for the reverence that that terrible majesty brings.]

Strozzi's direct equation of Ferdinando with the divine aids Ferdinando's position as the divine "head" of Tuscany and echoes his metaphorical divine power as Jove in *intermedi*. By changing

[110] Strozzi, *Orazioni et altre prose*, 117, 123.

the Hellmouth scene from diabolical jubilation in 1567 to a lament in 1589, Strozzi and Bardi reinforced this message, painting Ferdinando as the shutter of Hell and the usher of good.[111]

The visceral and intense visuals of the Hellmouth scene sharply contrast the absence of Jove and the comparatively unstimulating vision of Heaven. This was an intentional choice that paralleled the functions of the two Venuses. The *Venere vulgare* embodies, quite literally, sensory exploitation. Conversely, the *Venere celeste* embodies intellect and divine aspiration. Associated with the *Venere vulgare*, the Hellmouth provided a direct visual reference to spiritual life in the absence of Jove. The celestial spirits, which only seconds before disappeared back into the clouds, only prophesied Jove's coming. As things stood when the Hellmouth appeared, Hell was still a viable threat, or at least a reminder of it, to everyone present. The Hellmouth provided a visually stimulating, ghastly depiction of the soul's journey post-death, forcing viewers to confront a terrifying spiritual reality.[112]

The staged Hellmouth extends the stage space beyond what spectators can see, distorting spatial reasoning for viewers. It becomes a geographical focal point for viewers and dominates the physical space and the imagination, inasmuch as it can't be fully seen. It threatens to devour the space itself, including the audience. It faces them and devours their gaze, not unlike Armida when Tasso first introduces her in his poem. The gaping hole simultaneously oozes filth, vomits smoke and flames, and allows demons to pass through freely. Because stages for early musical theater and opera used real fire in their hellscapes, smoke would physically assault the audience

[111] Speaking about Ferdinando's awesome power as a divinely appointed prince, Strozzi says that "[…] massimamente de' principi il governo del mondo, il dipendente il tutto da un solo, l'aver il braccio dell'onnipotenza divina, questa gran macchina dell'universo in tanti potentate divissa era udito da lui con sommo diletto." Strozzi, *Orazioni et altre prose*, 67. He later mentions Ferdinando's "sublime virtù" on 74.

[112] Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1995), 120.

from the stage. The theme of devouring further disarms spatial reasoning for the audience. As a pit, the creation itself is anthropomorphized, entombing and pressing down on its victims. As a consuming agent, it swallows and digests them. This Hellmouth even has a Satan who, as in Dante's *Inferno*, has many heads and mouths, each masticating a different soul.[113]

Amy Holzapfel, in her discussion of Renaissance anatomy, likens the Hellmouth to a corpse in a dissection theater.[114] Anatomists temporarily dug up corpses, bodies associated with the underworld and its deviancy, and theatrically presented them for spectators to dissect visually while the anatomist did so physically. The Hellmouth is a body, a character or *personaggio* on the stage. Whether a beastly mouth or a pit in the earth, it always leads to beneath the stage. It acts, opening and closing, devouring, spitting flame and smoke, and emitting sounds from within. Natalie Alvarez suggests the corpse is engrossed in its own action—for the corpse, rigor mortis; for the Hellmouth, consumption—and so will not return the gaze of the onlooker.[115] The spectator can thus gaze into it uninterrupted and undisturbed. The Hellmouth absorbs the gaze of the giving spectator, who mistakenly senses no participatory action from the Hellish image.

And yet the Hellmouth does participate, though insidiously. The act of not returning the gaze, of not responding, is itself a form of participation. It allows the spectator to willingly walk (gaze) into the scene and be absorbed by it. This absorption engenders an "identification-as-possession," or the spectator's subsequent attachment to and identification with the stage

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[113] Satan and other demons frequently have extra mouths on their stomachs, in which viewers could see devoured souls further tormented in the bowels of the beast before being defecated, reconstituted, and devoured again. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell*, 88-89.

[114] Amy Strahler Holzapfel, "The Body in Pieces: Contemporary Anatomy Theatres," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 30, no. 2 (2008): 4.

[115] Natalie Alvarez, "Bodies Unseen: The Early Modern Anatomical Theatre and the Danse Macabre of Theatrical 'Looking,'" *Janus Head* 12, no. 2 (2011): 35, 42-43, https://doi.org/10.5840/jh201112227.

image.[116] Singers and actors differ from the Hellmouth in having motion and more obviously by actively participating in the scene. Hellmouths, by contrast, are stationary. Sounds are emitted from them, but by the singers and instrumentalists inside them. They devour as actors enter them. The Hellmouth draws in spectators' eyes and forces them to turn inwards to examine their own souls.[117]

The Venere celeste *and the Vision of Jove*

This turning inwards is precisely the point. The lack of divine resolution at the end of the *intermedio* further stimulates the desire for Jove's intervention that the sorceress, the celestial spirits, and the lamenting demons all alluded to. The audience has nowhere else to look—or think towards—than the unseen divine. Bardi constructed an *intermedio* that forces the audience to contemplate the divine. The sorceress, as *Venere celeste*, sets in motion a series of events that slowly but surely draw the audience's minds towards the supercelestial sphere and the invisible, divine Jove. At the end of the *intermedio*, their eyes have nothing else to see, and having been left with the promise of divine intervention, Jove is the only thing left to contemplate. Because Jove is never physically represented on stage, the sorceress is the only physical, bodily presence that bridges Earth and the supercelestial sphere. If the sorceress is *Venere celeste* and Jove is a divine stand-in for Ferdinando, then by the end of the *intermedio* we recognize that the sorceress perhaps allows the audience a metaphorical glimpse of the divine.

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[116] Alvarez, "Bodies Unseen," 43.

[117] See Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell*, 120. Revulsion and affinity with the Hellmouth are confused, and spectators return their gazes to it and cannot divert their attention from it. Paradoxically, the very shock, horror, and disgust of the Hellmouth allow spectators into it. The surplus of the Hellmouth/corpse, its excess, manifests at the moment it is seen. The absorption of the spectator's gaze imbues it with life beyond what was there before.

Since Vincenzo Cartari holds that Venus is the same as many other goddesses, the sorceress simultaneously embodies Diana and the *Venere celeste*. Beginning in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and allegorized in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, the Renaissance Diana is a figure of secret, divine knowledge.[118] By the late sixteenth century, Renaissance thinkers had elevated visions of Diana to witnessing a divine scene—a fact that has important implications for the sorceress's *intermedio*.[119] John Reynolds, in his 1599 *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Plays*, suggests that

[118] And then later allegorized again in Giordano Bruno's *Gli eroici furori* (1585), though it's not certain that the audience would have been familiar with Bruno's Diana. For more on the allegorized Diana, see the following: Ovid, *Le metamorfosi*, ed. Rosella Corti, trans. Giovanna Faranda Villa (Milan: Rizzoli, 2010), 174-176: III.155-170; Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, trans. P. G. Walsh (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008),19-20: II.4; Giordano Bruno, *Gli eroici furori*, I.4, ed. Nicoletta Tirinnanzi, 1. ed, BUR L1280 (Milan: Biblioteca universale Rizzoli, 1999), I.iv, 157-160. By this point, Diana was for centuries already recognized as a representative of witchcraft and as a Neoplatonic symbol of divine knowledge. In 906 Diana was named the goddess of pagans in Regino of Piüm's famed *Canon Episcope*, a text which would become important for the Kramer and Istitoris's *Malleus maleficarum* centuries later. For the *Canon Episcope*, see Edward Peters and Alan Charles Kors, eds., *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 58-63; and Brian P. Levack, ed., *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 33-35. See also R. G. Peden, "The Statues in Apuleius 'Metamorphoses' 2.4," *Phoenix* 39, no. 4 (1985): 380-383, https://doi.org/10.2307/1088402; Timothy M. O'Sullivan, "Human and Asinine Postures in Apuleius' Golden Ass," *The Classical Journal* 112, no. 2 (2017), 196, https://doi.org/10.5184/classicalj.112.2.0196; and Leonard Barkan, "Diana and Actaeon: The Myth as Synthesis," *English Literary Renaissance* 10, no. 3 (September 1980), 318-324, and 344, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.1980.tb00720.x.

[119] Even Petrarch provides us with a long autobiographical poem (*Canzioniere* XXIII, *Nel dolce tempo della prima etade*) that climaxes and culminates with Actaeon's vision of Diana, his metamorphosis, and his death. He equates Actaeon's transformation with ecstatic and thwarted love, and a complication of identity, as witnessing the divine causes the loss of one identity and its replacement with a new one. Petrarch's themes return and are given heightened significance in Bruno's *Gli eroici furori* where, as Leonard Barken avers, divinity and nature are combined. Bruno defines Diana as the synthesis of divinity and the world. Diana is the shadow of the divine through which the spectator can see and merge with God: "Però a nessun pare possibile de vedere il sole, l'universale Apolline e luce absoluta per specie suprema ed eccellentissima; ma sì bene la sua ombra, la sua Diana, il mondo, l'universo, la natura che è nelle cose, la luce che è nell'opacità della materia, cioè quella in quanto splende nelle tenebre." The Renaissance iteration of the Actaeon myth emphasizes, especially in Bruno and through Petrarch, a divine, amorous furor akin to Orlando's madness. The sight of divine beauty translates to a divinely inspired *furore*, and the image of Diana once again becomes a mirror in which Actaeon reflects himself.

theatergoers catch a certain "frenzy" from the stage and begin to reflect what they have seen.[120] As in Diana's Actaeon myth, the audience might see themselves transformed to an elevated state, though, importantly, unified under Medici influence. The sorceress, like the Renaissance *Venere celeste*–Diana, might have been seen as a shadow of the divine or a materialized representation of the divine that draws influence from it. She invokes Jove in her *intermedio*, commanding the celestial spirits yet remaining under the rule of the divine god. If the stage becomes a mirror, then the courtly audience filled with Europe's elites might see itself in the court of celestial spirits under Jove.

Only during the sixth and final *intermedio* does Jove finally arrive to unite the realms, shutting out Hell and fulfilling the sorceress's prophesy. From the opening of the *intermedio*, Bardi blatantly highlight the harmony of the spheres theme, driving home the idea of a unified and ordered universe under Jove: "e 'l cominciamento fu una dolcissima melodia d'infinto numero di dolci, e vari strumenti, e forse mai simile non udita: e mentre, che quello angelico suono interteneva gli spettatori; ecco s'apre il cielo, per entro al quale nel più alto luogo si

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Yet unlike the Ovidian and Apuleian visions of descent into bestiality, Actaeon now ascends by merging with Diana, the personification of nature and the divine. He becomes his reflection, transforming into what he hunted from the beginning: the divine, nature (the stag). Bruno's ascension and transformation ultimately free him from human sensual impediments. His human thoughts, which sought the divine, find it inside of him. The self-devouring imagery as divine suffering evinces Actaeon's transcendence from his sensory prison (his body) and allows him to see and experience only the divine. See: Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Sabrina Stroppa, 1. ed, ET Classici 1581 (Turin: Einaudi, 2011), 41-44: Canzone XXIII, esp. vv. 141-169, 44; Barkan, "Diana and Actaeon: The Myth as Synthesis," 335-343; Bruno, *Gli eroici furori*, 300-308: II.2; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Under the Mantle of Love: The Mystical Eroticism of Marsilio Ficino and Giordano Bruno," in *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, ed. Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal, Aries Book Series, v. 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 201-202.

[120] John Reynolds and William Gager, *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes (1599)* (Middleborough: R. Schilders, 1599), 118, http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/thoverthrow-stage-playes-1599/docview/2138578623/se-2.

vedevano a concistoro gl'Iddei" [and the beginning was a very sweet melody of an infinite number of sweet and various instruments, and perhaps never heard before: and while that angelic sound entertained the spectators, behold, the heavens opened, through which in the highest place the gods were seen in court].[121] Now that Jove is on his way down from the supercelestial sphere, the heavenly spirits and gods begin to harmonize more sweetly than has ever been heard. There will not only be a harmonic union between the realms, but a physical one, as the heavens open up to reveal all the gods.

For the duration of the *intermedio,* celestial spirits and the pantheon of gods take turns singing Jove's praises and rejoicing in his union with Earth and the goods that will come of it. Soon,

> Cominciano gl'Iddei, scesi in terra, e via le nugole sparite, come baleno, preso per mano, e quelle Ninfe, e i pastori, tuttavia cantando, e loro insegnando, a ballar con essi […]. Anche quei di terra con esso loro ballando, cantando tutto il rimanente della canzone, aiutati da una Armonia, d'altri strumenti, e di voci, ch'uscia dall'aperto cielo, che pareva, che tutte le gerarchie degli Angeli si fosser fermate quivi a cantare […].[122]
>
> [The Gods begin, descending to the earth, and away the clouds disappear, like a flash, taken by the hand, and those Nymphs, and the shepherds, nevertheless singing, and teaching them, to dance with them [...]. Even those on earth danced with him, singing all the rest of the song, aided by a Harmony, by other instruments, and by voices, which came out of the open sky, which seemed as if all the hierarchies of the Angels had stopped here to sing […].]

The gods and spirits cross down to Earth and dance and sing in celebration with humans. Now that Jove is arriving and Hell is shut, humans have direct access to the divine. In other words, Jove's arrival signals the solidification of the metaphysically connected hierarchy and the unification of the body politic with Jove as its head. When he does arrive, he sits high in the

[121] Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato,* 60.
[122] Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato,* 64.

heavens, below the ceiling of the stage in the clouds, "in più eminente luogo di ciascun'altro, sopra un real seggio rilucente d'oro, e d'avorio, e di preziosissime gemme, sostenuto in vece di piedi da quattro statue d'oro con l'ali, figurate per la Vittoria" [in a more eminent place than any other, upon a royal throne shining with gold, ivort, and most precious gems, supported instead of feet by four golden statues with wings, shaped as Victory].[123] Sitting in the highest position and surrounded by gleaming gold and gems, Jove basks in the glory of his victorious union.

The sorceress's prophesy comes true in every sense: Jove has descended and joined Earth, and he even poured down literal golden rain to signal the beginning of the new Golden Age: "s'apre il cielo, e piobbe in grand'abbondatia pioggia d'oro che molti credendosi che veramente piovesse si mossero per volere andare a raccorne […]." [the sky opened, and a rain of gold fell in such abundance that many, believing that it was really raining, moved to want to go and collect it.].[124] The sorceress essentially presided over the nuptials between Jove and Earth, seeing as she invoked Jove and drew him down from the supercelestial sphere to partake in the union. As a hybrid character, she embodies Juno and Venus, both of whom, for Cartari, are goddesses of marriage.[125] Jove's golden rain upholds this hypothesis, evoking the myth of Danaë and Jupiter in which he came to her as a golden rain, showering and impregnating her, consummating their union. The golden rain in this *intermedio* is a symbolic consummation of Jove's union with Earth. More pertinently, it references the fertility of a Tuscany awaiting Ferdinando's rule and Christine's virginity and fertility before their wedding. The *intermedio* and the theatrical event end under the golden rain, like in the Danaë myth, as humans and gods dance with organized choreography and sing sweet harmonies together under (now-present) Jove's

[123] Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato,* 69.
[124] Cavallino, *Raccolta di tutte le solennissime feste,* 7
[125] Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi*, 459

rule. From both the stage and the audience, people shouted, “viva Ferdinando, viva Ferdinando, Gran Duca di Toscana” [Long live Ferdinando, long live Ferdinando, Grand Duke of Toscana].[126]

[126] Cavallino, *Raccolta di tutte le solennissime feste,* 7

Coda

Possession, Exorcism, Deception

"Fuori, Satana, fuori!'"[1]

[Be gone, Satan, be gone!]

This dissertation has explored the interplay between staged diabolical characters and their social, religious, and political implications for viewers. Examining the production and reception of these figures has shown how their imagery and sound engaged with the cultural anxieties of the period. Despite the pervasive Counter-Reformation rhetoric warning against unseen spiritual threats, these figures persisted in theater productions, challenging the emotions and intellectual faculties of theatergoers. Theater creators staged these figures to articulate fears of spiritual bondage and influence, implicitly contesting contemporary religious epistemologies in ways that turned the musical stage into a locus of social and political contestation.

Intervening in scholarly conversations about personhood and intellect in early modern performance, the project addresses the complex dynamics between belief, experience, and visual and sonic perception. It has highlighted how actors and spectators alike navigated the porous boundaries between their minds and the spectacles they engaged with, often resulting in profound transformations of their sense of reality. The diabolical emerged as a subversive force capable of influencing human behavior, using the powerful combination of visual and sonic stimuli to evoke emotional responses.

[1] Giacomo Puccini, Giuseppe Giacosa, and Luigi Illica, *Tosca,* ed. Mario Parenti (Milan: Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l., 1999), Act I, p. 23.

My examination of performativity in early modern Italian musical theater offers insights into how belief systems and cultural anxieties were negotiated on stage. My chapters underscore theater's role in shaping and reflecting societal attitudes towards the supernatural and the unseen, illustrating the enduring impact of these performances on the collective consciousness of their audiences. I have examined how belief embeds itself in physical experience and infiltrates the rational mind. My analyses have focused on the interplay between the demonic and spectacle, particularly within the sonic domain. By exploring musical theater and Renaissance demonological treatises, I have theorized diabolical stagings in two primary ways. First, by considering the demonic from a theological perspective, using Renaissance theories about the real demonic, I have framed the demon as an actor skilled in temptation. This perspective reveals how those deemed demons or occupying the roles of demons use theatrical methods to negatively affect their interlocutors spiritually. Second, I have investigated the theological and political impacts of portraying diabolical figures in musical theater by exploring opera libretti and musical intermedi. I have analyzed how auditory experiences shape senses of reality, influencing how people interact and learn. In all cases studied, staged demons emerge as disruptive figures of temptation and manipulation, significantly impinging on audience worldviews. These findings shed light on the intricate relationships between belief, experience, and perception, illustrating the powerful influence of diabolical representations on the human mind.

As this project develops, I will continue to examine diabolical theatrics in instances of possession and the Catholic rite of exorcism. Hilaire Kallendorf's *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* is especially inspirational, as she lays out what she calls the major "theologemes"—or units of constitutive myths narrated in a

structure dealing with religious content—for literary exorcisms and analyzes them using several early-modern plays containing exorcisms.[2] Similarly, Biran Levack discusses the cultural performativity of possession and exorcism in his *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West.*[3] Yet much remains to be explored regarding the theatrics of possession and exorcism through a sonic lens, whether examining actual cases of possession and exorcism or theatrical renditions, especially on the musical stage. In this short Coda, I examine the very little-known opera *Il demone amante, overo Giugurta* (1685) as an example of how and where this project can further develop.

The story was written by Venetian librettist Matteo Noris (ca.1640-1714). The music, composed by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo (1653-1723), is unfortunately lost. The novelty of this opera lies not so much in its plot but in its blatant use of religious themes, imagery, and actions, including characters who dress as a demon or a god to seduce young women, use explicitly lascivious language to describe demons, and most surprisingly, participate in a hasty, botched exorcism. The exorcism is particularly noteworthy as it seems that no other extant early modern operatic work attempted to portray an exorcism. Even though Noris set the opera in the second century BCE, its overt Christian allusions prompted governmental censors—specifically Venice's *Esecutori contro la Bestemmia*, a magistracy within the judicial system of the Republic of Venice policing public and private religious and moral crimes—to swiftly intercede and demand, in the same season, revisions that would excise from the libretto the priest, exorcism, and any lascivious depictions of the demon. Interestingly, both the original uncensored version—

[2] Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), xxi and 9.

[3] Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 81-112.

Il demone amante, over Giugurta—and the censored version—*Il Giugurta* (1685) were published, which was in itself unusual.[4]

The censorship underscored the Church's anxieties over staged representations of these themes, presumably especially the rite of exorcism, a sacramental delivered through the direct intercession of the Church in a demoniac's life. Exorcism, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was itself a highly theatrical event, though in a hyper-controlled fashion and environment.[5] In Noris's case, when he integrated the ritual of exorcism into the opera's narrative, he unwittingly created a hybrid structure that Kallendorf calls a ritualized narrative, or a narrative whose structure becomes sacralized from its content.[6] That Noris portrayed the exorcism in such a farcical way could not be overlooked by the *Esecutori* for two reasons: 1) he portrayed the ritual in terms destined to mock it in a publicly theatrical setting, ones that might undermine the Church's narrative of its own spiritual power and importance, and 2) by sacralizing the narrative, Noris would have produced a real-life yet unsanctioned, uncontrolled sacred ritual in a secular theatrical space.

The intercession of the *Esecutori contro la Bestemmia* resulted in a rapidly produced revision of the opera and would have certainly been followed by a public proclamation of Noris's transgression. The *Esecutori* frequently—sometimes weekly—had proclamations nailed around Venice that listed recently committed sins and their potential punishments. Among the

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[4] Compare Matteo Noris, *Il demone amante, ouero Giugurta. Drama per musica da rappresentarsi nel teatro di Sant'Angelo, l'anno 1686.* (Venice: Per Francesco Nicolini, 1686) and Matteo Noris, *Il Giugurta. Drama per musica da rappresentarsi nel teatro di Sant'Angelo, l'anno 1686.* (Venice, Italy: Per Francesco Nicolini, 1686).

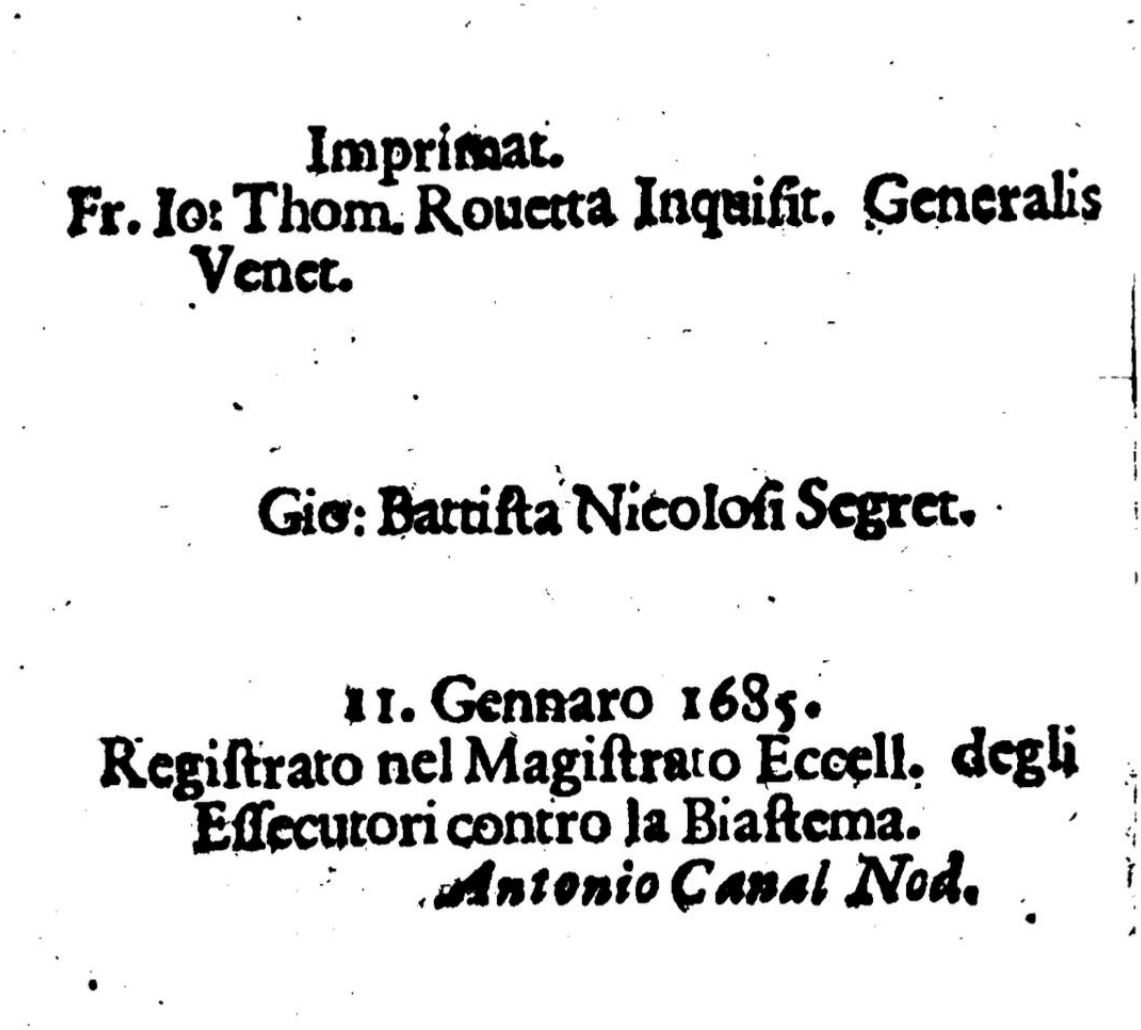
[5] See Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 2-3. Here, De Certeau briefly discusses how the diabolical, especially possession and consequently exorcism, became a form of public trial and theater in the seventeenth century. See also Levack, *The Devil Within*, 83.

[6] Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts*, 8.

dozens of proclamations that I read through in the *Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia*, nearly all of them listed some variation of "Mutilazione di lingua" [mutilation of the tongue] as a potentially just punishment for sinners, even for simple transgressions.[7] While physical threats of this nature were unlikely to have actually been carried out, the trend seems to localize the tongue as a potential source of unbridled delectation. By mutilating it—literally, or metaphorically through censure—the tongue itself might learn a lesson or at least be weakened enough to stifle inner desires from easily escaping through it in the future. Although I have not yet been able to find the proclamation listing Noris's censure, we know that it certainly occurred thanks to the stamp of approval from the *Esecutori* found at the end of Noris's revised libretto [Figure 10].

In what follows, I provide a brief, critical summary of Noris's opera in which I probe the salient instances of its censorship. This serves two purposes. Firstly, it allows me to conclude this dissertation by illuminating the stakes of theatrically depicting diabolical figures as seen within

[7] See, for example, Esecutori contro la bestemmia, "Proclama Publicato d'Ordine dell'Illustrissimi, e Eccellentissimi Signori Essecutori contro la Bestemia. In materia di biastema, oscenità, parole indecenti, improprie, e scandolose, e dovuta riverenza alle chiese, e lochi sacri," (Stampato per Antonino Pinelli, Stampator Ducale, December 23, 1686), housed in the Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, Shelfmark MISC. C 001 022.


Imprimat.
Fr. Io: Thom. Rouetta Inquiſit. Generalis Venet.

Gio: Battiſta Nicoloſi Segret.

11. Gennaro 1685.
Regiſtrato nel Magiſtrato Eccell. degli Eſſecutori contro la Biaſtema.
Antonio Canal Nod.

Figure 40: *Notice of approval from the* Esecutori contro la bestemmia *at the end of Matteo Noris's revised libretto* Il Giugurta

the plot of a seventeenth-century opera. Noris's original libretto exposes the potency of belief, especially coupled with deception while also critiquing the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable portrayals of the supernatural in theatrical spaces, thus revealing the societal and ecclesiastical anxieties of the period. Secondly, it points toward ways to develop this dissertation in subsequent work.

Noris's *Il demone amante, overo Giugurta,* constructs a complex narrative with a comedic tone, which, according to Kallendorf, was common in early-modern plays with

exorcisms—even in *King Lear*.[8] The opera is set in the second century BCE, which is fitting given that the names and complex situations are typical of Renaissance comedy based on ancient comedies. Noris fills the opera with myriad recognitions and, more often than not, misrecognitions, which play into the work's comedic tone and lead to an eventual moral appeal by the end of the work. The plot follows the courtier Aderbale, who conspires with the servant Lesbia to delude King Giugurta's daughters, Efigenia and Lutetia, into falling in love with him. On two separate occasions, Aderbale costumes himself as Pluto, King of Hell—referred to as "il Demone" throughout the opera save for a few occasions—and as Jove, supreme god, in order to seduce the princesses. He later convinces another courtier, Erenio, to dress as a demon servant to Pluto in exchange for one of the princesses as a prize. Efigenia falls madly in love with Pluto, and Lutetia becomes enamored with Jove, resulting in a complicated situation in which the princesses deny their father's wish that they marry two Roman dukes, Albino and Metello.

After her first encounter with the King of Hell, Efigenia tells her father, Giugurta, of her new betrothal and her refusal of Albino. Giugurta, shocked, becomes disturbed by Efigenia's actions as he tries to argue with her. He, as well as the Roman dukes, witness her erratic love-sickness and conclude that she must be demon-possessed. Shortly thereafter, Aderbale visits Lutetia in the guise of Jove and quickly finds her favor. Lutetia, already devout, becomes hyper-religious, her piety and religious zeal reaching new levels. She similarly refuses her Roman duke, Metello, professing her love for the supreme god.

Later, Giugurta surprises Efigenia with a priest from the local temple who attempts to exorcise a demon from her. In a comical turn of events, Efigenia reacts poorly to this ambush and attacks the priest, driving *him* out. Giugurta, in a fit of desperation, throws down his crown

[8] Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts*, 131-140.

and dresses as a humble shepherd, now fully intent on living out his days free of the chaos into which his life has recently fallen. Giugurta leaves the castle and enters the woods.

A short time later, Aderbale and Lesbia decide to convince Efigenia and Lutetia to go to a secret spot in the woods where they can marry Pluto and Jove. Aderbale dresses as Jove and leads Lutetia to the woods. Meanwhile, Erenio dresses as Pluto's demon servant and tells Efigenia that he will take her to Pluto, also in the woods. As luck would have it, Giugurta, dressed as a shepherd, runs into Erenio and Efigenia in the forest. The couple doesn't recognize him as Giugurta, but Giugurta immediately recognizes them and decides to retain his disguise until he can figure out what is going on. While Giugurta the shepherd stalls Erenio and Efigenia with questions, Aderbale and Lutetia stumble upon the whole group. They also don't recognize Giugurta, mistaking him for a dirty shepherd. Aderbale and Erenio, annoyed at this stranger for inconveniencing them and their plans, insult him. The shepherd then reveals himself as King Giugurta and, in a fury, castigates the courtiers and Lesbia for their misdeeds. Initially disappointed, the princesses then happily accept the Roman dukes as their husbands while the trio of miscreants awaits punishment.

Opera libretti in the seventeenth century repeatedly made reference to Fate, Destiny, and the like as embodied personifications and employed pagan gods as characters, all of which were heretical according to canon law. Librettists were thus careful to provide written warnings at the beginnings of their libretti, apologizing for any scandalous depictions and assuring readers and viewers that what they would encounter was simply fantasy and jest. Noris likewise provided a caveat at the outset of his work. Still, his depictions of Jove and Pluto came strikingly close to descriptions of God and Satan, which almost certainly contributed to the opera's censorship by the *Esecutori*. For example, Lesbia describes Jove as the god "che ne l'Empiro ha il trono" [that

in the Empyrean has his throne].[9] The Empyrean is a clear reference to the medieval theological conception of the final circle of the Heavenly sphere in which resides God, as seen most prominently, perhaps, in the *Paradiso* of Dante's *Divina commedia.* As for the Satan figure, Lesbia describes the pagan god Pluto to Efigenia in a way that strongly alludes to the Christian description of Lucifer's fall from Heaven:

> Il Demone? Fu in Cielo
> Di beltà pari al Nume;
> […]
> E a l'or, che tirpartito
> Fu l'Impero del Mondo
> […] in soggio eterno
> Pluto discese a dominar l'Infero.[10]
>
> [The Demon? He was in Heaven
> Of a beauty equal to the Divine;
> […]
> And when the Empire of the World
> Was divided into three parts,
> […] Pluto descended to rule Hell.]

Noris compounds the similarities with Lucifer when Lesbia summons Pluto with a made-up ritual—though in reality, Lesbia has simply summoned Aderbale dressed as the demon—to meet Efigenia. The princess, wholly enamored by Pluto's beauty, listens as he proudly equates himself with the grandeur of Heaven. As Pluto, he reflects on celestial and terrestrial order, emphasizing the beauty and authority of the demons, which he likens to the splendors and powers of Heaven.[11]

Aderbale, with Lesbia's help, successfully seduces Efigenia with his beautiful costume and self-aggrandizing speeches about Infernal power. She truly and fervently believes that he is

[9] Noris, *Il demone amante,* I.viii, p. 24.
[10] Noris, *Il demone amante,* I.iii, pp. 17-18.
[11] Noris, *Il demone amante,* I.xi, p. 28.

the King of Hell. When King Giugurta later informs Efigenia of her betrothal to the Roman Duke Albino, she refuses to marry him. She informs both men of her husband-to-be: "Il demone d'Abiso" [The demon of the Abyss].[12] The strength of her belief and her insistence on the demon's existence is enough to convince the king and the dukes. Indeed, her passions are so intense that Giugurta and the dukes mistake her behaviors for signs of demonic possession:

Me[tello e Albino]. Traluna gli occhi.
Gi[ugurta]. E palida diviene.
Ah figlia!
[…]
M. Lo spirto ora l'assale.
Ef[igenia]: Son del demone.
Gi. (E vero!)
Ef. E solo ei solo
Posesso ha di quest'alma.
[…]
M. (è il demone, che parla)
Gi. *con dolcezza* Efigenia il tuo seno
Di furia si disarmi.
Ecco Albino
Ef. *grida* Crudel, non tormentarmi.
Gi. Chi t'offende? Efigenia
[…]
Vuol con ira portarsi ad Albino. La trattiene Giugurta.
[…]
Si stacca dal Padre, va con furia da un'altra parte. Giugurta li va dietro.
[…]
[Giugurta] la ferma, ella grida più forte, non la guarda e piange.
[…]
Gi. Erenio in lei di Stige
Si è un demone scoperto.
Tu, che ne dici?
Er[enio]. È affassinata al certo.
Efigenia ch'era messa in passo di paratir sente le voci del Padre, e ritorna a lui, e ad essi.
Ef. Il demone? Il demone? Sì brutto
Non è […].
E ciò che dico al demone? […].

[12] Noris, *Il demone amante,* II.iii, p. 41.

[Metello and Albino: She rolls her eyes.
Giugurta: And she turns pale.
Ah, daughter!
Efigenia: I belong to the demon!
Gi: (It's true!)
Ef.: And he alone
Possesses my heart!
[…]
M.: (It's the demon speaking.)
Gi.: *gently* Efigenia, let your heart
Be disarmed of fury.
Here, Albino—
Ef.: *screams out* Cruel one, do not torment me!
Gi.: Who offends you? Efigenia—
[…]
She angrily lunges towards Albino. Giugurta holds her back.
[…]
She breaks free from her father and hurries in a fury to another spot in the room. Giugurta follows her.
Giugurta stops her, and she screams louder. He doesn't look at her, and he cries.
[…]
Gi. Erenio, in her, from Hell,
A demon has been discovered.
What do you say?
Erenio: She is certainly possessed.
Efigenia, who was set to leave, hears her father's voice and returns to them.
Ef.: The demon? The demon? He's
Not really so ugly […].
And what do I say to the demon? […].]

Efigenia rolls her eyes, goes pail, shrieks, violently lashes out, erratically paces the room, and explicitly proclaims that she belongs to the demon. These are all common symptoms of possession that playwrights and librettists would have been familiar with.[13] They were common symptoms of lovesickness as well, especially as outlined by Jacques Ferrand of Agen's *Treatise*

[13] See Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts*, 23; Gaetano Paxia's introduction in Girolamo Menghi, *The Devil's Scourge: Exorcism During the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Gaetano Paxia (Boston: Weiser Books, 2002), 28; and Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 76, http://qut.eblib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=432299.

on Lovesickness (1610), where he calls attention to agitated eyes, sweating, weeping, shrieking, and a pale visage.[14] Ferrand also briefly comments on how symptoms of lovesickness might be brought on (albeit rarely) by interaction with a demonic incubus or succubus, creatures that blind their victims' intellects, rendering them unable to recognize the "corruptness of their imagination and their folly."[15] Stephen Greenblatt explains that witnesses—audiences—to possession, especially in a theatrical context, would expect the demoniac to embody a specific "decorum," similar to what we see in Noris's libretto.[16] Efigenia's theatrics during her fit align with the decorum expected of both the opera's potential audience and her father's and the dukes' conception of demonic possession. Indeed, at the end of her ravings about Pluto, she sings an aria, "Luci, luci belle," about their love:

Tutti l'ascoltano con meraviglia.
Luci luci belle
Siete siete stelle.
Che ingemmate il Ciel d'amor
Occhi neri e fiammeggianti
Son facelle
Per l'inferno degli amanti.
Crini erranti
Son catene del mio cor.[17]

[*Everyone listens with amazement.*
Beautiful lights,
You are stars,
That adorn the sky with love.
Black, flaming eyes,
Are torches
For the lovers' Hell.
Errant locks of hair

[14] Jacques Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, ed. and trans. Donald Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 228-229, 269-270.

[15] Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, 308-310.

[16] Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists," in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000), 209.

[17] Noris, *Il demone amante*, 36-38.

Are chains for my heart.]

Everything that comes before her aria ("Luci luci belle") is recitative, and it's metrically quite fitful, which may have been a means of further painting her state of mind. The aria that ends the scene, though, acts as a flight of pure lyrical sound that exists in a kind of transporting envelope. It serves as proof of her obsessive love for Pluto and her conviction that he exists. Ferrand's treatise also holds that lovers are by nature more loquacious and persuasive than those who are not in love: "lovers try to convince everyone else of what they have first convinced themselves […]."[18] Efigenia not only engages in the loud and boisterous behaviors symptomatic of possession and love obsession but easily spreads her belief in the demon's existence to everyone else in the room.

Giugurta's and the dukes' belief in her possession echoes that in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, in which a woman calls an exorcist to help her husband, who has been acting strangely, only to discover that the man she thought was her husband is actually her husband's long-lost twin brother.[19] Kallendorf examines Shakespeare's play to comment on mock exorcisms and instances of accused possession resulting from innocent, exaggerated misunderstandings.[20] She explains that deceit doesn't play a part in the misdiagnosed possession or the subsequent exorcism. This is where Kallendorf's example and Noris's opera differ. In Shakespeare's play, the supposedly possessed twin doesn't believe himself to be possessed, and neither does Efigenia in *Il demone amante*, though Efigenia does believe herself to be betrothed to the demon owing to Lesbia's and Aderbale's deception. Even in the subsequent exorcism

[18] Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, 270.

[19] This trope of substitution and misrecognition was quite common. See Wendy Doniger, *The Woman Who Pretended to Be Who She Was: Myths of Self-Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford university press, 2005), 60-63.

[20] Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts*, 40.

scene, Lesbia laughs to herself about the situation—"Ah ah la crede indemoniata" [Ha ha! He thinks she's possessed!]—and keeps up the ruse, reveling in her control over everybody's belief in her fabricated world. Indeed, the entire opera is predicated on false beliefs instigated by deceit, where a cleverly invented and performed narrative can control how others view themselves and their surroundings. Lesbia constructed the demon's existence and tempted Efigenia into believing in it and its power. Efigenia's simple belief in the demon subsequently spread to those around her, devolving into accusations of possession and a need for exorcism.

The exorcism scene was the most controversial part of Noris's opera and is the only scene that was entirely cut and transformed in his rewrite, *Il Giugurta*. Not only does the scene mock the exorcism ritual and the priest performing it, but it also closely approaches the language used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catholic exorcisms. Giugurta summons Efigenia and Lesbia to spring on Efigenia a surprise exorcism. At first, Efigenia is simply annoyed, but Giugurta successfully attempts to coax the supposed demon to manifest itself by enraging Efigenia. Efigenia attempts to leave with Lesbia when the priest acts:

Sac[erdote].	Ferma
	O Spirto di Cocito.
Ef.	Parla con te [Lesbia]?
Les.	Non credo.
Mentre vogliono partire il Sac. tocca con la verga Efigenia, e dice.	
Sac.	Ferma dico
	Per comando di Giove
	Demone al Ciel nemico.
Ef.	A me?
Sac.	A te, ch'entro a quel petto
	Indegnamente alberghi.
Ef.	O scelerato: degno
	È del sen d'Efigenia
	Solo il gran Re de l'ombre, egli la srinse
	Con immortal catena.
[…]	
Sac.	Dimmi, o spirto infernal con qual ragione
	Hai su quell'alma impero?

Ef. O verme indegno, uom di vil terra nato
E vuoi, che a te ragione
Renda il gran Dio Plutone?
Sac. Son di Giove Ministro: a sì gran Nome
Esci fuor di costei
Libera la Donzella.
Ef. Tu sacrilego, e reo de pio delirii
Esci da queste soglie, ha qui sua stanza
Solo il gran Re d'inferno.
Va incalzandolo, lui si ritira.
E già di lui consorte
La Figlia di Giugurta,
La Vergine Efigenia.
[…]
Sac. Spirto più ostinato
Io non intesi mai.
Ella guardandolo va poco con ira la minaccia col capo poi camina sdegnata.
Gi. Usa l'estremo uffizio.
Sac. Alzar le voci, e batterla conviene.
[…]
O ancor superbo
Ne le cadute, o spirto contumace
A questa man, che sacra ora ti sfer…
Vuol batterla con la verga, ella glie la toglie de mano. […] *Da uno schiafo al Sac.*[21]

[Priest: Stop,
Oh spirit of Cocytus!
Ef.: Is he speaking to you [Lesbia]?
Les.: I don't think so.
As they are about to leave, the priest touches Efigenia with his rod and says:
Priest: Stop, I say,
By the command of Jove,
Demon, enemy of Heaven!
Ef.: Me?
Priest: You, who unworthily dwell
Within her breast!
Ef.: O scoundrel, worthy
Is the bosom of Efigenia
Only for the great King of Darkness, who clasped her
With an immortal chain!
[…]
Priest: Tell me, oh infernal spirit, by what right
Do you hold sway over that soul?

[21] Noris, *Il demone amante*, 62-64.

Ef.: Oh worthless worm, man born of vile earth,
And you wish that to you the great god Pluto
Should render account?
Priest: I am a Minister of Jove: at this great Name,
Come out of her!
Free the maiden!
Ef.: You sacrilegious one, guilty of pious deliriums,
Leave these premises, here abides
Only the great King of Hell!
She drives him back, he retreats.
And already with him is
The Daughter of Giugurta,
The Virgin Efigenia.
[…]
Priest: I have never known
A more obstinate spirit.
She looks at him, goes a little angrily, threatens him with her head, then walks away disdainfully.
Gi.: Use the ultimate office!
Priest: We must raise our voices and beat her.
[…] Oh still proud
In your fall, oh disobedient spirit,
To this hand, which sacredly now smi…
He wants to strike her with the rod, she takes it from his hand. […] She hits the priest.]

The humor is evident. Efigenia puts the priest to shame with her passionate aversion to the ritual and desire to leave the vicinity. The priest, who truly thinks that Efigenia is possessed, comes off as weak and fearful when she physically retaliates, fleeing the scene. Immediately in the following scene, he tells Giugurta that prayer—the implication being prayer at a distance—is the only chance Efigenia has. Even if Efigenia isn't possessed, she still follows the expected patterns of an aggressive demoniac responding vehemently to a religious ritual, even invoking Pluto himself. The extended dialogue between the priest and Efigenia imitates the heated duels often found in Renaissance exorcism texts, such as those in Menghi's *Flagellum dæmonum* (1577).[22]

[22] Girolamo Menghi, *Flagellum dæmonum, exorcismos terribiles, potentissimos, et efficaces* (Venice: Apud Paulum Balleonium, 1683).

We can't know if Noris read Menghi's or another priest's exorcism texts, yet exposure to the religious theatrics of exorcism was common enough, and people, especially if educated, would have had at least an idea of a Catholic exorcism's form.[23] Noris's priest invokes Jove, a thinly veiled reference to the Christian God, to drive out what he calls the fallen demon, a reference to Lucifer, to return to Hell. He even raises his voice in an attempt to confront the perceived demon with a priest's most valuable weapons: his voice, his words, and his faith.

Indeed, Noris's exorcism strongly echoes the dramatic, fiery language given to priests in these types of texts. Using Menghi as an example, let us look at a short excerpt from the "First Exorcism" of his *Flagellum dæmonum*:

> Reprobate, murderer, son of perdition, I command you † through that same Lord whose sign appeared in heaven; he whom the shepherds went to see and the Magi to adore; he whom the angels and archangels praise together. I order you to come out immediately from this body, creature of Christ; go to the depths of the sea or into the sterile trees or into the wilderness, where there is no Christian habitation or presence of human beings, and there let the sky's lightning burn you. May the sovereign majesty of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the true Trinity, force you to come out. I exhort you, † iniquitous devil, in the name of Jesus the Nazarene, so that, in hearing the word of the Lord, you will come out of this servant of God. Again, I command † you through he who, when he was born, was greeted by the singing of angels […].[24]

Menghi's colorful, descriptive attacks and damnations against the demon in this actual exorcism jump off the page. One can almost hear the priest castigating the demon inside the demoniac and

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[23] See Kallenforf, *Exorcism and Its Texts*, xviii.

[24] Girolamo Menghi, *The Devil's Scourge: Exorcism During the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Gaetano Paxia (Boston: Weiser Books, 2002), 59. Compare the original Latin: "Tu ergo homicida, reprobe, fili perditionis, per ipsum re † coniuro, cuius signum apparvit in celis quem pastores viderunt, et Magi adoraverunt, quem Angeli, et Archangeli collaudant, ut statim exeas de vase isto, et plasmate Christi; et pergas in profundum maris, vel in arbores steriles, vel accessus hominum, et ubi te incendant fulgura de cœlo. SS. Trinitatis, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus sanctus vera maiestas Dei, cogat te statim exire. Adiuro te † inique dæmon, per ipsum, cuius nomen est Iesus Nazarænus, ut foras exeas audit overo Domini ab hoc famulo Dei. Per ipsum te coniuro, † cuius ortum SS. Angeli collaudantes cantaverunt […]." Menghi, *Flagellum dæmonum*, 56.

can easily imagine an angry, resisting demonic voice attempting to fight back. The *Esecutori* would have quickly recognized this sort of language in Noris's exorcism scene before swiftly censoring it to protect viewers from any potential blasphemous contamination of the sacred rite with the fictional spectacle.

As this project develops further, it will continue to examine possession, exorcism, and spiritual influence through performative and sonic lenses. Girolamo Menghi's tracts on exorcism will provide fertile ground for examining exorcism's theatrical and richly sonic nature. The seven exorcisms in Menghi's *Flagellum daemonum* give an experience of the rite's active and loudly performative character. His *Flagellum* eventually became part of the *Thesaurus exorcismorum*, the compendium of exorcism tracts comprising works by several authors. This project will go on to juxtapose the varied exorcisms found in the *Thesaurus* with Pope Paul V's *Rituale romanum*, established in 1614 to impose some standardizing order on the ritual.[25] Examining the rich corpus of exorcisms alongside accounts of demonic possession as theatrical events will ultimately aid investigations into the many operas, *sacre rappresentazioni*, and oratories of the seventeenth century that deal with demonic temptation, oppression, and exorcism not only of people but also of things and places.[26] R. P. M. Avila's *Trattato spirituale sopra il verso, audi filia, del salmo, eructavit cor meum… Dove si tratta del modo di udire Dio, e fuggire*

[25] *Rituale romanum, Pauli V. P. M. iussu editum* (Rome: Ex Typographia Camerae Apostolicae, 1617), https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByY1ndAfoS5vby1GcVZKWHVlVjA/edit?pli=1&resourcekey=0-97iQwVttgrISo4zjv4clRA.

[26] See, for example: Andrea Lorenzani Romano, *Le frodi di Scaltrito Demonio overo l'innocenza difesa dal cielo* (Bologna: Per gl'Eredi del Pisarri, 1682); Scipione Rota da Cagli, *Occulti inganni del demonio* (Venice: Presso Angelo Salvadori, 1629); Honofrio Giliberto da Solofra, *Il vinto inferno da Maria* (Trani: Per Lorenzo Valerii, 1644); and Girolamo Curti, *L'inferno abbattuto overo il trionfo di Santa Maria liberatrice di Viterbo* (Viterbo: Per Michele Benedetti, 1715).

i linguaggi del Mondo, della Carne, e del Demonio (1610) will prove useful for interpreting the sonic aspects of these texts and performances, opening up avenues for understanding how theater creators and audiences interacted with these issues.[27]

These interactions, especially by audiences, remain crucial to this project, especially when objects of study contain Christian marvels such as demonic and angelic intervention in earthly affairs. Tasso's approach to Christian marvels immediately comes to mind as proof of the importance of audience reactions and beliefs in light of the artistic forms that audiences and readers experience. In the second discourse of his *Discorsi del poema eroico* (1594), Tasso discusses the marvelous and the verisimilar in poetry:

> Ma benché io stringa il poeta epico ad un obligo perpetuo di servare il verisimile, non però escludo da lui l'altra parte, cioè il meraviglioso; anzi giudico che un'azione medesima possa essere e meravigliosa e verisimile; e molti credo che siano i modi di congiungere insieme queste qualità così discordanti […].
>
> Attribuisca il poeta alcune operazioni, che di gran lunga eccedono il poter de gli uomini, a Dio, a gli angoli suoi, a' demoni o a coloro a' quali da Dio o da' demoni è conceduta potestà, quali sono i santi, i magi e le fate. Queste opere, se per se stesse saranno considerate, meravigliose parranno, anzi miracoli sono chiamati nel commune uso di parlare. […] Queste medesime, se si averà riguardo alla virtù e alla potenza di chi l'ha operate, verisimili saranno giudicate, perché, avendo gli uomini nostri bevuta nelle fasce insieme col latte questa opinione, ed essendo poi in loro confermata da i maestri della nostra santa fede (cioè che Dio e i suoi ministri e i demoni e i magi, permettendolo Lui, possano far cose sovra le forze della natura meravigliosa), e leggendo e sentendo ogni dì ricordarne nuovi esempi, non parrà loro fuori del verisimile quello che credono non solo esser possibile, ma stimano spesse fiate esser avvenuto e poter di nuovo molte volte avvenire. Sì come anco a quegli antichi, che vivevano ne gli errori della lor vana religione, non deveano parer impossibili que' miracoli che de' loro dei favoleggiavano non solo i poeti, ma l'istorie; perché, se pur gli uomini scienziati gli prestavano picciola credenza, basta al poeta in questo, com'in molte altre cose, la opinion della moltitudine, alla quale molte volte, lasciando l'essatta verità delle cose, e suole e dee attenersi.[28]

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[27] R. P. M. Avila, *Trattato spirituale sopra il verso, audi filia, del salmo, eructavit cor meum... Dove si tratta del modo di udire Dio, e fuggire i linguaggi del Mondo, della Carne, e del Demonio*, trans. Camillo Camilli (Rome: Per Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1610).

[28] Torquato Tasso, *Discorso del poema eroico*, in *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico*, ed. Luigi Poma (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1964), 96-97.

> [But although I insist that the epic poet must always adhere to the verisimilar, I do not exclude from him the other aspect, which is the marvelous; in fact, I believe that an action can be both marvelous and verisimilar, and there are many ways, I think, to combine these seemingly discordant qualities […].
>
> The poet should attribute certain actions that greatly exceed human capability to God, his angels, demons, or those to whom God or demons have granted power, such as saints, magicians, and fairies. […] These works, if considered independently, will appear marvelous and are even called miracles in common speech. These same works, if one considers the virtue and power of those who performed them, will be judged verisimilar because our people have imbibed this opinion along with their mother's milk, and it has been confirmed in them by the teachers of our holy faith (that is, that God, his ministers, demons, and magicians, with His permission, can perform things beyond the natural powers of the marvelous). By reading and hearing new examples of these things every day, what they believe to be not only possible but often to have happened and to be able to happen again many times will not seem implausible to them. Just as for the ancients who lived in the errors of their vain religion, those miracles that their gods were said to perform should not have seemed impossible, not only to the poets but also to the historians; because, even if the learned men gave little credence to them, the poet needs, in this as in many other things, only the opinion of the multitude, to which he often, leaving aside the exact truth of things, both usually does and ought to adhere to.]

According to Tasso, what might be incredible in isolation can be accepted as true within the context of divine or supernatural intervention. He draws parallels between his own time—instances, literary or otherwise, of Christian marvels—and ancient religions, where the general populace accepted miraculous stories about their gods, even if the educated only skeptically received them. The poet, therefore, must consider the masses' beliefs, even—and perhaps especially—if those beliefs deviate from strict truth, to make the narrative marvels seem plausible. The audience's beliefs dictate the veracity of what they witness in any given narrative. All the more reason, then, to be careful with what is included in the narrative itself, as it might implicate the author in any heretical views and subtly shape the interlocutor's perceptions of truth.

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