

Leonie Pawlita  
**Staging Doubt**



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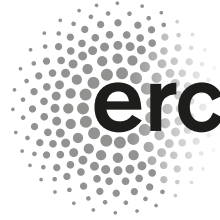
Skepticism in Early Modern European Drama

DE GRUYTER

This book is published in cooperation with the project DramaNet, funded by the European Research Council



**Early Modern European Drama  
and the Cultural Net**



**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

ISBN 978-3-11-066055-5

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-066058-6

e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-066054-8



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**Library of Congress Control Number: 2019945619**

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>

© 2019 Leonie Pawlita, published by Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston

The book is published with open access at [www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com).

Typesetting: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.

Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

Cover illustration: photodeedooo/iStock/Thinkstock

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In memory of my father



# Acknowledgments

This book is the revised and translated version of my doctoral dissertation, *Skeptizismus im europäischen Drama der Frühen Neuzeit: Untersuchungen zu Dramentexten von Shakespeare, Calderón, Lope de Vega, Rotrou und Cervantes*, which was accepted at Freie Universität Berlin in 2015 and written within the framework of the European Research Council Advanced Grant Project “Early Modern European Drama and the Cultural Net (DramaNet)” at Freie Universität Berlin. I am thankful to the European Research Council for its financial support.

My deep gratitude goes to my doctoral advisors, Prof. Joachim Küpper and Prof. Susanne Zepp. Their unwavering support, encouragement, and confidence in my work, alongside their academic sharpness and enthusiasm, inspiring criticism, and fruitful advice, have accompanied and helped shape my academic career and research for many years. I am thoroughly thankful to them.

Prof. Stephanie Bung, Dr. Sven Thorsten Kilian, and Prof. Claudia Olk participated in the examining committee, for which I am very thankful, too. Their questions and discussion have greatly enriched this book. I would also like to thank my former colleagues in the DramaNet research team as well as the participants in the research colloquium at the Institute for Romance Languages and Literatures at Freie Universität Berlin for stimulating discussions.

At the Martin Buber Society of Fellows in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I am enjoying an inspiring, vibrant, and supportive research environment, for which I am likewise very grateful. I owe particular gratitude to the society’s former director, Prof. Ruth HaCohen, as well as its current one, Prof. Yigal Bronner. My great thanks are also due to many of the Buber fellows for both horizon-broadening conversations and academic exchange, as well as for a great deal of support and friendship.

In addition, I wish to express my deep thanks to Prof. Ruth Fine, who generously welcomed me at the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies at the Hebrew University and who has mentored and in so many ways supported me ever since.

This book has benefited greatly from Fray Hochstein’s thorough editing of the English translation. I am very grateful for her incisive and stimulating work and support.

My sincere thanks also go to De Gruyter Publishing.

I am very thankful to my parents who have always given me their support. My most profound thanks go to my partner, family, and friends for their patience, backing, and love. Finally, a very special credit to a very special cast in my life for always enriching it, in order of their appearance: Frida, Luk, Telmo, Tim, Bruno, Bele, Mauro.





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# Introduction

The resurgence of ancient skepticism in the 16th and 17th centuries is one of the most striking and influential phenomena in the cultural history of the Early Modern era. The re-emergence of this school of thought during this period stemmed not only from a humanist fascination with ancient literature and philosophy, but also must be understood against the background of a time marked by massive change and the loss of hitherto valid certainties. Above all, the discovery of new continents that began in 1492 shook the very foundations of what Europeans knew about the world. They were confronted with previously unknown lands populated by people with unfamiliar cultures, knowledge, and beliefs. In the physical realm, the discovery of America and the Magellan-Elcano circumnavigation (1519–1522) of the globe, followed by the theories and findings of Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, proving that the earth was round and did not occupy the center of the universe, led to fundamental doubts about the reliability of sensory perception and toppled Aristotelian epistemology. It is this questioning of the reliability of the senses that is one of the main pillars of skepticism. In the spiritual realm, the Reformation, with its questioning of ecclesiastical authority and ‘religious truth,’ dislodged the authority of the Church as a mediator of certainty – an authority that had been monumentally, solidly, unchallenged for centuries. Once shaken, the cracks continued to expand, growing ever wider with the humanist rediscovery of the diversity of ancient thought and the expansion of philosophical discourse in the 16th century. Aristotle was joined by Plato and Neo-Platonism, as well as the Hellenistic schools of philosophy of the Stoa and of Epicurus. All became important points of reference in Renaissance thought. Although skepticism is not an isolated phenomenon in this discursive field, it became the dominant and influential trend from the 16th well into the 17th century. In the face of a developing plurality in the fields of science, philosophy, and religion, especially in light of the continuous and ongoing new discoveries taken place at the time, the arguments of the skeptics appear to be a way of countering the uncertainty of the period.

The dissemination of Pyrrhonism in Early Modern Europe began with the publication in 1562 of a Latin translation of Greek physician and philosopher Sextus Empiricus’ *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. A complete Latin edition of his works was published seven years later, in 1569, giving a further boost to its reception. However, discussions on skepticism in the second half of the 16th century differ markedly from those of the 17th century. The escalation of economic, social, ideological, and power-political conflicts, as well as the wider crisis with the Aristotelian concept of science, spurred anti-skeptical discourses. In his fundamental study, *The*

*History of Scepticism* (first published in 1960), Richard H. Popkin, an eminent historian of philosophy, states that during the early 17th century there was a comprehensive “*crise pyrrhonienne*.”<sup>1</sup> During this period wars of faith were raging throughout Europe, and most states were experiencing profound internal political unrest and economic decay. The urge for discursive renovation intensified, and discussions refuting skepticism and providing an answer to the question of certainty became increasingly virulent. René Descartes’ (1596–1650) epistemological model, which, along with Francis Bacon’s (1561–1626) empiricism, is regarded as the cornerstone of philosophical modernity, was to become the most powerful enterprise for ‘overcoming the skeptical crisis.’

Ancient Pyrrhonian skepticism was ubiquitous in Early Modern culture, a phenomenon prevalent in almost all discourses, throughout the whole of

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<sup>1</sup> Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle*, 3rd ed., Oxford/New York 2003, p. 43 and *passim*. Popkin laid the foundation for modern research into Early Modern skepticism and identified the important role played by the resurgence of Pyrrhonian skepticism in the development of European philosophy. Popkin’s text generated great interest and scholarly debate and has engendered numerous articles and papers on skepticism and the history of philosophical skepticism. The numerous recent publications on the topic attest to the continuing interest it arouses. As representatives, the following volumes published in the last decade shall be mentioned here (and with regard to further relevant literature, see the subsequent chapter of this work on skepticism): Gianni Paganini/José R. Maia Neto (eds.), *Renaissance Scepticisms*, Dordrecht 2009; J. Maia Neto/G. Paganini/John Christian Laursen (eds.), *Skepticism in the Modern Age: Building on the Work of Richard Popkin*, Leiden/Boston 2009; Carlos Spoerhase/Dirk Werle/Markus Wild (eds.), *Unsicheres Wissen: Skeptizismus und Wahrscheinlichkeit 1550–1850*, Berlin/New York 2009; Diego Machuca (ed.), *Pyrrhonism in Ancient, Modern, and Contemporary Philosophy*, Dordrecht 2011. For critical positions on Popkin’s theses, see: Dominik Perler, “Was There a ‘Pyrrhonian Crisis’ in Early Modern Philosophy?,” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 86 (2004), pp. 209–220; Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Rethinking the History of Skepticism: The Missing Medieval Background*, Leiden/Boston 2010. Although not a particular focus of this book, studies on the Jewish reception of and writings on skepticism, particularly those by *conversos* and *marranos*, highlight the contribution of this community to the emergence of modernity in Europe and provide important insights into the cultural-historical constellations of the period. This includes works such as Yirmiyahu Yovel’s book *The Other Within: The Marranos. Split Identity and Emerging Modernity*, Princeton, NJ 2009. See, furthermore, the study: Susanne Zepp, *An Early Self: Jewish Belonging in Romance Literature, 1499–1627*, trans. Insa Kummer, Stanford, CA 2014. In addition, reference shall be made to: Yosef Kaplan, “Richard Popkin’s Marrano Problem,” in: Jeremy D. Popkin (ed.), *The Legacies of Richard Popkin*, Dordrecht 2008, pp. 197–212; José Faur, *In the Shadow of History: Jews and Conversos at the Dawn of Modernity*, Albany, NY 1992; Richard Popkin, *The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought*, Leiden/New York 1992. Also important to mention is the DFG-Kolleg-research group *Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies (MCAS)–Jewish Scepticism*, directed by Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Veltri at Hamburg University since 2015 (URL: <https://www.maimonides-centre.uni-hamburg.de/en.html> [retrieved: 28 March 2019]).

Europe, and which ranged far beyond the field of philosophy. The present study is a comparative investigation of Early Modern debates on skepticism as expressed in European drama, an artistic genre that had a prominent and shaping role in this cultural epoch. The study is based on seven theatrical stage plays, from three different linguistic and theatrical-cultural contexts: England, France, and Spain. These three countries were the great military, political, ideological, and cultural powers of 17th century Europe. Furthermore, it was in these three cultural spaces that the form and meaning of theater and drama were fundamentally and effectively conceived; the Spain of the Counter-Reformation gave birth to Spanish *comedia nueva*, Protestant England had the Shakespearean tragedy, and centralist-absolutist France the French *tragédie*.

This book seeks to examine the role that skepticism played in the drama of Early Modern Europe, the ways in which it was integrated and discussed in theatrical texts, and the similarities and differences of how each of the plays addressed the challenges posed by this philosophical discourse, taking into account questions of genre and historical-cultural context. It will accomplish this by engaging in a close reading of select, seminal texts of the 16th–17th centuries: William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*; Pedro Calderón de la Barca's (1600–1681) *comedia La vida es sueño* (1636) and his *auto sacramental* of the same name; Lope de Vega's (1562–1635) Genesis drama *Lo fingido verdadero* (1608/1621); *Le Véritable Saint Genest* (1647), a French adaptation of Lope's *comedia de santos* by Jean de Rotrou (1609–1650); *L'illustre Comédien ou le Martyre de Saint Genest* (1645) by Nicolas-Marc Desfontaines (1610?–1652), another French adaptation of the Genesis legend; and a short drama by Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616), *Entremés del Retablo de las maravillas*, published in his *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos* in 1615.

While not the first study to examine the topic of skepticism in literature or in Early Modern drama, by taking a comparative approach that seeks to explore the manifestation of skepticism in the drama of three different linguistic-cultural contexts the study breaks new ground.<sup>2</sup> My contention is that one of

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<sup>2</sup> Thus, individual studies on this complex usually focus on the dramatic work of one single playwright or on one theater-cultural context: for instance, James F. Gaines, *Molière and Paradox: Skepticism and Theater in the Early Modern Age*, Tübingen 2010 (on the French context and the key dramas by an author who is not discussed here); John D. Cox, *Seeming Knowledge: Shakespeare and Skeptical Faith*, Waco, TX 2007; William M. Hamlin, *Tragedy and Scepticism in Shakespeare's England*, Basingstoke/New York 2005; Mathew R. Martin, *Between Theater and Philosophy: Skepticism in the Major City Comedies of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton*, Newark, DE 2001; the study by Ulrich Ritter, *Montaignes Skeptizismus und dramatisierte Skepsis bei Shakespeare*, Diss. Bochum 2004, online-publication, URL: <http://www-brs.ub.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/netahtml/HSS/Diss/RitterUlrich/diss.pdf> (retrieved: 28 March 2019), is to be highlighted with

the main strategies of representation by which skepticism was expressed in drama is the dramatic device of the ‘play within a play’ (and affine strategies).<sup>3</sup> Despite differences of genre, date, linguistic-cultural context, aesthetic agenda or ideological impetus, all the plays studied share the same overarching structural principle, namely that they contain a ‘play within a play’ and that this is the vehicle for expressing a skeptical point of view and discussing its (problematic) implications. In each instance the use of the ‘play within the play’ allows highlight the unreliability of sensory perception and the difficulty in distinguishing, with any certainty, between appearance and reality. The study also examines the question of whether and according to what principle the challenges associated with the presentation of skepticism’s core assumptions are expressed in each of the dramas. This epistemological subject matter, i.e. the question of reliable knowledge, which is, according to the skeptics, unattainable through sensory perception, is connected to an ethical dimension within the field of moral philosophy. Thus, the study’s objective also includes, against the backdrop of their respective contexts of origin, a possible classifying of the references to or ‘answers’ that the dramas convey to the arguments of skepticism and to skeptical categories of thinking, acting, and attitude.

The first chapter of this book provides a short introduction to skepticism, setting out the main aspects of ancient philosophical skepticism, based on Sextus Empiricus’ *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (Chap. 1.1), the only text to have survived from the Classical period that provides a systematic representation of the skepticism of Late Antiquity and moreover, the text that inspired the resurgence of

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regard to the concentrated comparison between Montaigne and Shakespeare and the emphasis on ‘dramatized skepticism.’ In particular, there have been numerous publications on Shakespeare’s skepticism. Maureen Ihrle offered a study on skepticism in Cervantes, however, with a focus on the second part of the *Quijote* and the *Persiles*, some time ago: Maureen Ihrle, *Skepticism in Cervantes*, London 1982. Articles that take a comparative perspective with regard to the corpus to be examined here usually refer to two different literary traditions; with regard to the dramas dealt with also in this study, see: Joachim Küpper, “*Hamlet*, by Shakespeare, and *La vida es sueño*, by Calderón, or the Problem of Scepticism,” *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 58 (2008), pp. 367–399; Barbara Simerka, “Metatheater and Skepticism in Early Modern Representations of the Saint Genesius Legend,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 42 (2005), pp. 50–73. (A discussion of the relevant research literature will be carried out in the individual chapters of this book.) Verena Olejniczak Lobsien is the author of the fundamental overarching study on the aspect of skepticism in Early Modern literature: Verena Olejniczak Lobsien, *Skeptische Phantasie: Eine andere Geschichte der frühneuzeitlichen Literatur*, Munich 1999.

<sup>3</sup> For the dramatic device of the ‘play within the play,’ see, e.g., Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, trans. John Halliday, Cambridge/New York 1993, pp. 223–230; George Forestier, *Le théâtre dans le théâtre sur la scène française du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2nd ed., Geneva 1996, pp. 10–14.

Pyrrhonism in the Early Modern period. I then (Chapter 1.2) review engagements with skepticism from the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (section 1.2.1). No less important in this regard, but currently less prominent, is Francisco Sánchez's *Quod nihil scitur* (1581) (section. 1.2.2). Finally, I present Descartes' (section 1.2.3) examination of skepticism, which, as is well known, was hugely influential and ultimately led to an important role for rationalism as a co-founding element of philosophical modernity. The Cartesian attempt to overcome skepticism is evidence of its broad dissemination and influence during this period and points to its problematic implications and their intensifications, possibly depending on cultural-historical constellations. Descartes wrote almost a half century after Montaigne and Sánchez. His project is accordingly situated in an anti-skeptical discourse and seeks to overcome skeptical uncertainty.

Chapter 2 examines the earliest and most well-known drama of the chosen corpus, *Hamlet*. The chapter will focus on the issue of the problem of perception that runs throughout the play, with particular attention to one of the first appearances of a 'play within a play' in the history of drama.

Chapter 3 explores Calderón de la Barca's discussion of skepticism in his famous dream-play *La vida es sueño*, in which the dramatization of skeptical doubt takes place not within a 'play within the play' but in the form of a pretended dream that serves a similar narrative function. The *comedia* is compared to one of Calderón's *auto sacramentales* (*La vida es sueño*), the central genre of religious theater in Counter-Reformation Spain. As part of this discussion, the chapter also outlines parallel strategies to overcome skepticism used by both Calderón and Descartes.

Chapter 4 focuses on two plays that dramatize the life and martyrdom of Saint Genesius. According to legend, St. Genesius was a Roman actor who, during the course of portraying a Christian on stage, is suddenly overcome and immediately converts to Christianity. He was later martyred by Emperor Diocletian. Lope de Vega's play *Lo fingido verdadero* was subsequently adapted by French playwright Jean de Rotrou. The blurring of the boundaries between reality and fiction is already inherent in this 'genuine' 'play within the play.' After a detailed analysis of Lope's drama, Rotrou's transformation of the Spanish *comedia* into the French *tragédie* will be examined and the striking differences in representation and the 'solution' each provides to the problem of the unreliability of perception described. The chapter also examines another, less prominent, French Genesius play, *L'illustre Comédien ou le Martyre de Saint Genest* by Desfontaines, which although written at nearly the same time as Rotrou's version does not refer to Lope's original.

Chapter 5 deals with a short dramatic text by Cervantes, the interlude *El retablo de las maravillas*, which enacts the fundamental skeptical thesis of the unreliability of sensory perception in the context of Cervantine world view.

The book closes with a discussion of the findings with regard to the main question of skepticism.

Note on quotations and translations: In order to avoid redundancies, in my close readings, quotes from the Spanish and French plays are provided with English translations only when deemed necessary. Unless otherwise indicated, translations of quotes from primary and secondary sources are my own.



# 1 Skepticism in the Philosophical Tradition

## 1.1 On Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*

Pyrrhonian skepticism as a philosophical idea is named after Pyrrho of Elis (c. 365–275 BCE). Pyrrho left no writings of his own (at least none that have survived) but what is known about his life is that he participated in the campaigns of Alexander the Great, including those in India, and lived to see Alexander's demise and the dissolution of his empire. The mainly anecdotal information that has been passed down represents the consequent realization of his skeptical philosophy in everyday life mostly in a polemical, caricaturing manner.<sup>4</sup> Pyrrhonism was presumably developed into a theory by Aenesidemus, a first-century philosopher based in Alexandria,<sup>5</sup> but its most famous proponent was another Alexandrian – the Greek physician and philosopher Sextus Empiricus, who lived over 400 years after Pyrrho. Sextus Empiricus' work *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (*Pyrrhōneioi hypotypōseis*) provides the most comprehensive and detailed account of Pyrrhonian skepticism yet found. In addition to *Outlines*, his preserved works comprise the eleven books *Against the Mathematicians* (*Pros matematikús* or *Adversus mathematicos*; usually the Latin version of the title is used). The first section critically examines the individual arts and sciences of grammar, rhetoric, geometry,

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, the accounts are legion that he, “[...] leaving nothing to the arbitrariness of the senses[;]”, was not “[...] going out of his way for nothing, taking no precaution, but facing all risks as they came, whether carts, precipices, dogs or what not [...]” (cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae et sententiae philosophorum* IX,62 [Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Greek-English), trans. Robert Drew Hicks, 2 vols., London/New York 1925, vol. 2, pp. 474 f.]); the following anecdote, documenting the skeptical serenity, is also famous: “When his fellow-passengers on board a ship were all unnerved by a storm, he kept calm and confident, pointing to a little pig in the ship that went on eating, and telling them that such was the unperturbed state in which the wise man should keep himself” (Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* IX,66 [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, vol. 2, pp. 480 f.]). When he was in the retinue of Alexander the Great in India, he is said to have come into contact with Indian ascetics – called by the Greeks “[g]ymnosophists,” ‘naked wise man’ (γυμνοσοφισταί) (cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* IX,61 [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, pp. 474 f.]); for possible influences and parallels as well as for the related research, cf. Richard Bett, *Pyrrho, His Antecedents, and His Legacy*, Oxford 2000, pp. 169–178; with regard to Pyrrho of Elis, see also, among others, Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson, “Pyrrho and Early Pyrrhonism,” in: Richard Bett (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*, Cambridge/New York 2010, pp. 36–57.

<sup>5</sup> See Malte Hossenfelder, *Die Philosophie der Antike 3: Stoa, Epikureismus und Skepsis*, in: Wolfgang Röd (ed.), *Geschichte der Philosophie*, 13 vols., Munich 1976–2014, vol. 3 (1985), pp. 147 f.

arithmetic, astronomy, and music (Books I–VI), and the second section (Books VII–XI) explores dogmatic philosophy (logic, physics, and ethics), thus broadening the discussion of the *Outlines*' books three and four.

Sextus Empiricus begins the first book of *Hypotyposes* (the second and third books deal with “statements of the Dogmatists”) by declaring that in the search for truth one can either claim to have found it (the Dogmatists), believe that it is unattainable (the Academic skeptics), or maintain that although the truth has not yet been found, one is committed to continue searching for it (the Pyrrhonian skeptics).<sup>6</sup> From the beginning Sextus makes it clear that his work is descriptive, but also sets out the subjective-relative orientation typical of Pyrrhonism: “[O]ur task at present is to describe in outline the Sceptic doctrine, first premising that of none of our future statements do we positively affirm that the fact is exactly as we state it, but we simply record each fact, like a chronicler, as it appears to us at the moment.”<sup>7</sup>

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**6** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoneion Hypotyposeon/Outlines of Pyrrhonism* I, 1–4: “The natural result of any investigation is that the investigators either discover the object of search or deny that it is discoverable and confess it to be inapprehensible or persist in their search. So, too, with regard to the objects investigated by philosophy, this is probably why some have claimed to have discovered the truth, others have asserted that it cannot be apprehended, while others again go on inquiring. Those who believe they have discovered it are the ‘Dogmatists,’ specially so called—Aristotle, for example, and Epicurus and the Stoics and certain others; Cleitomachus and Carneades and other Academics treat it as inapprehensible: the Sceptics keep on searching. Hence it seems reasonable to hold that the main types of philosophy are three—the Dogmatic, the Academic, and the Sceptic” (Sextus Empiricus, Πυρρόωνειοι ὑποτυπώσεις/*Outlines of Pyrrhonism* [Greek-English], ed. and trans. Robert Gregg Bury, in: *Sextus Empiricus*, ed. and trans. R. G. Bury, 4 vols., London/Cambridge, MA 1933–1949, vol. 1, 3rd ed. 1961, p. 2/3). Bury’s Greek-English edition of the *Outlines* forms the textual basis used here. More recent English editions of the *Hypotyposes* include: Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Scepticism*, trans. and ed. Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes, Cambridge/New York 2000 (1st ed. 1994); *The Sceptic Way: Sextus Empiricus’s Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, trans. and ed. Benson Mates, Oxford/New York 1996). With regard to the name of the skeptical school and the aspect of ‘searching’ (σκέψις means ‘lookout for,’ ‘mental peering, searching, watching, scrutinizing’), the following is later specified: “The Sceptic School, then, is also called ‘Zetetic’ (ζητητική) from its activity in investigation and inquiry, and ‘Ephetic’ (ἐφεκτική) or Suspensive from the state of mind produced in the inquirer after his search, and ‘Aporetic’ (ἀπορητική) or Dubitative either from its habit of doubting and seeking, as some say, or from its indecision as regards assent and denial, and ‘Pyrrhonian’ (Πυρρώνειος) from the fact that Pyrrho appears to us to have applied himself to Scepticism more thoroughly and more conspicuously than his predecessors” (*Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 7 [S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 4/5–6/7]).

**7** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 4 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 2/3–4/5).

Sextus defines skepticism as

[...] an ability, or mental attitude, which opposes appearances to judgements in any way whatsoever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence of the objects and reasons thus opposed, we are brought firstly to a state of mental suspense and next to a state of 'unperturbedness' or quietude.<sup>8</sup>

The three core elements of Pyrrhonism are thus: *isosthenia* (ἰσοσθενής), the equally balanced co-presence of opposing arguments (establishing these oppositions is also, so to speak, the skeptical method)<sup>9</sup>; *epoché* (ἐποχή), the suspension of judgement that follows from *isosthenia*; and *ataraxia* (ἀταραξία), a tranquil state of mind, the attainment of which is the goal of Pyrrhonism.

To begin with, let us consider “[t]he originating cause of Scepticism [...][:] the hope of attaining quietude.”<sup>10</sup> *Ataraxia* is the absence of *tarachai* (ταραχαι), disturbances, a freedom from inner restlessness and confusion, or to put it metaphorically, “an untroubled [condition] and [calmness of the sea] of soul (γαληνότης).”<sup>11</sup> *Ataraxia* is not held to be a consistently achievable state – it represents no overarching goal, cannot be obtained by means of a zealous pursuit or the avoidance of such a pursuit, and it is not clear that *ataraxia* will lead to happiness:

We assert still that the Sceptic's End is quietude in respect of matters of opinion and moderate feeling (μετρισιπάθεια) in respect of things unavoidable. For the Sceptic, having set out to philosophize with the object of passing judgement on the sense-impressions and ascertaining which of them are true and which false, so as to attain quietude thereby, found himself involved in contradictions of equal weight (ἰσοσθενής διαφωνία), and being unable to decide between them suspended judgement; and as he was thus in suspense there followed, as it happened, the state of quietude in respect of matters of opinion. For the man who opines that anything is by nature good or bad is forever being disquieted: when he is without the things which he deems good he believes himself to be tormented by things naturally bad and he pursues after the things which are, as he thinks, good; which when he has obtained he keeps falling into still more perturbations because of his irrational and immoderate elation, and in his dread of a change of fortune he uses every endeavour to avoid losing the things which he deems good. On the other

**8** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 8 (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 6/7).

**9** The ἰσοσθενής διαφωνία, the ‘contradictions of equal weight’ (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 26 [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 18/19]; see the following quote above). For the use of the term *isosthenia*, see Malte Hossenfelder, “Einleitung,” in: Sextus Empiricus, *Grundriß der pyrrhonischen Skepsis*, introd. and trans. Malte Hossenfelder, 5th ed., Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 9–88, here p. 43.

**10** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 12 (S. E., *Outlines* [cf. note 6], p. 8/9).

**11** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 10 (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 8/9).

hand, the man who determines nothing as to what is naturally good or bad neither shuns nor pursues anything eagerly; and, in consequence, he is unperturbed.<sup>12</sup>

The telos is thus consequently modified by Sextus to the effect that attaining ataraxy refers to ‘matters of opinion,’ that is to the realm of voluntary decisions, while *metriopatheia* (μετριοπάθεια), ‘moderate feeling,’ can be achieved in respect to conditions that are unavoidable, such as pleasure/unpleasure or physical suffering (being cold, hungry etc.), in the sense that by accepting them as subjective realities, without subjecting them to a value judgment (e.g., without interpreting them as an objective evil), then there is ‘moderate feeling,’ that is, *metriopatheia* is achieved.<sup>13</sup> The possibility of recognizing the truth of a judgment, including value judgements, is radically rejected.

Given ‘the contradictions of equal weight’ of conflicting opinions (*isosthenia*), all a skeptic can do is refrain from judgement; or pause,<sup>14</sup> and ‘by chance’ (τυχικώς) attain a state of serenity; *ataraxia* follows the *epoché* caused by *isosthenia* like “a shadow follows its substance.”<sup>15</sup> For a skeptic, *tarachai* (perturbations)

<sup>12</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 25–28 (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 18/19).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 29 f. (“We do not, however, suppose that the Sceptic is wholly untroubled; but we say that he is troubled by things unavoidable; for we grant that he is cold at times and thirsty, and suffers various affections of that kind. But even in these cases, whereas ordinary people are afflicted by two circumstances,—namely, by the affections themselves and, in no less a degree, by the belief that these conditions are evil by nature,—the Sceptic, by his rejection of the added belief in the natural badness of all these conditions, escapes here too with less discomfort. Hence we say that, while in regard to matters of opinion the Sceptic’s End is quietude, in regard to things unavoidable it is ‘moderate affection’” [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 20/21]). With the concept of metriopathy, the demarcation to Stoa (an arbitrary re-evaluation of things and thus their controllability is not possible) and epicureism (pleasure can not be regarded as always available or unpleasure as always avoidable) becomes evident. (See also Hossenfelder, *Stoa, Epikureismus und Skepsis* [cf. note 5], pp. 152 ff.).

<sup>14</sup> Cf., however, Hossenfelder’s remark: “‘Epoché’ bedeutet zweierlei im Pyrrhonismus. Einmal meint es die Urteilsenthaltung, zum anderen das ‘Innehalten’ mit der Suche nach dem Wahren. [...] Es findet sich jedoch in den Quellen keine klare Scheidung der beiden Begriffe von Epoché. Sogar in der Definition, die Sextus von Epoché gibt, scheinen mir beide Begriffe vermengt zu sein [...]” [*Epoché* means two things in Pyrrhonism. On the one hand, it means the suspension of judgement; on the other hand, it means the ‘pausing’ in the search for what is true. (...) In the sources, however, there is no clear separation of the two concepts of *epoché*. Even in the definition that Sextus gives of *epoché*, both concepts seem to me to be mingled (...)] (“Einleitung” [cf. note 9], pp. 56 f.).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 29: “So, too, the Sceptics were in hopes of gaining quietude by means of a decision regarding the disparity of the objects of sense and of thought, and being unable to effect this they suspended judgement; and they found that quietude, as if by chance, followed upon their suspense, even as a shadow follows its substance” (S. E., *Outlines* [cf. note 6], p. 20/21).

consists of any pursuit of knowledge compelled by zeal. Knowledge must rather be sought in a state of distanced serenity and indifference. Unlike universal skepticism, however, which casts doubt on the very possibility of knowledge, Pyrrhonian skepticism maintains that the truth is not principally unrecognizable, it has simply not yet been recognized. Even doubt is relative and refers to the current state of each perceiving and judging individual.<sup>16</sup>

The Pyrrhonian attitude of *epoché*, suspension of judgment, is based on *isosthenia*, a methodology of continual questioning of absoluteness. For each statement, a counter-statement is deliberately sought. The acceptance of their equivalence leads to un-decidability, the inability to recognize the truth of a statement and give it preference over another.

*Isosthenia*, the equally balanced conflict of opposing opinions that leads to suspension of judgement, is grounded upon lists of skeptical arguments, the famous tropes (τρόποι). The first list of these “skeptical modes” consists of ten tropes,<sup>17</sup> which, according to Sextus, originate from Aenesidemus (1st century BCE). This is followed by another five “modes” or “tropes of suspension of judgement”<sup>18</sup> attributed to Agrippa (1st century CE), two ‘newer’ tropes,<sup>19</sup> and an account of “skeptical expressions.”<sup>20</sup>

The ten tropes of Aenesidemus focus on proving the skeptical position on the relativity of every judgment (“[. . .] the Mode of relation stands as the highest genus [. . .]”)<sup>21</sup> and use mostly perceptive impressions to argue relativity, namely that sense experience cannot provide a basis for certain knowledge. They thus challenge the Aristotelian conception of knowledge acquisition.

The first trope argues that due to differences among animals, they do not experience (see, hear, smell, feel) the same things in the same way, thus it is possible to make a statement about how a thing appears in each case, but not about how it ‘really’ is: “If, then, owing to the variety in animals their sense-impressions differ, and it is impossible to judge between them, we must necessarily suspend judgement regarding the external underlying objects.”<sup>22</sup>

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16 Hossenfelder, *Stoa, Epikureismus und Skepsis* (cf. note 5), pp. 156 f.

17 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 36–163 (S. E., *Outlines* [cf. note 6], pp. 24/25–92/93).

18 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 164–177 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 94/95–100/101).

19 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 178 f. (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 100/101–102/103).

20 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 187–209 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 106/107–124/125).

21 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 39 (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 26/27).

22 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 40–78, here I, 61 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 26/27–46/47, here p. 36/37).

The next trope expands the argument to the differences among human beings, saying that given that individual perception can differ from human to human, views about the same object can be contradictory.<sup>23</sup>

The third trope points to different perceptions within a particular human being. Since each of the senses has a different nature, the same individual can have contradictory reactions to the same impetus. For example, honey can appear pleasant to taste, but not to see, paintings can seem plastic to sight, but not to the sense of touch. Reason is therefore incapable of making a clear judgement and must exercise restraint: “But if the senses do not apprehend external objects, neither can the mind apprehend them; hence, because of this argument also, we shall be driven, it seems, to suspend judgement regarding the external underlying objects.”<sup>24</sup>

The fourth trope focuses on how different states of being, such as sleeping or waking, drunkenness or sobriety, motion or rest, or the different stages of age and development, causes our perceptions and understanding to vary, making a reliable judgment about the ‘reality status’ of perception impossible, “[. . .] so that as a result of this Mode also we are brought to suspend judgement regarding the nature of external realities.”<sup>25</sup>

The first four tropes illustrate the relativity of sensory perception by the perceiving subject. The next tropes include the relation to what is “judged,” i.e. to the perceived objects, in order to argue against a universal validity of sense experience.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the fifth trope considers the changing positions, distances, and locations that cause a change in the perception of the object. For example, a ship viewed from a distance appears small and stationary, but appears large and in motion from up close; the same tower that seems round from afar round, seems square when near; the same oar that seems to be bent when in the water, is

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**23** See, e.g.: “But if the same objects affect men differently owing to the differences in the men, then, on this ground also, we shall reasonably be led to suspension of judgement. For while we are, no doubt, able to state what each of the underlying objects appears to be, relatively to each difference, we are incapable of explaining what it is in reality” (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 79–90, here I, 87 [S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 46/47–54/55, here pp. 52/53]).

**24** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 91–99, quote I, 99 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 54/55–58/59, quote p. 58/59).

**25** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 100–117, quote I, 117 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 58/59–68/69, quote p. 68/69).

**26** See Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 38 (“The first four of the ten Modes are subordinate to the Mode based on the subject [for the subject which judges is either an animal or a man or a sense, and existent in some condition]: the seventh and tenth Modes are referred to that based on the object judged: the fifth, sixth, eighth and ninth are referred to the Mode based on both subject and object” [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 24/25]).

straight when in the air; the color of a dove's neck changes depending on one's position. Therefore:

[s]ince [...] all apparent objects are viewed in a certain place, and from a certain distance, or in a certain position, and each of these conditions produces a great divergency in the sense-impressions, as we mentioned above, we shall be compelled by this Mode also to end up in suspension of judgement. For in fact anyone who purposes to give the preference to any of these impressions will be attempting the impossible.<sup>27</sup>

The sixth trope argues that an object cannot be perceived in isolation and is always impacted by its surroundings. Thus: “[...] the same sound appears of one sort in conjunction with rare air and of another sort with dense air; and odors are more pungent in a hot bath-room or in the sun than in chilly air; and a body is light when immersed in water but heavy when surrounded by air.”<sup>28</sup>

The seventh trope argues that the quantity and composition of the objects bring about a change in their perception. Individual grains of sand, for instance, are rough to the touch, but a pile of sand is soft; wine has a strengthening effect when consumed in moderation, but an excessive amount weakens the body. Therefore, one is unable to make any absolute assertions concerning the nature of external existing objects.<sup>29</sup>

The eighth trope summarizes the previous arguments and refers in generalizing terms to the relativity of all that is given:

The *Eighth Mode* is that based on relativity; and by it we conclude that, since all things are relative, we shall suspend judgement as to what things are absolutely and really existent. [...] “[A]ll things appear relative” [...] with respect to the thing which judges, [...] and with respect to the concomitant percepts [...]. Do things which exist “differentially” differ from relative things or not? If they do not differ, then they too are relative; but if they differ, then, since everything which differs is relative to something (for it has its name from its relation to that from which it differs), things which exist differentially are relative. [...] [A]ll things are relative[.]<sup>30</sup>

In the ninth trope, it is argued that phenomena are perceived differently depending on their constant or rare occurrence. The sea makes a completely different impression on someone seeing it for the first time as opposed to someone

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**27** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 118–123, quote I, 121 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 68/69–74/75, quote p. 70/71).

**28** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 124–128, quote I, 125 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 72/73–76/77, quote p. 74/75).

**29** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 129–134 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 76/77–78/79).

**30** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 135–140 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 78/79–82/83).



used to its sight. Although the sun is much more impressive than a comet, we are more awestruck by a comet because it is a rare event compared to the sun, which is visible every day. Consequently, no definite statement could be made about the nature of the objects themselves.<sup>31</sup>

The tenth and last trope differs from the preceding ones, inasmuch as its argument is not directed towards the reliability of sensory perception, but rather to ethics, maintaining that in light of the variety of ways of life, customs, laws, mythical beliefs, and dogmatic assumptions of men, it is only possible to make a statement about a particular phenomenon, but not on the nature of things. Therefore, here, too, one could only suspend value judgement.<sup>32</sup>

The five Agrippian modes (or tropes) of skeptical *epoché* (ἐποχή) that follow the list above are understood as a supplement that strengthens the argument for *isosthenia*. These are the modes of dispute or discrepancy (διαφωνία), of infinite regress, of relativity, of hypothesis, and of *diallelus* or circular reasoning. The first trope bases suspension of judgement on the fact that when various opinions exist on a particular matter the result is an undecidable conflict, an insoluble *diaphonia*.<sup>33</sup> The trope on regress *ad infinitum* says that an argument given as proof of a statement itself requires proof, and this again requires a further proof; this series of confirmations can continue endlessly, so that there is no starting-point for establishing an argument.<sup>34</sup> The mode deriving from relativity corresponds to the eighth trope in Aenesidemus' list of the ten tropes of suspension of judgement.<sup>35</sup> The trope of hypothesis relates to the regress *ad infinitum*. It inevitably occurs when

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31 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 141–144 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 82/83–84/85).

32 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 145–163 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 84/85–92/93). The *isosthenias* set up here consist, on the one hand, in the contrasts within the mentioned categories, that is to say, for instance, with regard to habits it was customary for some Ethiopians to tattoo their newborns, but not in other cultures; with regard to the way of life that of the Spartans could be opposed to that of the Italian Greeks, etc.; on the other hand, there is a relativizing contrast between them: for example, custom and legendary belief contradicted one another, when the myths would tell that Kronos had eaten his own children, while it was now customary to take care of children, etc.

33 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 165 (“That based on discrepancy leads us to find that with regard to the object presented there has arisen both amongst ordinary people and amongst the philosophers an interminable conflict because of which we are unable either to choose a thing or reject it, and so fall back on suspension [of judgement]” [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 94/95]).

34 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 166 (“The Mode based upon regress *ad infinitum* is that whereby we assert that the thing adduced as a proof of the matter proposed needs a further proof, and this again another, and so on *ad infinitum*, so that the consequence is suspension [of judgement], as we possess no starting-point for our argument” [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 94/95]).

35 Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 167 (“The Mode based upon relativity, as we have already said, is that whereby the object has such or such an appearance in relation to the subject



the infinite regression is interrupted by a dogmatic positing, which is then used as proof in the argument that follows, despite clearly not having been proven.<sup>36</sup> The mode of *diallelus* occurs when the justification of a statement itself requires the confirmation of this unproven statement.<sup>37</sup>

After naming the five tropes, Sextus gives a demonstration of their application, showing that every object, being either of the senses or of thought, can be referred to these tropes, and he explains the following<sup>38</sup>: the first trope argues that every object was subject to controversy, since some hold that only objects of perception were true, others that only intelligible objects were true, and still others that some sense-objects and some thought-objects were true. This controversy cannot be resolved. The second trope posits that if the truth of an object of the senses was proven by an object of the senses, this would itself require proof, and so on *ad infinitum*; and if an object of the senses were to be proven by an object of thought, which are also subject to dispute, this too would lead to an infinite regression. If the proof for an object of thought is sought from an object of the senses, then “[. . .] since an intelligible was adduced to establish the sensible and a sensible to establish the intelligible, the Mode of circular reasoning is brought in.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, the fifth trope applies. If, in order to escape this conclusion, some postulate without proof was assumed, the inescapable mode of hypothesis (this also harks back to the fourth trope) would be brought in for the opposite or even the subject of inquiry itself could just as well be hypothesized. Finally, which illustrates the third trope, all objects of perception are shown to be relative, since they were relative to those who have the sensations.

In summary, according to the argument of this passage, every perceptible object and/or its qualification can easily be referred to one of the five tropes. Malte Hossenfelder notes that what followed from the demonstrated application

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judging and to the concomitant percepts, but as to its real nature we suspend judgement” [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 94/95]).

**36** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 168 (“We have the Mode based on hypothesis when the Dogmatists, being forced to recede *ad infinitum*, take as their starting-point something which they do not establish by argument but claim to assume as granted simply and without demonstration” [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 94/95]).

**37** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 169 (“The Mode of circular reasoning is the form used when the proof itself which ought to establish the matter of inquiry requires confirmation derived from that matter; in this case, being unable to assume either in order to establish the other, we suspend judgement about both” [S. E., *Outlines*, p. 94/95]). Jonathan Barnes, *The Toils of Scepticism*, Cambridge/New York 1990, provides a detailed study of the Agrippian tropes in Sextus' *Outlines*.

**38** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 169–177 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 94/95–100/101).

**39** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 172 (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 96/97).

was ‘that the five tropes come into effect in a different order and only in connection with each other, so that they basically constitute one single complex trope’ (“[. . .] daß [die fünf Tropen] in einer anderen Reihenfolge und nur im Zusammenhang wirksam sind, so daß sie im Grunde einen einzigen komplexen Tropus ausmachen”).<sup>40</sup> Sextus then goes on to discuss the parallel application, in which an object of thought has to be decided and concludes:

[. . .] objects of thought, or intelligibles, are relative; for they are so named on account of their relation to the person thinking, and if they had really possessed the nature they are said to possess, there would have been no controversy about them. [. . .] [T]he intelligible also is referred to the Five Modes, so that in all cases we are compelled to suspend judgement concerning the object presented.<sup>41</sup>

Whereas the initial ten tropes illustrated the relativity of sensory perception, the above demonstrates that the same difficulty applies to thought objects as well. The result is that, from a skeptical point of view, no reliable knowledge is possible – everything is relative.

Finally, Sextus mentions two further modes of suspension of judgement handed down by the later skeptics. These were thought to introduce *aporia* about everything by showing that, since everything was apprehended either through itself or by means of something else, nothing can be apprehended either by means of itself or through another thing. That nothing can be apprehended by means of itself is clear from the controversy that existed regarding all things. The addition here is that nothing can be apprehended by means of something else, in other words the means by which an object was apprehended must itself always be apprehended by means of something else, so that one is either thrown into a process of regress *ad infinitum* or of *diallelus*.<sup>42</sup>

After presenting the modes of suspension of judgement, Sextus gives a systematic account of the programmatic *φωναί* of the skeptics, the ‘skeptical phrases.’ These are succinct formulations that mark a skeptical position. He emphasizes that these expressions are not to be understood as absolute, for even to them no pure significance can be ascribed, they are only relative to the

<sup>40</sup> Hossenfelder, *Stoa, Epikureismus und Skepsis* (cf. note 5), pp. 158 f., here p. 158 (see also the explanatory notes in his “Einleitung” [cf. note 9], pp. 44 f.).

<sup>41</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 177 (S. E., *Outlines* [cf. note 6], p. 100/101).

<sup>42</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 178 f. (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 100/101–102/103). Between the exposition of these two tropes and the presentation of the ‘skeptical expressions,’ a further list of tropes is given, which, however, are not classified into the tropes of suspension: it is a list of eight arguments by Aesidemus that oppose the concept of causation (I, 180–186). For this, see Hossenfelder, “Einleitung” (cf. note 9), p. 44, n. 76.

skeptics uttering them; they too must be met with indifference. Furthermore, “[. . .] we do not employ them universally about all things, but about those which are non-evident and are objects of dogmatic inquiry; and that we state what appears to us and do not make any positive declarations as to the real nature of external objects [. . .].”<sup>43</sup> Pyrrhonian skepticism is relative and its epistemological effectiveness consists in the rejection of any claim to truth in the field of knowledge by showing *diaphonias* and their un-decidability. The telos of the ‘skeptical phrases,’ as well as that of the ‘tropes of suspension of judgement,’ is *isosthenia*.

The first expression, ‘Not more’ (οὐ μᾶλλον), stands elliptically for ‘Not this more than that, up than down.’ This expression makes clear that it is the expression of a subjective opinion that, in the face of the equipollent conflict of several opinions, will perforce withdraw from taking up a position.<sup>44</sup> Next, Sextus comments on the skeptics’ ‘Non-assertion’ (ἀφασία): the skeptical attitude makes no assertions, either affirmative or negative.<sup>45</sup> Further expressions cited by Sextus are ‘Perhaps’ (τάχα), ‘Possibly’ (ἔξουσι), and ‘Maybe’ (ἐνδέχεται).<sup>46</sup> They indicate the ‘inability to make assertions’ and show the Pyrrhonian attitude of *epoché*, made explicit in the formulation ‘I suspend judgement’ (ἐπέχω).<sup>47</sup> The phrases ‘I determine nothing’ (οὐδὲν ὀρίζω) and ‘All things are undetermined’ (πάντα ἐστὶν ἀόριστα), also illustrate the suspension of judgement: “All the matters of dogmatic inquiry which I have examined appear to me to be such that no one of them is preferable to the one in conflict with it in respect of credibility or incredibility.”<sup>48</sup> The phrases ‘All things are non-apprehensible’ (πάντα ἐστὶν ἀκατάληπτα), ‘I am non-apprehensive’ (ἀκατάληπτῶ), or ‘I do not apprehend’ (οὐ καταλαμβάνω) also express *epoché*, emphasize the subjective-relative aspect, and testify to the indifference with which the skeptic is to act even towards the expressions

<sup>43</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 206 ff., quote I, 208 (S. E., *Outlines* [cf. note 6], p. 122/123).

<sup>44</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 188–191, quote I, 188 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 108/109–110/111, quote p. 108/109).

<sup>45</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 192 f. (“Non-assertion, then, is avoidance of assertion in the general sense in which it is said to include both affirmation and negation, so that non-assertion is a mental condition of ours because of which we refuse either to affirm or to deny anything. [. . .] It must also be borne in mind that what, as we say, we neither posit nor deny, is some one of the dogmatic statements made about what is non-apparent; for we yield to those things which move us emotionally and drive us compulsorily to assent” [S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 110/111–112/113]).

<sup>46</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 194 f. (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 112/113–114/115).

<sup>47</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 196 (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 114/115).

<sup>48</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 197 f., quote I, 198 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 114/115–116/117, quote p. 116/117).

themselves.<sup>49</sup> Finally, the skeptical strategy of *isosthenia* itself is formulated as a phrase: “To every argument an equal argument is opposed” (παντὶ λόγῳ λόγον ἴσον ἀντικείμεθα). This is explained as:

So whenever I say [this] [. . .], what I am virtually saying is “To every argument investigated by me which establishes a point dogmatically, it seems to me there is opposed another argument, establishing a point dogmatically, which is equal to the first in respect of credibility and incredibility” [. . .].<sup>50</sup>

At the end of the first book of the *Hypotyposes*, Sextus differentiates Pyrrhonian skepticism from other schools of philosophy, particularly “Academic philosophy.”<sup>51</sup> This is the second tradition of Greek skepticism known as Academic skepticism that is based on the Socratic dictum ‘I know that I know nothing.’ It was promulgated by Plato’s Academy, and as the ‘New Academy’ under the direction of Arcesilaus of Pitane (c. 315–241 BCE) and Carneades of Cyrene (c. 213–129 BCE), and his pupil Cleitomachus of Carthago (c. 186–109 BCE), as well as the slightly later Philo of Larissa (c. 159–84 BCE).<sup>52</sup> Unlike Pyrrhonism, no unified account of the Academic variant of skepticism has survived. What we do know is mainly based on the writings of M. Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE), especially *Academica*, Diogenes Laertius’ (3rd century CE) *Vitae et sententiae philosophorum*, and Aurelius Augustinus’ (354–430) discussion *Contra Academicos*. Its impact extends into the Early Modern era. In this period, however, the terms ‘skeptical’ and ‘Pyrrhonian’ were used synonymously by most contemporaries, whereas the adherents of Academic skepticism were, in accordance with Sextus Empiricus’ view, not considered skeptics, but rather ‘negative dogmatists.’<sup>53</sup> Sextus states:

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**49** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 200 f. (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 116/117–118/119). Cf.: “‘All the non-apparent matters of dogmatic inquiry which I have investigated appear to me non-apprehensible.’ And this is the utterance not of one who is positively asserting [. . .], but of one who is announcing his own state of mind, ‘wherein’, he says, ‘I conceive that up till now I myself have apprehended nothing owing to the equipollence of the opposites [. . .]’” (I, 200 [p. 118/119]).

**50** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 202–205, quote I, 203 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 118/119–120/121, quote p. 120/121).

**51** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 220–235 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 132/133–144/145). Furthermore, the relevant differences to “Heracleitean philosophy” (I, 210 ff.), “Democritean philosophy” (I, 213 f.), “Cyrenaic doctrine” (I, 215) and “Protagorean doctrine” (I, 216–219) are pointed out.

**52** Cf. Hossenfelder, *Stoa, Epikureismus und Skepsis* (cf. note 5), pp. 191–200, here pp. 191 f.

**53** For the latter, see Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), p. XX; for the aspect of the outlined transmission, see Popkin, *The History of Scepticism*, pp. XVII f.; Olejniczak Lobsien, *Skeptische Phantasie* (cf. note 2), pp. 36 f.; for the reception history, see in detail: Charles B. Schmitt, *Cicero Scepticus: A Study of the Influence of the Academica in the Renaissance*, The Hague 1972.

The adherents of the New Academy, although they affirm that all things are non-apprehensible, yet differ from the Sceptics even, as seems probable, in respect of this very statement that all things are non-apprehensible (for they affirm this positively, whereas the Sceptic regards it as possible that some things may be apprehended) [...].<sup>54</sup>

The significant distinction between these two classical forms of skepticism is that the skepticism of the Academics is universal and absolute, the recognizability of truth is considered impossible in principle. The skepticism of the Pyrrhonians, however, is universal and relative. Sextus Empiricus notes the consequences of this difference:

[...] [T]hey [the Academics] differ from us quite plainly in their judgement of things good and evil. For the Academicians do not describe a thing as good or evil in the way we do; for they do so with the conviction that it is more probable that what they call good is really good rather than the opposite, and so too in the case of evil, whereas when we describe a thing as good or evil we do not add it as our opinion that what we assert is probable, but simply conform to life undogmatically that we may not be precluded from activity. And as regards sense-impressions, we say that they are equal in respect of probability and improbability, so far as their essence is concerned, whereas they assert that some impressions are probable, others improbable. And respecting the probable impressions they make distinctions: some they regard as just simply probable, others as probable and tested, others as probable, tested, and 'irreversible.' [...] Furthermore, as regards the End (or aim of life) we differ from the New Academy; for whereas the men who profess to conform to its doctrine use probability as the guide of life, we live in an undogmatic way by following the laws, customs, and natural affections.<sup>55</sup>

Academic skepticism's rejection of truth and certainty as a matter of principle, as well as its concomitant assumption that even deception cannot in principle be excluded, led to its substitution of the certainty criterion with the criterion of 'credibility' or 'probability' (πιθανότης, *probabilitas*). As a result, both practical action and judgment about the world are oriented according to probabilities. Ideas are distinguished by degrees of credibility and a detailed examination of the respective object allows, to a certain extent, a provisional 'understanding' of reality, but only when the verified is credible or likely as opposed to true rather than false. This modification developed by Academic skepticism has constructive potential in terms of scientific conceptualizations.

Furthermore, the passage quoted above illuminates an aspect of the debate over skepticism that has been present from the beginning, namely, praxis, i.e.,

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<sup>54</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 226 (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 138/139).

<sup>55</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 226–231 (S. E., *Outlines*, pp. 138/139–142/143). For the differences between the two forms of skepticism, see Hossenfelder, "Einleitung" (cf. note 9), pp. 12–30.

the skeptical attitude's compatibility with real (practical) life. Given the skeptics' radical and all-encompassing indifference based on the un-decidability of the equally balanced conflict of opinions, philosophical skepticism has always been prey to the accusation of *apraxia*. To this the Pyrrhonians respond by saying: 'we [...] simply conform to life undogmatically that we may not be precluded from activity' and 'we live in an undogmatic way by following the laws, customs, and natural affections.' Before explaining further, however, it is important to take note of the following foundational passage on the aspect of the "criterion" of skepticism:

The criterion, then, of the Sceptic School is, we say, *the appearance*, giving this name to what is virtually the sense-presentation. For since this lies in feeling and involuntary affecting, it is not open to question. Consequently, no one, I suppose, disputes that the underlying object has this or that appearance; the point in dispute is whether the object is in reality such as it appears to be. Adhering, then, to appearances we live in accordance with the normal rules of life, undogmatically, seeing that we cannot remain wholly inactive.<sup>56</sup>

The decisions that govern practical life – for Pyrrhonian skepticism recognizes 'phenomena' – comply with everyday life experience and the accepted customs and laws (παράδοσις νόμων τε καὶ ἐθῶν), i.e., with the 'tradition of the forefathers.'<sup>57</sup> In this sense, the skeptic does not make his 'own' decisions, which in turn would have to be based on value judgments (*epoché* also relates to the realm of moral values), but bases his actions on what is already accepted, usual, and customary in the society in which he happens to live. He adheres to the given law, follows traditional habits and customs, adopts in a way decisions that others have made, and thus lives a life guided by serenity. In this sense, non-action in daily life implies assuming a particular stance or position, whereas living according to the cultural morals and rules of one's society

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<sup>56</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 22 (S. E., *Outlines* [cf. note 6], p. 16/17; my italics). Sextus then explains the different spheres of everyday life as follows: "And it would seem that this regulation of life is fourfold, and that one part of it lies in the guidance of Nature, another in the constraint of the passions, another in the tradition of laws and customs, another in the instruction of the arts. Nature's guidance is that by which we are naturally capable of sensation and thought; constraint of the passions is that whereby hunger drives us to food and thirst to drink; tradition of customs and laws, that whereby we regard piety in the conduct of life as good, but impiety as evil; instruction of the arts, that whereby we are not inactive in such arts as we adopt. But we make all these statements undogmatically" (I, 23 f. [p. 16/17]).

<sup>57</sup> See Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 17: ἀκολουθοῦμεν γάρ τινη λόγῳ κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον ὑποδεικνύντι ἡμῖν τὸ ξῆν πρὸς τὰ πάτρια ἔθη καὶ τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὰς ἀγωγὰς καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα πάθη/"For we follow a line of reasoning which, in accordance with appearances, points us to a life conformable to the customs of our country and its laws and institutions, and to our own instinctive feelings" (S. E., *Outlines*, p. 12/13).

implies a non-stance. The problematic implications of consistent skepticism and the response of the skeptics appear in condensed form in an account by Diogenes Laertius on the conflict between dogmatists and skeptics.

And when the dogmatists argue that he [the skeptic] may thus live in such a frame of mind that he would not shrink from killing and eating his own father if ordered to do so, the Sceptic replies that he will be able so to live as to suspend his judgement in cases where it is a question of arriving at the truth, but not in matters of life and the taking of precautions. Accordingly we may choose a thing or shrink from a thing by habit and may observe rules and customs.<sup>58</sup>

## 1.2 Skepticism in the Early Modern Period

Ancient skepticism was rediscovered in the Early Modern period. Henri Estienne's first printing of a Latin translation of the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* in 1562, followed, in 1569, by Gentian Hervet's Latin translation of Sextus Empiricus' complete works, resulted in widespread dissemination of Pyrrhonism's most important source. Sextus' writings propelled the renaissance of skepticism in the 16th and 17th centuries, and this in turn had a profound impact on the development of Western culture from this period on. The Greek original was published in 1621. The first vernacular translations of the *Hypotyposesis*, dating to 1590–1591, include a partial translation into English, and a full English version was printed in 1659.<sup>59</sup> This is not to say that Sextus' writings were previously unknown. The Italian humanist intellectuals of the 15th century, for example, were clearly familiar with the work.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola's *Examen vanitatis doctrinae gentium* (published in 1520), is clearly in dialogue with the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, a text he had to have encountered in manuscript form.<sup>61</sup> The writings of Diogenes Laertius, Cicero, Lucian, and Galen, also served as sources of information on skeptical thinking, especially in the first half of the 16th century.<sup>62</sup> Richard Popkin writes: "From the mid-fifteenth century onward, with the discovery of manuscripts

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<sup>58</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* IX,108 (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* [cf. note. 4], p. 200/201).

<sup>59</sup> See Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), pp. 18 f.

<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, Luciano Floridi, *Sextus Empiricus: The Transmission and Recovery of Pyrrhonism*, Oxford/New York 2002, pp. 13–25, regarding the transmission in the Middle Ages; also pp. 25–51, regarding the reception in the Renaissance, and esp. pp. 27–35, regarding the rediscovery by the Italian humanists.

<sup>61</sup> See Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), pp. 19–27.

<sup>62</sup> See pp. 28–38.



of Sextus' writings, there is a revival of interest and concern with ancient skepticism and with the application of its views to the problems of the day."<sup>63</sup>

It is without question that there had been discourses informed by skeptical thinking, or bearing an affinity to skepticism before the Early Modern period.<sup>64</sup> Late medieval debates about nominalism, for example, particularly concepts going back to William of Ockham (1285–1349), foreshadow central (skeptical) foundations of modernity. Foundations that only begin to develop in the 16th century, or rather are re-appropriated within the context of this period.<sup>65</sup> It is precisely this aspect, the 'context,' that needs to be emphasized in order to clarify the specificity of the Early Modern period's reception of skepticism as an integral part of modernity. Nominalism and Ockhamism were ultimately part of an intrasystem conflict, that is, situated in an internal conflict within the system of Christian theology, specifically, scholasticism.

The invention of letterpress printing enabled the rapid and broad dissemination of the skeptics' ideas in the Early Modern period. It was a period characterized by massive uncertainty caused by an onslaught of changes that weakened or profoundly shook the traditional view of the world. Renaissance humanism, the Reformation, and the increasing emancipation of the natural sciences are constitutive elements of this historical context. However, the central event that shook all previous certainties to their core was the discovery of the New World. The Age of Discovery, beginning in the early 15th century, led to profound political, economic, scientific, and cultural transformations, and confronted Europeans with a reality unknown in the theological tradition or ancient texts – a fact that must have been shocking. With these discoveries the Aristotelian system began to

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<sup>63</sup> P. XX.

<sup>64</sup> See, for instance, the study by Dominik Perler, *Zweifel und Gewißheit: Skeptische Debatten im Mittelalter*, Frankfurt am Main 2006.

<sup>65</sup> See, e.g., Floridi's remarks: "The late medieval debate on protoskeptical issues was connected [...] with epistemological investigations resulting from factors such as a critical approach to Aristotle's texts, the spread of logical studies and the parallel debate upon the paradoxes and 'insolubilia', the coming to maturity of the controversy over the nature of universals, and the discussion concerning the implications of the doctrine of the total contingency of the world. Ockhamism, for example, by developing to its final consequences the presupposition of God's boundless omnipotence, could raise a number of doubts about the nature of reality and the power of reason that would find a conceptual echo in Descartes's *Meditationes*. If God was really omnipotent, nothing was necessarily as it was; everything could have been otherwise. The possibility that things may in fact differ completely from the way they appear could be seriously and consistently entertained" (Floridi, *Sextus Empiricus* [cf. note 60], pp. 23 f.). On the role of Ockhamism in the constitution of the modern era, see Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace, Cambridge, MA/London 1999, pp. 145–203 (esp. pp. 160–163 [on the Paris Decree of Bishop Tempier of 1277]).



unravel. The existence of previously unknown continents, the circumnavigation of the globe, and the cosmological discoveries of Copernicus, and later of Galileo and Kepler, contradicted the Aristotelian epistemology that had, in principle, given reliability to sensory perception. The idea that the earth is a sphere and not a disk, that it orbits the sun and not vice versa, radically contradicts perception. These advances in knowledge, together with the uncertainty they engendered, proved fertile ground for the growth of skepticism.

The challenges to Aristotelian authority were not limited to the field of epistemology, but were extended to theology as well. The Thomist tradition of scholasticism (developed by Thomas Aquinas [1225–1274]) was based on Aristotle and the Aristotelian epistemological position that knowledge starts from perception and that the senses, if they are governed by reason, are able to transmit ‘truth’ about the world within the scope of the human possibilities of knowledge. Thomism retained its hold on theology, particularly in 16th and 17th century Spain. The Counter-Reformation, in particular the Council of Trent (1545–1563) reaffirmed and based itself on Thomist ideals. While this ‘Aristotelized’ current of Christianity collides with skepticism and its challenge to the reliability of sensory perception, the Paulinian-Augustinian tradition, the second main current in Christian discourse expressed in Nominalism, Erasmism, and Protestantism, has several affinities to skepticism<sup>66</sup> and thus ultimately echoes the Christian system’s inherent ‘mistrust’ of everything sense-related.

The Reformation is one context in which philosophical skepticism re-emerged in the Early Modern period. Firstly, the Reformers’ questioning of the ecclesiastical authority’s claim to absoluteness as the mediator of a ‘true faith’ already bears skeptical traits. Yet, the prevalence of skepticism in the theological discourses of the 16th and 17th centuries went far beyond this. Accusations of skepticism were used by both ideological camps to disavow their enemies. It became a standard claim against the Reformation by representatives of the Counter-Reformation, but it was also used by Martin Luther (1483–1546) in *De servo arbitrio* [On the Bondage of the Will] (1525), his response to Erasmus of

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<sup>66</sup> The knowledge of the world, which we can obtain through sense perception, is always a vague impression: See, e.g., *1 Cor* 13, 9–12 (“*Ex parte enim cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus. Cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est. [...] Videmus nunc per speculum in ænigmate: tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte: tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum.*”/“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. [...] For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known’ [my italics]). All biblical quotations in English are from the *King James Version*; those in Latin are from the *Vulgata*.

Rotterdam's (1469–1536) polemic against Protestantism *De libero arbitrio* [On Free Will] (1524). Skepticism also served both sides as an instrument of argumentation to strengthen each one's position. The controversy over the *regula fidei* already implies the classic skeptical problem of the 'criterion of truth.' The argument put forward by Erasmus in *De libero arbitrio*, or the attitude he ultimately adopts corresponds to Pyrrhonism,<sup>67</sup> namely that it is not possible to state what is the 'true' truth, as Protestantism does with regard to Scripture. Given that nothing can be known with certainty, said Erasmus, it is therefore better to suspend judgment, rely on tradition, and stick to the guidelines of the Church. Primarily on the basis of this 'conservative-Pyrrhonian attitude,' which regarded tradition and custom as the most appropriate guide for practical life in view of uncertainty, there was, in the 16th century, significant ideological consistency between the 'new skeptics,' the *nouveaux Pyrrhoniens* following Montaigne, as Popkin calls them, and those who advocated for the preservation of traditional Christianity. These Counter-Reformers were soon to abandon this position, however, over the course of the 17th century, in favor of a decidedly anti-skeptical position, as they instead began to insist, frantically, on dogmatic certainty and moral theological principles.<sup>68</sup>

The undisputedly most influential figure in the mediation of ancient skeptical thinking and the formulation of Early Modern skepticism was Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592). In his *History of Scepticism*, Popkin refers to Montaigne, the author of the *Essais* (1580/88/95) as “[...] the thinker who most absorbed the new influence of Sextus Empiricus and who used this material on the intellectual problems of his time [...],” saying further that: “His Pyrrhonism helped to create *la crise pyrrhonienne* of the early seventeenth century. [...] [T]hrough Montaigne, Renaissance skepticism became crucial in the formation of modern philosophy [...].”<sup>69</sup>

Given this pivotal role in the development of skepticism in the Early Modern period, the following section consists of an in-depth discussion on

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<sup>67</sup> Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, *De libero arbitrio διατριβή sive collatio* (1524)/ *A Discussion of Free Will*, trans. Peter Macardle, in: [Erasmus of Rotterdam], *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. William Barker, Alexander Dazell, et al., vol. 76: *Controversies*, ed. Charles Trinkaus, Peter Macardle, and Clarence H. Miller, Toronto/Buffalo/London 1999, pp. 1–89, see esp. Ia 4 ff. (pp. 7 f.).

<sup>68</sup> See Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), pp. 3–16 (among other things, on the controversy between Luther and Erasmus), pp. 57–79 (on the alliance between *nouveaux pyrrhonisme* and orthodox Christian theology), pp. 80–110 (on the growing distancing of the Pyrrhonians in the 17th century and the anti-skeptical reaction [cf. in this respect also the subchapter on Descartes' engagement with skepticism, chap. 1.2.3]).

<sup>69</sup> P. 43.

Montaigne's *Essais*. It is followed by a discussion of the equally influential *Quod nihil scitur* (1581) by Francisco Sánchez (1551–1623). The final section of the chapter explores René Descartes (1596–1650) and his highly influential work to 'overcome of the skeptical crisis.'

### 1.2.1 Michel de Montaigne

"Il n'y a raison qui n'en aye une contraire, dit le plus sage party des philosophes" ['No reason but has its contrary,' says the wisest of the Schools of Philosophy] is the opening line of the 15th chapter of the second book (titled *Que nostre desir s'accroist par la malaisance* [That difficulty increases desire]) of Michel de Montaigne's *Essais*, first published in Bordeaux in 1580. This expression of the Pyrrhonian-skeptical concept of *isosthenia* is one of the text's many explicit references to ancient skepticism (which Montaigne calls here even the 'wisest party of philosophers').<sup>70</sup> Montaigne's reading of Sextus is particularly apparent in his famous essay *Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde* [Apology for Raymond Sebond] (II, 12). In the course of this extensive and complex text, whose starting point is a defense of Raimundus Sabundus' *Theologia naturalis* (1434–1436), but whose further course develops towards a contrary position, central elements of Pyrrhonism are presented, complete with extensive quotations from the *Outlines*. The following passage is one in which Montaigne discusses the unreliability of sensory perception by referring back to Sextus' tropes:

Les sens sont aux uns plus obscurs et plus sombres, aux autres plus ouverts et plus aigus. Nous recevons les choses autres et autres, selon que nous sommes et qu'il nous semble. Or nostre sembler estant si incertain et controversé, ce n'est plus miracle, si on nous dit, que nous pouvons avouer que la neige nous apparoist blanche, mais que d'establir si de son essence elle est telle, et à la verité, nous ne nous en sçaurions respondre: et, ce commencement esbranlé, toute la science du monde s'en va necessairement à vau-l'eau. Quoy, que noz sens mesmes s'entr'empeschent l'un l'autre? une peinture semble eslevée à la veue, au

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<sup>70</sup> Michel de Montaigne, II, 15: *Que nostre desir s'accroist par la malaisance*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais*, ed. Jean Balsamo, Michel Magnien, and Catherine Magnien-Simonin ("Notes de lecture" and "Sentences peintes" ed. by Alain Legros), Paris 2007, pp. 649–655, here p. 649. The English translation is to the edition: Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. and ed. Michael Andrew Screech, London 1991 (II, 15: *That difficulty increases desire*, pp. 694–700, here p. 694). It is worth mentioning that the skeptical principle of *isosthenia*, ΠΑΝΤΙ ΛΟΓΩ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΙΣΟΣ ΑΝΤΙΚΕΙΤΑΙ, along with other guiding principles of Pyrrhonian skepticism, quoted from Sextus' *Hypotyposeis*, also belongs to those sayings and maxims which are burnt into the beams of the famous library in the 'Tour de Montaigne' (cf. "Sentences peintes et autres inscriptions de la bibliothèque de Montaigne," in: Montaigne, *Les Essais*, pp. 1309–1316, here p. 1314 [No. 35]).

maniement elle semble plate[;] [...] le miel est plaisant au goût, mal plaisant à la vue. [...] Or, nostre estat accommodant les choses à soy, et les transformant selon soy, nous ne sçavons plus quelles sont les choses en verité, car rien ne vient à nous que falsifié et alteré par nos sens. Où le compas, l'esquarre et la regle sont gauches, toutes les proportions qui s'en tirent, tous les bastimens qui se dressent à leur mesure, sont aussi necessairement manques et defaillans. L'incertitude de noz sens rend incertain tout ce qu'ils produisent.<sup>71</sup>

'Some people's senses are dullish and dimmer: others are more open and acute. We perceive objects to be like this or that in accordance with our own state and how they seem to us. But *seeming*, for human beings, is so uncertain and so controvertible that is it no miracle if we are told that we may acknowledge that snow seems white to us but cannot guarantee to establish that it is truly so in essence. And once you shake that first principle, all the knowledge in the world in inevitably swept away. What about our very sense hampering each other? A painting may seem to have depth, but feels flat [...] honey is pleasant to taste, unpleasant to look at [...] Now, since our state makes things correspond to itself and transforms them in conformity with itself, we can no longer claim to know what anything truly is: nothing reaches us except as altered and falsified by our senses. When the compass, the set-square and the ruler are askew, all the calculations made with them and all the structures raised according to their measurements, are necessarily out of true and ready to collapse. The unreliability of our senses renders unreliable everything which they put forward.'<sup>72</sup>

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71 Montaigne, II, 12: *Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* (cf. note 70), pp. 458–642, here pp. 636 f.; on the explicit reference to skepticism, see esp. pp. 529–535 (there, e.g., on *epoché*, ataraxy, the 'skeptical expressions,' and the aspect of praxis: "Or cette assiette de leur [des Pyrrhoniens] jugement droicte, et inflexible, recevant tous objects sans application et consentement, les achemine à leur Ataraxie; qui est une condition de vie paisible, rassise, exempte des agitations que nous recevons par l'impression de l'opinion et science que nous pensons avoir des choses" [p. 530]; "Leur mot sacramental, c'est ἐπέχω; c'est à dire je soutiens, je ne bouge. [...] Leur effect [de leurs refrains], c'est une pure, entiere, et tres-parfaicte surceance et suspension de jugement. Ils se servent de leur raison, pour enquerir et pour debattre: mais non pas pour arrester et choisir. Quiconque imaginera une perpetuelle confession d'ignorance, un jugement sans pente et sans inclination, à quelque occasion que ce puisse estre, il conçoit le Pyrronisme" [p. 532]; "Quant aux actions de la vie, ils sont en cela de la commune façon. Ils se prestant et accommodent aux inclinations naturelles, à l'impulsion et contrainte des passions, aux constitutions des loix et des coustumes, et à la tradition des arts[...] [...] Ils laissent guider à ces choses là leurs actions communes, sans aucune opinion ou jugement" [pp. 532 f.]), pp. 555 ff. (there also the much cited "Que sçay-je?" [What do I know?]: "Quand ils [les philosophes Pyrrhoniens] prononcent: J'ignore, ou, Je doute, ils disent que cette proposition s'emporte elle mesme, quant et quant le reste: ny plus ne moins que la rubarbe, qui pousse hors les mauvaises humeurs, et s'emporte hors quant et quant elle mesmes. Cette fantasie est plus seurement conceue par interrogation: Que sçay-je? comme je la porte à la devise d'une balance" [p. 555]), pp. 613–618, pp. 625 f. and pp. 633–639.

72 Montaigne, II, 12: *An Apology for Raymond Sebond*, in: Montaigne, *Essays* (cf. note 70), pp. 489–682, here pp. 676 ff.

Later, after elaborating on the problem of the criterion of knowledge according to the skeptic tradition,<sup>73</sup> the narrating I concludes that there was no foundation of certainty, no basis for being able to judge with certainty, and that the attempt to grasp real being was like attempting to hold water in one's hands:

Finalement, il n'y a aucune constante existence, ny de nostre estre, ny de celuy des objects. Et nous, et nostre jugement, et toutes choses mortelles, vont coulant et roulant sans cesse. Ainsin il ne se peut establir rien de certain de l'un à l'autre, et le jugeant et le jugé estans en continuelle mutation et branle. Nous n'avons aucune communication à l'estre, par ce que toute humaine nature est tousjours au milieu entre le naistre et le mourir, ne baillant de soy qu'une obscure apparence et ombre, et une incertaine et debile opinion. Et si, de fortune, vous fichez vostre pensée à vouloir prendre son estre, ce sera ne plus ne moins que qui voudroit empoigner l'eau: car tant plus il serrera et pressera ce qui de sa nature coule par tout, tant plus il perdra ce qu'il vouloit tenir et empoigner.<sup>74</sup>

“To conclude, there is no permanent existence either in our being or in that of objects. We ourselves, our faculty of judgment and all mortal things are flowing and rolling ceaselessly: noting certain can be established about one from the other, since judged and judging are ever shifting and changing. We have no communication with Being; as human nature is whole situated, forever, between birth and death, it shows itself only as a dark shadowy appearance, an unstable weak opinion. And if you should determine to try and grasp what Man's *being* is, it would be exactly like trying to hold a fistful of water: the

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**73** I.e. in the sense of the infinite regress, cf.: “Pour juger des apparences que nous recevons des sujets, il nous faudroit un instrument judiciaire: pour verifier cet instrument, il nous y faut de la demonstration: pour verifier la demonstration, un instrument, nous voilà au rouet. Puis que les sens ne peuvent arrester nostre dispute, estans pleins eux-mesmes d'incertitude, il faut que ce soit la raison: aucune raison ne s'establira sans une autre raison, nous voylà à reculons jusques à l'infiny” (Montaigne, *Apologie* [cf. note 71] p. 638). Our ideas are derived from sensory perception, as the conclusion goes, but this only indicates how things appear to us, not how they really are (“Nostre fantasie ne s'applique pas aux choses estrangeres, ains elle est conceue par l'entremise des sens; et les sens ne comprennent pas le subject estranger, ains seulement leurs propres passions: et par ainsi la fantasie et apparence n'est pas du subject, ains seulement de la passion et souffrance du sens; laquelle passion, et subject, sont choses diverses: parquoy qui juge par les apparences, juge par chose autre que le subject” [p. 638]), so that a reliable judgment on the world becomes impossible, whether by means of direct sense-experience, or by means of ideas (“Tout ainsi comme, qui ne cognoit pas Socrates, voyant son pourtraict, ne peut dire qu'il luy ressemble. Or qui voudroit toutesfois juger par les apparences: si c'est par toutes, il est impossible, car elles s'entr'empeschent par leurs contrarietez et discrepances, comme nous voyons par experience: Sera ce qu'aucunes apparences choisies reglent les autres? Il faudra verifier cette choisie par une autre choisie, la seconde par la tierce: et par ainsi ce ne sera jamais fait” [p. 639]).

**74** P. 639.

more tightly you squeeze, anything the nature of which is always to flow, the more you will lose what you try to retain in your grasp.<sup>75</sup>

As this quotation shows, skeptical uncertainty does not relate to the outside world alone, but also to the human being who perceives and judges it. Montaigne's *Essais* not only convey the concrete contents of the ancient skeptics' concepts in the sense of a humanistic tradition, but, even more importantly, productively transform them.<sup>76</sup> With his work Montaigne created a new literary form that was to have a profound impact on writing and thinking in the

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75 Montaigne, *An Apology*, p. 680.

76 On the specificity of this 'adaptation'/'transformation' ("An-Verwandlung") in the *Apologie*, see, amongst others, Andreas Kablitz, "Montaignes 'Skeptizismus.' Zur *Apologie de Raimond Sebond (Essais: II, 12)*," in: Gerhard Neumann (ed.), *Poststrukturalismus: Herausforderung an die Literaturwissenschaft*, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 504–539, quote p. 505; '[the transformation consisted in that] Montaigne's appropriation of this skepticism develops from its techniques an instrument with the help of which he also rejects the premises of Pyrrhonism itself; [...] on the other hand, he brings to light the abyss of that discourse which is bound to a Christian concept of truth' ("[Die Transformation besteht darin, daß] [...] Montaignes Aneignung dieser Skepsis aus ihren Techniken ein Instrument entwickelt, mit dessen Hilfe er ebenso den Prämissen des Pyrrhonismus selbst eine Absage erteilt, [...] er zum anderen die Abgründigkeit jenes Diskurses zum Vorschein bringt, der einem christlichen Wahrheitsbegriff verpflichtet ist" [ibid.]). On Montaigne's 'skeptical writing' in the *Essais*, the "aesthetic-productive transformation of the philosophical reference text," see, furthermore, esp. Zepp, *An Early Self* (cf. note 1), pp. 93–115 (quote p. 99, on the *Apologie*: pp. 100 ff.). The scholarly literature on Montaigne's skepticism from a philosophical and philosophico-historical perspective is abundant, as Nicola Panichi notes: "[...] whole generations of scholars have practiced [on Montaigne's scepticism] [...]" ("Montaigne and Plutarch. A Scepticism That Conquers the Mind," in: Paganini/Maia Neto [eds.], *Renaissance Scepticisms* [cf. note 1], pp. 182–211, here p. 182; p. 182 f., n. 1 lists relevant studies); to be mentioned here: the basic chapter in Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), pp. 44–63; Vicente Raga Rosaleny, "The Current Debate About Montaigne's Skepticism," in: Maia Neto/Paganini/Laursen (eds.), *Skepticism in the Modern Age* (cf. note 1), pp. 55–70; Sérgio Cardoso, "On Skeptical Fideism in Montaigne's *Apology for Raymond Sebond*," in: Maia Neto/Paganini/Laursen (eds.), *Skepticism in the Modern Age* (cf. note 1), pp. 71–82; Luiz Eva, "Montaigne's Radical Skepticism," in: Maia Neto/Paganini/Laursen (eds.), *Skepticism in the Modern Age* (cf. note 1), pp. 83–104; Markus Wild, "Montaigne als pyrrhonischer Skeptiker," in: Wild/Spoerhase/Werle (eds.), *Unsicheres Wissen* (cf. note 1), pp. 109–134; as well as the more recent study: Manuel Bermúdez Vázquez, *The Skepticism of Michel de Montaigne*, Cham/Heidelberg/New York 2015. It is not intended to deny here that all Hellenistic philosophical schools had influence on the *Essais* (with regard to the reception of Stoicism, see John D. Lyons, *Before Imagination: Embodied Thought from Montaigne to Rousseau*, Stanford, CA 2005, pp. 32–60; for this aspect in general, see also corresponding passages in Hugo Friedrich's comprehensive study on Montaigne [Hugo Friedrich, *Montaigne*, 3rd ed., Tübingen/Basel 1993 (1st ed. 1949), esp. pp. 60–71, pp. 93–131, pp. 252–260, pp. 301 ff.]). The reception of skepticism, however, has to be considered

modern age. As Christian Schärff states in his study on the history of the essay (*Geschichte des Essays*),

Montaigne war nicht nur der erste, der konsequent auf die innerweltliche Dimension des empirischen Ich abgehoben, nicht nur derjenige, der die antike Skepsis in Gestalt des Pyrrhonismus in die Neuzeit hineintransponiert hat, er war darüber hinaus auf bestimmte Art und Weise der erste, der sich zu einem vollkommen autonomen Schreibakt aufgeschwungen hat. Diese drei Komponenten sind bei ihm untrennbar miteinander verknüpft [...].<sup>77</sup>

‘Montaigne was not only the first one to consistently emphasize the inner-worldly dimension of the empirical I and not only the one who transposed ancient skepticism in the shape of Pyrrhonism into the modern age but, furthermore, he was, in a certain way, the first one to soar up towards an act of writing being entirely autonomous. In Montaigne, these three components are inseparably intertwined.’

In his preface to the reader, Montaigne places the Self at the center of contemplation: “[...] je suis moy-mesmes la matiere de mon livre [...]” [I myself am the subject of my book]; and that this contemplating is characterized by playful irony becomes evident in the sentence: “Que si j’eusse esté parmy ces nations qu’on dict vivre encore sous la douce liberté des premieres loix de nature, je t’asseure que je m’y fusse très-volontiers peint tout entier, et tout nud” [(F)or had I found myself among those peoples who are said still to live under the sweet liberty of Nature’s primal laws, I can assure you that I would most willingly have portrayed myself whole, and wholly naked.]<sup>78</sup> He even, as the

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particular, as it is expressed not only thematically, but is manifest also in the form of the *Essais*, in the writing itself.

**77** Christian Schärff, *Die Geschichte des Essays: Von Montaigne bis Adorno*, Göttingen 1999, pp. 46 f.; see altogether pp. 44–63.

**78** Montaigne, “Au Lecteur,” in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* (cf. note 70), p. 27; Montaigne, “To the Reader,” in: Montaigne, *Essays* (cf. note 70), p. liv. It should be noted here the specific reference to the ‘inhabitants of the New World’ in the prominent essay *Des Cannibales* (I, 30) (but see as well, e.g., III, 6: *Des Coches* [in: Montaigne, *Les Essais*, pp. 941–960, here pp. 952–960] and regarding what is mentioned in the following, II, 11: *De la cruauté* [Montaigne, *Les Essais*, pp. 442–457, here p. 452]). There, the ‘barbaric cruelty’ (cannibalism) of the ‘savages’ is compared with the atrocities committed in the name of the faith during the religious wars raging in France: “Je pense qu’il y a plus de barbarie à manger un homme vivant, qu’à le manger mort, à deschirer par tourmens et par gehennes, un corps encore plein de sentiment, le faire rostir par le menu, le faire mordre et meurtrir aux chiens, et aux pourceaux (comme nous l’avons, non seulement leu, mais veu de fresche memoire, non entre des ennemis anciens, mais entre des voisins et concitoyens, et qui pis est, sous pretexte de pieté et de religion), que de le rostir et manger apres qu’il est trespasé” (I, 30: *Les Cannibales*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais*, pp. 208–221, here p. 216). The exposing of the relativity of what is described as ‘barbaric’ holds subversive implications insofar as, on the one hand, a critical commentary related to actuality is made possible, and on the other hand, a fixed ascription is being dismantled. (In the



following oft-quoted passage indicates, seems to elide the Self and the text: “Je n’ay pas plus fait mon livre que mon livre m’a fait. Livre consubstantiel à son auteur: D’une occupation propre: Membre de ma vie: Non d’une occupation et fin, tierce et estrangere comme tous autres livres” [I have not made my book any more than it has made me – a book of one substance with its author, proper to me and a limb of my life (and whose business is not designed for others, as that of all other books is.)]<sup>79</sup> The intention of the *Essais* is not to popularize a knowledge accumulated from books nor to serve as a philosophical-moral treatise with claims to universal validity. The focus is no longer on the doctrines of ancient or theological authorities functioning as guarantors of truth, but on a self-reflexive subject whose self-questioning, undertaken with a skeptical and serene attitude, leads him to explore a wide variety of topics, through which he is presented with a multitude of opinions that he then integrates into his own thinking process. In the essay called *Des livres* [On Books] the speaking I says with self-irony:

Je ne fay point de doute, qu’il ne m’advienne souvent de parler de choses, qui sont mieux traictées chez les maistres du mestier, et plus veritablement. C’est icy purement l’essay de mes facultez naturelles, et nullement des acquises: Et qui me surprendra d’ignorance, il ne fera rien contre moy: car à peine respondroy-je à autruy de mes discours, qui ne m’en responds point à moy, ny n’en suis satisfait. Qui sera en recherche de science, si la pesche où elle se loge: il n’est rien dequoy je face moins de profession. Ce sont icy mes fantasies, par lesquelles je ne tasche point à donner à connoistre les choses, mais moy: elles me seront à l’aventure connues un jour, ou l’ont autresfois esté, selon que la fortune m’a peu porter sur les lieux, où elles estoient esclaircies. Mais il ne m’en souvient plus. Et si je suis homme de quelque leçon, je suis homme de nulle retention. Ainsi je ne pleuvy aucune certitude, si ce n’est de faire connoistre jusques à quel point monte pour cette heure, la connoissance que j’en ay. Qu’on ne s’attende pas aux matieres, mais à la façon que j’y donne.<sup>80</sup>

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following, however, it also says: “Nous les pouvons donc bien appeller barbares, eu esgard aux regles de la raison, mais non pas eu esgard à nous, qui les surpassons en toute sorte de barbarie” [ibid.]).

**79** Montaigne, II, 18: *Du desmentir*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais*, pp. 702–706, here pp. 703 f.; Montaigne, II, 18: *On giving the lie*, in: Montaigne, *Essays*, pp. 753–758, here p. 755.

**80** Montaigne, II, 10: *Des livres*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* (cf. note 70), pp. 427–441, here pp. 427 f. See in this regard as well: “Les autres forment l’homme, je le recite: et en represente un particulier, bien mal formé: et lequel si j’avoy à façonner de nouveau, je ferois vrayement bien autre qu’il n’est: meshuy c’est fait. [. . .] Le monde n’est qu’une branloire perenne [. . .]. La constance mesme n’est autre chose qu’un branle plus languissant. Je ne puis assseurer mon object [. . .]. Je ne peinds pas l’estre, je peinds le passage [. . .]. [. . .] Je n’enseigne point, je raconte” (Montaigne, III, 2: *Du repentir*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais*, pp. 844–859, here pp. 844 ff.).



'I do not doubt that I often happen to speak of things which are treated better in the writings of master-craftsmen, and with more authenticity. What you have here is purely an essay of my natural, not at all of my acquired, abilities. Anyone who catches me out in ignorance does me no harm: I cannot vouch to other people for my reasonings: I can scarcely vouch for them to myself and am by no means satisfied with them. If anyone is looking for knowledge let him go where such fish are to be caught: there is nothing I lay claim to less. These are my own thoughts, by which I am striving to make known not matter but me. Perhaps I shall master that matter one day; or perhaps I did so one when Fortune managed to bring me to places where light is thrown on it. But I no longer remember anything about that. I may be a man of fairly wide reading, but I retain nothing. So I guarantee you nothing for certain, except my making known what point I have so far reached in my knowledge of it. Do not linger over the matter but over my fashioning of it.'<sup>81</sup>

What is central to the skeptic project of the *Essais* is the movement, the process of thinking, rather than its outcome. The narrative dynamics of the *Essais* are characterized by structures of *isosthenia* and suspension of judgment; not the assertion of certainty and assurance of truth, but the renouncing of the search for truth in a reflected way, 'attempts' as the title (*essais*) states. The last essay of the second book refers to this writing process as *fagotage* (meaning non-structured and piecemeal, fagot, bundle). It is this process that results in the sense of openness and lack of dogmatism for which the work is famous, and which not least is also reflected in the well-known genesis and edition history of the content-wise and formally heterogeneous project of the *Essais*.<sup>82</sup>

In his study on Montaigne (which also examines the 'motion' [*mouvement*] present in the *Essais*), Jean Starobinski examines the idea of the 'return to oneself' advocated in Montaigne's writing, particularly in reference to the chapter *De la solitude* (I, 38). According to Starobinski, this 'return to oneself' differed

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<sup>81</sup> Montaigne, II, 10: *On Books*, in: Montaigne, *Essays* (cf. note 70), pp. 457–471, here pp. 457 f.

<sup>82</sup> "Ce fagotage de tant de diverses pieces, se fait en ceste condition, que je n'y mets la main, que lors qu'une trop lasche oysiveté me presse, et non ailleurs que chez moy. Ainsin il s'est basti à diverses poses et intervalles, comme les occasions me detiennent ailleurs par fois plusieurs moys. Au demeurant, je ne corrige point mes premieres imaginations par les secondes, ouy à l'aventure quelque mot: mais pour diversifier, non pour oster. Je veux représenter le progrès de mes humeurs, et qu'on voye chaque piece en sa naissance" (Montaigne, II, 37: *De la ressemblance des enfans aux peres*, in: *Les Essais* [cf. note 70], pp. 796–826, here p. 796). The first edition of 1580 – in 1572, in the year of the so-called St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Montaigne had begun with the work on the *Essais* – comprised 94 chapters in two books, the fourth edition published in 1588 was supplemented by new essays in a third book (now a total of 107 chapters) as well as by numerous corrections and additions to existing texts; until his death in 1592, Montaigne incorporated further additions and changes into his hand copy, the famous *Exemplaire de Bordeaux*; a final version was published posthumously by his adopted daughter Marie de Gournay in 1595 (this is also the basis of the edition used here).

from the Christian-Augustinian turning inward and did not correspond to the traditional idea of the *vita contemplativa* (contemplative life) as opposed to the *vita activa* (active life). The purpose of the latter was to enable one to be ready to listen to the voice of God, and by internalizing the submission to transcendence and the hope for salvation, whereas in Montaigne's *Essais* the inner 'conversation' was a self-sufficing end in itself.<sup>83</sup> The *Essais* launched a tradition of secular self-representation. In this respect, they also differ from confessional literature, a genre begun with Augustine's *Confessiones* (c. 397–400), in which self-knowledge is considered the path to a knowledge of God, a resting in God.

It is important to re-state here that the 16th century mindset that engaged with the ancient pagan philosophical skepticism was one shaped by Christianity and its internal pluralization. This period, particularly in France, saw an ever-escalating and bloody religious conflict that degenerated into a series of confessional civil wars. Montaigne refers to these conflicts throughout his work<sup>84</sup> and in fact died before they were resolved. Despite this, Montaigne's skepticism does not amount to a rejection of faith, but, in the sense of a Pyrrhonian conservatism, it 'comes to terms' with the given, in this case with traditional Christianity.<sup>85</sup> This

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**83** Jean Starobinski, *Montaigne in Motion* [*Montaigne en mouvement*, 1982], trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago/London 1985, p. 12 ("Montaigne's interpreters have in general been clearly aware of how this kind of 'turning inward,' derived from the teachings of the Greek and Latin philosophers, differed from that urged by Christian piety and especially by Augustinian preaching: the latter advised turning inward in order to heed the voice of God and submit to his judgment, internalizing the individual's submission to the transcendental. By contrast, the withdrawal desired by Montaigne has as its only purpose the discovery of a conversational mirror within oneself; it aims to restore full powers of judgment to the mortal individual, dividing the self between two equal powers and rejecting the claims of any outside authority. Although humanism and religion both recommend interior 'conversation' and *reappropriation*, from the standpoint of the believer this is but a first step, to be followed by obedience to divine authority and the hope of salvation. For the humanist who has taken his distance from religion, the inner reappropriation, if successful, is sufficient unto itself. The solitude sanctioned by humanism is not to be confused with the traditional *vita contemplativa*, which in the religious scheme of things was opposed to the *vita activa*, or life in the world."). Regarding this, see also already Zepp, *An Early Self* (cf. note 1), p. 103 (on *De la solitude* in the following; pp. 103–106).

**84** See one of the many examples above note 78.

**85** Cf.: "Car, quelque apparence qu'il y ayt en la nouvelleté, je ne change pas aisément, de peur que j'ay de perdre au change: Et puis que je ne suis pas capable de choisir, je prens le choix d'autrui, et me tiens en l'assiette où Dieu m'a mis. Autrement je ne me sçauroy garder de rouler sans cesse. Ainsi me suis-je, par la grace de Dieu, conservé entier, sans agitation et trouble de conscience, aux anciennes creances de nostre religion, au travers de tant de sectes et de divisions que nostre siecle a produittes" (Montaigne, II, 12: *Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde* [cf. note 71], p. 604); regarding the aspect of 'skeptical practice,' that is, following the rules and customs customary in the society in which one lives, see also: "[. . .] le sage doit au

is evident in the essay *Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde* discussed above, where he uses the argumentative instruments of Pyrrhonian skepticism to criticize any attempt to prove the truth of Christian beliefs through reason. Montaigne's skepticism has thus been termed, variously, 'Catholic Pyrrhonism,' 'skeptical Fideism,' or 'conformist Fideism,' and his writings have been read as representative, if not defending, a specific form of Fideism.<sup>86</sup> This aspect will not be discussed further here, especially as it is problematic to insinuate that the author would have a certain intention in this regard. What is clear, however, is that the skepticism expressed in Montaigne's work found its way into the theological discourse and was taken up as a welcome argumentative tool by representatives of the Counter-Reformation in their battle of words with the Reformers.<sup>87</sup>

In the context of a dynamic, instable, pluralizing world without binding variables to provide orientation, the *Essais* present a subjective-skeptical perspective; they do not attempt to systematize the observed and experienced diversity but rather appear to accept with composure the multiplicity and

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dedans retirer son ame de la presse, et la tenir en liberté et puissance de juger librement des choses: mais quant au dehors, qu'il doit suivre entierement les façons et formes receues. La societé publique n'a que faire de nos pensées: mais le demeurant, comme nos actions, nostre travail, nos fortunes et nostre vie, il la faut prester et abandonner à son service et aux opinions communes [...]. Car c'est la regle des regles, et generale loy des loix, que chacun observe celles du lieu où il est" (Montaigne, I, 23: *De la coustume, et de ne changer aisement une loy receue*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* [cf. note 70], pp. 111–127, here pp. 122 f.). See, however, as well Zepp, *An Early Self* (cf. note 1), p. 102 ("[...] [T]he writing 'I' [of the *Apologie*] appears as a Christian and a Catholic. However, this decision does not result from (ethnic) affiliation or a pre-rational clinging to tradition, but rather from the lack of a rationally based alternative option, which becomes evident in the process of writing. The textual 'I' in the *Essais* is based on the impossibility of a decision for anything other than the given.").

**86** See, among others, Friedrich, *Montaigne* (cf. note 76); Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), p. 47 and *passim* ("The 'Apologie' unfolds in Montaigne's inimitable rambling style as a series of waves of scepticism, with occasional pauses to consider and digest various levels of doubt but with the overriding theme an advocacy of a new form of fideism – Catholic Pyrrhonism."); Terence Penelhum, *God and Scepticism: A Study on Scepticism and Fideism*, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster 1983, pp. 18–31 ('conformist fideism'); taking up the discussion, see, e.g.: Cardoso, "On Skeptical Fideism in Montaigne's *Apology for Raymond Sebond*" (cf. note 76); for readings of the *Apologie* problematizing this complex of issues, see, e.g., as well the publication by A. Kablitz mentioned in note 76; reference should also be made to the abundance of secondary literature about Montaigne's skepticism mentioned there (note 76).

**87** Regarding this aspect, see once more Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), pp. 57–79 (who also makes it clear himself: "Regardless of what personal convictions Montaigne may or may not have had, his writings were to play an enormous role in the intellectual world of the seventeenth century" [p. 57]) and see chap. 1.2 above.

inconstancy of the world, opinions, people, and the self.<sup>88</sup> One could describe the skeptical project of the *Essais* as translating the abstract notions ‘relativity of perception,’ ‘relativity of judgments,’ ‘suspension of certainty,’ and ‘suspension of judgement’ into a serene, ironic, unsystematic, self-referred narration, which integrates observations of the world and real historical references into the process of narrating and thinking together with historical anecdotes, literary and biblical quotations, and philosophical aphorisms. The lack of certainty and the experience of contingent existence do not lead to despair, nor is there an attempt to ‘overcome’ skeptical doubt by means of reason or faith. Instead, it is celebrated in a playful way. Considering a perception of truth as relative and not absolute, a stance that ultimately came to include traditional moral theology,<sup>89</sup> the human being’s understanding of himself appears as an independent (purely worldly) ethical dimension:

Je propose une vie basse, et sans lustre: C’est tout un. On attache aussi bien toute la philosophie morale, à une vie populaire et privée, qu’à une vie de plus riche estoffe: *Chaque homme porte la forme entiere, de l’humaine condition*. [. . .] J’ay mes loix et ma cour, pour juger de moy, et m’y adresse plus qu’ailleurs.<sup>90</sup>

‘I am expounding a lowly, lacklustre existence. You can attach the whole of moral philosophy to a commonplace private life just as well as to one of richer stuff. *Every man bears the whole Form of the human condition*. [. . .] I have my own laws and law-court to pass judgement on me and I appeal to them rather than elsewhere.’<sup>91</sup>

The presence of skepticism in Montaigne’s writing is particularly attested to in a passage from the 26th chapter of the first book. This somewhat short essay,

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**88** For this aspect, see, e.g.: Montaigne, II, 1: *De l’inconstance de nos actions*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* (cf. note 70), pp. 351–358 (“Toutes les contrarietez s’y trouvent, selon quelque tour et en quelque façon: Honteux, insolent, chaste, luxurieux, bavard, taciturne, laborieux, delicat, ingenieux, hebeté, chagrin, debonaire, menteur, veritable, sçavant, ignorant, et liberal, et avare, et prodigue: tout cela, je le vois en moy aucunement, selon que je me vire: et quiconque s’estudie bien attentivement trouve en soy, voire et en son jugement mesme, cette volubilité et discordance. Je n’ay rien à dire de moy, entierement, simplement, et solidement, sans confusion et sans meslange, ny en un mot” [p. 355]; “Nous sommes tous de lopins, et d’une texture si informe et diverse, que chaque piece, chaque moment, fait son jeu. Et se trouve autant de difference de nous à nous mesmes, que de nous à autrui” [p. 357]).

**89** Regarding this, see, e.g., Montaigne, II, 12: *Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde* (cf. note 71), pp. 460–465, p. 527, pp. 607–611; as well as the *essai* quoted in the following.

**90** Montaigne, III, 2: *Du repentir* (cf. note 80), pp. 845–848 (my italics).

**91** Montaigne, III, 2: *On repenting*, in: Montaigne, *Essays* (cf. note 70), pp. 905–921, here pp. 908–911.

though thematically close to the philosophically dense *Apologie*, is entitled *C'est folie de rapporter le vray et le faux à nostre suffisance* [It is madness to judge the true and the false from our own capacities],<sup>92</sup> which clearly reflects characteristics of Pyrrhonian criticism. The text begins by naming (in a *topos*-like way) two opposing human flaws that affect the ability to judge: simplicity and ignorance on the one hand and, on the other, the presumption that those things that do not seem probable are therefore false.<sup>93</sup>

Montaigne then uses a variety of examples to develop the idea of the credibility or non-credibility of those things that appear to be inaccessible to reason, implicitly referring to central aspects of the confessional debate of the time (in particular the ‘miracle’ of transubstantiation as the central dogma of Catholicism). The essay ends with the following passage:

Et d'avantage, je le puis dire pour l'avoir essayé, ayant autrefois usé de cette liberté de mon choix et triage particulier, mettant à nonchaloir certains points de l'observance de nostre Eglise, qui semblent avoir un visage ou plus vain ou plus estrange, venant à en communiquer aux hommes sçavans, j'ay trouvé que ces choses là ont un fondement massif et tressolide: et que ce n'est que bestise et ignorance, qui nous fait les recevoir avec moindre reverence que le reste. Que ne nous souvient il combien nous sentons de contradiction en nostre jugement mesmes? combien de choses nous servoyent hier d'articles de foy, qui nous sont fables aujourd'huy? La gloire et la curiosité, sont les deux fleaux de nostre ame. Cette cy nous conduit à mettre le nez par tout, et celle là nous defend de rien laisser irresolu et indecis.<sup>94</sup>

‘Moreover I can say that for having assayed it; in the past I made use of that freedom of personal choice and private selection of in order to neglect certain details in the observance of our Church because they seemed to be rather odd or rather empty; then, when I came to tell some learned men about it, I discovered that those very practices were based on massive and absolutely solid foundations, and that it is only our ignorance and animal-stupidity which make us treat them with less reverence than all the rest. Why cannot we remember all the contradictions which we feel within our own judgment, and how many things which were articles of belief for us yesterday and fables for us today? Vainglory and curiosity are the twin scourges of our souls. The former makes

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**92** Montaigne, I, 26: *C'est folie de rapporter le vray et le faux à nostre suffisance*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* (cf. note 70), pp. 185–189.

**93** “Ce n'est pas à l'aventure sans raison, que nous attribuons à *simplesse et ignorance*, la facilité de croire et de se laisser persuader [. . .]. [. . .] Mais aussi de l'autre part, c'est une *sotte presumption*, d'aller desdaignant et condamnant pour faux, ce qui ne nous semble pas vray-semblable [. . .]” (p. 185; my italics).

**94** P. 189.

us stick out noses into everything: the latter forbids us to leave anything unresolved or undecided.<sup>95</sup>

The narrating I reports that once he himself had neglected certain points of church praxis and/or dogma that seemed to him vain or strange, only to realize, after discussing the matter with learned men, that those things indeed had a solid and strong foundation and that it was only because of our stupidity and ignorance that we received them with less reverence than others (aspects of the doctrine of the faith). However, certainty is only supposedly gained here; this position is not the last word, but it is *isosthenia* and *epoché*, the skeptical suspension of judgement resulting from it, that are expressed at the end of the essay. It is the shift into a mode of questioning (*Que sçais-je?* [What do I know?]) that expresses the skeptical attitude: ‘Que ne nous souvient il combien nous sentons de contradiction en *nostre* jugement mesmes? combien de choses nous servoyent hyer d’articles de foy, qui nous sont fables aujourd’huy?’ [Why do we not consider what contradictions we find in our own judgments; how many things were yesterday articles of *our* faith, that today appear (*to us*) no other than fables?]. The decisive factor here is that the articulated doubt concerns not only the writing ‘I,’ but, by using the plural (*nous*), is extended to include the *hommes sçavans* [the learned men] that had before been the former guarantors of dogmatic certainty. The text then ends with a formulaic, epistemological (and, in the context of the *Essays*’ enterprise, also self-ironic) statement that presumption (*gloire*) and curiosity (*curiosité*) were scourges of our soul (*fleaux de nostre ame*).<sup>96</sup>

### 1.2.2 Francisco Sánchez’ *Quod nihil scitur*

In Lyon in 1581, only a year after the first publication of the immensely successful *Essais* (which by 1669 had gone through no less than 37 editions), appeared the second major text of importance for Early Modern skepticism, entitled, programmatically and provocatively, *Quod nihil scitur* [That Nothing is Known]. This philosophical treatise was written by Francisco Sánchez (also: Sanches, 1551–1623), called ‘the Skeptic’ by his contemporaries. Sánchez lived in Toulouse,

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<sup>95</sup> Montaigne, I, 27: *That it is madness to judge the true and the false from our own capacities*, in: Montaigne, *Essays* (cf. note 70), pp. 200–204, here pp. 457 f.

<sup>96</sup> See also already Zepp, *An Early Self* (cf. note 1), pp. 99 f.

where he was a practicing physician as well as a professor of philosophy and medicine at the university.<sup>97</sup> Montaigne's *Essais* constitute a separate literary

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97 Whether Franciscus Sanchez – this is the name given in his publications, all of which were written in Latin – is to be regarded as a Spaniard (Sánchez) or a Portuguese (Sanches) is a controversial question and is therefore usually reflected in the spelling of his name. (Even though the Spanish spelling is used here, this is not intended to be a determination in the sense of a ‘national origin.’ *Quod nihil scitur* bears witness to the prevalence of skepticism in the second half of the 16th century as a Europe-wide phenomenon.) Sánchez was born in the Spanish-Portuguese border region (in Tuy, on the Spanish-Galician side of the Miño border river, or in Braga, on the territory of Portugal) presumably into a Spanish family of *conversos*, who emigrated to Bordeaux in the early 1560s (probably as a result of the increasingly repressive approach of the Portuguese authorities that culminated with the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal in 1536). There, Sánchez attended the famous Collège de Guyenne, where Montaigne had studied twenty years earlier. (Although a distant relationship between the two, through Montaigne's mother's family, has been posited, there is no evidence that they knew each other or exchanged ideas together. It is likely, however, that Montaigne knew of Sánchez' text, even if he does not explicitly mention it, at the time of the publication of the second edition of the *Essais*.) Sánchez studied medicine in Rome, among other places, and obtained his doctorate at the famous medical faculty of the University of Montpellier. Although teaching there, he did not receive the hoped-for professorship. He left the Huguenot Montpellier, marked by religious conflict, and settled in the Catholic city of Toulouse in 1575. For thirty years he worked as a doctor at the Hôtel-Dieu, the municipal hospital; his university activities in Toulouse began in 1585, when he was offered the chair of philosophy, and where from 1612 until his death in 1623 he held a professorship in medicine. In addition to his principal skeptical work, *Quod nihil scitur*, which was already available in manuscript form in 1574 (thus in close proximity to Montaigne's *Essais*), Sánchez wrote several philosophical as well as medical treatises; in 1636, the collected writings published by his sons appeared in Toulouse (*Opera Medica: His iuncti sunt tractatus quidam philosophici non insubtiles*). Worth mentioning is the *Epistula ad Clavium* (Letter to Christoph Clavius [1538–1612], one of the famous astronomers and mathematicians of the 16th century), a text that appears to be particularly interesting with regard to Descartes: Sánchez calls himself ‘Carneades Philosophus’ there, thus giving himself the name of one of the most important ancient Academic skeptics (Carneades of Cyrene) and critically examining the claims to certainty of mathematics. Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), in his *Dictionnaire*, considered Sánchez a ‘great skeptic’ or ‘great Pyrrhonian’ – the terms were used synonymously in the 16th and 17th centuries: “SANCHEZ (François) [...] C'étoit un gran Pyrrhonien [...]” [He was a great Pyrrhonian] (Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 4 vols., 5th ed. Amsterdam 1740 [1st ed. 1697 (2 vols.)], vol. 4, pp. 133 f.). The dissemination of *Quod nihil scitur* throughout Europe is attested to not only by the number of editions (among others, Frankfurt 1618; Rotterdam 1649) but also by the fact that the text was the subject of much anti-skeptical discourse in the 17th century (see for example, these refutation attempts published in Germany: Ulrich Wild, *Quod aliquid scitur*, Leipzig 1664; Daniel Hartnack, *Sanchez aliquid sciens*, Szczecin 1665); a possible relation to Descartes is still to be discussed. This outline is based on the accounts in: Manuel Bermúdez Vázquez, *La fuerza de la duda: Francisco Sánchez el escéptico*, Madrid 2013, pp. 17–35; Kaspar Howald, “Einleitung,” in: Francisco Sánchez, *Quod nihil scitur/Daß nichts gewußt wird*, introd. and ed. Kaspar Howald, trans. Damian Caluori and Kaspar Howald, Latin



genre that conveyed, particularly in the *Apologie*, the ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ of Pyrrhonian skepticism in an Early Modern, Christian context, and examined a variety of issues – philosophical, theological, scientific, ethical or political – through a skeptical lens. Sánchez, however, focused exclusively on the epistemological dimension. His treatise was written in Latin and intended for an academic audience. It had a radically anti-Aristotelian and decidedly anti-scholastic impetus, but it was also, as scholarship repeatedly indicates, “a philosophical work in its own right.”<sup>98</sup>

The text’s ‘Preface to the Reader’ opens with a quotation of the first sentence of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: “Innatum hominum velle scire: paucis concessum scire velle: paucioribus scire” [‘Mankind has an inborn desire to know’; to but a few has been granted the knowledge of how to *desire*; and to fewer still has it been granted to *know*].<sup>99</sup> Given that the goal of the treatise appears to be

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text ed. Sergei Mariev, Hamburg 2007, pp. IX–CLXIII, esp. pp. IX–XXXIX; Elaine Limbrick, “Introduction,” in: Francisco Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)*, ed. Elaine Limbrick, Latin text ed. and trans. Douglas F. S. Thomson, Cambridge/New York/New Rochelle 1988, pp. 1–88, esp. pp. 1–24, pp. 47–50, pp. 84–87; Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), pp. 38–43; see also the chapter on Sánchez in: Eloy Bullón y Fernández, *Los precursores españoles de Bacon y Descartes*, Salamanca 1905, pp. 153–192, here pp. 153–160; for a comparison Montaigne/Sánchez, see, e.g., Gianni Paganini, *Skepsis: Le débat des modernes sur le scepticisme*, Paris 2008, pp. 15–60 (“Chap. I: La redécouverte du phénomène – Montaigne vs Sanches”); see also with regard to the impact of being a *converso* on Sánchez’ (and Montaigne’s) thinking (“It seems that it was in Bordeaux, in the avant-garde intellectual atmosphere of the newly arrived *converso* population – particularly at the Collège de Guyenne – that the skeptical problem was first identified and properly formulated, thus unleashing the skeptical crisis that would rage through seventeenth century Europe.”) and for an analysis of Sánchez’ philosophy with respect to elements referring to a Jewish tradition: Faur, *In the Shadow of History* (cf. note 1), pp. 87–109 (quote p. 109).

<sup>98</sup> Here in Popkin’s formulation (*The History of Scepticism* [cf. note 1], p. 39).

<sup>99</sup> The Latin text as well as its English translation are quoted from the edition: Francisco Sanches (Franciscus Sanchez), *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)*, ed. Elaine Limbrick, ed. Latin text and trans. Douglas F.S. Thomson, Cambridge/New York/New Rochelle 1988, here p. 92/p. 166 (“Franciscus Sanchez Lectori S[alutem],” pp. 92–95; “Francisco Sanches to the Reader, Greetings,” pp. 166–172; italics in the original). Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 980a 21 (I, 1) (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. William D. Ross, in: [Aristotle], *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 6th ed., 2 vols., Princeton, NJ 1995, vol. 2, pp. 3343–3716, p. 3343: “All men by nature desire to know.”). Montaigne also begins the last of his *Essais*, which discusses ‘experience,’ with this quote of Aristotle (Montaigne, III, 13: *De l’Experience*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* [cf. note 70], pp. 1111–1167, here p. 1111: “Il n’est desir plus naturel que le desir de cognoissance.”). It is this *essai* that is thought to be an indication that Montaigne knew *Quod nihil scitur*. Furthermore, reference has been made to the similar empirical-like conclusion (which is still to be explained in regard to Sánchez) that concrete experience could provide a possible ground for knowledge (see



to undermine Aristotelian epistemology (and thus the basis of contemporary science and guarantee of human cognitive ability implicit in the quote from Aristotle), it must be read as ironic-programmatic. Sánchez then goes on to inform his readers that his thirst for knowledge, which he had from very early on, was quickly stymied by the lack of satisfactory results. Having examined the teachings of the ancients and of his contemporaries, he “[...] found not one who gave an honest and full report of the judgments one ought to form concerning facts (*res*).” The account of his experience and his subsequent reaction show obvious parallels to the self-presentation given in Descartes’ *Discours*:

Subsequently I withdrew into myself; I began to question everything, and to examine the facts themselves as though no one had ever said anything about them, which is the proper method of acquiring knowledge. I broke everything down into its ultimate first principles. Beginning, as I did, my reflection at this point, the more I reflected the more I doubted. I was incapable of grasping anything in its whole nature. I was in despair, but I still persisted.<sup>100</sup>

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Limbrick, “Introduction” [cf. note 97], pp. 80 f. with notes 41 and 43; Howald, “Einleitung” [cf. note 97], pp. XVI f. with note 15).

**100** Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)* (cf. note 99), p. 167. “A prima vita, Naturae contemplationi addictus minutim omnia inquirebam. Et quâvis initio adidus animus sciendi quocumque oblato cibo contentus esset utcumque: post modicum tamen tempus indigestione praeiens reuomere coepit omnia. Quaerebamque iam tunc quid illi darem quod & perfecte amplecteretur, & fruere absolute: nec erat qui desiderium expleret meum. Euoluebam praeteritorum dicta, tentabam praesentiū corda: idem respondebant: quod tamen mihi satisfaceret, omnino nihil. [...] nullū tamen inueni, qui quid de rebus iudicandum sincere, absoluteque proferret. Ad me proinde memetipsum retuli; omniaque in dubium reuocans, ac si a quopiam nil unquam dictum, res ipsas examinare coepi: qui verus est sciendi modus. Resoluebam usque ad extrema principia. Inde initium contemplationis faciēs, quo magis cogito magis dubito: nil perfecte complecti possum. Despero. Persisto tamen” (p. 92). Descartes’ engagement with skepticism will be discussed in detail in the following sub-chapter; however, since the explanations there do not explicitly include the above-mentioned (more extensive) *Discours* I, exemplary excerpts are quoted here for illustration: “J’ai été nourri aux lettres dès mon enfance, et pource qu’on me persuadait que, par leur moyen, on pouvait acquérir une connaissance claire et assurée de tout ce qui est utile à la vie, j’avais un extrême désir de les apprendre. Mais, sitôt que j’eus achevé tout ce cours d’études, au bout duquel on a coutume d’être reçu au rang des doctes, je changeai entièrement d’opinion. Car je me trouvais embarrassé de tant de doutes et d’erreurs, qu’il me semblait n’avoir fait autre profit, en tâchant de m’instruire, sinon que j’avais découvert de plus en plus mon ignorance. [...]”; “Mais après que j’eus employé quelques années à étudier [...] dans le livre du monde et à tâcher d’acquérir quelque expérience, je pris un jour résolution d’étudier aussi en moi-même, et d’employer toutes les forces de mon esprit à choisir les chemins que je devais suivre. [...]” (René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, in: René Descartes, *Œuvres*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 13 vols., Paris 1897–1913, vol. 6 [1902]: *Discours de la Méthode & Essais*, pp. 1–78, here p. 4 and pp. 10 f.)/“From my childhood

It must be pointed out here that while for Descartes self-referentiality and ‘hyperbolic doubt’ are the basis for ‘overcoming’ doubt reached by the *cogito*, Sánchez’ *quo magis cogito magis dubito* [the more I think, the more I doubt] reads like a skeptical counter-argument *ante litteram*. The quote articulates a skeptical attitude in the sense of doubt about the possibility of finding a ‘right method of (possible) knowledge’ and not, as postulated by Descartes, the certainty of actually having found it.<sup>101</sup>

After clarifying his deliberate turning away from authorities as guarantors of certainty and from the method of scholastic reasoning (logic only results in “a maze of words, without any foundation in the truth”<sup>102</sup>), and having addressed the reader as an ally in conceiving of *res* (things) that is exclusively “under the guidance of sense-perception and reason” and in “doubts concerning the nature of things,”<sup>103</sup> the intention of the quest is made explicit:

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I have been nourished upon letters, and because I was persuaded that by their means one could acquire a clear and certain knowledge of all that is useful in life, I was extremely eager to learn them. But as soon as I had completed the course of study at the end of which one is normally admitted to the ranks of the learned, I completely changed my opinion. For I found myself beset by so many doubts and errors that I came to think I had gained nothing from my attempts to become educated but increasing recognition of my ignorance. [...] ‘But after I had spent some years pursuing these studies in the book of the world and trying to gain some experience, I resolved one day to undertake studies within myself too and to use all the powers of my mind in choosing the paths I should follow [...]’ (René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, in: [René Descartes], *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, 3 vols., Cambridge/London/New York 1984–1991, vol. 1, pp. 111–151, here p. 112 and p. 116). Howald points to the fact that the two texts belong to the genre of intellectual autobiography dating back to Galen and their strategic self-representation (Howald, “Einleitung” [cf. note 97], p. LXIII).

**101** For this aspect, see also Howald, “Einleitung” (cf. note 97), pp. LXIII f.

**102** Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)* (cf. note 99), p. 168; “[...] ex his alias inferunt: & ex his iterū alias; nil in rebus perpendentes, quousque labyrinthum verborum absque aliquo fundamento veritatis produxere: ex quo tandem non res intelligas naturales; sed nouarum rerum, fictionumque texturam discas: quibus intelligendis nulla sufficiat mens. Quis enim quae non sunt intelligat?” (p. 92). It should also be noted that there can already be observed here a reference to nominalism (*res [...] quae non sunt* [non-existing things]).

**103** “Cum iis igitur mihi res sit, qui nullius addicti iurare in verba magistri, proprio Marte expendunt, sensu, rationeque ducti. Tu igitur quisquis es eiusdem mecum conditionis, temperamentique: quique de rerum naturis saepissime tecum dubitasti, dubita modo mecum: ingenia nostra, naturamque simul exerceamus. Sit mihi liberum iudicium, non irrationabile tamen. Tibi tale & concedo, & precor” (p. 93)/“Accordingly, I would address myself to those who, ‘not bound by an oath of fidelity to answer master’s words’, assess the facts for themselves, under the guidance of sense-perception and reason. You, reader, whoever you may be, who share my situation and disposition, who have very often entertained private doubts concerning the nature of things – share, now, *my* doubts too. Let us together apply our intellectual gifts and our

Yet all the same I make no general promise that I shall therefore give you the Truth, for I am ignorant of her, as I am of everything else. Still, I will pursue my enquiry to the best of my powers; and you for your part shall be pursuing Truth [. . .]. Yet you are not to expect ever to capture her, or with full knowledge lay hold on her; let the chase suffice for you, as it does for myself. For me this is the aim and the end; an aim and an end, which you too must seek.<sup>104</sup>

He then goes on to emphasize a central point of reference in his approach, namely, medicine, and particularly the connection of philosophy and medicine and thus also the envisaged practical ‘benefit’ of the undertaking.<sup>105</sup> Any rejection of authority in the field of science, however, did not apply to the realm of faith, as Sánchez emphasizes: “I shall follow Nature alone. Authority bids us *believe*, whereas Reason *demonstrates*; the former is more suited to faith, the latter to the sciences.”<sup>106</sup>

The structure of the text underlines its skeptical orientation. It is designed dialogically, whereby on the one hand it is not always possible to clearly determine which utterances are to be assigned to ‘Sánchez’ or the textual I, respectively, and which to the *fictus interlocutor*; on the other hand, the imaginary interlocutor/reader or the imaginary interlocutors/readers take on different functions and roles, and act, for instance, as a (sometimes also mocked) counterpart; Aristotle or representatives of an Aristotelized scholasticism, function

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natural inclinations. Give me leave to judge freely, so long as I do not depart from rationality; and I both grant you, and wish for you, the same” (pp. 168 f.).

**104** P. 170. “Nec proinde tamen Veritatem tibi omnino polliceor, ut qui eam, ut alia omnia, ignorem: inquiram tamen in quantum potero: tuque utcumque apertam, & e latebris excussam persequeris. Nec tamen eam arripere speres unquam, aut sciens tenere: sufficiat tibi quod & mihi, eandem agitare. Hic mihi scopus, his finis est: hunc tu quaerere etiam debes” (p. 94).

**105** “Quo posito, a principiis rerum exordium sumentes, grauiora Philosophiae capita examinabimus, ex quibus facilius reliquia colligi possint. Nec enim in his inmorari in votis est omnino: ad Medicam quippe artem viam affectamus, cuius professores sumus: cuiusque principia omnia Philosophicae contemplationis sunt: ut eadem manu duos simul moueamus lapides: nec enim aliter vita sufficeret” (p. 94)/“This established, we shall begin with the first principles of things, and shall investigate the more important topics of philosophy, to the end that from them other questions may more easily be deduced; for it is in no way to my purpose to linger over them, since the goal of my proposed journey is the art of medicine, which I profess, and the first principles of which lie entirely within the realm of philosophical contemplation. Thus we shall kill two birds with one stone” (p. 171). This connection is an aspect that in particular Limbrick (“Introduction” [cf. note 97]) elaborates on.

**106** P. 172 (italics in the original). “Solam sequar ratione Naturam. Autoritas credere iubet; ratio demonstrat: Illa fidei; haec scientiis aptior” (p. 94).

as an interested, supportive student and as an accomplice in the search for truth, or as frame of reference in an inner monologue.<sup>107</sup>

The text begins with a statement relativizing the dogmatic implication of the title: “Nec unum hoc scio, me nihil scire: Coniecto tamen nec me, nec alios. Haec mihi vexillum propositio sit, haec sequenda venit, Nihil scitur” [I do not *know* even this one thing, namely that I know nothing. I infer, however, that this is true both of myself and of others. Let this proposition be my battle colour – it commands my allegiance – ‘Nothing is known.’]<sup>108</sup>

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**107** For this, see the observations in Howald (“Einleitung” [cf. note 97], pp. XLV–XLIX), who also refers to the tradition of the diatribe as well as to the tradition of the *ad hominem*-argumentation.

**108** Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)* (cf. note 99), p. 95; pp.172 f. (italics in the original). The opening sentence is – without this being indicated as such – a quotation attributed to Metrodorus of Chios (c. 5th–4th century BC), a student of Democritus, which is mentioned in Diogenes Laertius (*Vitae et sententiae philosophorum* IX, 10 [58]), in Cicero’s *Academica* (II, 73), and also in Sextus Empiricus (*Adversus Mathematicos* VII, 88). The sentence ‘*Nihil scitur*’ inheres a self-contradiction, which is problematic from a skeptical point of view, if it is expressed with a claim to truth. The quotation cited above is succeeded by the following, which is marked in the marginal note as “Ambigua consequentia” [ambiguous conclusion]: “Hanc si probare sciuero, merito concludam, nil sciri: si nesciuero, hoc ipso melius: id enim asserebam” (p. 95)/“If I come to *know* how to establish this, I shall be justified in drawing the conclusion that nothing is known; whereas if I *do not know* how to establish it, then all the more so – for that was what I claimed” (p. 173; italics in the original). Here the ‘shifting’ of the dogmatic assertion that ‘nothing is known’ (it is that of the dogmatic skeptics, those associated with Academic skepticism) to a logical-argumentative ‘truth’ becomes apparent. But it is not about ‘demonstrating’ (*demonstrare*) in the Aristotelian sense (as ‘a syllogism that gives birth to knowledge’); this will be one of those elements in the Aristotelian scholastic system of knowledge that will later be removed from its postulate of certainty, but rather about a logical-argumentative making plausible without an absolute claim to knowledge (*probare*). With ironic wit and already giving a sense of the style and argumentation strategy of the entire treatise against any claim to perfect knowledge, the text continues: “At dices: si probare scias, contrariū sequetur, aliquid enim scis iam. At ego cōtra prius conclusi, quam tu argueres. Iam incipio turbare rem: Ex hoc ipso iam sequitur, nil sciri. Forsan non intellexisti, meque ignarum aut cauillatorem vocas. Verum dixisti. Melius ego te, quia non intellexisti. Ignari igitur ambo. Iam ergo nesciens concluisti quod quaerebam. Si intellexisti ambiguitatem consequentiae, aperte vidisti, nil sciri. sin minus, cogita, distingue, & mihi solue nodum. Acue ingenium” (p. 95)/“But you will say, ‘If you *know* how to establish it, this will result in a contradiction, for you already know *something*.’ I have, however, anticipated your objection by coming to the opposite conclusion. Now I begin to upset the argument: it already follows, *from this very consideration*, that nothing is known. Perhaps you have failed to grasp my meaning and are calling me ignorant, or a quibbler. You have told the truth; but I have a better right to say this of *you*, since you have failed to understand. So we are both ignorant. This being so, you have unwittingly arrived at the conclusion I was looking for. If you have understood the ambiguity of the inference, you have clearly perceived that nothing is known; if not, then ponder, make

What follows is a systematic attack on claims to certainty and the contemporary understanding of science. This is carried out under the skeptical *vexillum*, “[. . .] the name; for as far as I am concerned every definition, and almost every enquiry, is about names. More fully: we cannot comprehend the *natures* of things; at least, I cannot.”<sup>109</sup> *Quod nihil scitur* also contains a radical critique of language.<sup>110</sup> This is followed by a primarily nominalist polemic against the Aristotelian-scholastic knowledge system and its theory of definitions and categories, including syllogistic reasoning, conception of the understanding of causes and principles and the conception of science.<sup>111</sup> After problematizing the axioms of Aristotelian science and thus explaining the “[. . .] ignorance of others in relation to the definition of knowledge [science] and the nature of understanding [. . .],” the second step would consist of portraying his “own ignorance” in order to show “[. . .] how completely we lack knowledge. [. . .].”<sup>112</sup> The

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a distinction, and untie this knot for me. Sharpen your wits” (p. 173; italics in the original). (Regarding the opening passage and what is said here, see Howald, “Einleitung” [cf. note 97], pp. XL–XLIII; Limbrick, “Introduction” [cf. note 97], p. 65 and her commentary in the English translation: Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)* [cf. note 99], pp. 172 f., note 20; see also Agostino Lupilo, “Humanus Animus Nusquam Consistit”. Doctor Sanchez’s Diagnosis of the Incurable Human Unrest and Ignorance,” in: Paganini/Maia Neto [eds.], *Renaissance Scepticisms* [cf. note 1], pp. 149–179, here p. 158).

**109** Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)* (cf. note 99), p. 174 (italics in the original). “A nomine rem ducamus. Mihi enim omnis nominalis definitio est, & fere omnis quaestio. Explico. Rerum naturas cognoscere non possumus, ego saltem” (p. 95).

**110** See also the later reflection dedicated decisively to the topic of language (Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod nihil scitur)*, pp. 119–121; pp. 216–220).

**111** See Sánchez, *Quod nihil scitur*, pp. 96–110; pp. 175–199. A detailed account of the argumentation leading to the ‘*nihil ergo sciunt*’ (among others, with the reference points “Tu tamen definitionem dicis esse quae rei naturam demonstrat” [p. 95]/“You, however, claim that there is a definition which ‘demonstrates the nature of a thing’” [p. 174]; “Quid igitur ille? Scientia habitus per demonstrationem acquisitus” [p. 97]/“What, then does [Aristotle] say? ‘Knowledge [science] is a mental disposition, acquired by demonstration’” [p. 178]; “Ia quid illud est: Demonstratio? Diffinies iterū, Syllogismus scientiā pariens” [p. 99]/“What, now, is the thing called a ‘demonstration’? You will define it afresh as follows: ‘a syllogism that gives birth to knowledge [science]’” [p. 181]) shall be omitted here. It should be noted that not only is Aristotle’s dominant authority in the scholastic system challenged, so is the Platonic ‘doctrine of science,’ the idea that knowledge is a remembering, (using, among others, the skeptical argument of *regressus ad infinitum*) deprived of its basis of certainty (see pp. 106–108; pp. 192–195).

**112** P. 200 (“Hucusque enim aliorum ignorantiam, circa scientiae definitionem, cognitionemque subinde ostendi: nunc meam proferam, ne solus ego scire aliquid videar. Ex quo videre poteris quam inscientes simus” [p. 110]). This according to the explanation articulated at the beginning: “Quae enim hucusque a pluribus recepta fuere, mihi falsa videntur, ut iam ostendi: quae deinceps dicam, vera. Forsan contrarium iudicabis tu, & fortassis verum erit hoc: unde sequitur confirmatio propositi, Nil sciri” (pp. 110 f.)/“Now, the doctrines that have hitherto

starting point of the subsequent systematic critique of knowledge is a (nominal) definition of knowledge or science, respectively, formulated on its own and qualified as an “easy [...] explanation”: “SCIENTIA EST REI PERFECTA COGNITIO” [Knowledge (science) is perfect understanding of a thing].<sup>113</sup> This, however, does not suspend skeptical doubt, whose continuous presence can be seen, for example, in the question of what ‘understanding’ (*cognitio*) is and how it should be defined:

But I do not know what “understanding” is; define it for me. I should call it comprehension or perception or “intellection” of a thing, and anything else that means what these words mean. If you are still in doubt about this, I will be silent; but I shall ask you for another definition, and if you reply to my request I will raise a doubt about your statement. Thus we are always in difficulties because of our ignorance. [...] When, afterwards, I discuss understanding with you, I suppose it to be such as I have grasped, while you suppose it to be such as you have grasped. I assert that it is *this*, while you, on the other hand, assert that it is *that*. Who is to arbitrate the dispute?<sup>114</sup>

Sánchez then carries out a detailed analysis of the possibility (or impossibility) of knowledge in accordance with the formulated hypothesis, i.e., on the basis of its components: “Accordingly, if you grant my definition, there are three factors in knowledge: the thing that is to be known [*res scienda*]; understanding (*cognitio*); and the perfection of knowledge [*perfectum*]. We shall have to consider each of them singly, in order that we may deduce that nothing is known.”<sup>115</sup> In the problematization of assured knowledge, the difficulties arising from the object, the thing to be apprehended (*res cognita*)<sup>116</sup> are dealt with first, then the aspect of

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been accepted by the majority appear to me false, as I have already shown, whereas those I am about to formulate appear to me true. Perhaps you will take the opposite view, and it may be that this will be the true one – from which results the confirmation of the proposition that ‘nothing is known’” (p. 200).

**113** P. 111; p. 200 (capital letters in the original; for the status of the sentence as a nominal definition, see: “Ecce facilem, veram tamen nominis explicationem” [p. 111]/“There you have an easy, yet true, explanation of the term [...]” [p. 200]).

**114** P. 200 f. (italics in the original). “Sed nescio quid sit cognitio, defini mihi. Dicerem rei comprehensionem, perspectionem, intellectionem, & si quid aliud est, quod idem significet. Si de hoc adhuc dubites, tacebo: sed petam a te aliud. Si dederis, de tuo dubitabo: sicque perpetua laboramus ingorantia. [...] Dum de cognitione postea tecum loquor, qualem comprehēdi, talem suppono: tu contra qualem tu. Hoc ego assero eam esse: tu contra illud. Quis componet litem?” (p. 111).

**115** Pp. 203 f. “In scientia igitur, si definitionem admittas meam, tria sunt, res scienda, cognitio, & perfectum: quorum quodlibet singillatim nobis expēdendum erit, ut inde colligamus nihil sciri” (p. 113).

**116** Pp. 113–131; pp. 204–238.

knowledge (*cognitio*), where in the presentation of the real reasons preventing knowledge a distinction is made between the act of apprehending (*cognitio ipsa*)<sup>117</sup> and the apprehending subject, the person that understands (*cognoscens*).<sup>118</sup>

In the course of this argument – as in the first part of the treatise that questions knowledge based on authority – numerous skeptical *topoi* are applied, as for example in the context of the discussion of the unreliability of sensory perception.<sup>119</sup> Sánchez does not explicitly refer to the central texts of ancient skepticism, inasmuch as neither the writings of Sextus Empiricus nor Cicero's *Academica* are mentioned in *Quod nihil scitur*. However, there are references to other ancient texts that were familiar with skepticism, such as: Diogenes Laertius' *Vitae et sententiae philosophorum*, Plutarch's *Lucullus* and *Adversus Colotem*, and Galen's *De optima doctrina*.<sup>120</sup> Scholars are still divided as to whether the skepticism developed in *Quod nihil scitur* is more aligned with the Pyrrhonian or the Academic traditions, and even whether Sánchez saw himself as related to one or the other of these schools.<sup>121</sup>

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**117** Pp. 131–141; pp. 238–254.

**118** Pp. 141–163; pp. 254–289.

**119** Pp. 135–142; pp. 245–254 (this in connection with the analysis of the 'act of cognition').

**120** Limbrick ("Introduction" [cf. note 97], p. 64 with note 63) notes that Erasmus' translation of Galen's *De optimo docendi genere* was contained both in the edition of 1562 of the *Hypotyposes Pyrrhonianae* and in the edition of Sextus' writings of 1569, so that Sánchez might have read Sextus Empiricus 'in the original' after all. However, the skeptics are not mentioned often in *Quod nihil scitur* (the Pyrrhonians four times, the Academics twice, and in fact together with the Pyrrhonians). For example, in a passage where Socrates ('I know that I know nothing') is characterized as being 'most wise,' Sánchez also points out the difference to his own project: "Now, what I have always most earnestly looked for in anyone is what I am doing, namely that he should truly say whether he knew anything completely. But such a person I have nowhere found, save for that wise and honest man Socrates (though the Pyrrhonians, and the Academic school, and the so-called sceptics, and Favorinus too, made the same assertion), who knew only this, that he knew nothing. For this saying alone he earns in my opinion the supreme place among mankind of wisdom; yet even so, he has not fully satisfied my mind, since he was ignorant even of that one fact, just as he was of others. But it was in order the more positively to assert that he knew nothing, that he said he knew that one fact. Accordingly, since he knew nothing, he decided not to write down for us moderns to read" (Sánchez, *Quod nihil scitur*, p. 184) ("Hoc enim unum semper maxime ab aliquo expetui, quod modo facio, ut vere diceret an aliquid perfecte sciret: nusquam tamen inveni, praeterquam in sapienti illo, proboque viro Socrate, (licet & Pyrrhonij, Academici, & Sceptici vocati, cum Fauorino id etiam asserent) qui Hoc unum sciebat, quod nihil sciebat. Quo solo dicto mihi doctissimus iudicatur: quāquam nec adhuc omnino mihi experlit mentem: cum & illud unum, sicut alia, ignoraret. Sed ut magis assereret se nil scire, illud unum se scire dixit: qui proinde quum nihil sciret, nihil nobis scribere voluit" [p. 101]).

**121** For this aspect, see Howald, "Einleitung" (cf. note 97), pp. LXXII–LXXXVIII.



The Ockhamist-Nominalist *nescio* appears to be hinted at in the guiding principle *quod nihil scitur*. Man's 'not knowing' in the face of the contingency of the world and an unlimited all-powerful and omniscient God is not, however, the central underlying thesis of Sánchez' text, nor can it properly be classified as a work of Christian-skeptical fideism.<sup>122</sup> The omniscience of God is stressed (as well as the unquestionable truth of Holy Scripture), but this occurs in the context of a critique of the reliability of human cognitive faculty and the established sciences: "[...] Sanches rarely indulges in metaphysical discussion and, whenever he does, it is with the object of refuting Aristotle or Galen."<sup>123</sup> Two arguments in this context are worth mentioning, both recall the (theological) nominalist discourse mentioned previously and refer to the discovery of new worlds; as discussed earlier in the chapter, these discoveries were the cause of significant uncertainty experienced in this period (epistemologically and in terms of faith).

Nay, perhaps there are (or have been, or will be) some others still more unlike us than they are, in some part of the world not yet discovered by us. *For who can state anything with certainty about all that was, is, or will be?*<sup>124</sup>

Yesterday you said in the light of your complete scientific knowledge – or rather, knowledge that was complete even long ages ago – that the entire earth was surrounded by the Ocean; and you divided it into three all-embracing parts, namely Asia, Africa, and Europe. But what are you to say today? *A new world has been discovered – new realities – in New Spain or in the West and East Indies.*<sup>125</sup>

The phrase '*Deus omnia novit*' [God knows everything] appears a few passages later in the marginalia, mentioned to show the ignorance in things and man's

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<sup>122</sup> See Limbrick, "Introduction" (cf. note 97), pp. 73 f.; Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), p. 43; Howald, "Einleitung" (cf. note 97), pp. LI ff. (there are also references to opposing positions).

<sup>123</sup> Limbrick, "Introduction" (cf. note 97), p. 74.

<sup>124</sup> Sánchez, *That Nothing Is Known (Quod Nihil Scitur)* (cf. note 99), p. 221; my italics ("[...] quin & aliqui forsant sunt alij magis his a nobis diuersi in aliqua orbis parte, nobis nondum aperta, aut fuere, aut erunt. *Quis enim de omni quod fuit, quod est, aut quod erit certum quid proferre potest?*" [p. 122, my italics]). The sentence is also given in the marginalia: "Nullus de omni quod fuit, quod erit, certum quid dicere potest" [No one can say anything certain about all that has been and will be].

<sup>125</sup> Pp. 221 f.; my italics. "Dicebas heri perfecta scientia tua, imo & a plurimus saeculis, totam terram Oceano circumflecti, eamque in tres diuidebas partes uniuersales, Asiam, Africam, Europam. Nunc quid dices? *nouus est inuentus mundus, nouae res*, in noua Hispania, aut Indiis Occidentalibus, Orientalibusque" (p. 122; my italics).



lack of the ability of cognition. Due to a lack of proportionality man cannot apprehend the perfect and sublime God and anything that comes close to him.<sup>126</sup>

Throughout the treatise it engages with the posited definition (*scientia est rei perfecta cognitio* [knowledge (science) is perfect understanding of a thing]); the use of conclusions such as ‘nihil scitur’ (and its variants, such as ‘Nihil ergo scimus,’ ‘Quid ergo scimus? Nihil,’ ‘ergo nil scis,’ and so on) makes it clear that there is no *scientia* in the sense of a *rei perfecta cognitio* (and probably cannot exist either). The aspect of perfection, the last element of the definition, is then summarized at the end: “And no one doubts that scientific knowledge ought to be a perfect form of ‘cognition’; but *what* that is, and where and *in* what it is – about this there is the greatest doubt. This too, like other things, is unknown. Perhaps it does not exist anywhere, and this is the more reasonable position.” For “perfect cognitive understanding (*cognitio*)” requires “a perfect ‘cognising’ subject (*cognoscens*)” and a “[duly arranged] object to be ‘cognised’,” that is “[something *perfect*] in Nature.”<sup>127</sup> This implies that any knowledge man can gain about the world can only approximate perfection. The abandonment of the claim to truth in favor of probability is an expression of the probabilism of Academic skepticism. By abandoning Aristotelian-scholastic essentialism and its methods of supposed knowledge acquisition, by recognizing the limitations of one’s own cognitive faculties and those of potential objects of cognition, there still remains, as the text tends to suggest, certainly the possibility of (imperfect, limited) knowledge achieved through one’s own observation of nature

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126 “[N]obis autem cum Deo nulla proportio, quemadmodum nec finito cum infinito, nec corruptibili cum aeterno: denique eius collatione nihil potius sumus quam aliquid. Hac eadem ratione ille omnia novit, ut qui omnibus maior, superior, praestantior, aut melius, ne collationem cum creaturis facere videar, maximus, supremus, praestantissimus sit. Quaecumque summo huic optifici propinquiora sunt, ea ratione nobis incognita etiam sunt” (p. 124)/“[T]o us, however, there is no proportion in relation to God, since there can be no proportion between the finite and the infinite, or the corruptible and the eternal; in a word, compared to Him we are nothing, rather than something. On the same principle, God knows everything, inasmuch as he is greater, higher, and most excellent of all. Whatever things approach more closely to this Supreme Artificer are for that very reason also unknown to us” (pp. 224 f.).

127 P. 289; italics in the original. “Et quod perfecta esse debeat cognitio scientia, nulli dubium: quae autem illa sit, ubi, & in quo, maximum. Sicut & alia, hoc etiam ignoratur. Forsan nulibi est: & hoc magis rationale. Diximus partim supra: Perfecta cognitio perfectum requirit cognoscentem, debiteque dispositam rem cognoscendam: quae duo nusquam vidi. Si vidisti tu, scribe mihi. Nec hoc solum: sed an videris perfectum quid in natura. Illud autem requiri vidisti iam supra, nec proinde necesse est hic repetere” (p. 163). For the mentioned aspects, see pp. 142–147; pp. 256–264 (among other things, a perfect body would be a prerequisite, since the human soul needed the most perfect body for knowledge; furthermore: God alone is perfect).

(of the individual things), concrete experience, and evaluation of the empirical observations.<sup>128</sup>

In his conclusion, Sánchez states that:

[...] [his] purpose is to establish [...] a kind of scientific knowledge that is both sound and as easy as possible to attain; but *not* a science that is full of those chimeras and fictions, unconnected with factual truth, which are put together, not to teach facts, but solely to show off the writer's intellectual subtlety.<sup>129</sup>

He concludes the treatise by writing: “In the meantime, as I prepare to examine *Things*, I shall raise the question whether anything is *known*, and if so, how, in the introductory passages of another book, a book in which I will expound, as far as human frailty allows, the *method of knowing*.”<sup>130</sup> Sánchez states several times throughout the treatise that it is his goal to ‘establish a science as firm and simple as possible’ and to compose a ‘method of knowledge,’ – in other

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**128** Regarding this, see, e.g.: “Cognitio omnis a sensu trahitur. Ultra hanc, omnia confusio, dubitatio, perplexitas, divinatio: nil certum. Sensus solum exteriora videt: nec cognoscit” (p. 130)/“All understanding is derived from the senses, and beyond this kind of understanding, all is confusion, doubt, perplexity, guesswork; nothing is certain” (p. 236); “Certissima cognitio a sensu. Incertissima a ratione” [The most certain knowledge comes from the senses, the most uncertain from reason] (marginalia); “Nil certius sensu: nil eodem fallacius” (p. 140)/ “[N]othing is more reliable, or again more deceptive, than the senses” (p. 252); pp. 157–163/pp. 277–289 (for the central quote [p. 157; p. 277], see below note 131); “Experimentum sine iudicio stare nequit” [Experience can not exist without judgment] (marginalia); “[...] quot experimenta habere potest iuuenis? Sat pauca. Quomodo ergo super pauca recte iudicium ferat?” (p. 157)/ “[...] how *many* experiences can a mere youth command? Few enough. How, then, is he to judge aright on the basis of only a few?” (p. 278; italics in the original); “Proinde & maior literatorum numerus his temporibus fidelis quidem est, non sciens: quippe qui ex libris quidquid habent hauriant, non adhibito iudicio, rerumque experimento, ut decet [...]” (p. 159)/“For just this reason, the majority of educated men in our day are indeed characterised by belief, not knowledge, insofar as they derive all they possess from books. They do not apply judgment and an experimental grasp of facts, as they should [...]” (p. 282). Limbrick puts this aspect as follows: “Sanches’s scepticism is philosophically anchored in the Academic scepticism of the school of Carneades and confirmed by his own experiences as a physician who adhered to the Galenic method with its insistence on judgement and empirical observation” (“Introduction” [cf. note 97], p. 88; see, furthermore, esp. pp. 54 f.).

**129** P. 290; italics in the original. “Mihi namque in animo est firmam, & facilem quantum possum scientiam fundare: nin vero chimaeris & fictionibus a rei veritate alienis, quaeque ad ostendendam solum scibentis ingenij subtilitatem, non ad docendas res comparatae sunt, plenam” (pp. 163 f.).

**130** P. 290; italics in the original. “Interim nos ad res examinandas accingentes, an aliquid sciatur, & quomodo, libello alio praeponemus: quo methodum sciendi, quantum fragilitas humana patitur, exponemus” (p. 164).

words a treatise dedicated to ‘scientific method’ (*De methodo sciendi*) based on ‘experience’ and ‘judgement.’<sup>131</sup> This, as well as the tendency towards empiricism identified in his work, has led him be considered a precursor of empiricism. There are also those who have interpreted his doubt as ‘methodical’ in the sense that his skeptical criticism of existing knowledge merely serves to create a new basis of certainty, and thus corresponds in principle to Cartesian doubt.<sup>132</sup> Whether or not Sánchez ever wrote this treatise on scientific method we do not know. Certainly, no such treatise has survived, nor is any mention of it made in the literature of the period. The question of whether something can be known with certainty is left open at the end of the text and thus a claim to absoluteness of the proposition ‘nihil scitur’ is relativized. After examining the ‘things’ (*res*), he would discuss ‘whether something is known and how’ ([...] nos ad res examinandas accingentes, *an aliquid sciatur*, et quomodo, libello alio

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**131** See: “Duo sunt inueniendae veritatis media miseris humanis: quādoquidem res per se scire non possunt, quas si intelligere, ut deberent, possent, nullos alio indigerent medio: sed cum hoc nequeant, adiumenta ignorantiae sua adinvenere: quibus propterea nil magis sciunt, perfecte saltem. Seda liquid percipiunt, discuntque. Ea vero sunt experimentum, iudiciumque. Quodrum neutrum sine alio stare recte potest: quorumque utrumque quomodo habendum, adhibendumque sit, in libello huic proximo, quem indies parturimus, latius declarabimus. Interim vede ex hoc Nihil sciri” (p. 157)/“For luckless humanity, there are two means of discovering truth, since men cannot *know* things in themselves. If they could acquire intellectual understanding of them as they should be able to do, then they would need no other means; but since they cannot do this, they have found additional ways of coming to the aid of their own ignorance. Consequently, although they have no more *knowledge* because of these aids (at least in the sense of perfect knowledge) yet they do perceive something, and learn something. Those methods consist of experience and judgment. Neither of these two can properly retain validity without the other. I shall explain at greater length how each of them is to be acquired, and how applied, in my next treatise after this one (I am daily bringing it to birth). For the present, observe how it follows, from the following consideration, that ‘nothing is known’” (p. 278; italics in the original); as well as the marginalias: “De modo sciendi librum expecta” [Expect a book *On the method of knowledge*] and “In libro, Modi sciendi, docebitur quomodo quid discutiatur sine syllogistica doctrina” [In the book *On the method of knowledge* I will teach how something is discussed without the science of the syllogists].

**132** See, e.g., Bullón, *Los precursores de Bacon y Descartes* (cf. note 97), pp. 160–188 (“Podemos, por lo tanto, afirmar que si la labor filosófica de Francisco Sánchez empieza pareciéndose a la de Descartes, termina por ser semejante a la de Bacon de Verulam” [p. 186]); Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), p. 41 (“[...] Sanches put forward a procedure, not to gain knowledge but to deal constructively with human experience. This procedure, for which Sanches introduced the term (for the first time) *scientific method*, ‘Método universal de las ciencias’, consists in patient, careful empirical research and cautious judgement and evaluation of the data we observe.”); Howald, “Einleitung” (cf. note 97), pp. LVII–LXXII, who provides an overview of the two interpretive lines (‘constructive interpretation’ and ‘skeptical interpretation’) of the Sanchezian doubt.

praeponeamus: quo methodum sciendi [. . .]’), the answer to the first question serving as a prerequisite for the exploration of the second.<sup>133</sup> Remarkably, Sánchez concludes *Quod nihil scitur* with the word “QUID?” [What?].<sup>134</sup> The question implies openness, room for counterargument, a continuation of the conversation, a lack of closure and persistence of doubt, an open-ended search for an answer to the question of whether knowledge is possible or not. In this respect, Sánchez’ skepticism is that of a σκεπτικός – a skeptic in the original sense of a seeking, questioning, examining, inquiring person.<sup>135</sup>

### 1.2.3 René Descartes and Skeptical Philosophy

In comparison to the previously discussed texts, René Descartes’ (1596–1650) engagement with skepticism is situated in a changed discursive context. Called the father of modern philosophy by Schopenhauer,<sup>136</sup> Descartes, a mathematician

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**133** See also: “You have, then, observed the difficulties that place scientific knowledge beyond our reach. I am aware that perhaps much of what I have said will not find favour; but on the other hand, you will say, *neither have I demonstrated that nothing is known*. At least, I have expounded my own opinion as clearly, accurately, and truthfully as I could [. . .]” (Sánchez, *That Nothing is Known [Quod nihil scitur]* [cf. note 99], p. 289; my italics) (“Ergo vidisti difficultates quae scientiam nobis adimunt. Scio, plura forsam non placebunt ex his quae hic dixi: *sed nec, dices, demonstraui nil scire*. Saltem quantum potui clare, fideliter, & vere, quid sentirem exposui” [p. 163; my italics]).

**134** P. 164; p. 290.

**135** Cf. once more Sextus Empiricus’ distinction between the philosophical schools at the beginning of his *Outlines*: “The natural result of any investigation is that the investigators either discover the object of search or deny that it is discoverable and confess it to be inapprehensible or *persist in their search*. So, too, with regard to the objects investigated by philosophy, this is probably why some have claimed to have discovered the truth, others have asserted that it cannot be apprehended, while others again *go on inquiring*. Those who believe they have discovered it are the ‘Dogmatists,’ specially so called—Aristotle, for example, and Epicurus and the Stoics and certain others; Cleitomachus and Carneades and other Academics treat it as inapprehensible: *the Sceptics keep on searching*” (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 1–3 [S. E., *Outlines* (cf. note 6), p. 2/3; my italics]); see also Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae et sententiae philosophorum* IX, 11(69) (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* [cf. note 4], p. 183). Limbrick (“Introduction” [cf. note 97], p. 3) and Howald (“Einleitung” [cf. note 97], p. CLVIII), too, point to this aspect, despite differences in the interpretation of Sánchez’ skepticism.

**136** As already in his dissertation *Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde* (1813): “[. . .] unser[n] vortreffliche[r] Kartesius, [. . .] Vater der neuern [sic] Philosophie [. . .]” (Arthur Schopenhauer, *Ueber die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde: Eine philosophische Abhandlung*, ed. Julius Frauenstädt, 4th ed., Leipzig 1875 [1st ed. 1813], p. 9); see also Schopenhauer, “Skizze einer Geschichte der Lehre vom Idealen und Realen,” in:

and philosopher, was active during a time when political, social, economic, and ideological conflicts were intensifying throughout Europe. The bloody Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) that engulfed much of central Europe represents a far-reaching escalation in this period of crisis. It ended up transforming the political face of Europe and testifies the insoluble hardening of the battle lines that had begun to be drawn with the Reformation. It came on the heels of the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598) that took place between Catholics and Protestant Huguenots and claimed the lives of an estimated three million people in France. This conflict officially ended in 1598 when, sixteen years after the so-called St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Henry of Navarre, the first Bourbon to rise to the French throne in 1594, had (once again) converted to Catholicism to become King Henry IV of France and issued the Edict of Nantes. The edict confirmed Catholicism as a state religion, but granted subjects freedom of conscience. Calvinist Protestants were granted civil and political equality, and were allowed to practice their religion within specific territories.<sup>137</sup> King Henry IV was assassinated in 1610, an indication of the changing political, ideological, and intellectual climate in Europe and France in particular.<sup>138</sup> With his death the freedoms

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Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena: Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, 2 vols., Berlin 1851, vol. 1, pp. 1–27, here p. 3, *passim*. It should be added more precisely that Descartes – primarily next to Francis Bacon – is of course regarded as ‘one’ of the pioneers of modern philosophy and science.

**137** Protestants were forbidden to worship openly at court, or in Paris and the surrounding area (cf. Art. 13 and Art. 14 of the Edict); the places of refuge and security given to them (for eight years they maintained military garrisons that were financially subsidised by the Crown) were primarily in the Protestant south and southwest of the kingdom (cf. the second addition to the Edict, ‘Brevet des garnisons’: “Aujourd’huy dernier jour d’avril 1598, le roy etant à Nantes, voulant donner tout le contentement qu’il luy est possible à ses sujets de la Religion pretendue reformée sur les demandes et requestes qui luy ont esté faites de leur part pour ce qu’ils ont estimé leur estre necessaire, tant pour la liberté de leurs consciences que pour l’assurance de leurs personnes, fortunes et biens, et pour l’assurance que Sa Majesté a de leur fidelité et sincere affection à son service, [...] leur a accordé et promis: Que toutes les places, villes et chasteaux qu’ils tenoient jusques à la fin du mois d’aoust dernier, esquelles y aura garnisons, par l’estat qui en sera dressé et signé par Sa Majesté, demeureront en leur garde sous l’autorité et obeissance de Sa[dite] Majesté par l’espace de huict ans à compter du jour de la publication du[dit] edict. [...] Et pour l’entretenement des garnisons qui devront estre entretenues [en lesdites] villes, places et chasteaux, leur a Sa[dite] Majesté accordé jusques à la somme de neuf-vingts mille escus [...]”; important cities were, for instance, La Rochelle, Cognac, Saumur, Montpellier, Nîmes) (Consulted edition: Bernard Barbiche [ed.], *L’Édit de Nantes et ses antécédents (1562–1598)*, Paris n.d. [critical online edition], URL: <http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/editsdepacification/> [retrieved: 28 March 2019]).

**138** Stephen E. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, Chicago 1992 (1st ed. New York 1990), pp. 45–56 (cf. “To suggest that this event [the assassination of King Henry IV

granted to the Huguenots were increasingly eroded, particularly under the leadership of Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin<sup>139</sup> during the reign of Louis XIII and his son Louis XIV. The situation continued to deteriorate until in 1685, Louis XIV issued the Edict of Fontainebleau that revoked the Edict of Nantes and banned Protestantism in France, leading to the emigration of the majority of Huguenots to England, Prussia, and Holland. In France, the religious conflict was, from the beginning, strongly mixed with political motivations. The principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* [Whose realm, his religion] established at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 could not be applied to the large, contiguous territory of the French kingdom. Henry IV's policy of seeking to stabilize 'national' unity,<sup>140</sup> which formed one of the foundations of the state absolutism that was consolidating itself among its successors, was integrative; for the first time, it conceded a separation between loyalty to a sovereign and religious affiliation.<sup>141</sup> "In practical terms," says Toulmin, who also sees a resemblance between Henry's political approach and Montaigne's intellectual approach,<sup>142</sup> "the murder of King Henry IV carried

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of France] *caused* the shift from humanism to more rigorous, dogmatic modes of thought would be an exaggeration: it will be enough to see it as *emblematic* of changes that were ready to begin or had already begun. Henry's murder may or may not have been 'epoch-making'; but, at least, we can take it as 'epoch-marking'" [p. 46; italics in the original]. Already before the murder perpetrated by François Ravaillac on 14 May 1610, a fanatical supporter of the Catholic League, there had been assassination attempts against the king (the predecessor to the throne Henry III had also been murdered in 1589): In 1594 this led to an expulsion of the Jesuits from parts of the country decided by the Paris Parliament, since the assassin was a member of the order, which, however, was annulled again in 1603 by a decree of Henry IV (see p. 48 and p. 52).

**139** Cf. p. 51. To be mentioned by way of example are the siege and fall of the Huguenot main base La Rochelle (1627–28) and the so-called Edict of Grace of Nîmes, issued in 1629 by Louis XIII, which decreed the military and political disempowerment of the Protestants but (still) confirmed the right to exercise religion in accordance with the Edict of Nantes (see Janine Garrisson, *L'Édit de Nantes et sa révocation: Histoire d'une intolérance*, Paris 1985, pp. 65–80).

**140** The foreign policy situation was also fragile: the conflict with Spain continued to pose a threat to the French kingdom, which in principle was not resolved until the Pyrenean Peace of 1659 and their final takeover of hegemonic power on the continent.

**141** Toulmin points out, on the one hand, that also in Poland Protestants had initially been guaranteed religious tolerance (*Cosmopolis* [cf. note 138], p. 51), but in the course of the Counter-Reformation the constitutionally anchored religious freedom was abolished in the 1630s (p. 53). On the other hand, he emphasizes again the exceptional status of the politics attempted in France by referring to the situation in England, more precisely: the persecution of the Protestants under Queen Mary I (r. 1553–1558) respectively of the Catholics under Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) (p. 51).

**142** P. 50 (cf.: "Henry IV's relaxed attitude to practical politics reminds one of Michel de Montaigne's attitude in the intellectual realm.").

to people in France and Europe the simple message, ‘A policy of religious toleration was tried, and failed.’ For the next forty years, in all the major powers of Europe, the tide flowed the other way.”<sup>143</sup>

The first decades of the 17th century were also rocked by the acceptance of the heliocentric world view as a result of Galileo Galilei’s (1564–1641) proof of the Copernican hypotheses and the findings of Johannes Kepler (1571–1630).<sup>144</sup>

As a result of these political, religious, and scientific upheavals, the skepticism of the 16th century and the openness and plurality that characterized Renaissance discourse were followed, in the 17th century, by an increasingly urgent need for certainty and a discursive change and the rejection of the answers provided by Pyrrhonian skepticism.<sup>145</sup> For this period, shaken by one crisis after another, the ‘answers’ of skepticism, a Pyrrhonian attitude seemed more and more “unacceptable.”<sup>146</sup> As Popkin states, in the first half of the 17th century,

The Reformation had produced a *crise pyrrhonienne* in religious knowledge in the quest for absolute assurance about religious truths. [...] As the scientific reformation began, and the system of Aristotle was challenged, the sceptical attack quickly broadened the problem to an assault on the basis of all knowledge. [...] The “new science” of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Gassendi has “cast all in doubt.” The discoveries in the New World and in the classical world had given other grounds for scepticism. The cumulative attacks of humanistic Pyrrhonists[,] [...] [like] Montaigne [...], and of scientific Pyrrhonists like Gassendi [...], left the quest for guaranteed knowledge about the “real” world without a method, a criterion, or basis. No type of rational inquiry into the truth of things seemed possible [...]. The *crise pyrrhonienne* had overwhelmed man’s quest for certainty in both religious and scientific knowledge. [...] In this critical situation, the scientists, the philosophers, and the theologians would either have to fight for survival or

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**143** P. 53. According to Toulmin, the only remaining “haven of tolerance” were the Netherlands (*ibid.*).

**144** The discovery of the telescope dates from 1609, in 1610/11, Galileo’s relevant astronomical discoveries follow, in 1632, the *Dialogo* on the two world systems is published, in 1636 the *Discorsi*; the so-called Kepler’s Laws of planetary motion are formulated in the years 1609 and 1619.

**145** Significantly, in Popkin’s study, the chapter opening this complex of discussion is titled “The Counterattack Begins” (*The History of Scepticism* [cf. note 1], pp. 99–110 [see also the following quote above]); Toulmin calls the first half of the 17th century “Counter-Renaissance” (*Cosmopolis* [cf. note 138], pp. 45–87).

**146** Cf. p. 55: “By 1620, people in positions of political power and theological authority in Europe no longer saw Montaigne’s pluralism as a viable intellectual option, any more than Henri’s tolerance was for them a practical option. The humanists’ readiness to live with uncertainty, ambiguity and differences of opinion had done nothing (in their view) to prevent religious conflict from getting out of hand: *ergo* (they inferred) it had helped *cause* the worsening state of affairs. If skepticism let one down, certainty was more urgent. It might not be obvious what one was supposed to be certain about, but *uncertainty* had become *unacceptable*.”



abandon the quest for certainty. Gradually, first in the area of religion and then in science and philosophy, the menace of Pyrrhonism was recognized, and a counterattack was begun.<sup>147</sup>

When Descartes published his first work, the *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison et chercher la vérité dans les sciences* [Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking the Truth in the Sciences],<sup>148</sup> anonymously in Leiden (he arrived in the Netherlands in 1629), an anti-skepticist reaction was in ascendance and Montaigne's playful, open form of skepticism was no longer possible. Descartes' exploration of skepticism was aimed at overcoming the ever-intensifying 'quest for certainty.' It was his intention to create a firm basis of knowledge, a solid philosophical foundation on which all other sciences could be built.

Before looking at the text that is central to this, the *Meditationes de prima philosophia* [Meditations on First Philosophy], first published in 1641,<sup>149</sup> I will first refer to a discussion on the foundations of metaphysics that appears in the

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**147** Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (cf. note 1), pp. 97 ff. See also Toulmin: "If Europeans were to avoid falling into a skeptical morass, they had, it seemed, to find *something* to be 'certain' about. [...] On reflection, perhaps, human experience might turn out to embody clarities and certainties that Montaigne and the skeptics had overlooked. Henry's murder was not an immediate occasion to renew the philosophical dialogue, but it helped to bring the desperation of the time into sharper focus, and provided a natural context in which the Quest for Certainty could take shape." (*Cosmopolis* [cf. note 138], pp. 55 f.; italics in the original).

**148** – followed by the three treatises, 'essays with this method' (*Essais de cette méthode*): *La Dioptrique*, *Les Météors*, and *La Géométrie* (the subtitle of the first edition reads further: *Plus La Dioptrique, Les Météors, et La Géométrie. Qui sont des essais de cette Méthode* [and in addition the Optics, the Meteorology and Geometry, which are essays in this Method]).

**149** Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* were published in Paris in 1641 under the full title *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia, in qua Dei existentia et animae immortalitas demonstratur* [Meditations on First Philosophy in which are demonstrated the existence of God and the distinction between the human soul and the body], together with the first six 'Objectiones et Responiones,' the 'objections' formulated by, among others, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) and Descartes' respective 'replies'; the second edition, published in Amsterdam in 1642, was extended by another series of 'Objections' and 'Replies' (*Meditationes de Prima Philosophia, in quibus Dei existentia, et animae humanae a corpore distinctio, demonstrantur. His adjunctae sunt variae objectiones doctorum virorum in istas de Deo et anima demonstrationes; cum Responionibus Authoris. Secunda editio septimis objectionibus antehac non visis aucta*); in 1647, for the first time a French translation of the texts was published (*Les Méditations Métaphysiques*). Also relevant is the first part ('De principiis cognitionis humanae')/'About the principles of human knowledge') of the *Principia philosophiae* [Principles of Philosophy] published in 1644 (in: Descartes, *Œuvres* [cf. note 100], vol. 8,1 [1905], here pp. 5–39; *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* [cf. note 100], vol. 1, pp. 177–291, here pp. 193–222).



fourth part of the *Discours*.<sup>150</sup> This text provides an outline of what Descartes goes on to elaborate in great detail in the *Meditationes*, and as such can be understood as a kind of prologue to the later work.<sup>151</sup> The text begins:

[...] [A]lors je désirais vaquer seulement à la recherche de la vérité, je pensai qu'il fallait [...] que je rejetasse, comme absolument faux, tout ce en quoi je pourrais *imaginer le moindre doute* afin de voir s'il ne resterait point, après cela, quelque chose en ma créance, qui fût entièrement indubitable.<sup>152</sup>

'[...] I now wished to devote myself solely to the search for truth, I thought it necessary to do the very opposite and reject as if absolutely false everything in which I could *imagine the least doubt*, in order to see if I was left believing anything that was entirely indubitable.'<sup>153</sup>

The way to achieve the goal of a 'entirely indubitable' knowledge base (*qui fût entièrement indubitable*) requires the rejection as false of all that can be called into doubt. More precisely, that for which only the slightest doubt could be 'imagined' (*en quoi je pourrais imaginer le moindre doute*). The reference to the dream argument (which will be explained later in more detail) is then formulated as follows:

Et enfin, considérant que toutes les mêmes pensées, que nous avons étant éveillés, nous peuvent aussi venir, quand nous dormons, sans qu'il y en ait aucune, pour lors, qui soit vraie, *je me résolus de feindre que* toutes les choses qui m'étaient jamais entrées en l'esprit n'étaient non plus vraies que les illusions de mes songes.<sup>154</sup>

'Lastly, considering that the very thoughts we have while awake may also occur while we sleep without any of them being at the that time true, *I resolved to pretend* [to feign/for the fiction] *that* all the things that had ever entered my mind were no more true than the illusions of my dreams.'<sup>155</sup>

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**150** This is what it says in Descartes' summary of content, preceding *Discours*: "En la 4<sup>e</sup> [partie], [on trouvera] les raisons par lesquelles il [l'auteur] prouve l'existence de Dieu et de l'âme humaine, qui sont les fondements de sa métaphysique" (Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* [cf. note 100], p. 1)/"In the fourth [discourse] [you will find] the arguments by which he proves the existence of God and the human soul, which are the foundations of his metaphysics" (Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* [cf. note 100], p. 111).

**151** Cf. Christian Wohlers, "Vision und Illusion des Neuanfangs," in: René Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia* [Latin-German], ed. and trans. Christian Wohlers, Hamburg 2008, pp. VII–XLIX, here pp. XIII f.

**152** Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* IV (cf. note 100), p. 31, my italics.

**153** Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* (cf. note 100), pp. 126 f., my italics.

**154** Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* IV, 1 (cf. note 100) p. 32; my italics.

**155** Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* (cf. note 100), p. 127; my italics.

The constructed exaggeration, the artificiality of the argument, are revealed by the use of the verb *feindre* ('to pretend/to feign'). This highlights clearly that Descartes' 'search for truth' primarily makes use of the tools of rhetoric (rather than of logic). In the continuation of the passage above, Descartes begins to formulate his concept of certainty, which is central to his thinking, as well as explicitly stating the relation of skepticism, and its quasi rhetorical instrumentalization, to his epistemological project:

Mais, aussitôt après, je pris garde que, pendant que je voulais ainsi penser que tout était faux, il fallait nécessairement que moi, qui le pensais, fusse quelque chose. Et remarquant que cette vérité: *je pense, donc je suis*, était si ferme et si assurée, que toutes les plus extravagantes suppositions des sceptiques n'étaient pas capables de l'ébranler, je jugeai que je pouvais la recevoir, sans scrupule, pour le premier principe de la philosophie que je cherchais.<sup>156</sup>

'But immediately I noticed that while I was trying thus to think everything false, it was necessary that I, who was thinking this, was something. And observing that this truth '*I am thinking, therefore I exist*' was so firm and sure that all *the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics* were incapable of shaking it, I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.'<sup>157</sup>

Elsewhere in the text Descartes distances himself from the skeptics and makes a distinction between skeptical and methodical doubt. He was not imitating the skeptics, he claims, for they doubted solely in order to doubt and gladly gave the impression that they were always indecisive; his intention, however, was to achieve certainty and 'to cast aside the loose earth and sand so as to come upon rock or clay.' In other words, Descartes saw doubt as a means to achieve his goal of irrefutable certainty:

Non que j'imitasse [. . .] les sceptiques, qui ne doutent que pour douter, et affectent d'être toujours irrésolus: car, au contraire, tout mon dessein ne tendait qu'à m'assurer, et à rejeter la terre mouvante et le sable, pour trouver le roc ou l'argile.<sup>158</sup>

156 Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* IV, 1 (cf. note 100) p. 33 (italics in the original ['je pense, donc je suis'] and my italics).

157 Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* (cf. note 100), p. 127 (italics in the original ['I am thinking, therefore I exist'] and my italics).

158 Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* III, 6, p. 29 (In context: "Et en toutes les neuf années suivantes, je ne fis autre chose que rouler çà et là dans le monde, tâchant d'y être spectateur plutôt qu'acteur en toutes les comédies qui s'y jouent; et faisant particulièrement réflexion, en chaque matière, sur ce qui la pouvait rendre suspecte, et nous donner occasion de nous méprendre, je déracinais cependant de mon esprit toutes les erreurs qui s'y étaient pu glisser auparavant. Non que j'imitasse pour cela les sceptiques, qui ne doutent que pour douter, et affectent d'être toujours irrésolus: car, au contraire, tout mon dessein ne tendait

[...] I was not copying the sceptics, who doubt only for the sake of doubting and pretend to be always undecided; on the contrary, my whole aim was to reach certainty – to cast aside the loose earth and sand so as to come upon rock or clay.<sup>159</sup>

In the *Meditationes* there are also instances of a decidedly anti-Pyrrhonian attitude. For example, in his ‘Reply’ to the ‘Fifth Set of Objections’ elaborated by Pierre Gassendi (*Responsio auctoris ad quintas objectiones*),<sup>160</sup> when responding to objections raised regarding doubt over the reliability of sensory perception in the second *Meditatio* Descartes emphasizes the separation between theory and practice. One must strictly distinguish between the “inquisitione[s] veritatis” (“investigation of the truth”) and the “actiones vitae” (“actions of life”). Absolute doubt should not be transferred to the “[vita] regenda” (‘way of living’), and his judgement about the sceptics is accordingly mocking:

When I said that the entire testimony of the senses should be regarded as uncertain and even as false, I was quite serious; indeed this point is so necessary for an understanding of my *Meditations* that if anyone is unwilling or unable to accept it, he will be incapable of producing any objection that deserves a reply. However, we must note the distinction which I have insisted on in several passages, between the actions of life and the investigation of the truth. For when it is a question of organizing our life, it would, of course, be foolish not to trust the senses, and the sceptics who neglected human affairs to the point where friends had to stop them falling off precipices deserved to be laughed at. Hence I pointed out in one passage that no sane person ever seriously doubts such things.<sup>161</sup>

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qu’à m’assurer, et à rejeter la terre mouvante et le sable, pour trouver le roc ou l’argile. Ce qui me réussissait, ce me semble, assez bien, d’autant que, tâchant à découvrir la fausseté ou l’incertitude des propositions que j’examinais, non par de faibles conjectures, mais par des raisonnements clairs et assurés, je n’en rencontrais point de si douteuses, que je n’en tirasse toujours quelque conclusion assez certaine, quand ce n’eût été que cela même qu’elle ne contenait rien de certain” [pp. 28 f.]/“Throughout the following nine years I did nothing but roam about in the world, trying to be a spectator rather than an actor in all the comedies that are played out there. Reflecting especially upon the points in every subject which might make it suspect and give occasion for us to make mistakes, I kept uprooting from my mind any errors that might previously have slipped into it. In doing this I was not copying the sceptics, who doubt only for the sake of doubting and pretend to be always undecided; on the contrary, my whole aim was to reach certainty – to cast aside the loose earth and sand so as to come upon rock or clay. In this I think I was quite successful. For I tried to expose the falsity or uncertainty of the propositions I was examining by clear and certain arguments, not by weak conjectures; and I never encountered any proposition so doubtful that I could not draw from it some quite certain conclusion, if only the conclusion that it contained nothing certain” [Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, p. 125]).

<sup>159</sup> Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, p. 125.

<sup>160</sup> For the *Objectiones et Responsiones*, see above note 149.

<sup>161</sup> René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (cf. note 100), vol. 2, p. 243 (Author’s Replies to the Fifth Set of Objections,

The starting point of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* is a "[...] general demolition of [all] my opinions [...] to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations [...] [in order] to establish [something] [...] in the sciences that was stable and likely to last." The I of the *Meditationes* continues: "[...] [F]or the purpose of rejecting all my opinions [...] it will be enough if I find in each of them at least some reason for doubt."<sup>162</sup> Radical doubt is not propagated as a goal, but as a method by which to arrive at a solid basis of knowledge. It is a pursuit whose goal is not to establish *isosthenias* that can lead to *epoché* and ultimately to an indifferent serenity perceived as happiness, but to pave the way to assured certainty. Descartes opposes the idea that truth is impossible to recognize by striving for the creation of unquestionable truths.

When orchestrating radical methodical doubt as preparation for the acceptance of the basis of certainty of the *cogito, ergo sum*, Descartes attributes particular significance to the skeptical dream argument.<sup>163</sup> In Sextus Empiricus'

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pp. 241–267). "Quod enim dixi, 'omnia sensuum testimonia pro incertis, imo etiam pro falsis, esse habenda', omnino serium est, & ad meas Meditationes intelligendas adeo necessarium, ut quisquis illud admittere non vult, aut non potest, nihil in ipsas responsione dignum objiciendi sit capax. Sed advertenda est distinctio, variis in locis a me inculcata, inter actiones vitae & inquisitionem veritatis. cùm enim de regendâ vitâ quaestio est, ineptum sane esset sensibus non credere, planeque ridendi fuerunt illi Sceptici qui res humanas eò usque negligebant, ut, ne se in praecipitia conjicerent, ab amicis deberent asservari; atque idcirco alicubi admonui, 'neminem sanae mentis de talibus seriò dubitare'" (René Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, in: Descartes, *Œuvres* [cf. note 100], vol. 7 [1904]: *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, pp. 350 f. [Responsio Authoris ad Quintas Objectiones, pp. 347–391]); see also Descartes, *Œuvres*, vol. 7, p. 460 ('the metaphysical, hyperbolic doubt can not be transferred to practical life': "[...] de summâ illâ dubitatione, quam saepe metaphysicam, hyperbolicam, atque ad usum vitae nullo modo transferendam esse [...]") ['Objectiones Septimae cum notis authoris']; regarding the mentioned anecdote, see Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum IX,62 (Lives of Eminent Philosophers* [cf. note 4], pp. 457 ff.).

**162** Descartes, *Meditations* (cf. note 161), First Meditation 'What can be called into doubt,' p. 12; "[...] ac proinde funditus omnia semel in vita esse evertenda, atque a primis fundamentis denuo inchoandum, si quid aliquando firmum & mansurum cupiam in scientiis stabilire; [...] solus secedo, serio tandem & libere generali huic mearum opinionum eversioni vacabo. [...] sed quia jam ratio persuadet, non minus accurate ab iis quae non plane certa sunt atque indubitata, quam ab aperte falsis assensionem esse cohibendam, satis erit ad omnes rejiciendas, si aliquam rationem dubitandi in unaquaque reperero" (Descartes, *Meditationes* [cf. note 161], *Meditatio I* 'De iis quae in dubium revocari possunt,' pp. 17 f.).

**163** It should be noted that though the corresponding line of argument is (see *Meditatio II*), the prominent formulation, however, is not to be found in the *Meditationes* (there it reads: 'ego sum, ego existo; certum est' and 'res cogitans [sum]') [see below]). The central passage from the *Discours de la méthode* ('je pense, donc je suis') has already been quoted (see above,

*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, the fourth of the ten ‘tropes of suspension of judgement’ attributed to Aenesidemus relativizes the possibility of obtaining reliable

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notes 156 and 157); see, furthermore, *Principia philosophiae* I, 7 and I, 10 (Descartes, *Principia philosophiae* [cf. note 149], p. 7 and p. 8; Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* [cf. note 149], pp. 194 f. and pp. 195 f.). The aspect extensively discussed in research of the ‘historical precursors’ of the Cartesian formula of certainty (cf. the related remarks in Wohlers, “Vision und Illusion des Neuanfangs” [cf. note 151], p. XXXIII) can only be mentioned here. Worth mentioning in this context (without going into the differences with regard to statement, context and intention of the argumentation) is the Augustinian *Si fallor, sum* [If I am mistaken, I am] – the doubt itself cannot be doubted; it reflects the recognition of one’s own being). On the one hand, Descartes himself points to the source in a letter to Marin Mersenne (1588–1648): “Vous m’auiez cy-deuant auerty d’un passage de S. Augustin, touchant mon *Je pense, donc je suis*, que vous m’auez, ce me semble, redemandé depuis; il est au Liure onzième de *Ciuitate Dei*, chap. 26” (Lettre CCXXII: Descartes à Mersenne [Leyde, décembre 1640], in: Descartes, *Œuvres* [cf. note 100], vol. 3 [1899]: *Correspondance III, janvier 1640 à juin 1642*, pp. 253–262, here p. 261)/“Some time ago, you drew my attention to a passage from St Augustine concerning my *I am thinking therefore I exist*, and I think you have asked me about it again since then. It is in Book Eleven, chapter 26 of *De Civitate Dei*’ (*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* [cf. note 100], vol. 3: *The Correspondence*, p. 161). On the other hand, in Augustine, who as is known also deals with skepticism elsewhere, especially in his early work *Contra Academicos*, the argument is explicitly directed against the (however: Academic) skeptics: “Nulla in his veris [mihi esse me, idque nosse et amare certissimum est] Academicorum argumenta formido dicentium: Quid, si falleris? Si enim fallor, sum. Nam qui non est, utique nec falli potest; ac per hoc sum, si fallor” [In these truths (that I am, that I know this, and that I love it), I am not afraid of any objection from the Academics who ask, What if you are wrong? For even if I am wrong, I am. Anyone who is not, cannot be mistaken either, and that is why I am, if I am mistaken] (Aurelius Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* XI, 26; quoted from: *Sancti Aurelii Augustini episcopi De civitate Dei libri XXII*, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, 2 vols., Stuttgart/Leipzig 1993, vol. 1, p. 498. See also Augustine, *Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate* 7,20; *De trinitate* XV, 12,21; and above all *De trinitate* X, 10,14 [‘dubito ergo sum’]). It can also be read in Thomas Aquinas that in the act of thinking the knowledge of self-existence manifests itself: “[. . .] [N]ullus potest cogitare se non esse cum assensu: in hoc enim ipso quod cogitat aliquid, percipit se esse” [No one can think with consent that he is not; for by thinking something he realizes that he is] (*De veritate* q. 10 a. 12 ad. 7; quoted from: Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia* [Editio Leonina], 50 vols. [still unfinished], Rome 1882–, vol. 22,2 [1972]: *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, QQ. 8–20, p. 342). Bullón (*Los precursores españoles de Bacon y Descartes* [cf. note 97], p. 104), among others, refers to the pre-forms of the *cogito, ergo sum* in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas and the passages cited here; he does this in the context of the discussion of the *Antoniana Margarita* (1554) by the Spanish physician and philosopher Gómez Pereira (1500–1567) as a precursor of Cartesian philosophy (cf. pp. 90–129), the central (*cogito*-)sentence there reads: “Nosco me aliquid noscere, & quicquid noscit est, ergo ego sum” [I know that I know something, and everything that knows is; therefore I am] (Gómez Pereira, *De immortalitate animorum Antonionae Margaritae*, in: Gómez Pereira, *Antoniana Margarita: opus nempe physicis, medicis, ac theologis, non minus utile, quam necessarium*, Medina del Campo 1554, cols. 609–832, here col. 760 [cf. Bullón, pp. 102 ff.]).

knowledge by means of sensory perception on the basis of the variability of the state in which the perceiving subject finds himself, and refers, in this context, to the un-decidability of the states of dream and of wakefulness.<sup>164</sup> The *Meditationes* initially question the reliability of sensory perception, which hitherto functioned as a mediator of truth,<sup>165</sup> but then determines that with the exception of insanity, sensory perception gives reliable evidence of objects in the immediate vicinity and of the things concerning the body. However, Descartes then goes further in his radicalization of doubt, and begins to identify the dream as paradigmatic of the deception of sensory perception:

As if I were not a man who sleeps at night, and regularly has all the same experiences I while asleep as madmen do when awake – indeed sometimes even more improbable ones. How often, asleep at night, am I convinced of just such familiar events – that I am here in my dressing-gown, sitting by the fire – when in fact I am lying undressed in bed! Yet at the moment my eyes are certainly wide awake when I look at this piece of paper; I shake my head and it is not asleep; as I stretch out and feel my hand I do so deliberately, and I know what I am doing. All this would not happen with such distinctness to someone asleep. Indeed! As if I did not remember other occasions when I have been tricked by exactly similar thoughts while asleep! As I think about this more carefully, I see plainly *that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be*

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**164** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 100–117 [fourth trope], here I, 104 [dream argument] (“[I, 100:] This is the Mode [the *Fourth Mode* of suspension] based, as we say, on the ‘circumstances,’ meaning by ‘circumstances’ conditions or dispositions. And this Mode, we say, deals with states that are natural or unnatural, with waking or sleeping, with conditions due to age, motion or rest, hatred or love, emptiness or fullness, drunkenness or sobriety, predispositions, confidence or fear, grief or joy. [...] [I, 104:] Sleeping and waking, too, give rise to different impressions, since we do not imagine when awake what we imagine in sleep, nor when asleep what we imagine when awake; so that the existence or nonexistence of our impressions is not absolute but relative, being in relation to our sleeping or waking condition. Probably, then, in dreams we see things which to our waking state are unreal, although not wholly unreal; for they exist in our dreams, just as waking realities exist although non-existent in dreams” [Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines* (cf. note 6), pp. 58/59–68/69, here pp. 60/61–62/63]). It should already be said that precisely this skeptical argument and also the reference to Descartes will play a central role in the context of the discussion of Calderón’s drama later in this study (chap. 3.1).

**165** “Nempe quidquid hactenus ut maxime verum admisi, vel a sensibus, vel per sensus accepi; hos autem interdum fallere deprehendi, ac prudentiae est nunquam illis plane confidere qui nos vel semel deceperunt” (Descartes, *Meditationes* [cf. note 161], *Meditatio I*, p. 18)/ “Whatever I have up till now accepted as most true I have acquired either from the senses or through the senses. But from time to time I have found that the senses deceive, and it is prudent never to trust completely those who have deceived us even once” (Descartes, *Meditationes* [cf. note 161], *First Meditation*, p. 12).

*distinguished from being asleep.* The result is that I begin to feel dazed, and this very feeling only reinforces the notion that I may be asleep.<sup>166</sup>

If dream and wakefulness cannot be distinguished empirically, and if all this is merely a dream, as the thought experiment continues,<sup>167</sup> nevertheless, simple and universal generalities that shape phenomena (be they true or false) – such as the (Aristotelian) categories – must be undoubtedly true; therefore, in the sciences too, a distinction must be made between unreliable disciplines that depend on the examination of composite things, and the reliable mathematical disciplines: “For whether I am awake or asleep, two and three added together are five, and a square has no more than four sides. It seems impossible that such transparent truths should incur any suspicion of being false.”<sup>168</sup> Building on a “[...] long-standing opinion [...] firmly rooted in my mind [...] that there

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**166** Descartes, *Meditations*, First Meditation, p. 13; my italics; “[...] tanquam non sim homo qui soleam noctu dormire, & eadem omnia in somnis pati, vel etiam interdum minus verisimilia, quam quae [amentes] isti vigilantes. Quam frequenter vero usitata ista, me hic esse, toga vestiri, foco assidere, quiet nocturna persuadet, cum tamen positis vestibus jaceo inter strata! Atqui nunc certe vigilantibus oculis intueor hanc chartam, non sopitum est hoc caput quod commoveo, manum istam prudens & sciens extendo & sentio; non tam distincta contingerent dormienti. Quasi scilicet non recorder a similibus etiam cogitationibus me alias in somnis fuisse delusum; quae dum cogito attentius, tam plane video *nunquam certis indiciis vigiliam a somno posse distingui*, ut obstupescam, & fere hic ipse stupor mihi opinionem somni confirmet” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 19; my italics).

**167** “Age ergo somnietur, nec particularia ista vera sint, nos oculos aperire, caput movere, manus extendere, nec forte etiam nos habere tales manus, nec tale totum corpus” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 7)/“Suppose then that I am dreaming, and that these particulars – that my eyes are open, that I am moving my head and stretching out my hands – are not true. Perhaps, indeed, I do not even have such hands or such a body at all” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 13).

**168** Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 13. “Nam sive vigilem, sive dormiam, duo & tria simul juncta sunt quinque, quadratumque non plura habet latera quam quatuor; nec fieri posse videtur ut tam perspicuae veritates in suspicionem falsitatis incurrant” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 20). For the outlined above, see Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 13 f. (cf. Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 20: “Nec dispari ratione, quamvis etiam generalia haec, oculi, caput, manus, & similia, imaginaria esse possent, necessario tamen saltem alia quaedam adhuc magis simplicia & universalia vera esse fatendum est, ex quibus tanquam coloribus veris omnes istae, seu verae, seu falsae, quae in cogitatione nostra sunt, rerum imagines effinguntur. Cujus generis esse videntur natura corporea in communi, ejusque extensio; item figura rerum extensarum, item quantitas, sive earumdem magnitudo & numerus; item locus in quo existant, tempusque per quod durent, & similia. Quapropter ex his forsitan non male concludemus Physicam, Astronomiam, Medicinam, disciplinasque alias omnes, quae a rerum compositarum consideratione dependent, dubias quidem esse; atqui Arithmetice, Geometriae, aliasque ejusmodi, quae non nisi de simplicissimis & maxime generalibus rebus tractant, atque utrum eae sint in rerum natura necne, parum curant, aliquid certi atque indubitati continere”).



is an omnipotent God who made me the kind of creature that I am,” doubts about logic and the propositions of mathematics are ultimately also possible, namely in the case that God wanted to cause this deception. But this would be contrary to the benevolence of God, which is assumed.<sup>169</sup> Even if one espoused the position that there was no almighty God, it would be all the more likely to always be mistaken out of imperfection.<sup>170</sup> The meditator admits that everything that he had thought to be true so far, all the familiar opinions could ultimately be doubted – and this for well-considered reasons – but stresses that these views are nevertheless so credible that it would be much more reasonable to agree with them and to trust them than to deny them.<sup>171</sup> In this way, the next

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**169** “Verumtamen infixam quaedam est meae menti vetus opinio, Deum esse qui potest omnia, & a quo talis, qualis existo, sum creatus. [...] Imò etiam, quemadmodum iudico interdum alios errare circa ea quae se perfectissime scire arbitrantur, ita ego ut fallar quoties duo & tria simul addo, vel numero quadrati latera, vel si quid aliud facilius fingi potest? At forte noluit Deus ita me decipi, dicitur enim summe bonus; sed si hoc ejus bonitati repugnaret, talem me creasse ut semper fallar, ab eadem etiam videretur esse alienum permittere ut interdum fallar; quod ultimum tamen non potest dici” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 21)/“And yet firmly rooted in my mind is the long-standing opinion that there is an omnipotent God who made me the kind of creature that I am. [...] What is more, since I sometimes believe that others go astray in cases where they think they have the most perfect knowledge, may I not similarly go wrong every time I add two and three or count the sides of a square, or in some even simpler matter, if that is imaginable? But perhaps God would not have allowed me to be deceived in this way, since he is said to be supremely good. But if it were inconsistent with his goodness to have created me such that I am deceived all the time, it would seem equally foreign to his goodness to allow me to be deceived even occasionally; yet this last assertion cannot be made” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 14). Here are all the concepts that will appear after the establishment of the ‘thinking self’ as the ‘firm foundation of certainty’: the precondition of a benevolent God who does not deceive, the primacy of mathematics, and the ‘innate ideas’ given by God, which enable ‘clear and distinct’ knowledge.

**170** “Essent verò fortasse nonnulli qui tam potentem aliquem Deum mallent negare, quàm res alias omnes credere esse incertas. Sed iis non repugnemus, totumque hoc de Deo demus esse fictitium; [...] quoniam falli & errare imperfectio quaedam esse videtur, quo minùs potentem originis meae auctorem assignabunt, eo probabilius erit me tam imperfectum esse ut semper fallar” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 21)/“Perhaps there may be some who would prefer to deny the existence of so powerful a God rather than believe that everything else is uncertain. Let us not argue with them, but grant them that everything said about God is a fiction. [...] yet since deception and error seem to be imperfections, the less powerful they make my original cause, the more likely it is that I am so imperfect as to be deceived all the time” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 14).

**171** “[...] sed tandem cogor fateri nihil esse ex iis quae olim vera putabam, de quo non liceat dubitare, idque non per inconsiderantiam vel levitatem, sed propter validas & meditata rationes; [...] nec unquam iis [consuet(is) opinion(ibus)] assentiri & confidere desuescam, quamdiu tales esse supponam quales sunt revera, nempe aliquo quidem modo dubias, ut jam jam ostensum est, sed nihilominus valde probabiles, & quas multo magis rationi consentaneum sit credere quàm negare” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 21 f.)/“[...] but [I] am finally compelled to



step of the strategic-radical doubt, which is intended to establish a firm foundation of knowledge, is initially provided with similar indications as outlined in the abovementioned reference to the *Discours*:<sup>172</sup> The constructedness of the argument is made explicit (“[. . .] non male agam, si, *me ipsum fallam*, illasque aliquandiu omnino falsas imaginariasque esse *fungam* [. . .]”) and the ‘riskless’ epistemological approach is highlighted (“[. . .] scio nihil inde periculi vel erroris interim sequuturum, [. . .] quandoquidem nunc *non rebus agendis, sed cognoscendis tantum incumbo*.”).<sup>173</sup>

On the third level of hyperbolic doubt, the indistinguishability between the dream state and the waking state is followed by a hypothesis of an all-encompassing deception by a “geniu[s] [. . .] malignu[s].” Not God, who is the “source of truth” (“fontem veritatis”), but an “evil, most powerful and cunning demon” (“genium [. . .] malignum, [. . .] summe potentem & callidum”), a “deceiver” (“deceptor”) who could, with malicious and deceptive intent, ensure that all perceptions and “[. . .] all external things are merely the delusions of dreams [. . .].”<sup>174</sup>

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admit that there is not one of my former beliefs about which a doubt may not properly be raised; and this is not a flippant or ill-considered conclusion, but is based on powerful and well thought-out reasons. [. . .] I shall never get out of the habit of confidently assenting to these opinions, so long as I suppose them to be what in fact they are, namely highly probable opinions – opinions which, despite the fact that they are in a sense doubtful, as has just been shown, it is still much more reasonable to believe than to deny” (Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 14 f.).

172 See above pp. 55 f.

173 Descartes, *Meditationes* (cf. note 161), p. 22; my italics (“[. . .] I think it will be a good plan to turn my will in completely the opposite direction and *deceive myself, by pretending for a time* that these former opinions are utterly false and imaginary. I shall do this until the weight of preconceived opinion is counter-balanced and the distorting influence of habit no longer prevents my judgement from perceiving things correctly. In the meantime, I know that no danger or error will result from my plan, and that I cannot possibly go too far in my distrustful attitude. This is because the task now in hand does *not involve action but merely the acquisition of knowledge*” [Descartes, *Meditations* (cf. note 161), p. 15; my italics]).

174 “Supponam igitur non optimum Deum, fontem veritatis, sed genium aliquem malignum, eundemque summe potentem, & callidum, omnem suam industriam in eo posuisse, ut me falleret: putabo coelum, aërem, terram, colores, figuras, sonos, cunctaque externa nihil aliud esse quam ludificationes somniorum, quibus insidias credulitati mea tetendit: considerabo me ipsum tanquam manus non habentem, non oculos, non carnem, non sanguinem, non aliquem sensum, sed haec omnia me habere falso opinantem [. . .]” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 22 f.)/ “I will suppose therefore that not God, who is supremely good and the source of truth, but rather some malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning has employed all his energies in order to deceive me. I shall think that the sky, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things are merely the delusions of dreams which he has devised to ensnare

The *Meditationes* do not remain for long in this extreme state of doubt. At its most radical point, the meditator finds the Archimedean point<sup>175</sup> of all knowledge. All-consuming doubt is finally replaced by the sought-after unquestionable basis of knowledge – the certainty of the existence of the thinking self:

But there is a deceiver of supreme power and cunning who is deliberately and constantly deceiving me. In that case I too undoubtedly exist, if he is deceiving me; and let him deceive me as much as he can, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something. So after considering everything very thoroughly, I must finally conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind.<sup>176</sup>

[. . .]

Sense-perception? This surely does not occur without a body, and besides, when asleep I have appeared to perceive through the senses many things which I afterwards realized I did not perceive through the senses at all. Thinking? At last I have discovered it – thought; this alone is inseparable from me. *I am, I exist – that is certain*. [. . .] At present I am not admitting anything except what is necessarily true. I am, then, in the strict sense only a thing that thinks; I that is, I am a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason [. . .]. [. . .] I am a thing which is real and which truly exists. But what kind of a thing? As I have just said – a thinking thing.<sup>177</sup>

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my judgement. I shall consider myself as not having hands or eyes, or flesh, or blood or senses, but as falsely believing that I have all these things” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 15); “deceptor”/“deceiver”: *ibid.* and *passim*.

**175** “Nihil nisi punctum petebat Archimedes, quod esset firmum & immobile, ut integram terram loco dimoveret; magna quoque speranda sunt, si vel minimum quid invenero quod certum sit & inconcussum” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, Meditatio II ‘De natura mentis humanae: quod ipsa sit notior quam corpus,’ p. 24)/“Archimedes used to demand just one firm and immovable point in order to shift the entire earth; so I too can hope for great things if I manage to find just one thing, however slight, that is certain and unshakeable” (Descartes, *Meditations*, Second Meditation ‘The nature of the human mind, and how it is better known than the body,’ p. 16).

**176** Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 17; my italics. “Sed est deceptor nescio quis, summe potens, summe callidus, qui de industria me semper fallit. Haud dubie igitur ego etiam sum, si me fallit; & fallat quantum potest, nunquam tamen efficiet, ut nihil sim quamdiu mea liquid esse cogitabo. Adeo ut, omnibus satis superuque pensatis, denique statuendum sit hoc pronuntiatum, ‘Ego sum, ego existo,’ quoties a me profertur, vel mente concipitur, necessario esse verum” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 25; my italics).

**177** Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 18; my italics. “Sentire? nempe etiam hoc non fit sine corpore, et permulta sentire visus sum in somnis, quae deinde animadverti me non sensisse. Cogitare? Hic invenio: cogitatio est, haec sola a me divelli nequit. *Ego sum, ego existo; certum est*. [. . .] Nihil nunc admitto nisi quod necessario sit verum: sum igitur praecise tantum res cogitans, id est, mens, sive animus, sive intellectus, sive ratio, voces mihi prius significationis ignotae. Sum autem res vera, & vere existens, sed qualis res? Dixi, cogitans” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, Meditatio II, p. 27; my italics; see also pp. 28 f. [Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 19 f.], but also

[...]

*I am a thing that thinks*: that is, a thing that doubts, affirms, denies, understands a few things, is ignorant of many things, is willing, is unwilling, and also which imagines and has sensory perceptions; [...] even though the objects of my sensory experience and imagination may have no existence outside me, nonetheless the modes of thinking which I refer to as cases of sensory perception and imagination, in so far as they are simply modes of thinking, do exist within me – of that I am certain. [...] *I am certain that I am a thinking thing*.<sup>178</sup>

Such cognitive certainty, however, presupposes the rejection of the ‘demon hypothesis.’<sup>179</sup> Only under the premise of a metaphysical assurance of the existence of a perfect, almighty, and, in particular, benevolent God, who acts as guarantor

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the Second Meditation altogether (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 23–34; Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 16–23).

**178** Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 24; my italics. “*Ego sum res cogitans*, id est dubitans, affirmans, negans, pauca intelligens, multa ignorans, volens, nolens, imaginans etiam & sentiens; ut enim ante animadverti, quamvis illa quae sentio vel imaginor extra me fortasse nihil sint, illos tamen cogitandi modos, quos sensus & imaginationes appello, quatenus cogitandi quidam modi tantum sunt, in me esse sum certus. [...] *Sum certus me esse rem cogitantem*” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, Meditatio III ‘De Deo, quod existat,’ pp. 34 f.). This is the beginning of the Third Meditation (‘The existence of God’), which takes up the results of the second (“[...] nam cum mihi nunc notum sit ipsamet corpora non proprie a sensibus, vel ab imaginandi facultate, sed a solo intellectu percipi, nec ex eo percipi quod tangantur aut videantur, sed tantum ex eo quod intelligantur, aperte cognosco nihil facilius aut evidentius mea mente posse a me percipi” [Descartes, *Meditationes*, Meditatio II, p. 34]/“I now know that even bodies are not strictly perceived by the senses or the faculty of imagination but by the intellect alone, and that this perception derives not from their being touched or seen but from their being understood; and in view of this I know plainly that I can achieve an easier and more evident perception of my own mind than of anything else” [Descartes, *Meditations*, Second Meditation, pp. 22 f.]).

**179** See Descartes, *Meditationes*, Meditatio III, pp. 35 f.; Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 25. (After recalling that the doubt about mathematical truths is based on the hyperbolic doubt of the ‘*genius malignus*’-argument,’ it reads: “Et certe cum nullam occasionem habeam existimandi aliquem Deum esse deceptorem, nec quidem adhuc satis sciam utrum sit aliquis Deus, valde tenuis &, ut ita loquar, Metaphysica dubitandi ratio est, quae tantum ex ea opinione dependet. Ut autem etiam illa tollatur, quamprimum occurret occasio, examinare debeo an sit Deus, &, si sit, an possit esse deceptor; hac enim re ignorata, non videor de ulla alia plane certus esse unquam posse” [Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 36]/“And since I have no cause to think that there is a deceiving God, and I do not yet even know for sure whether there is a God at all, any reason for doubt which depends simply on this supposition is a very slight and, so to speak, metaphysical one. But in order to remove even this slight reason for doubt, as soon as the opportunity arises I must examine whether there is a God, and, if there is, whether he can be a deceiver. For if I do not know this, it seems that I can never be quite certain about anything else” [Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 25]).

of truth, can the basis of knowledge be guaranteed.<sup>180</sup> The guarantee for building objective knowledge is provided by the ‘rational ideas’ given by God and in particular by the ‘clear and distinct’ concepts of mathematics and logic. As the meditator determines, after having reassured himself of his own (thinking) existence (itself the result of doubt), only that which can be grasped entirely “clearly and distinctly” (“clare & distincte”) has a claim to truth.<sup>181</sup> And in contrast to the ‘ideas coming from outside’ (“ideae adventitiae”) and the ‘self-generated ideas’ (“ideae me ipso factae”), only the “innate ideas” (“ideae innatae”) received directly from God, fulfill this claim.<sup>182</sup> A further axiom of the system of rational

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**180** See the proofs of God’s existence in the third (Meditatio III ‘De Deo, quod existat’/‘The existence of God’) and fifth meditation (Meditatio V ‘De rerum materialium; & iterum de Deo, quod existat’/‘The essence of material things, and the existence of God considered a second time’), which, however, shall not be explained here in more detail (cf. esp. Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 41–52 and pp. 65–71; Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 28–35 and pp. 45–49), as well as, among other things, regarding the compatibility of error with the idea of a perfect and benevolent God: Meditatio IV ‘De vero & falso’/‘Truth and falsity’ (cf. esp. Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 54–62; Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 38–43). (Cf. e.g.: “In primis enim agnosco fieri non posse ut ille me unquam fallat; in omni enim fallacia vel deceptione aliquid imperfectionis reperitur; & quamvis posse fallere, nonnullum esse videatur acuminis, aut potentiae argumentum, proculdubio velle fallere, vel malitiam vel imbecillitatem testatur, nec proinde in Deum cadit [Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 53]/“To begin with, I recognize that it is impossible that God should ever deceive me. For in every case of trickery or deception some imperfection is to be found; and although the ability to deceive appears to be an indication of cleverness or power, the will to deceive is undoubtedly evidence of malice or weakness, and so cannot apply to God” [Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 37]; “Atque ita plane video omnis scientiae certitudinem & veritatem ab una veri Dei cognitione pendere, adeo ut, priusquam illum nossem, nihil de ulla alia re perfecte scire potuerim” [*Meditationes*, p. 71]/“Thus I see plainly that the certainty and truth of all knowledge depends uniquely on my awareness of the true God, to such an extent that I was incapable of perfect knowledge about anything else until I became aware of him” [*Meditations*, p. 49]).

**181** “[...] ac proinde jam videor pro regula generali posse statuere, illud omne esse verum, quod valde clare & distincte percipio” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 35)/“So I now seem to be able to lay it down as a general rule that whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly is true” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 24); cf. as well the formulation of the ‘rule of evidence’ in the *Discours*, the first of the four rules of understanding set up there (Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* II, 7 [cf. note 100], p. 18; Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* [cf. note 100], p. 120 [followed by: ‘rule of decomposition,’ ‘rule of order,’ ‘rule of completeness’]), see also the further explanation of ‘clare et distincte’ in the sixth meditation (Descartes, *Meditationes* [cf. note 161], p. 78; Descartes, *Meditations* [cf. note 161], p. 54); see also the broader thematization of this aspect in connection with the discussion of *La vida es sueño* later in this study (chap. 3.1).

**182** Regarding the *ideae innatae*, see in particular the third meditation (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 34–52, esp. pp. 37–40; Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 24–36, esp. pp. 26 f.; cf., furthermore, *Meditationes*, pp. 68–71 and pp. 78 ff.; *Meditations*, pp. 47 ff. and pp. 54 f.); for the aspect of the assured certainty of the innate ‘clear’ mathematical categories, cf., e.g., *Meditationes*, p. 43;

cognition constitutes the strict separation of mind (*res cogitans*) and body (*res extensa*), of reason and sensory perception.<sup>183</sup> Knowledge about the material world,

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*Meditations*, pp. 29 f. ('extension in length, breadth and depth,' 'motion,' 'duration,' 'number,' etc.) and *Meditationes*, pp. 63 ff.; *Meditations*, pp. 44 f. (e.g., 'the idea of the triangle!'; moreover: "meminique me semper [...] ejusmodi veritates, quae nempe de figuris, aut numeris, aliisve ad Arithmeticam, vel Geometriam, vel in genere ad puram atque abstractam Mathesim pertinentibus, evidenter agnoscebam, pro omnium certissimis habuisse" [*Meditationes*, p. 65]/"I also remember that [...] I always held that the most certain truths of all were the kind which I recognized clearly in connection with shapes, or numbers or other items relating to arithmetic or geometry, or in general to pure and abstract mathematics" [*Meditations*, p. 45]) as well as the following above. (For the mentioned classification of ideas, cf.: "Ex his autem ideis aliae innatae, aliae adventitiae, aliae a me ipso factae mihi videntur: nam quod intelligam quid sit *res*, quid sit *veritas*, quid sit *cogitatio*, haec non aliunde habere videor quam ab ipsamet mea natura; quod autem nunc strepitum audiam, solem videam, ignem sentiam, a rebus quibusdam extra me positis procedere hactenus judicavi; ac denique Syrenes, Hyppogryphes, & similia a me ipso finguntur" [*Meditationes*, pp. 37 f.; my italics]/"Among my ideas, some appear to be innate, some to be adventitious, and others to have been invented by me. My understanding of what a *thing* is, what *truth* is, and what *thought* is, seems to derive simply from my own nature. But my hearing a noise, as I do now, or seeing the sun, or feeling the fire, comes from things which are located outside me, or so I have hitherto judged. Lastly, sirens, hippogriffs and the like are my own invention" [*Meditations*, p. 26; my italics]; for the 'first innate idea,' cf.: "idea[e] vera[e] mihi ingenita[e], quarum prima & praecipua est idea Dei" [*Meditationes*, p. 68]/"the true ideas which are innate in me, of which the first and most important is the idea of God" [*Meditations*, p. 24]; on the aspect of the God given ratio, the innate ability to grasp the evident, cf.: "[...] nam quaecumque lumine naturali mihi ostenduntur, ut quod ex eo quod dubitem, sequatur me esse, & similia, nullo modo dubia esse possunt, quia nulla alia facultas esse potest, cui aequae fidam ac lumini isti, quaeque illa non vera esse possit docere" [*Meditationes*, pp. 38f]/"Whatever is revealed to me by the natural light – for example that from the fact that I am doubting it follows that I exist, and so on – cannot in any way be open to doubt. This is because there cannot be another faculty both as trustworthy as the natural light and also capable of showing me that such things are not true" [*Meditations*, p. 27]).

**183** Cf. for this esp. the explanation in *Meditatio V* 'De rerum materialium; & iterum de Deo, quod existat'/'The essence of material things, and the existence of God considered a second time' and *Meditatio VI* 'De rerum materialium existentia, & reali mentis a corpore distinctione'/'The existence of material things, and the real distinction between mind and body' (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 63–90, esp. pp. 78–81; Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 44–62, esp. pp. 54 ff. [e.g.: "Et quamvis fortasse (...) habeam corpus, quod mihi valde arcte conjunctum est, quia tamen ex una parte claram & distinctam habeo ideam mei ipsius quatenus sum tantum *res cogitans*, non *extensa*, & ex alia parte distinctam ideam corporis, quatenus est tantum *res extensa*, non *cogitans*, certum est me a corpore meo revera esse distinctum, & absque illo posse existere"/"It is true that I may have (...) a body that is very closely joined to me. But nevertheless, on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it"]; *Meditationes*, pp. 85 f.; *Meditations*,

whose existence is now guaranteed by the non-deceptive God, can only be obtained through reason, the recognition of rational-mathematically translatable structures.<sup>184</sup> After having established the certainty of reason and the explanatory model of the world based on it, the sixth *Meditation* undertakes a revision of the doubts expressed in the first *Meditation*: the senses may deceive, but not always (“[...] non quidem omnia, quae habere videor a sensibus, puto esse temere admittenda; sed neque etiam omnia in dubium revocanda”).<sup>185</sup> Here, once again Descartes rejects traditional (Aristotelian) epistemology that maintains that the experience of sensory perception could serve as the first, secure basis for knowledge. Sensory perception must first

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p. 59 [the body is divisible, the mind indivisible]; for the determination of the ego as a ‘thinking substance,’ cf. in addition to what has just been quoted further the above [‘Ego sum res cogitans’; ‘Sum certus me esse rem cogitantem’] as well as, among others: “[...] ego, qui nihil aliud sum quam res cogitans [...]” [*Meditationes*, p. 81]/“[...] I, who am nothing but a thinking thing [...]” [*Meditations*, p. 56]). It should be noted that, even though Cartesian metaphysics is still essentially based on the authority of God, the paradigm of a strict separation of reason and physis holds highly problematic theological implications, not least of which was the accusation of the incompatibility of substance theory with the central Catholic dogma of transubstantiation, which ultimately led to a ban on his writings. They were placed on the Index of Forbidden Books, introduced in 1559 by the Tridentinum, on November 20th 1663 (thirteen years after his death) (cf. *Index Librorum prohibitorum*, ed. Pope Alexander VII, Rome 1664, pp. 393b–394a and p. 396; cf. also the discussions on the topic of the Eucharist in the *Objectiones et Responiones* [Descartes, *Meditationes* (cf. note 161), pp. 217 f. (*Objectiones Quartae*, pp. 196–218) and pp. 248–256 (*Responsio ad Quartas Objectiones*, pp. 218–256); Descartes, *Meditations* (cf. note 161), pp. 152 f. (*Forth Set of Objections*, pp. 138–153) and pp. 173–178 (*Author’s Replies to the Fourth Set of Objections*, pp. 154–178)]). Thirteen years later, in 1676, Montaigne’s *Essais* were indexed, but interestingly enough, the writings of Sextus Empiricus were not.

**184** “Non tamen forte omnes [res corporeae] tales omnino existunt, quales illas sensu comprehendo, quoniam ista sensuum comprehensio in multis valde obscura est & confusa; sed saltem illa omnia in iis sunt, quae clare & distincte intelligo, id est omnia generaliter spectata, quae in purae Matheseos objecto comprehenduntur” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 80; see as well *Meditationes*, p. 71)/“They [corporeal things] may not all exist in a way that exactly corresponds with my sensory grasp of them, for in many cases the grasp of the senses is very obscure and confused. But at least they possess all the properties which I clearly and distinctly understand, that is, all those which, viewed in general terms, are comprised within the subject-matter of pure mathematics” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 55; see as well p. 49).

**185** Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 77 f. (“[...] although I do not think I should heedlessly accept everything I seem to have acquired from the senses, neither do I think that everything should be called into doubt” [Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 54]).

undergo the ‘prior examination by the intellect’ – i.e. be compared with the *ideae innatae*, the ‘mathematizability’ – in order to be considered reliable, to be grasped as ‘clear and distinct.’<sup>186</sup>

Radical doubt shook and then collapsed the foundations of existing certainties in order to build on the newly uncovered foundation of reliable knowledge; namely, the doubting person’s own certainty of being. This new certainty of knowledge, i.e., rationalism, is then denied its actual effective power at the end of the *Meditationes*. In order to recognize and avoid errors based on sensory perception, the various senses serve as a means of comparison, with memory and the mind available as suitable instruments.<sup>187</sup> Coherence, continuity, and order are determined as adequate criteria for distinguishing between false and unproblematic sensory perceptions. The previously expressed “exaggerated

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**186** Cf.: “[. . .] Ideoque haec natura docet quidem ea refugere quae sensum doloris inferunt, & ea prosequi quae sensum voluptatis, & talia; sed non apparet illam praeterea nos docere ut quicquam ex istis sensuum perceptionibus sine *praevio intellectus examine* de rebus extra nos positis concludamus, quia de iis verum scire ad mentem solam, non autem ad compositum videtur pertinere [. . .]” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 82 f.; my italics)/“My nature [what God has bestowed on me as a combination of mind and body], then, [. . .] does indeed teach me to avoid what induces a feeling of pain and to seek out what induces feelings of pleasure, and so on. But it does not appear to teach us to draw any conclusions from these sensory perceptions about things located outside us without waiting *until the intellect has examined the matter*. For knowledge of the truth about such things seems to belong to the mind alone, not to the combination of mind and body” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 57; my italics); on the aspect of ‘mathematization,’ see above note 184; for the referring to traditional epistemology, which is then replaced by the ‘rationalistic system,’ cf.: “Atque etiam quia recordabar me prius usum fuisse sensibus quam ratione, videbamque ideas quas ipse effingebam non tam expressas esse, quam illae erant quas sensu percipiebam, & plerumque ex earum partibus componi, facile mihi persuadebam nullam plane me habere in intellectu, quam non prius habuissem in sensu” (*Meditationes*, p. 75)/“In addition, I remembered that the use of my senses had come first, while the use of my reason came only later; and I saw that the ideas which I formed myself were less vivid than those which I perceived with the senses and were, for the most part, made up of elements of sensory ideas. In this way, I easily convinced myself that I had nothing at all in the intellect which I had not previously had in sensation” (*Meditations*, p. 52).

**187** Furthermore, all the senses, as far as what is beneficial to the body, more often gave true than false information: “Nam sane, cum sciam omnes sensus circa ea, quae ad corporis commodum spectant, multo frequentius verum indicare quam falsum, possimque uti fere semper *pluribus ex iis ad eandem rem examinandam*, & insuper *memoria*, quae praesentia cum praecedentibus connectit, & *intellectu*, qui jam omnes errandi causas perspexit; [. . .]” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 89; my italics)/“For I know that in matters regarding the well-being of the body, all my senses report the truth much more frequently than not. Also, I can almost always make use of more than one sense to investigate the same thing; and in addition, I can use both my memory, which connects present experiences with preceding ones, and my intellect, which has by now examined all the causes of error” (Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 61).



doubts” (“hyperbolicæ [...] dubitationes”) would thus have to be rejected, moreover, they would be downright “laughable” (“risu dignæ”). This applies particularly to: “[...] the principal reason for doubt, namely my inability to distinguish between being asleep and being awake.”<sup>188</sup> Descartes then refutes the skeptical ‘dream trope’ by using the argument of continuity:

For I now notice that there is a vast difference between the two [being asleep and being awake], in that dreams are never linked by memory with all the other actions of life as waking experiences are. If, while I am awake, anyone were suddenly to appear to me and then disappear immediately, as happens in sleep, so that I could not see where he had come from or where he had gone to, it would not be unreasonable for me to judge that he was a ghost, or a vision created in my brain, rather than a real man. But when I distinctly see where things come from and where and when they come to me, and when I can connect my perceptions of them with the whole of the rest of my life without a break, then I am quite certain that when I encounter these things I am not asleep but awake.<sup>189</sup>

The examination of the connection between current perceptions and previous life experiences can provide reliable information about whether one is awake or dreaming, since continuity in this respect can only be consistent with the waking state. The clarity of the nexus provides the evidence. Under the axiomatic conditions of the distinction between reason and sensory perception and the existence of a benevolent God, who guarantees the reality of the outside world and ensures the reliable functioning of reason, dream and reality are kept explicitly distinct. Descartes then continues:

And I ought not to have even the slightest doubt of their reality if, after calling upon all the senses as well as my memory and my intellect in order to check them, I receive no

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**188** Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 61; “[...] non amplius vereri debeo ne illa, quae mihi quotidie a sensibus exhibentur, sint falsa, sed hyperbolicæ superiorum dierum dubitationes, ut risu dignæ, sunt explodendæ. Praesertim summa illa de somno, quem a vigilia non distinguebam” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 89).

**189** Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 61 f. “[N]unc enim adverto permagnum inter utrumque esse discrimen, in eo quod nunquam insomnia cum reliquis omnibus actionibus vitæ a memoria conjungantur, ut ea quae vigilantanti occurrunt; nam sane, si quis, dum vigilo, mihi repente appareret, statimque postea disparet, ut fit in somnis, ita scilicet, ut nec unde venisset, nec quo abiret, viderem, non immerito spectrum potius, aut phantasma in cerebro meo effectum, quam verum hominem esse judicarem. Cum vero eae res occurrunt, quas distincte, unde, ubi, & quando mihi adveniant, adverto, earumque perceptionem absque ulla interruptione cum tota reliqua vita connecto, plane certus sum, non in somnis, sed vigilantanti occurrere” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 89 f.).



conflicting reports from any of these sources. For from the fact that God is not a deceiver it follows that in cases like these I am completely free from error.<sup>190</sup>

And it is this very aspect mentioned again here – the authority of God to whom man owes the ‘innate ideas’ that enable him to achieve a reliable perception of the material world based on mathematical understanding – that gives the epistemological project of this ‘Father of Modernity’ a ‘pre-modern’ impulse. The change of perspectives in Descartes’ line of thought, however, points to philosophical modernity, for the focus is not on the knowledge of the very nature of things themselves, but on the self-assurance of thinking, the methodical backing of one’s own thinking processes. The anchoring of knowledge in reason makes recourse to authority-related knowledge obsolete, and inextricably detaches itself from traditional epistemology. In Descartes’ work, the path to this ‘new beginning’ is not an explicit engagement with authority and tradition, but rather in the form of ‘meditation’ and an engagement with skepticism. However, Descartes’ view inwards, to the self, is not that the introspection of Montaigne; it is epistemologically motivated. Radical skeptical doubt serves to establish the foundation of subjective, and, ultimately, objective certainty. In contrast to the Early Modern skeptics Montaigne and Sánchez, Descartes’ reception of ancient Pyrrhonism is not affirmative; rather, the hyperbolic doubt of the *Meditationes* serves as a rhetorical volte to create a foundation of certainty that ultimately cannot be logically demonstrated. Cartesian rationalism, based on methodical reference to skepticism, is not a refutation of skepticism, of doubt about the reliability of sensory perception.

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**190** Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 62. “Nec de ipsarum veritate debeo vel minimum dubitare, si, postquam omnes sensus, memoriam & intellectum ad illas examinandas convocavi, nihil mihi quod cum caeteris pugnet, ab ullo ex his nuntietur. Ex eo enim quod Deus non sit fallax, sequitur omnino in talibus me non falli” (Descartes, *Meditationes*, p. 90). It should be noted that in the following sentence, which concludes the *Meditationes*, the theoretical character is again emphasized. Even if the possibility of certain knowledge is theoretically guaranteed, in practical, everyday life errors can occur after all, which is ultimately all too human. Implicitly, the aspect which Descartes emphasizes in several places is also mentioned again, namely, that the methodical doubt can not be transferred to the realm of action, the ‘*res agendae*’ (“Sed quia rerum agendarum necessitas non semper tam accurati examinis moram concedit, fatendum est humanam vitam circa res particulares saepe erroribus esse obnoxiam, & naturae nostrae infirmitas est agnoscenda” [*Meditationes*, p. 90] / “But since the pressure of things to be done does not always allow us to stop and make such a meticulous check, it must be admitted that in this human life we are often liable to make mistakes about particular things, and we must acknowledge the weakness of our nature” [*Meditations*, p. 62]).

## 2 On Skepticism in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

The source material for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (c. 1600) is derived from Norse mythology and was recorded in the *Historiae Danicae* of Saxo Grammaticus at the end of the 12th century. However, it is the expanded (by the addition of moralizing commentaries) version of the story in François de Belleforest's popular *Histoires tragiques* (1559–1582) that is generally regarded as one of Shakespeare's immediate sources.<sup>191</sup> There are several differences between the two texts; for example, although constitutive elements of the plot (fratricide, incestuous marriage, feigned madness, and execution of a long-delayed revenge) are present in Belleforest's work, there is no ghost. In addition, Fengon – the equivalent of Shakespeare's Claudius – murders Amleth's father in public, so the issue of doubt, a central motif in *Hamlet*, regarding whether a murder took place and who carried it out, does not exist.<sup>192</sup> In *Hamlet*, the protagonist, a student in Wittenberg, is summoned back to the Danish court of Elsinore because of his father's sudden death, and only learns that his father was murdered from the ghost: "GHOST: 'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard, / A serpent stung me—so the whole ear of Denmark / Is by a forged process of my death / Rankly abus'd—but know, thou noble youth, / The serpent that did sting thy father's life / Now wears his crown."<sup>193</sup>

Ghosts were by no means uncommon on the stage of the time. One reason was the significant influence of the tragedies written by Seneca, which saw

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**191** It is the third *histoire* of the fifth volume, published for the first time in 1570, of the seven-volume collection of 'tragic stories,' which Belleforest wrote between 1559 and 1582, initially as a continuation of the translation and adaptation of Bandello's *Novelle* begun by Pierre Boaistuau and published in 1559 under the title *Histoires tragiques*. For the sources of *Hamlet*, see Harold Jenkins, "Introduction," in: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins, The Arden Shakespeare, 2nd Series, London 2005, pp. 1–159, pp. 82–112, esp. pp. 85–89 (Saxo Grammaticus), pp. 89–96 (Belleforest), pp. 82–85 and pp. 97–101 (*Ur-Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy*).

**192** See François de Belleforest, *Histoires tragiques. Histoire 108* [1604]: "Avec quelle ruse Amleth qui, depuis, fut roi de Danemark, vengea, la mort de son père Horwendille, occis par Fengon son frère et autre occurrence de son histoire," in: Christian Biet (ed.), *Théâtre de la cruauté et récits sanglants en France (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris 2006, pp. 509–545, p. 513. Even if Amleth is still a child at the time of the act, the code of honour commits him to avenge the murder of his father as soon as he has reached manhood. His feigned madness serves to gain him time and to lull the murderer, who took possession of his victim's throne, empire and wife, into a false sense of security (see pp. 515 f.).

**193** William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.5.35–40. All references to the play are from Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Jenkins (cf. note 191), and are subsequently given parenthetically in the text.

a resurgence of interest in the 16th century.<sup>194</sup> As is well known, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (printed in 1592) also contains a ghost figure and in reports on performances of the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*, the appearance of a ghost is highlighted as well. This appearance of the supernatural is not unique to *Hamlet*, and in fact appears in numerous plays of Shakespeare's oeuvre (consider the witches of *Macbeth* or the ghosts in *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*). Despite this, much ink has been spilt speculating on how the ghost came to appear in *Hamlet* and which sources Shakespeare was drawing from when he chose to integrate the figure into his famous stage play. It can be said to be as central a question to Shakespearean scholarship as the ghost's undoubtedly central role and function in the drama, added to which is the question of whether Shakespeare was bringing in a pagan or a Christian element.<sup>195</sup>

What is fascinating about the figure of the ghost in *Hamlet* is not just how it relates to Shakespeare's modification of his source material, but also its problematic reality in the context of the play. Hamlet's doubts about the reality status of the ghost and his message are directly connected to the central motif of the play, namely, Hamlet's hesitation to exact the revenge called for by the spirit of his father. This element of the play relates to two key aspects of the discussion on skepticism: firstly, the epistemological question of the certainty of that which is perceived via the senses, which the skeptics questioned and which was one of their main arguments; and secondly, stemming from that uncertainty, praxis: the question of whether and how a specific action is possible in the face of uncertainty. Relating skepticism to world literature's most famous

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**194** See already Frederic W. Moorman, "The Pre-Shakespearean Ghost," *Modern Language Review* 1 (1906), pp. 86–95, esp. pp. 89 f.; on ghostly apparitions in Elizabethan theater, see also Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Princeton, NJ/Woodstock 2001, pp. 151–204 (chap. 4 "Staging Ghosts").

**195** In this regard, see, among others, Clinton P. E. Atchley, "Reconsidering the Ghost in *Hamlet*. Cohesion or Coercion?," *Philological Review* 28:2 (2002), pp. 5–20; Catherine Belsey, "Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter. *Hamlet* and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 (2010), pp. 1–27; John Freeman, "This Side of Purgatory. Ghostly Fathers and the Recusant Legacy in *Hamlet*," in: Dennis Taylor/David N. Beauregard (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity in Early Modern England*, New York 2003, pp. 222–259; Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (cf. note 194); Walter Wilson Greg, "Hamlet's Hallucination," *Modern Language Review* 12 (1917), pp. 392–421; Moorman, "Shakespeare's Ghosts," *Modern Language Review* 1 (1906), pp. 192–201; Elihu Pearlman, "Shakespeare at Work. The Invention of the Ghost," in: Arthur F. Kinney (ed.), *Hamlet: New Critical Essays*, New York 2002, pp. 71–84; Robert H. West, "King Hamlet's Ambiguous Ghost," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 70 (1955), pp. 1107–1117; John Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet?*, 3rd ed., Cambridge 1951, pp. 51–86 (chap. 3: "Ghost or Devil?").

'doubter' is not a new aspect of *Hamlet* research; the following discussion, however, will focus, in particular, on the points raised above.<sup>196</sup>

The question of the ghost's 'ontological' status is expressed from the very beginning of the play. In the opening scene of the drama, it is near to midnight and the guards are waiting, together with Horatio, for the ghost to appear:

HORATIO: What, has *this thing* appear'd again tonight?  
 BARNARDO: I have seen nothing.  
 MARCELLUS: Horatio says 'tis *but our fantasy*,  
 And will not let belief take hold of him,  
 Touching this *dreaded sight* twice seen of us.  
 Therefore I have entreated him along  
 With us to watch the minutes of this night,  
 That if again this *apparition* come,  
 He may approve our eyes and speak to it.  
 HORATIO: Tush, tush, 'twill not appear. (1.1.24–33; my italics)

Classifying perception remains elusive, as the ghost actually appears twice in the course of the scene, only to vanish without responding to the words of Horatio (1.1.43–54, 1.1.128–146). At this point the ghost is still not identified with the late king, although a similarity is noted several times throughout the scene.<sup>197</sup> This threatening uncertainty about the cause and significance of the

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**196** If the presence of skepticism in Shakespeare's work is usually attributed to his reception of Montaigne, which is clearly evident in the case of *The Tempest* (dated around 1610) (the point of reference being Essay I, 31: *Des cannibales*; cf. to this, Olejniczak Lobsien, *Skeptische Phantasie* [cf. note 2], pp. 232–242), for *Hamlet*, this is quite controversial: although French versions were already circulating before the English translation by John Florio appeared, the first edition of the *Essays of Montaigne* was published in 1603, thus dating after *Hamlet*. On the reception of skepticism in England, see Hamlin, *Tragedy and Scepticism in Shakespeare's England* (cf. note 2), pp. 29–115. On the aspect of skepticism in *Hamlet* are to be mentioned: Millicent Bell, *Shakespeare's Tragic Skepticism*, New Haven/London 2002, pp. 29–79; Graham Bradshaw, *Shakespeare's Scepticism*, Brighton 1987, pp. 95–125; Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare*, Cambridge/New York 1987, pp. 179–192; John D. Cox, "Shakespeare and the French Epistemologists," *Cithara* 45 (2006), pp. 23–45; Küpper, "Hamlet and *La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 2), pp. 376–396; Aaron Landau, "'Let me not burst in ignorance.' Skepticism and Anxiety in *Hamlet*," *English Studies* 82 (2001), pp. 218–230; Olejniczak Lobsien, *Skeptische Phantasie* (cf. note 2), pp. 102–126; Christoph Menke, "Tragödie und Skeptizismus. Zu *Hamlet*," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 75 (2001), pp. 561–486; Ritter, *Montaignes Skeptizismus und dramatisierte Skepsis bei Shakespeare* (cf. note 2).

**197** "MAR.: [...] Look where it comes again. / BAR.: In the same figure like the King that's dead. / [...] / Looks a not like the King? Mark it, Horatio. / HOR.: Most like. [...]" (1.1.43–46);

apparition (see, e.g., “HOR.: [...] It harrows me with fear and wonder” 1.1.47) evokes attempts at interpretation that draw upon both mythical explanations and the current political and military situation. Only a few weeks have passed since the sudden and mysterious death of King Hamlet. Denmark is now making evident preparations for war, although against whom and for what purpose is unclear (1.1.73–82). Horatio states that, according to rumors, an attack from Norway is imminent because young Fortinbras is said to be intent on recapturing the territory his father had lost in the battle to King Hamlet (1.1.83–110). On the one hand, the ghost is perceived as a “portentous figure” (1.1.112), an ominous sign of the future of the state (1.1.72), drawing parallels to the mysterious events that supposedly took place before the death of Caesar in Ancient Rome (1.1.16–128). On the other hand, it is connected with *topoi* based on popular beliefs about apparitions (see, e.g., 1.1.139–141, 154–170).<sup>198</sup> There are explicit references to the realm of speculation (“HOR.: So have I heard and do in part believe it.” 1.1.170; “MAR.: Some say that [...]” 1.1.163); and the uncertainty about what is seen manifests itself in the irritated exclamations, as the ghost disappears in the mist of dawn: “BAR.: 'Tis here. / HOR.: 'Tis here. / MAR.: 'Tis gone” (1.1.145–147). This atmosphere of the dark, doubtful, and nebulous pervades the entire play, and is already present in the opening verses that describe the changing of the guards: “BAR.: Who's there? / FRANCISCO: Nay, Answer me. Stand and unfold yourself. / BAR.: Long live the King! / FRAN.: Barnardo? / BAR.: He” (1.1.1–5).

Horatio decides to inform Hamlet about what he believes he has seen, because: “HOR.: This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him” (1.1.176). But even before the ghost is mentioned in their conversation in the second scene of the first act, Hamlet says: “My father—methinks I see my father— / HOR.: Where, my lord? HAMLET: In my mind's eye, Horatio” (1.2.184 f.). This reference to the

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“HOR.: What art thou that usurp'st this time of night, / Together with that fair and warlike form / In which the majesty of buried Denmark / Did sometimes march? [...] / MAR.: “It is offended. BAR.: See, it stalks away” (1.1.49–53); “MAR.: Is it not like the King? / HOR.: As thou art to thyself. / Such was the very armour he had on / When he th'ambitious Norway combated. / So frown'd he once, when in angry parle / He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice. / 'Tis strange” (1.1, 61–67); “BAR.: [It] [c]lomes armed through our watch so like the King” (1.1.113). Furthermore, the use of both the neutral personal pronoun as well as the personal forms (“a” and “he,” e.g. “With martial stalk has he [the ghost] gone by our watch” [1.1.69]) to designate the ghost (as well as in 3.4.136–139) is to be emphasized here, for this also may refer to its dubious status.

**198** Such as wandering at night in places where illegally accumulated treasures are hidden (1.1.139–141) or their disappearance at the cockcrow and its use to drive away evil spirits in the nights of the Christmas season (1.1.154–170).

internal senses, that is, to the realm of the imaginary, of vision and dream, is relevant in light of Hamlet's 'actual' encounters with his father's ghost (in 1.4–5 and 3.4), to the extent that there is no certainty as to whether these encounters are real (that is, are perceived by the external senses), or whether they too happen only in Hamlet's "mind's eye." The distinction between external and internal sense perception ("fantasy") is frequently thematized in the play, most prominently in Horatio's reaction to the first appearance of the ghost: "BAR.: Is not this something more than fantasy? / [...] / HOR.: Before my God, I might not this believe / Without the *sensible and true avouch / of mine own eyes*" (1.1.57–61; my italics).

Hamlet is incredulous ("Tis very strange" 1.2.220) and unsettled ("but this troubles me" 1.2.224) by the report of his friend and the guards and asks detailed questions regarding the appearance of the apparition.<sup>199</sup> Nevertheless, the scene closes with the statement: "HAM.: My father's spirit—in arms! All is not well. / I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come. / Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise, / Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes" (1.2.255–258).<sup>200</sup> The uncertainty and unease felt by the protagonist in the face of his father's untimely and unexpected death and his mother's rapid subsequent marriage to his uncle – now in possession of the crown – are articulated very clearly from the beginning of the play.<sup>201</sup> However, the vague

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**199** "HAM.: Arm'd, say you? HOR./BAR./MAR.: Arm'd, my lord. / HAM.: From top to toe? HOR./BAR./MAR.: My lord, from head to foot. / HAM.: Then saw you not his face? / HOR.: O yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up. / HAM.: What look'd he, frowningly? / HOR.: A countenance more in sorrow than in anger. / HAM.: Pale, or red? / HOR.: Nay, very pale. HAM.: And fix'd his eyes upon you? / HOR.: Most constantly. HAM.: I would I had been there. / HOR.: It would have much amaz'd you. HAM.: Very like. / Stay'd it long? / HOR.: While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred. / MAR./BAR.: Longer, longer. / HOR.: Not when I saw't. / HAM.: His beard was grizzled, no? / HOR.: It was as I have seen it in his life, / A sable silver'd" (1.2.226–242).

**200** The disclosure of a crime represents another *topos* of ghost appearances (see the editor's commentary in: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* [cf. note 191], p. 197).

**201** See Hamlet's first monologue (1.2.129–158), cf. for instance: "[...] O God! God! / How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!" (1.2.132 ff.) and "O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason / Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle, / My father's brother—but no more like my father / Than I to Hercules. Within a month, / Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears / Had left the flushing in her galled eyes, / She married—O most wicked speed! To post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! / It is not, nor it cannot come to good" (1.2.150–158); his conversation with Horatio: "HAM.: But what is your affair in Elsinore? / [...] / HOR.: My lord, I came to see your father's funeral. / HAM.: I prithee do not mock me, fellow-student. / I think it was to see my mother's wedding. / HOR.: Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon. / HAM.: Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral bak'd meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. / Would I had met my dearest foe in

assumption that something is going wrong, that “foul play” is at work, becomes concrete only when Hamlet is ‘in direct contact’ with the ghost, who clearly calls what happened a crime: “GHOST: I am thy father’s spirit, / [. . .] / If thou didst ever thy dear father love—/ HAM.: O God! / GHOST: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. / HAM.: Murder!” (1.5.9–26). The exclamation of Hamlet following the revelation of the murderer (1.5.35–40), “O my prophetic soul! My uncle!” (1.5.41), repeats not only the dimension of inner perception (“in my mind’s eye”), but also implies the possibility of a prognosticating dream. Thus, it could be seen as a potential prophetic dream narrative that has been shortened radically – condensed to a verse.<sup>202</sup> Hamlet’s first reaction to the appearance of the ghost is also noteworthy. It is Horatio, not Hamlet, who first sees the spirit: “Look, my lord, it comes” (1.4.38) and interprets its gesture: “It beckons you to go away with it, / As if some impartment did desire / To you alone” (1.4.58–60). Only then does Hamlet acknowledge the ghost, saying: “It waves me forth again. I’ll follow it. / [. . .] / Go on, I’ll follow thee” (1.4.68–79). Hamlet does not initially recognize the ghost as his father, saying instead that he exhibits a “questionable shape” (1.4.43), but, when he starts to talk to him, he *names* him: “[. . .] I’ll call thee Hamlet, / King, father, royal Dane. O answer me” (1.4.44 f.).<sup>203</sup> When Hamlet finally follows the apparition, Horatio states with some concern: “He waxes desperate with imagination” (1.4.87).<sup>204</sup>

It is significant that throughout the entire play, Hamlet is the only person who hears the ghost speak. That the ghost’s words are thus attributable to Hamlet’s imagination is a possible, plausible, if not obvious assumption. Consider, for example, Act 3, scene 4, when Old Hamlet’s Ghost appears for the

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heaven / Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio” (1.2.174–183); his first scene with Gertrude and Claudius (1.2.64–129), esp.: “QUEEN: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off, / And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark. / Do not for ever with thy veiled lids / Seek for thy noble father in the dust. / Thou know’st ’tis common: all that lives must die, / Passing through nature to eternity. / HAM.: Ay, madam, it is common. QUEEN: If it be, / Why seems it so particular with thee? / HAM.: Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not ‘seems’” (1.2.68–75).

**202** See Marjorie B. Garber, *Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis*, New Haven/London 1974, p. 95.

**203** See also Küpper, “*Hamlet and La vida es sueño*” (cf. note 2), p. 384, as well as pp. 380–384, regarding the role of the ghost in the scenes discussed above.

**204** Previously, he had already expressed the thought that the ghost could deprive Hamlet of reason and drive him mad (“What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord, / [. . .] / And there assume some other horrible form / Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason / And draw you into madness? Think of it” 1.4.69–74), yet Hamlet: “My fate cries out / And makes each petty artire in this body / As hardy as the Nemean lion’s nerve. / Still I’m called. [. . .] / [. . .] / [. . .] Go on, I’ll follow thee” (1.4.81–86).



final time. The protagonist finds his mother Gertrude in her chambers, and confronts her in the most vulgar language possible, accusing her of being complicit in the murder of her husband and marrying her lover, the brother and murderer of her husband, thus betraying Hamlet's father in the most shameful manner (3.4.28–30 and 39–103).<sup>205</sup> At this point the ghost suddenly appears (“HAM.: [...] What would your gracious figure?” 3.4.105). However, only Hamlet sees and hears him:

GHOST: Speak to her, Hamlet.  
 HAM.: How is it with you, lady?  
 QUEEN: Alas, how is't with you,  
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy,  
 And with th'incorporal air do hold discourse?  
 [...]
 [...] Whereon do you look?  
 HAM.: On him, on him. [...]
 [...]
 [...] Do not look upon me,  
 Lest with this piteous action you convert  
 My stern effects. [...]
 [...]
 QUEEN: To whom do you speak this?  
 HAM.: Do you see nothing there?  
 QUEEN: Nothing at all; [...]
 HAM.: Nor did you nothing hear?  
 QUEEN: No, nothing but ourselves.  
 HAM.: Why, look you there, look how it steals away.  
 My father, in his habit as he liv'd!  
 Look where he goes even now out at the portal. (3.4.115–138)

The queen, who does not see the ghost, can only interpret her son's behavior within the framework of mental illness (“Alas, he's mad” 3.4.106; “This is the very coinage of your brain. / This bodiless creation ecstasy / is very cunning in” 3.4.139–141). In fact, madness or delusion represents a prominent and complex theme in Shakespeare's play, so that even feigned madness must be considered a relevant variable in the plot – as Hamlet declares at the end of the first act: “[...] I perchance hereafter shall think meet / To put an antic disposition on” (1.5.179 f.). Claudius' ambition is to determine the reason for “Hamlet's transformation” (2.2.5; see 3.1.2–4). However, during the course of the play it is not

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**205** Furthermore, Hamlet stabs Polonius – assuming it was Claudius – who had hidden behind a curtain at the beginning of the scene (3.4.20–26).



always clear from Hamlet's remarks and behavior whether he is just 'acting' mad in an attempt to deceive the outside world or is indeed suffering from internal sensory deception.<sup>206</sup>

Although Hamlet accepts the ghost's charge to avenge the murder of his father,<sup>207</sup> he does not immediately take action. The doubts about the credibility of the ghost – and thus Claudius' actual guilt – remain<sup>208</sup>; they culminate in the conjecture that the apparition of his dead father may have been a demon, a deception of the devil: “[. . .] The spirit that I have seen / May be a devil, and the devil hath power / T'assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps, / Out of my weakness and my melancholy, / As he is very potent with such sprits, / Abuses me to damn me. [. . .]” (2.2.594–599). First, the category of 'demonic dream' should be mentioned here. The 'power of the devil' resides in the manipulation of inner perception, so that Hamlet may have been tricked by a seemingly 'well-intentioned' form – the spirit of his dead father – but one that in actuality harbors deeply evil intentions. Second, Hamlet's self-confessed melancholy is noteworthy in view of his disposition toward a highly active imagination. In this regard, it is important to note Polonius' interpretation of “Hamlet's lunacy” (2.2.49), which he sees as afflicted by the so-called 'lovesickness,' a specific form of melancholy.<sup>209</sup>

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**206** In this respect, Hamlet's encounter with Ophelia, immediately after the central monologue (3.1.89–163), and the scene of the funeral (5.1.210–294) should be mentioned. One of the numerous parallel constellations (or set in the skeptical frame: structures of *isosthenia*) of the play – such as 'Hamlet-Laertes,' 'Hamlet-Young Fortinbras' – marks the episode of Ophelia's madness with regard to the complex of madness (4.5.1–95, 152–198; 4.7.162–190; 5.1.1–8).

**207** He announces immediately, even before the discovery of Claudius as the perpetrator, his readiness to take revenge (“Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift / As meditation or the thoughts of love / May sweep to my revenge” 1.5.29–31), and takes an oath after the spirit has disappeared (1.5.95–112).

**208** On the one hand, to Horatio: “[. . .] Touching this vision here, / It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you” (1.5.143 f.), and on the other, when he “sees” the ghost for the first time: “Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, / Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell, / Be thy intents wicked or charitable, / Thou com'st in such a questionable shape / That I will speak to thee. [. . .]” (1.4.40–44), and, in a similar way, after its disappearance: “O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else? / And shall I couple hell? [. . .]” (1.5.92 f.).

**209** See 2.2.92–151 (“POLONIUS: [. . .] Your noble son is mad” 2.2.92; after telling his daughter, Ophelia, to stay away from Hamlet, the following had happened: “[. . .] he, repelled [. . .] / Fell into a sadness, then into a fast, / Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness, / Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension, / Into the madness wherein now he raves / And all we mourn for” 2.2.146–151); 2.2.189 f.: “POL.: [. . .] A is far gone. And truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love, very near this.”; see also Gertrude's later statement: “[. . .] Ophelia, I do wish / That your good beauties be the happy cause / of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope your virtues / Will bring him to his wonted way again, / To both your honours” (3.1.38–42).

Hamlet's awareness of the precarious reality of the ghost and thus his doubts about the reliability of his senses – Joachim Küpper calls him “the prototype of the contemporary sceptical intellectual”<sup>210</sup> – manifests itself in his plan to obtain certainty by other means: “[. . .] I'll have grounds / More relative than this. The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King” (2.2.599–601). As he states:

[. . .] I have heard  
 That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
 Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
 Been struck so to the soul that presently  
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions.  
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
 Play something like the murder of my father  
 Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;  
 I tent him to the quick. If a do blench,  
 I know my course. [. . .] (2.2.584–594)

This, however, contradicts Hamlet's previous observation:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
 That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,  
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
 With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!  
 For Hecuba!  
 What's Hecuba to him, or he to her,  
 That he should weep for her? What would he do  
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
 That I have? [. . .] (2.2.545–556)

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Claudius, on the other hand, after he and Polonius had observed the encounter between Hamlet and Ophelia: “Love? / His affections do not that way tend, / Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little, / Was not like madness. There's something in his soul / O'er which his melancholy sits on brood, / And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose / will be some danger; [. . .]” (3.1.164–169).

**210** Küpper, “*Hamlet* and *La vida es sueño*” (cf. note 2), p. 389. This publication already includes the approach with regard to the connection between the unreliability of sensory perception, skepticism and *Hamlet*, and thus also a relevant point of reference for what is discussed here.

Previously in Act 2, Hamlet instructs one of the actors from the traveling troupe to recite a monologue from a play based on the *Aeneid*,<sup>211</sup> in which Aeneas tells Dido about Priam's murder (see 2.2.427–444). The convincing emotionality of the actor when he speaks of Pyrrhus' murder of Priam, and especially of Hecuba's lamentation, refer not only to the 'power' of the theater and the craft of acting, but also to the ability of human beings to fake emotions ("What's

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**211** The passage mirrors basic motifs of Shakespeare's play. Hamlet himself begins to recite the first verses of this monologue ("One speech in't I chievely loved" 2.2.442) taken from an, as he emphasizes, "excellent play" (2.2.435), before the actor, as instructed to, continues. In Virgil, Aeneas tells the Queen of Carthage about the fall of Troy in the second book of the *Aeneis* (II, vv. 1–802), the death of Priam is sung about there in verses 506–558 (used edition: Publius Vergilius Maro, *Aeneis* [Latin-German], trans. and ed. Gerhard Fink, Düsseldorf/Zurich 2005). The representation in *Hamlet* differs, however, from the version of Virgil, as well as from contemporary dramatic versions, for example, *The Tragedy of Dido* (1594) by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe (see Harold Jenkins, "Longer Notes," in: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* [cf. note 191], pp. 421–571, here pp. 477–481). Thus, for example, Hecuba's lament does not become thematic there; but in the context of Shakespeare's drama, this reference is consistent. The short dramatic internal fiction (kind of a 'prelude' to the following 'play within the play') appears closely linked to the framing play. On the one hand, the scene serves the protagonist as a starting point for reflecting on his own behavior, his non-action in the face of his father's death and his subsequent course of action (cf. the following above as well as what was preceding this note; cf. also: "[...] He [this player] would drown the stage with tears, / And cleave the general ear with horrid speech, / make mad the guilty and appal the free, / Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed / The very faculties of eyes and ears. / Yet I, / A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak / Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, / And can say nothing—no, not for a king, / Upon whose property and most dear life / A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?" [2.2.556–566] and below note 224). On the other hand, the motif of mourning is not only associated with Hamlet himself, and can also be seen as referring to the description of Queen Hecuba's intense and overwhelming sorrow over the death of her murdered husband, King Priam. This, in Hamlet's opinion, is in marked contrast to his mother's grief over his father, which seems rather lacking (cf. e.g. 1.2.149–156; the Hecuba-scene: 2.2.501–514, the last verses read: "FIRST PLAYER: 'The instant burst of clamour that she made, / Unless things mortal move them not at all, / Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven / And passion in the gods'" 2.2.511–514; Polonius, who also witnesses the short performance, comments: "Look whe'er he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes" 2.2.515). Further aspects that should be noted include 'regicide,' 'revenge for the death of the father' (Pyrrhus is the son of Achilles) as well as the motif of 'hesitation': When Pyrrhus is about to kill Priam with his sword, he pauses for a moment, but finally brutally kills him ("FIRST PLAYER: '[...] Unequal match'd. / Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide; / [...] / [...] For lo, his sword, / Which was declining on the milky head / Of reverend Priam, seem'd i'th' air to stick; / So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood, / And like a neutral to his will and matter, / Did nothing. / [...] / [...] after Pyrrhus' pause / Aroused vengeance sets him awork, / And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall / On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne, / With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword / Now falls on Priam'" (2.2.467–488).

Hecuba to him, or he to her[?]”) as well as to conceal them. The awareness of the possibility of simulation and dissimulation is in stark contrast to the notion of being able to obtain certainty about something based on the outward appearance and gestures of a person (“I’ll observe his looks; / I tent him to the quick. If a do blench, / I know my course”).<sup>212</sup>

The assumption, referring to one of the fundamental theses of ancient skepticism, that no reliable statements about reality can be made on the basis of sensory perception, manifests itself in Hamlet’s doubts about the reality of the ghost; the possibility it may have been an ‘evil spirit,’ a deception, remains. In anticipation of what will soon be staged, Hamlet articulates his doubts that the upcoming ‘test’ of Claudius will provide any certainty. The protagonist does not, however, content himself with this structure of *isosthenia*. He continues his search for certainty. The ‘play within the play’ (“the play is the thing”) now takes on a central importance, in what is undoubtedly the most prominent use of this representation strategy in the history of drama.<sup>213</sup> “*The Murder of Gonzago*” (3.2.134–254), the play to be performed before the royal court, dramatizes the core of what ‘motivates and plagues’ the protagonist – the circumstances of his father’s death.

In view of his doubt about the reliability of his own sensory perception, Hamlet uses the ‘play within the play’ as a way of attaining proof of Claudius’ guilt, with Horatio instructed to be a second observer:

HAM.: There is a play tonight before the King:  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father’s death.  
I prethee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul

<sup>212</sup> See already Küpper, “*Hamlet and La vida es sueño*” (cf. note 2), pp. 388 f.

<sup>213</sup> See on this subject, for instance, Bernhard Greiner, “The Birth of the Subject out of the Spirit of the Play within the Play: The *Hamlet* Paradigm,” in: Bernhard Greiner/Gerhard Fischer (eds.), *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-Theatre and Self-Reflection*, Amsterdam/New York 2007, pp. 3–14; and the older study by Robert James Nelson, *Play within a Play: The Dramatist’s Conception of His Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh*, New York 1971 (repr. of the 1st ed. New Haven 1958), pp. 11–35 (on *Hamlet*: pp. 17–30).

As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;  
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
 And after we will both our judgements join  
 In censure of his seeming. (3.2.75–87)

It should be recalled that the ghost had told Hamlet that Claudius had murdered him during his midday sleep in the garden by pouring poison into his ear (1.5.59–79). The 'play within the play' contains exactly such a scene.

Hamlet had not only arranged for this play, apparently already part of the theater company's repertoire, to be performed before the royal court,<sup>214</sup> but had supplemented the script with a short speech he wrote himself ("[...] a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't [...]" 2.2.535 f.) and rehearsed with the actors.<sup>215</sup> When the play begins, he is sitting in the audience next to Ophelia and makes repeated comments on what is called a "tragedy" in the short opening speech (3.2.144). The play begins with a conversation between a king and a queen ("[Player-]King" and "[Player-]Queen" according to the stage directions) who had been married for thirty years. The king declares that he is old and would soon die and leave his wife alone on earth, and remarks that it is possible that his wife would marry again after his death. The queen vehemently declares that a second marriage could never be anything but a betrayal of the first; and swears that disaster should come upon her if she marries again after his death.<sup>216</sup> Immediately after this

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**214** "HAM.: We'll hear a play tomorrow. / [To First Player] [...] Can you play *The Murder of Gonzago*? / FIRST PLAYER: Ay, my lord. / HAM.: We'll ha't tomorrow night [...]" (2.2.530–534).

**215** See "HAM.: Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines" (3.2.1–4; Hamlet's famous explanations about the art of acting [3.2.1–35] begin with these instructions). When Hamlet informs Horatio of his plan and asks him to observe Claudius during the performance as well, he refers to this speech he has added, to which the king would respond at the latest ("If his occulted guilt / Do not itself unkenneled in one speech, / It is a damned ghost that we have seen [...]"). What these "dozen or sixteen lines" may be, or if they are to be found in the 'play within the play' at all, is debated (see the editor's notes as well as Jenkins, "Longer Notes" [cf. note 211], pp. 481 f., p. 507). Ultimately, however, and in particular regarding the interpretative approach pursued here, this is not of great relevance.

**216** 3.2.150–218; cf. for instance "PLAYER QUEEN: 'Such love must needs be treason in my breast. / In second husband let me be accurst; / None wed the second but who kill'd the first.' / HAM.: [aside] That's wormwood. / PLAYER QUEEN: 'The instances that second marriage move / Are base respects of thrift, but none of love. / A second time I kill my husband dead, / When second husband kisses me in bed'" (3.2.173–180); "PLAYER KING: 'So think thou wilt no second husband wed, / But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.' / PLAYER QUEEN: 'Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light, / Sport and repose lock from me day and night, /

scene, which closes with the stage exit of the queen, and the king retiring to his midday nap, Hamlet asks his mother what she thinks of the play. In her view, the lady exaggerates, replies Gertrude, upon which Hamlet remarks that she will keep her word (3.2.220–226). Then Claudius intervenes and raises concerns about whether the play will potentially cause an affront, whereupon Hamlet superficially appeases. His explanations, however, are themselves essentially an ironic provocation (and serve to illustrate once again for the spectators/readers the ‘test’ nature of the ‘play within a play’):

KING: Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

HAM.: No, no, they do but jest—poison in jest. No offence i'th'world.

KING: What do you call the play?

HAM.: *The Mousetrap*—marry, how tropically! This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna—Gonzago is the Duke's name, his wife Baptista—you shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what o'that? Your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

(3.2.227–238)

The play resumes. When the murder finally takes place on stage, the performance is interrupted (“OPHELIA: The King rises. / [. . .] POLONIUS: Give o'er the play. / KING: Give me some light. Away” 3.2.259–262). Although Hamlet at first feels entitled to derive the proof of guilt from the behavior of the king (“HAM.: O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for / a thousand pound. Didst perceive?” 3.2.280 f.), Horatio's neutral statements, which do not refer to any specific reaction of Claudius, provide him with no certainty in this regard (“HOR.: Very well, my lord. / HAM.: Upon the talk of poisoning? / HOR.: I did very well note him” 282–284). What is crucial, however, is that Hamlet introduces the “murderer” as “nephew to the King” (3.2.239). This puts the reason for Claudius' abrupt leaving of the performance up for discussion: he might not have seen the scene as an allusion to his own crimes, but rather to a potential assassination attempt by his nephew Hamlet.<sup>217</sup> It is also noteworthy that

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To desperation turn my trust and hope, / An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope, / Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy, / Meet what I would have well and it destroy, / Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife, / If, once a widow, ever I be wife” (3.2.209–218).

217 Although during the representation of the murder by poisoning (stage direction: “[Lucianus] *Pours the poison in the sleeper's ears.*”). Hamlet once again – in the sense of “mousetrap” – implicitly draws the parallel to the murder of his father committed by Claudius, his subsequent accession to the throne and marriage to his mother (“HAM. A poisons him i'th' garden for his estate. [. . .] You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife” 3.2.255–258), the murderer of the inner play “[. . .] is one Lucianus, nephew to the King” (3.2.239) and thinks about revenge (“HAM.: [. . .] Begin, murderer. [. . .] Come, the croaking

during the “dumb-show” that precedes *The Murder of Gonzago*, whose plot it anticipates and which illustrates the poisoning in the garden, there is no reaction to be seen on the part of the royal couple.<sup>218</sup> Claudius himself reveals that he is guilty of murdering his brother only in a soliloquy in the following scene (“O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven; / It hath the primal eldest curse upon’t— / A brother’s murder. [. . .]” 3.3.36–38).<sup>219</sup>

In this way the true circumstances of his father’s death remain hidden from Hamlet until the end of the play. Ultimately, he does act, and revenges his father by killing his uncle. He does so, however, only minutes before his own violent death, and only after the fatally wounded Laertes informs him of Claudius’ intrigue concerning their duel and his plans for (Young) Hamlet’s murder.<sup>220</sup> Evidence of the reality of the ghost and his message, of Claudius’ guilt and thus the justification for revenge, eludes Hamlet until his own death. For the protagonist there is no ‘solution’ to this dilemma, it remains a skeptical *isosthenia*.

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raven doth bellow for revenge” 3.2.246 ff.). This ambiguity also points to the consistent structure of *isosthenia* that characterizes Shakespeare’s drama (on the aspect of ‘structural skepticism’ in *Hamlet*: Olejniczak Lobsien, *Skeptische Phantasie* [cf. note 2], pp. 102–126).

**218** Especially since the allusion to the murder of Hamlet’s father appears quite explicit there. As the stage direction says: “The trumpet sounds. A dumb show follows. Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly, the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck. He lies him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in another Man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper’s ears, and leaves him. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, makes passionate action. The Poisoner with some Three or Four comes in again. They seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts. She seems harsh awhile, but in the end accepts his love” (3.2.133/134).

**219** His pangs of conscience are already indicated at the beginning of this act: “POL.: ’Tis too much prov’d, that with devotion’s visage / And pious action we do sugar o’er / The devil himself. KING: [*aside*] O’tis too true. / How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience. / The harlot’s cheek, beautied with plast’ring art, / Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it / Than is my deed to my most painted word. / O heavy burden!” (3.1.49–54).

**220** “QUEEN: The drink, the drink! I’m poison’d. [*Dies*] / [. . .] HAM.: Treachery! Seek it out. / LAERTES: It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain. / No medicine in the world can do thee good; / In thee there is not half an hour’s life. / The treacherous instrument is in thy hand, / Unbated and envenom’d. The foul practice / Hath turn’d itself on me. Lo, here I lie, / Never to rise again. Thy mother’s poison’d. / I can no more. The King—the King’s to blame. / HAM.: The point envenom’d too! The, venom, to thy work. [*Wounds the King*] / [. . .] KING: O yet defend me, friends. I am but hurt. / HAM.: Here, thou incestuous, murd’rous, damned Dane, / Drink off this potion. Is thy union here? Follow my mother. [*King dies*] LAER.: He is justly serv’d. / It is a poison temper’d by himself” (5.2.316–333).

Hamlet's doubt is universal and radical. While for Descartes, writing a few decades later, the initially adopted possibility of a malicious deception caused by a *genius malignus* is excluded by the axiomatic authority of a benevolent God,<sup>221</sup> for Hamlet the aspect of potential demonic deception is pressing ("The spirit that I have seen / May be a devil").<sup>222</sup> While the radical skeptical doubt in the argument of the *Meditationes* serves to overcome skepticism, and leads to unquestionable certainties,<sup>223</sup> the staging of uncertainty in *Hamlet* ends not with solid evidence, nor in Pyrrhonian serenity, but, on the contrary, leads to a disastrous and gloomy end (Horatio is the only survivor; two families have been extinguished; Denmark will be captured by Norway under Fortinbras). The protagonist's attitude of *epoché* fails to achieve a state of *ataraxia* and Hamlet himself senses that his hesitation, which he expresses repeatedly, is highly problematic,<sup>224</sup> compelling him to continue to search for certainty throughout the play. The 'play within a play,' which reflects the version of events related to Hamlet by his father's ghost, is the doubting protagonist's tool in his search for truth and is intrinsically linked with the skepticism present in the play.

The dream motif is another element of the discussion of skepticism enacted in Shakespeare's play.

In Act 2, scene 2, Hamlet meets his school friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who have come to Elsinore at the behest of Claudius and Gertrude, in the hopes that they will be able to find out what has led to Hamlet's "change."<sup>225</sup> After meeting, the following dialogue ensues:

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**221** See the previous chapter on Descartes, esp. pp. 63–66.

**222** In his short comparison between Shakespeare and Descartes, John D. Cox sets Descartes' 'demon hypothesis' in relation to *Macbeth*, however ("Shakespeare and the French Epistemologists" [cf. note 196], p. 32 f.).

**223** See the previous chapter on Descartes, esp. pp. 66 ff.

**224** See, e.g., Hamlet's soliloquy following the 'player's scene' (2.2.544–601): "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I! / [ . . . ] / [ . . . ] Am I a coward? / Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across, / Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face, / Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie i'th' throat / As deep as to the lungs—who does me this? / Ha! / 'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be / But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall / To make oppression bitter, or ere this / I should ha' fatted all the region kites / With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain! / Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindles villain! / Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave, / That I, the son of a dear father murder'd, / Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, / Must like a whore unpack my heart with words / And fall a-cursing like a very drab, / A scullion! Fie upon't! Foh!" (2.2.544–583); see also 4.4.32–66.

**225** "KING: [ . . . ] I entreat you both / That, being of so young days brought up with him, / And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour, / That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court / Some little time, so by your companies / To draw him on to pleasures and to gather, /



HAM.: [...] What news?

ROSENCRANTZ: None, my lord, but the world's grown honest.

HAM.: Then is doomsday near. But your news is not true. Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN: Prison, my lord?

HAM.: *Denmark's a prison.*

ROS.: Then is the world one.

HAM.: A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o'th' worst.

ROS.: We think not so, my lord.

HAM.: Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

ROS.: Why, then your ambition makes it one: 'tis too narrow for your mind.

HAM.: O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space – were it not that I have *bad dreams*.  
(2.2.236–255; my italics)

It should be noted that nightmares (bad dreams) and feelings of anxiety and claustrophobia as if confined in a dungeon, were recognized symptoms of melancholy in the medical discourse of the day. In *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586), a prominent treatise by Shakespeare's contemporary Timothy Bright (1549/50–1615), it says for example: “The house except it be cheerefull and lightsome, trimme and neate, seemeth vnto the melancholicke a *prison or dungeon*, rather then a place of assured repose and rest.”<sup>226</sup> In Chapter 20, which describes “[t]he accidentes which befall melancholicke persons,” the melancholic person is characterized as “[...] suspicious, painefull in studie, and circumspect, giuen to fearefull and terrible dreames [...]”.<sup>227</sup>

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So much as from occasion you may glean, / Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus / That open'd, lies within our remedy. / [...] QUEEN: And I beseech you instantly to visit / My too much changed son” (2.2.10–35). In the course of the conversation – after the passage quoted above – Hamlet understands the intentions of his former friends (2.2.270–292). Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are also involved in Claudius' first murder plot against Hamlet. They escort him to England. According to Claudius' plan, he was supposed to be killed there, but Hamlet discovers the betrayal and uses a trick, which ultimately results in the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and returns to Denmark (cf. 3.3.1–27; 3.4.202–207; 4.6.12–28; 4.7.42–52; 5.2.2–59).

**226** Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholy*, Amsterdam/New York 1969 (repr. of the edition London 1586), p. 263 (my italics).

**227** Pp. 123–125, here p. 124. Cf. also: “Such persons are doubtfull, suspitious, and thereby long in deliberation, because those domestical feares, or that internall obscuritie, causeth an opinion of daunger in outward affaires, where there is no cause of doubt: their dreams are fearefull: partly by reason of their fancie waking, is most occupied about feares, and terrours,

Hamlet speaks of “bad dreams” that haunt him and seem to paralyze his imagination.<sup>228</sup> It is not “ambition,” that aspect which the Pyrrhonians call *tara-chai* (uneasiness, perturbations, disturbances), and seek to avoid, that motivates Hamlet’s actions, as Rosencrantz insinuates. His reason for making this allusion is presumably to elicit from Hamlet a statement regarding his ambitions for the throne, and apparently stems from the fears of the king.<sup>229</sup> In other words, it is

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which retaineth the impression in sleepe, and partly through blacke and darke fumes of melancholie, rising vp to the braine, whereof the fantasie forget obiectes, and disturbeth the sleep of melancholy persons. These persons are also subject to that kinde of suffocation in the night, which is called the mare, wherin, with some horrible vision in dreame they are half strangled, and intercepted of speech, through they striue to call. This happeneth through grosse melacholicke vapours in them which cause horrible and fearefull apparitions, by reason of the nature of that humour, and the fancie prone through custome to conceaue on the worse parte [...]” (Chap. 22 “How melancholie altereth those actions which rise out of the braine,” pp. 129–132, here pp. 131 f.). On the influence of the *Treatise of Melancholy* on Shakespeare’s drama, see Jenkins, “Introduction” (cf. note 191), pp. 106–108; the important observation shall be quoted: “[...] Shakespeare [...] take[s] us into Hamlet’s mind, to intellectualize the character, and, by doing so, transform[s] it. But many of the ideas he gives Hamlet to express belong to the common intellectual currency of his age, so that it cannot be surprising if some are also found in Bright” (p. 107) as well as the limiting final evaluation: “Altogether, while I think the influence of Bright on Shakespeare’s conception of Hamlet has been much exaggerated [...], there seems sufficient evidence to justify us in including *A Treatise of Melancholy* among the subsidiary sources of the play” (p. 108).

**228** Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel paraphrases Hamlet’s statement as follows: “Es gibt nichts, das der Einbildungskraft des Shakespeareschen Dramenhelden nicht zu Gebote stünde, auf das er mit seinem Verstand und seiner Vorstellungskraft nicht Einfluß nehmen könnte. Selbst auf engstem Raum ist es ihm möglich, sich kraft seiner Imagination als König eines unbegrenzten Territoriums zu fühlen. Alles dies wird freilich durch seine negativen Träume, die sich der Macht seines Willens entziehen, verhindert oder gar unmöglich gemacht” [There is nothing that the imagination of Shakespeare’s dramatic hero would not provide, which he could not influence with his mind and his imagination. Even in the most confined space, it is possible for him to feel the power of his imagination as king of an infinite territory. All this is, of course, due to his negative dreams that are beyond the power of his will, prevented or even made impossible] (*Die Traumtheorien des 20. Jahrhunderts und die Träume der Figuren Shakespeares: Mit einem Abriß philosophischer und literarischer Traumfassungen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Heidelberg 1992, p. 153).

**229** Claudius had indeed appointed Hamlet as his heir to the throne (“[...] and think of us / As of a father; for let the world take note / You are the most immediate to our throne” 1.2.107 ff.) – possibly for purely tactical reasons –, but sees in him increasingly a danger which needs to be ‘eliminated’ (cf., among others, 3.1.164–170; 3.3.1–7, 24 ff.). Hamlet never articulates a claim on his part to the crown towards Claudius – Denmark was an elective monarchy, and therefore the succession to the throne by the brother of the king was in principle legal; but he also significantly expresses his displeasure in this regard towards his mother Gertrude: “A murderer and a villain, / A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe / Of your precedent lord,

not striving for power that makes Hamlet perceive the world, and in particular Denmark, as a prison, but “bad dreams.”<sup>230</sup> The content of these dreams is never explicitly stated, although a reference to Hamlet’s encounter with the ghost (1.4; 1.5) and his previously expressed dark foreboding (1.2.184 ff.; 1.2.255–258) seem to be likely to the spectator/reader.<sup>231</sup>

In response to Guildenstern’s ensuing interjection, “Which dreams indeed are ambition; / for the very substance / of the ambitious is merely / the shadow of a dream” (2.2.256–259), Hamlet remarks “A dream itself is but a shadow” (2.2.260).<sup>232</sup> His attitude toward dreams seems to be ambiguous. This void-implying identification of dream and shadow stands in contrast to the active power of dreams he attested to a few verses earlier. Hamlet here describes the dream as a “shadow,” an idea also expressed by Shakespeare’s contemporary Thomas Nashe, who writes in a similar vein in his *Terrors of the Night* (1594), a text on dreams in the Aristotelian materialist tradition, that “[a] dream is nothing else but the echo of our conceits in the day.”<sup>233</sup>

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a vice of kings, / A cutpurse of the empire and the rule, / That from a shelf the precious diadem stole / And put it in his pocket— / [...]” (3.4.96–101) as well as towards Horatio: “He [Claudius] that hath kill’d my king and whor’d my mother, / Popp’d in between the election and my hopes, / [...]” (5.2.64 f.). On the aspect of succession to the throne, see Jenkins, “Longer Notes” (cf. note 211), pp. 421–571, here pp. 433 f.

**230** It should also be noted that Hamlet’s original intention was to leave Denmark and return to Wittenberg. At the request of his mother he stays in Elsinore (cf. 1.2.112–119).

**231** See Naoe Takei, “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions. A Study of Shakespeare’s Major Tragedies,” *Shakespeare Studies* [Tokyo] 8 (1969), pp. 18–47, here pp. 19 ff. Takei calls Hamlet’s dreams “[...] visions of the very evil in Denmark” (p. 19).

**232** The word play on “ambition,” “dream,” and “shadow” is further expanded on and finally taken to absurdity by Hamlet: “Ros.: Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a / quality that it is but a shadow’s shadow. / HAM.: Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs / and outstretched heroes the beggar’s shadows. Shall / we to th’court? For by my fay, I cannot reason” (2.2.261–265). The ambitious just reaches precisely what he dreamed of, meaning ambition is by its nature a shadow, the achieved goal is the shadow of a dream (Guildenstern), hence the shadow of a shadow (Rosencrantz). If ambition is the shadow of a shadow, the only corporeal beings who can cast shadows, would have to be those who have no ambition, that is, beggars, so that the ambitious monarch and hero in consequence are shadows of beggars (Hamlet).

**233** Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night or A Discourse of Apparitions* (1594), in: Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil, Summer’s Last Will and Testament, The Terrors of the Night, The Unfortunate Traveller and Selected Writings*, ed. Stanley Wells, London 1964, pp. 141–175, here p. 154.

The explicit equation of dream and shadow, as well as the aspect of “bad dreams,” can now be related to the metaphorical use of dreams in Hamlet’s famous monologue – set in the middle of the drama – quoted in full below:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
 And by opposing end them. *To die—to sleep,*  
*No more;* and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wish'd. *To die, to sleep;*  
*To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:*  
*For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,*  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
 Must give us pause—there's the respect  
 That makes calamity of so long life.  
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
 Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
 The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,  
 The insolence of office, and the spurns  
 That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,  
 When he himself might his quietus make  
 With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that *the dread of something after death,*  
*The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn*  
*No traveller returns,* puzzles the will,  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
 With this regards their currents turn awry  
 And lose the name of action. [. . .]

(3.1.56–88; my italics)-

In order to first contextualize the analogy between sleep and death (“[. . .] To die—to sleep, / No more; [. . .]”; 3.1.60 f.) and its implication for the concept of dream, it is worth taking a look at a passage from Tertullian’s *De anima* (around 210 CE). This early Christian treatise ‘on the soul’ contains a dream theory. Significantly, the comments on the dream in *De anima* lie between those focusing on the topic of sleep and those that thematize death.

Of crucial relevance for Tertullian's argument is the Christian idea of the soul as individual and immortal<sup>234</sup> and the idea that although the body rests during sleep, the active soul remains constantly in motion.<sup>235</sup> With the argument that Adam slept, first of all, before he worked, ate or spoke – the point of reference is the deep sleep reported in *Genesis* 2,21, induced in Adam by God,

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**234** See, for example, the depiction of death and the destiny of the souls after death in Tertullian, *De anima*, ed. Jan Hendrik Waszink, Leiden/Boston 2010, chaps. 50–58, pp. 67–80; Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, trans. Peter Holmes, in: Alexander Roberts/James Donaldson/Arthur Cleveland Coxe (eds.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 3: *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, ed. Allan Menzies, Buffalo 1885, pp. 181–235, pp. 227–235. In particular, notice the relatively physical conception of souls after death; for example, the suffering of torments in hell, the 'sitting' in heaven at the right hand of God (on the latter cf. for instance *Lk* 13,28 f.: "Ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium: cum videritis Abraham, et Isaac, et Jacob, et omnes prophetas in regno Dei, vos autem expelli foras. Et venient ab oriente, et occidente, et aquilone, et austro, et accumbent in regno Dei."/'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.');

regarding Tertullian, cf.: "Omnis ergo anima penes inferos? inquis. Velis ac nolis, et supplicia iam illic et refrigeria: habes pauperem et divitem. [...] [*Lk* 16,19–26]" (Tertullian, *De anima*, chap. 58, 1; p. 78)/'All souls, therefore, are shut up within Hades: do you admit this? (It is true, whether) you say yes or no: moreover, there are already experienced there punishments and consolations; and there you have a poor man and a rich. [...]'

(Tertullian, *On the Soul*, p. 234); "[...] Adeo novit et apud inferos anima et gaudere et dolere sine carne, quia et in carne et illaesa si velit dolet et laesa si velit gaudet. Hoc si ex arbitrio suo in vita, quanto magis ex iudicio dei post mortem?" (Tertullian, *De anima*, chap. 58, 5; p. 79)/'[...] Full well, then, does the soul even in Hades know how to joy and to sorrow even without the body; since when in the flesh it feels pain when it likes, though the body is unhurt; and when it likes it feels joy though the body is in pain. Now if such sensations occur at its will during life how much rather may they not happen after death by the judicial appointment of God!' (Tertullian, *On the Soul*, pp. 234 f.).

**235** Cf. chap. 43, 5: "Superest [...] sensualis vigoris somnum determinemus, quia corporis solius quietem procuret, non et animae. Animam enim ut semper mobilem et semper exercitam nunquam succedere quieti, alienae scilicet a statu immortalitatis; nihil enim immortale finem operis sui admittit, somnus autem finis est operis. Denique corpori, cui mortalitas competit, ei soli quies finem operis adlatura" (Tertullian, *De anima*, p. 59)/'Our only resource, indeed, is [...] by determining the soul to be a temporary suspension of the activity of the senses, procuring rest for the body only, not for the soul also. For the soul, as being always in motion, and always active, never succumbs to rest, – a condition which is alien to immortality: for nothing immortal admits any end to its operation; but sleep is an end of operation. It is indeed on the body, which is subject to mortality, and on the body alone, that sleep graciously bestows a cessation from work' (Tertullian, *On the Soul*, p. 222).

while he takes out the rib from which he formed Eve – Tertullian claims sleep is superior to all natural things and continues<sup>236</sup>:

Inde deducimur etiam [somnum] *imaginem mortis* iam tunc eum rescensere. Si enim *Adam de Christo figuram* dabat, somnus Adae mors erat Christi dormituri in mortem, ut de iniuria perinde lateris eius vera mater viventium *figuraretur* ecclesia. Ideo et somnus tam salutaris, tam rationalis etiam in publicae et communis iam mortis *effingitur* exemplar.<sup>237</sup>

'From this primary instance also we are led to trace even then the *image of death in sleep*. For as *Adam was a figure of Christ*, Adam's sleep shadowed out the death of Christ, who was to sleep a mortal slumber, that from the wound inflicted on His side might, in like manner (as Eve was formed), be *typified* the church, the true mother of living. This is why sleep is so salutary, so rational, and is actually *formed into the model* of that death which is general and common to the race of man.'<sup>238</sup>

Sleep is depicted as an 'image' (*imago*) of death<sup>239</sup>; the relation of sleep and death is described by the term *figura*. In Tertullian, the pattern of Christianity's figural understanding of history – the Old Testament as historically real prophecy and as an incomplete anticipation of the New (Christian) Testament – appears to be transferred to the conception of the dream, with the implication that, in the same way that after the death of the body the immortal soul is able to see the 'pure truth' hidden from this world, during sleep the soul is able, through the dream, to view a partial truth, which therefore ranks higher than what is perceived while awake.<sup>240</sup> He further writes that the eschatological expectation of resurrection is also reflected in the awaking, the 'reviving,' of the body after sleep.<sup>241</sup>

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**236** Tertullian, *De anima*, chap. 43, 9; p. 60 (Tertullian, *On the Soul*, p. 222) (cf. *Gen* 2,21: "Immisit ergo Dominus Deus soporem in Adam: cumque obdormisset, tulit unam de costis ejus, et replevit carnem pro ea.")/'And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;').

**237** Tertullian, *De anima*, chap. 43, 10; p. 60 (my italics).

**238** Tertullian, *On the Soul*, p. 222 (my italics).

**239** Elsewhere also "specul[um] mortis" (Tertullian, *De anima*, chap. 50, 1; p. 67)/'mirror and image of death' (Tertullian, *On the Soul*, p. 227); cf. as well *De anima*, chap. 58, 3; p. 78 (*On the Soul*, p. 235).

**240** On figural interpretation, cf. Erich Auerbach, "Figura" (1938), in: Erich Auerbach, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Romanischen Philologie*, Bern/Munich 1967, pp. 55–92, here pp. 65–82, esp. pp. 65 ff.; Erich Auerbach, "Figura," trans. Ralph Mannheim, in: Erich Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Minneapolis 1984, pp. 11–76, pp. 229–237, here pp. 28–60, esp. pp. 28–34 (cf. also the section on figural interpretation in the analysis of Lope de Vega's drama, chap. 4.1, pp. 247 ff.).

**241** Cf. "Sed et illa [anima] sic patitur, ut alibi agere videatur, dissimulatione praesentiae futuram absentiam ediscens, [...] et tamen interim somniat [...] [.] Nec quiescit, nec ignavescit

The ancient tradition of equating death and sleep<sup>242</sup> was first expressed centuries before Christianity, and contains the positively connoted concept of dreamlessness. The idea that death is like a dreamless sleep, was already formulated in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*:

For the state of death is one of two things: either it is virtually nothingness, so that the dead has no consciousness of anything, or it is, as people say, a change and migration of the soul from this to another place. And if it is unconsciousness, *like a sleep in which the sleeper does not even dream, death would be a wonderful gain*. For I think if any one were to pick out that night in which he slept a dreamless sleep and, comparing with it the other nights and days of his life, were to say, after due consideration, how many days and nights in his life had passed more pleasantly than that night, I believe that not only any private person, but even the great King of Persia himself would find that they were few in comparison with the other days and nights. So if such is the nature of death, I count it a gain; for in that case, all time seems to be no longer than one night.<sup>243</sup>

The sleep/death analogy is one often used in the Early Modern period, as is the idea of dreamlessness. For example, when Montaigne, in the twelfth essay of the third book of his *Essais*, says, with explicit reference to Socrates:

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omnino, nec naturam immortalitatis servam soporis addicit. Probat se mobilem semper; terra mari peregrinatur, negotiatur, agitur, laborat, ludit, dolet, gaudet, licita atque illicita persequitur, ostendit, quod sine corpore etiam plurimum possit, quod et suis instructa sit membris, sed nihilominus necessitatem habeat rursus corporis agitandi. Ita cum evigilaverit corpus, redditum officiis eius resurrectionem mortuorum tibi affirmat. [. . .]" (Tertullian, *De anima* [cf. note 234], chap. 43, 12; pp. 60 f.)/'Meanwhile the soul is circumstanced in such a manner as to seem to be elsewhere active, learning to bear future absence by a dissembling of its presence for the moment. [. . .] But yet it dreams in the interval. [. . .] It proves itself to possess a constant motion; it travels over land and sea, it trades, it is excited, it labours, it plays, it grieves, it rejoices, it follows pursuits lawful and unlawful; it shows what very great power it has even without the body, how well equipped it is with members of its own, although betraying at the same time the need it has of impressing on some body its activity again' (Tertullian, *On the Soul* [cf. note 234], p. 462). With regard to the New Testament use of the image of death as sleep in connection with the Christian thought of resurrection and eternal life cf., e.g., *Joh* 11, 1–45 (Raising of Lazarus), esp. 11–15, 23–26; *1 Cor* 15, esp. 20–26.

**242** In Greek mythology, for example, the close relationship between sleep and death can be seen in the twin brothers Hypnos (sleep) and Thanatos (death) (on this, cf. Jan Stenger, Art. "Somnus," in: *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Manfred Landfester, 16 vols., Stuttgart/Weimar 1996–2003, vol. 11 [2001], cols. 712 f.); cf., e.g., the portrayal in Homer, *Iliad* 14, 231–261, esp. 231 and 16, 667–675, esp. 672 (used edition: Homer, *Iliad* [Greek–English], trans. Augustus Taber Murray, rev. William F. Wyatt, 2nd ed., 2 vols., Cambridge, MA/London 1999).

**243** Plato, *Apologia Sokratous* 40 c–e (Plato, *The Apology of Socrates*, in: Plato, *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus* [Greek–English], ed. and trans. Harold North Fowler, Cambridge, MA/London 2005, pp. 68–145, here pp. 140–143; my italics).

À l'avanture est la mort chose indifferente, à l'avanture desirable. Il est à croire pourtant, si c'est une transmigration d'une place à autre, qu'il y a de l'amendement, d'aller vivre avec tant de grands personnages trespassez: et d'estre exempt d'avoir plus affaire à juges iniques et corrompus: Si c'est un aneantissement de nostre estre, c'est encore amendement d'entrer en une longue et paisible nuit. Nous ne sentons rien de plus doux en la vie, qu'un repos et sommeil tranquille, et profond sans songes.<sup>244</sup>

'Death may be something indifferent or something desirable. (We may believe, however, that it is a migration, a crossing from one place to another, and that there is some improvement in going to live among so many great men who have crossed the divide – and to be free from having to deal with wicked and corrupt judges! If death to be a reduction of out being to nothingness, it is still an improvement to enter upon a long and peaceful night. We know of nothing in life sweeter than quiet rest and deep dreamless sleep).<sup>245</sup>

It is this consideration that first predominates Hamlet's meditation on life and death.<sup>246</sup> If dying means sleeping, death is nothing more than a sleep ("[...] To die—to sleep, / No more [...]” 3.1.60 f.), it is a desirable state, yes: “[...] ’tis a consummation<sup>247</sup> / Devoutly to be wish’d. [...]” (3.1.63 f.), for it is characterized by insensitivity to agonizing external afflictions,<sup>248</sup> with it ends all earthly sorrow and pain (“[...] we end / The heart-ache and the thousand natural

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**244** Michel de Montaigne, III, 2: *De la physionomie*, in: Montaigne, *Les Essais* (cf. note 70), pp. 1082–1111, here p. 1099. As further points of reference of this “Renaissance commonplace” (Jenkins, “Longer Notes” [cf. note 211], p. 489) the secondary literature mentions Epicurus, Lucretius, Cicero, and Seneca (cf. *ibid.*; Carrol Camden, “Shakespeare on Sleep and Dreams,” *Rice Institute Pamphlets* 23 [1936], pp. 106–133, here p. 110; Julian C. Rice, “Hamlet and the Dream of Something After Death,” *Hartford Studies in Literature* 6 [1974], pp. 109–116, here pp. 110 f.; Guido Calogero, “Sleep with or without Dreams? Socrates, Epicurus, Montaigne and Shakespeare on Death,” in: École Libre de Philosophie ‘Plethon’ [ed.], *La réflexion sur la mort*, Athens 1977, pp. 56–67).

**245** Michel de Montaigne, III, 12: *On Physiognomy*, in: Montaigne, *Essays* (cf. note 70), pp. 1173–1206, here p. 1192.

**246** The interpretations of the ‘To be or not to be’-passage, probably the most famous monologue of occidental literary history, and likewise the most obvious manifestation of Hamlet's often articulated enigma, are as numerous as they are different: “And still today [...] there does not seem a general consensus even on what it is about, whether Hamlet's reflections are on suicide and death, on life beyond death, on melancholy self-reflection, on active intervention or revenge or on all or some of these topics listed here.” – as for instance Manfred Pfister puts it, “Enigma Variations. Performing ‘To Be or Not to Be’,” *Poetica* 37 (2005), pp. 349–372, here pp. 351 f.; cf. as well Jenkins, “Longer Notes” (cf. note 211), pp. 484–489.

**247** Jenkins (Commentary) and Bell (*Shakespeare's Tragic Scepticism* [cf. note 196], p. 76) point out that ‘consummation’ here does not mean primarily (Jenkins) – as in the modern sense – ‘perfection,’ ‘fulfillment,’ but – as a different spelling of ‘consumation’ (from ‘consume’) – simply ‘end,’ ‘dissolution into nothingness.’

**248** Cf. Marcus Noll, *An Anatomy of Sleep: Die Schlafbildlichkeit in den Dramen William Shakespeares*, Würzburg 1994, p. 158.



shocks / That flesh is heir to [...]” 3.1.61 ff.). The assumption that death is a good to be wished for in order to bring an end to the suffering inflicted during life by the arbitrary blows of fate (“The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” 3.1.58) is, however, immediately revised by extending the metaphor of death as sleep to include dreaming: “[...] To die, to sleep; / To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there’s the rub: / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, / Must give us pause—there’s the respect / That makes calamity of so long life” (3.1.64–69). On the one hand, the relevance ascribed to the dream argument (“there’s the rub”; “Must give us pause”; “there’s the respect”) should be highlighted; secondly, its eventuality is to be emphasized. The thought of possible dreams in the sleep of death, however, is aggravated by their potentially torturous nature. The well-known heavy burdens to be carried in this life (“[...] the whips and scorns of time, / Th’oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely, / The pangs of dispriz’d love, the law’s delay, / The insolence of office, and the spurns / That patient merit of th’unworthy takes, / [...] / To grunt and sweat under a weary life [...]” 3.1.70–77) are contrasted with the powerful fear of the uncertainty of death, of the unknown torments that are possibly to be suffered in the hereafter: “But that the dread of something after death [...] / [...] puzzles the will, / And makes us rather bear those ills we have / Than fly to others that we know not of?” (3.1.78–82).

Hamlet’s apostrophizing of death as “The undiscover’d country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns [...]” (3.1.79 f.) is, however, contrary to the return of his father’s spirit. ‘Old Hamlet’s Ghost’ explicitly refers to the place of his otherworldly plagues, the location of the “sulph’rous and tormenting flames” (1.5.3), purgatory: “[...] for a certain term [...] / confin’d to fast in fires, / Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature / Are burnt and purg’d away. [...]” (1.5.10–13) and the unimaginableness of what is suffered there.<sup>249</sup>

Purgatory is one of the ideological-theological points by which Protestantism was distinguished or distinguished itself from Catholicism, as expressed in 1563 when the Anglican Church rejected this particular Roman Catholic dogma.<sup>250</sup> Protestantism held that there is no process of purification and that the souls of the deceased go directly to heaven or hell; thus,

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**249** “[...] But that I am forbid / To tell the secrets of my prison-house, / I could a tale unfold whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, / Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres, / Thy knotted and combined locks to part, / And each particular hair to stand an end / Like quills upon the fretful porpentine. / But this eternal blazon must not be / To ears of flesh and blood. [...]” (1.5.13–22).

**250** Cf. Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (cf. note 194), pp. 235 f.

a temporary return from the dead is considered impossible, and the living cannot effect the salvation of the dead (for example by praying for their salvation or paying for one's own salvation), nor any other interaction between the realm of the living and that of the dead.<sup>251</sup>

The question of what follows after physical death is a poignant one for Hamlet, particularly when, in Act 3, scene 3, he is on the verge of carrying out the vengeance demanded of him by his father's ghost by killing the Claudius, who appears to be praying. He stays his hand, declaring that were he to kill him while the latter was in a state of grace this would enable his uncle to go directly to heaven,<sup>252</sup> something his father was denied: "A [Claudius] took my father grossly, full of bread, / With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May; / And how his audit stands who knows save heaven? / But in our circumstance and course of thought / 'Tis heavy with him. [...]" (3.3.80–84).<sup>253</sup> Hamlet does not act, but instead delays his deed.

The speculative impetus of the 'To be or not to be' monologue with respect to the sleep of death: "[...] to sleep / No more; [...]" (3.1.60 f.) versus "[...] perchance to dream [...]" (3.1.65), as well as the accentuation of Hamlet's fear of the unknown, of life – the dreams – after death are especially striking when compared to the corresponding passage in the so-called 'Bad Quarto' version of *Hamlet*.<sup>254</sup> There the assumption of a dreamless sleep is explicitly excluded, and the 'perhaps' is replaced by certainty:

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**251** Küpper points out the inconsistency that entails the return of 'Old Hamlet's Ghost' also in the context of Catholic doctrine: "The story the ghost tells about his temporary confinement to the fire would be unacceptable within Catholic doctrine, since Old Hamlet was killed without a confession and thus is doomed to hell, to eternal fire" ("*Hamlet and La vida es sueño*" [cf. note 2], p. 386, n. 46). In view of the indicated theological aspects, the symbolic aspects of where Hamlet is studying should also be pointed out: Wittenberg is closely linked with Protestantism (the reformers Luther and Melanchthon taught at Wittenberg University; in 1517 Luther posted his 95 theses there). It should be mentioned also that Hamlet does not combine the problematic topic of the ghost with his general reflections on death.

**252** "Now might I do it pat, now a is a-praying. / And now I'll do't. [*Draws his sword.*] And so a goes to heaven; / And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd: / A villain kills my father, and for that / I, his sole son, do this same villain send / To heaven. / Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge" (3.3.73–79).

**253** See also the ghost's emphasizing to have been torn from life unprepared, without confession: "Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, / Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd, / No reck'ning made, but sent to my account / With all my imperfections on my head" (1.5.76–79).

**254** This is the very corrupt quarto first print of the text appearing in 1603 ('Q1'; title: *The tragical historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke by William Shake-speare. As it hath been diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the cittie of London: as also in the two vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where*). Modern Hamlet editions, such as the one by Jenkins

To be, or not to be, I there's the point,  
 To Die, to sleepe, is that all? I all:  
 No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes,  
 For in that dreame of death, when wee awake,  
 And borne before an euerlasting Iudge,  
 From whence no passenger euer retur'nd,  
 The vndiscovered country, at whose sight  
 The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd.  
 But for this, the ioyfull hope of this,  
 Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world [. . .]<sup>255</sup>

The contrast between the two versions with regards to the clarity of the Christian implications is also striking. Hamlet of the 'Bad Quarto' version equates not only death and dreaming, but also takes up the thought of awakening in the 'true reality,' the 'real life' in the face of God ("[. . .] when wee awake, / And borne before an euerlasting Iudge"). This is further reflected in the ideas of the 'unknown land,' evoking an image of salvation and damnation, eternal salvation and eternal torment. It is a place, "at whose sight / the happy smile, and the accursed damn'd." It is not the fear of the possibility of hell ("the dread of something after death"; 3.1.78) that makes man tolerate the sufferings of the world, but the hope of heaven: "[. . .] who would this indure, / But for a hope of something after death?"<sup>256</sup>

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used here, are based on the second quarto edition of 1604/1605 ('Q2') and the first folio print from 1623 ('F1'). Q2 serves as the basis text; Q1 is selectively used. (Cf. Jenkins, "Introduction" [cf. note 191], pp 13–82, regarding Q1: pp. 13 f., pp. 18–36; Manfred Pfister, "Hamlet und kein Ende. Essay," in: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: Zweisprachige Ausgabe*, trans. Frank Günther, 4th ed., Munich 2002, pp. 364–391, here pp. 368 f.). As for the comparison, I am referring to Rice, "Hamlet and the Dream of Something After Death" (cf. note 244).

**255** William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: First Quarto, 1603*, Oxford 1965 (repr. of the edition London 1603), sig. D4v.

**256** "The widow being oppresd, the orphan wrong'd; / The taste of hunger, or a tirants raigne, / And thousand more calamities besides, / To grunt and sweate vnder this weary life, / When that he may his full Quietus make, / With a bare bodkin, who would this indure, / But for a hope of something after death? / Which pusles the braine, and doth confound the sence, / Which makes vs rather beare those euilles we haue, / Than flie to others that we know not of" (sig. Elr). Cf. Rice's classification regarding the distinctive deviation: "The First Quarto may be a reviser's attempt to censor and Christianize the agnosticism of the original text, which incorporates (if possibly only to reject) the skeptical possibility that the dream which is life may end in the grave" (Rice, "Hamlet and the Dream of Something After Death" [cf. note 244], p. 115). On the aspect of the 'fear of something after death' in the Christian context see David E. van Tassel, "Clarence, Claudio, and Hamlet. 'The Dread of Something after Death'," *Renaissance and Reformation* 7 (1983), pp. 48–62, here pp. 48 ff. and pp. 57–61, who discusses *Hamlet*, based on the "Exhortation against the Fear of Death" from the Protestant *Book of*

That an awareness of potential suffering after death not only ultimately outweighs the known evils to which man is exposed in this life, but also influences his action or inaction, is indicated in the last verses of the monologue (“Thus conscience does make cowards of us all, / And thus the native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought, / And enterprises of great pitch and moment / With this regards their currents turn awry / And lose the name of action. [...]” 3.1.83–88). Moving from general reflection to the specific situation of Hamlet and whether or not to carry out revenge on Claudius,<sup>257</sup> it is the fear of eternal damnation that makes the protagonist decide against such an action; for should his uncle be innocent of his father’s death, killing him would have grave consequences for Hamlet in the afterworld.<sup>258</sup>

Death is a central motif in Shakespeare’s play. The plot begins with the death of Hamlet’s father and ends with all the relevant characters dead and two families – of Hamlet and of Laertes – entirely extinguished. Only Horatio lives. In the so-called ‘closet scene,’ Hamlet stabs Polonius believing him to be Claudius (3.4.20–26). Ophelia<sup>259</sup> commits suicide by drowning herself (4.7.162–190; see “QUEEN: [...] Your sister’s drown’d, Laertes” 4.7.162). Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are killed by Hamlet while attempting to assassinate him on Claudius’ orders (cf. 5.2.2–59). In the final scene (see “FORTINBRAS: This quarry cries on havoc. O proud Death, / What feast is toward in thine eternal cell, / That thou so many princes at a shot / So bloodily hast struck?” 5.2.369–372) Gertrude dies after drinking a poison meant for Hamlet (5.2.294 ff., 314 ff.), Claudius dies after being mortally wounded by Hamlet with Laertes’ poison-

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*Homilies* (1547 and 1563–71) and the Christian *ars moriendi*-tradition, with regard to the Christian concept of preparation for death.

**257** Regarding interpretations that interpret the monologue as Hamlet’s thematization of his own suicidal thoughts, cf. the statement already at the beginning of his first monologue (1.2.129–158): “O that this too too sullied flesh would melt, / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew, / Or that the Everlasting had not fix’d / His canon ’gainst self-slaughter. [...]” (1.2.129–132).

**258** On the moral theological aspect in *Hamlet*, see, among others, Catherine Belsey, “The Case of Hamlet’s Conscience,” *Studies in Philology* 76 (1979), pp. 127–148; Willi Erzgräber, “Das Gewissen bei Shakespeare,” *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch im Auftrage der Görres-Gesellschaft* 40 (1999), pp. 95–114, here pp. 95–102.

**259** In the words of her brother Laertes: “A document in madness: thoughts and remembrance fitted” (5.5.176 and cf. 4.5.154–160); Claudius sees the reason for her change (“[...] poor Ophelia / Divided from herself and her fair judgement, / Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts;” 4.5.84–86) – like for Hamlet’s ‘change’ at first – in the death of her father Polonius (“O, this is the poison of deep grief: it springs / All from her father’s death. [...]” 4.5.75 f.) and Hamlet’s departure for England (4.5.79–84).

covered rapier (5.2.327–332), Laertes is also killed by Hamlet, after being stabbed with the same poisoned rapier, (5.2.308, 334 ff.) and finally Hamlet himself succumbs to the wound inflicted on him by Laertes (again with the poisoned rapier) before the accidental exchange of weapons (5.2.306, 357–363). Horatio continues the metaphor of death as sleep, when he says over the body of his dead friend: “[...] Good night, sweet prince, / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest” (5.2.364 f.). The play’s violent and bloody ending is also replete with contingency. In this regard, Hamlet’s statements, made shortly before the duel with Laertes, are striking: “[...] We defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, ’tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows aught, what is’t to leave betimes? Let be” (5.2.215–220) and when he reports to Horatio about his ‘trip to England’ at the beginning of the last scene: “[...] and that should learn us / There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will [...]” (5.2.9 ff.).<sup>260</sup> Hamlet finally gives up his attempt to use his rationality to influence the course of events and submits himself to the auguries of fate or to the authority of divine providence – it remains unclear which interpretation the play suggests.

The atmospheric presence of death in *Hamlet* permeates the play and is also evident, for example, in the protagonist’s mourning,<sup>261</sup> the appearance of ‘Old Hamlet’s Ghost,’ the graveyard scene, and Ophelia’s burial (5.1).

Thus, the main monologue of Hamlet in relation to the dream negotiates *the* problem of the human condition par excellence: the uncertainty about what may follow after death. It is not the fear of dying itself which Hamlet expresses, but the fear of the dreams that may come in the sleep of death: “[...] there’s the rub: / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come [...]” (3.1.65 f.); a fear of hellish dreams, whose ‘shadows’ (“A dream itself is but a shadow” 2.2.260) may be found in the ‘bad dreams’ of this world, the ‘bad dreams’ that Hamlet says have a cramping, oppressive power (“O God, I could be bounded in

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**260** See as well: “Why, even in that was heaven ordinaunt” (5.2.48).

**261** See 1.2. altogether (e.g. 1.2.66: “KING: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?”; 1.2.68–71: “QUEEN: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off, / And let thine eye look like a friend in Denmark. / So not for ever with thy veiled lids / Seek for thy noble father in the dust.”; 1.2.77–86: “HAM.: ’Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother, / Nor customary suits of solemn black, / Nor windy suspiration of forc’d breath, / No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, / Nor the dejected haviour of the visage, / Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief, / That can denote me truly. These indeed seem, / For they are actions that a man might play; / But I have that within which passes show, / These but the trappings and the suits of woe.”).

a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space – were it not that I have bad dreams” 2.2.253 ff.).<sup>262</sup>

This potentially significant impact on human life ascribed to dreams refers to a flow of transitions, a blurring of the boundaries between dream and reality. Bad dreams effect the imagination and intellect. The fear-generating darkness of the unknown appears to outweigh current concerns and needs, and even paralyzes one's determination and ability to act.

Completely in the spirit of Hamlet's remark at the end of the first act, “The time is out of joint. [...]” (1.5.196), uncertainty and ambiguity characterize Shakespeare's drama as a whole and are, so to speak, focused on the protagonist. As Verena Lobsien remarks: “[...] Hamlet findet sich in einer Situation radikalen Ordnungsverlusts und des Zusammenbruchs aller bisherigen Gewißheiten” [Hamlet finds himself in a situation radically deprived of order and all previous certainties].<sup>263</sup> This is closely connected to how the dream motif is negotiated in the play. The contemplation of death and use of the metaphorical dream concept cited in this context reflects that there are only probabilities, no certainties for Hamlet. At the end of life is sleep; but *perhaps* the life after death harbors comparable, if not immensely more difficult, hellish suffering than earthly life.

In this way, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* demonstrates, so to speak, *ad oculos* why in *this* moment of the Early Modern period a revival of ancient skepticism was ultimately not sustainable. The question of whether one acted ‘rightly’ or ‘not rightly’ is of less relevance if its answer only amounts to the extent to which one had found oneself with a (particularly relative) system of purely secular values. But if ‘just’ or ‘unjust’ actions constitute an ‘objective’ category tied to an absolute, and, moreover, punitive, metaphysical authority, then the connection between cognition/sensual perception and action/acting becomes a vital question that extends to one's eternal existence. In Shakespeare's most famous tragedy the serene humanism of Montaigne evaporates in the face of

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**262** With regard to the identification of dream and shadow, another dimension of this metaphor used in Shakespeare should be noted, which Andreas Höfele summarizes as follows: “‘Shadows’ ist die bei Shakespeare gängige Bezeichnung nicht nur für den Traum, sondern auch für Theater, die knappste Chiffre, in die der im Denken der Zeit geläufige Verweiszusammenhang zwischen Bühne, Welt und Traum sich fassen läßt” [‘Shadows’ is the common term used in Shakespeare not only for the dream, but also for the theater, the most concise cipher into which the relational context of reference between stage, world and dream, common in contemporary thought, can be expressed] (“Unquiet Slumbers’. Traum und Politik bei Shakespeare,” in: Peer Schmitt/Gregor Weber [eds.], *Traum und ‘res publica’: Traumkulturen und Deutungen sozialer Wirklichkeiten im Europa von Renaissance und Barock*, Berlin 2008, pp. 165–180, here pp. 176–180, quote p. 176).

**263** Olejniczak Lobsien, *Skeptische Phantasie* (cf. note 2), p. 105.

impending eternal fire. *Isosthenia* does not result in the tranquility of *epoché* but rather in despair and an inability to act. It appears ultimately *not* possible to exist without a sense of sure knowledge, and to this Shakespeare's play certainly does not present any solutions. It does clearly formulate a desideratum, but without, however, pointing to a direction where its fulfillment may be found.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* displays the pervasive impact that skepticism had in his time. In its representation and problematization of skeptical discourse the play makes use of the dream motif and sleep as death motif as well as of the dramatic device of the 'play within the play.' The use of the dream motif is particularly evident in Calderón and represents a central aspect of the expression of skepticism in his drama. Calderón, however, deals with the issues raised by skepticism in a completely different way than that of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as will be explored in the following chapter.

## 3 Aspects of Skepticism in Calderón's *La vida es sueño*

### 3.1 Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *comedia La vida es sueño* (1636)

*La vida es sueño* [Life is a Dream] is considered Calderón's (1600–1681) most prominent *comedia*. Written sometime between 1634 and 1635 and first published in 1636,<sup>264</sup> the play opens with Rosaura, the protagonist of its second plot, who, disguised as a man, has traveled to Poland from Moscow accompanied by her servant Clarín – *gracioso* of the play. She is seeking to restore her honor by finding her lover Astolfo, who had promised to marry her but instead abandoned her. Rosaura carries a sword that had been given to her mother Violante by her lover Clotaldo – now a favorite of the Polish king – as a guarantee when he left the Muscovite court before Rosaura was born. On their arduous journey through a mountainous wasteland, Rosaura and Clarín happen upon a dark tower hidden among the rocks from which the clank of chains, a voice, and a pale light emanate. Says Rosaura: “[. . .] / puedo determinar [. . .] / una prisión obscura, / que es de un vivo cadáver sepultura. / Y porque más me asombre, / en el traje de fiera yace un hombre / de prisiones cargado / y sólo de la luz acompañado.”<sup>265</sup> Chained and dressed in fur, the prisoner mourning his fate and ‘lack of freedom,’ is Segismundo, the protagonist of the play.<sup>266</sup> When he becomes aware

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**264** This in two versions: on the one hand, in Madrid in the *Primera parte de comedias* published by Calderón's brother José ([Pedro Calderón de la Barca], *Primera parte de comedias de don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, recogidas por don Ioseph Calderon de la Barca, su hermano*, Madrid 1636, fols. 1r–26v), on the other hand, in Zaragoza in the 30th sub-volume of the *Comedias de diferentes autores (Parte treynta de comedias famosas de varios autores*, Çaragoça 1636, pp. 127–173).

**265** The text is quoted after the edition: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño*, ed. Ciriaco Morón, 31st ed., Madrid 2008, here vv. 93–98; in the following, references will be cited parenthetically by verse numbers in the text. Note Rosaura's statement when she speaks for the first time of the building, which she thinks she recognizes among the rocks: “ROSAURA: ¿Quién ha visto sucesos tan extraños? / Mas, si la vista no padece engaños / que hace la fantasía, / a la medrosa luz que aún tiene el día / me parece que veo / un edificio. [. . .]” (vv. 50–54). Rosaura refers to the potential deception of sensory perception (‘si la vista no padece engaños / que hace la fantasía’) and it is this aspect, already hinted at at the beginning of the play, that will take shape over the course of the plot.

**266** On the basis of the statement “[. . .] el delito mayor / del hombre es haber nacido. [. . .]” (vv. 111 f.) Segismundo laments the freedom he has been deprived of, because “dejando a una parte, cielos, / el delito de nacer, qué más os pude ofender / para castigarne más” (vv. 115–118),



of Rosaura, his first desire is to brutally murder her (“Pues la muerte te daré, / [. . .] / entre mis membrudos brazos / te tengo que hacer pedazos”; vv. 180–185), but he soon changes his mind. Rosaura calls on his humanity and throws herself at his feet, and he is completely taken in by the nature of the person before him and by what his senses now perceive: “Tu voz pudo enternecerme, / tu presencia suspenderme, / y tu respeto turbarme” (vv. 190 ff.).<sup>267</sup> Apart from contact with his guard and educator Clotaldo, Segismundo has spent his entire life in isolation:

SEGISMUNDO: [. . .] que [. . .] yo aquí  
tan poco del mundo sé  
– que cuna y sepulcro fue  
esta torre para mí –;  
y [. . .] desde que nací,  
si esto es nacer, sólo advierto  
este rústico desierto  
donde miserable vivo,  
siendo un esqueleto vivo,  
siendo un animado muerto;  
y [. . .] nunca vi ni hablé  
sino a un hombre solamente  
que aquí mis desdichas siente,  
por quien las noticias sé

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and relates this to the freedom that bird (“ave” v. 123), land animal (“bruto” v. 133), fish (“pez” v. 143), brook (“arroyo” v. 153) – unlike him, although he is a human being – may enjoy: “¿y teniendo yo más alma, / tengo menos libertad?” (vv. 131 f.), “¿y yo, con mejor instinto, / tengo menos libertad?” (vv. 141 f.), “¿y yo, con más albedrío, / tengo menos libertad?” (vv. 151 f.); see Segismundo’s lamenting monologue on the whole: vv. 102–172. This aspect of freedom or freedom of will (‘albedrío’), seen as the provenance of human beings but denied to Segismundo, is from the beginning a central aspect of the play. (On the concepts of freedom and free will, cf. as well Theresa Ann Sears, “Freedom Isn’t Free. Free Will in *La vida es sueño* Revisited,” *Romance Quarterly* 49 [2002], pp. 280–289).

**267** See, furthermore: “tú sólo, tú has suspendido / la pasión a mis enojos, / la suspensión a mis ojos, / la admiración al oído. / Con cada vez que te veo / nueva admiración me das, / y cuando te miro más, / aún más mirarte deseo. / Ojos hidrópicos creo / que mis ojos deben ser, / pues cuando es muerte el beber / beben más, y desta suerte, / viendo que el ver me da muerte / estoy muriendo por ver. / Pero véate yo y muera, / que no sé, rendido ya, / si el verte muerte me da, / el no verte qué me diera. / Fuera más que muerte fiera, / ira, rabia y dolor fuerte; / fuera muerte, desta suerte / su rigor he ponderado, / pues dar vida a un desdichado / es dar a un dichoso muerte” (vv. 219–242). While Rosaura is still disguised as a man during this first encounter with Segismundo, the spectators/readers know that she is a woman not only because of the stage direction but also because Clarín refers to her as “señora” (see. v. 66, v. 82).

de cielo y tierra<sup>268</sup>; y [. . .]  
 aquí, porque más te asombres  
 y monstruo humano me nombres,  
 entre asombros y quimeras,  
 soy un hombre de las fieras  
 y una fiera de los hombres.

(vv. 193–212)

The tower appears to him as both ‘cradle and tomb’ (‘[. . .] cuna y sepulcro fue / esta torre para mí [. . .]’ vv. 195 f.); he describes himself as ‘living dead’ (‘esqueleto vivo,’ ‘animado muerto’ vv. 201 f.) – an oxymoron already used by Rosaura in her description of the darkness of the place (‘vivo cadáver’ v. 94) that is repeated throughout the drama<sup>269</sup> – and as both human being and wild animal (‘soy un hombre de las fieras / y una fiera de los hombres’ vv. 211 f.).<sup>270</sup> Represented linguistically-stylistically as a chiasmically reinforced antithesis, the dichotomy of man and animal, civilization and wilderness, reason and instinct, constitute intertwined problem areas negotiated in Calderón’s *comedia*. Other such pairs include chaos and order, heteronomy and autonomy, destiny and freedom, and, most central of all, dream and reality, deception and certainty, and their philosophical (and theological) implications.

Clotaldo soon appears with military guards. Segismundo is again locked in the tower and the interlopers are arrested, for they have stumbled onto a ‘forbidden place,’ hidden away by order of the king.<sup>271</sup> When she is arrested, Rosaura asks Clotaldo for mercy and hands him her sword, saying that she valued the sword highly because of its former owner and trusting only in it, she had traveled to Poland to avenge an injustice she had suffered. Therefore, she says, if she must die, she would like Clotaldo to have the sword in gratitude for his clemency. She charges him to keep it safe, for it holds a secret.<sup>272</sup> Clotaldo, knowing that he must put the young ‘man’ to death is dismayed at the sight of

**268** This refers to Clotaldo, who appears shortly thereafter (cf. vv. 282 f.: “Éste es Clotaldo, mi alcaide, / aún no acaban mis desdichas” and v. 309: “tirano dueño”).

**269** Cf. for instance: “vivo cadáver” (v. 998), “esqueleto vivo” (v. 2475). This too will be given consistency in the context of the metaphor of the title.

**270** For this, see also Segismundo’s lamenting monologue already mentioned (vv. 102–172; see above, note 266).

**271** “CLOTALDO: Oh vosotros, que ignorantes, / de aqueste vedado sitio / coto y término pasasteis / contra el decreto del rey / que manda que no ose nadie / examinar el prodigio / que entre estos peñascos yace: / rendid las armas y vidas” (vv. 296–303).

**272** “ROS.: Y si he de morir, dejarte / quiero, en la fe desta piedad, / prenda que pudo estimarse / por el dueño que algún día / se la ciñó; que la guardes / te encargo, porque aunque yo / no sé qué secreto alcance, / sé que esta dorada espada / encierra misterios grandes, / pues sólo fiado en ella / vengo a Polonia a vengarme / de un agravio. [. . .]” (vv. 366–377).

the sword because he recognizes his own coat of arms etched on it (“[. . .] ¡Santos cielos! / ¿Qué es esto? Ya son más graves / mis penas y confusiones, / mis ansias y mis pesares” vv. 377–380). In order to make sense of what he is seeing, he asks Rosaura where he (she) found the sword. From a woman, Rosaura replies, whose name she was not allowed to reveal, but who had told Rosaura to travel to Poland and to do everything she could to be seen with it by nobles and princes, for among them was one who would recognize it and who would help her and protect her. The woman never said his name since it was possible that he was already dead. Clotaldo is overcome with doubts: “¡Válgame el cielo! ¿Qué escucho? / Aun no sé determinarme / si tales sucesos son / ilusiones o verdades” (vv. 395 ff.). Was it possible that, if his senses did not deceive him, the young man (Rosaura) before him was in fact carrying the very sword he had given to Violante many years before as guarantee of his paternal protection?<sup>273</sup> If so, was he then in fact his child? His dilemma is further exacerbated by the fact that, if this were indeed the case, it meant that he would have to execute his own son, since he had disregarded the royal prohibition and had seen Segismundo (“Pues ¿qué he de hacer [¡ay de mí!] / en confusión semejante, / si quien la trae por favor, / para su muerte la trae, / pues que sentenciado a muerte / llega a mis pies? ¡Qué notable / confusión, qué triste hado, / qué suerte inconstante!” vv. 405–412). Both his heart and the circumstances (the fact that Rosaura has his sword) tell him that this is indeed his child (“Éste es mi hijo”),<sup>274</sup> but he despairs over how to act (“¿Qué he de hacer? ¡Válgame el cielo! / ¿Qué he de hacer? [. . .]” vv. 427 f.). If he brought the issue up before the king, it would mean his death, but if he hid it from him it would be a betrayal of his loyalty to the king which, after all, had priority over honor and life.<sup>275</sup> His next thought is that since the young man, by his own admission, came to Poland to avenge an abuse he had suffered, he must himself therefore be dishonourable and thus could not be his son (“¡No es mi hijo, no

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273 “CLOT.: Esta espada es la que yo / dejé a la hermosa Violante / por señas que el que ceñida / la trujera, había de hallarme / amoroso como hijo, / y piadoso como padre” (vv. 399–404).

274 “CLOT.: Éste es mi hijo, y las señas / dicen bien con las señales / del corazón, que por verle / llama al pecho, y en él bate / las alas, y no pudiendo / romper los candados, hace / lo que aquel que está encerrado, / y oyendo ruido en la calle / se asoma por la ventana. / Y él así, como no sabe / lo que pasa, y oye el ruido, / va a los ojos a asomarse, / que son ventanas del pecho / por donde en lágrimas sale” (vv. 413–426).

275 “CLOT.: [. . .] Porque llevarle / al rey es llevarle, ¡ay triste!, / a morir. Pues ocultarle / al rey no puedo, conforme / a la ley del homenaje. / De una parte el amor propio, / y la lealtad de otra parte / me rinden. Pero ¿qué dudo? / ¿La lealtad al Rey no es antes / que la vida y que el honor? / Pues ella viva y él falte” (vv. 428–438).

es mi hijo, / ni tiene mi noble sangre!” vv. 443 f.), only to reject this argument, saying “¡Mi hijo es, mi sangre tiene, / pues tiene valor tan grande!” (vv. 455 f.); after all, given that honor is easily damaged, it is also a sign of dignity to seek restore it whatever the danger to oneself.<sup>276</sup> Clotaldo remains uncertain (“entre una y otra duda”) and unable to make up his mind. He decides that he will leave it up to the King: “Y así, entre una y otra duda, / el medio más importante / es irme al rey y decirle / que es mi hijo, y que le mate” (vv. 457–460). If the king spared the life of his child, he would help him to overcome his shame; but if he condemned him to death, he should die without knowing that he was his father.<sup>277</sup>

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**276** “CLOT.: [...] [S]i aora atiendo / a que dijo que a vengarse / viene de un agravio, hombre / que está agraviado, es infame. / [...] / Pero si ya ha sucedido / un peligro, de quien nadie / se libró, porque el honor / es de materia tan fácil / que con una acción se quiebra / o se mancha con un aire, / ¿qué más puede hacer, qué más / el que es noble de su parte, / que a costa de tantos riesgos / haber venido a buscarle?” (vv. 439–454).

**277** “CLOT.: Quizá la misma piedad / de mi honor podrá obligarle; / y si le merezco vivo, / yo le ayudaré a vengarse / de su agravio; mas si el rey, / en sus rigores constante, / le da muerte, morirá / sin saber que soy su padre” (vv. 461–468). When Clotaldo then presents ‘the prisoner’ to the king, the requirement of secrecy is no longer relevant. Rosaura remains alive, but Clotaldo doesn’t tell the king or Rosaura that he is her father. He only reveals this at the end of the play, when Segismundo, the new ruler, orders that Rosaura and Astolfo marry, thus restoring her honor. After she is released and has received her sword back, Rosaura confides in Clotaldo and tells him that she is in fact a woman and that it is Astolfo, now planning on marrying Estrella, who took her honor. Clotaldo’s immediate reaction is confused (“¿Qué confuso laberinto / es éste, donde no puede / hallar la razón el hilo?” vv. 975 ff.) and again he is faced with the question of action: the right way should be shown by heaven (“Mi honor es el agraviado, / poderoso el enemigo, / yo vasallo, ella mujer, / descubra el cielo camino” vv. 978–981). Nevertheless, Clotaldo makes Rosaura believe that he will restore her honor. He passes her off as his niece and Rosaura goes to be Estrella’s lady-of-waiting at court. But he does not ‘act.’ When Rosaura reminds him once again of his promise and even provides him with an opportunity to take revenge on Astolfo – she is in possession of the key to the castle garden where Estrella and Astolfo meet – Clotaldo hesitates, thinking that Astolfo will soon be his king and that he is also indebted to him for saving his life, so instead he suggests to Rosaura that she go to a monastery to ‘heal’ her ‘loss of honor.’ The latter, however, is determined to kill Astolfo herself (“CLOT.: Pues ¿qué es lo que hacer esperas? / ROS.: Matar al Duque” vv. 2631 f.; see the whole scene: vv. 2492–2655). Armed, she rides to the insurgents’ troops, kneels down before Segismundo, explains her situation to him, and asks him to undertake to restore her honor, and at the same time offers her support, saying she will fight side by side with the soldiers (“que a una mujer infelice, / que hoy a tus plantas se arroja, / ampare por ser mujer / y desdichada [...]” vv. 2704–2707; “Mujer, vengo a persuadirte / al remedio de mi honra, / y varón, vengo a alentarte / a que cobres tu corona. / Mujer, vengo a enterrecerte / cuando a tus plantas me ponga, / y varón vengo a servirte / cuando a tus gentes socorra. / Mujer vengo a que me valgas / en mi agravio y mi congoja, / y varón vengo a valerte / con mi

The scene that has just been described in such detail presents all the elements that will be the focus of the main plot of the drama, which I will be discussing in what follows. Skepticism is one of the central themes of *La vida es sueño*.<sup>278</sup> Clotaldo is plagued by doubts about the reliability of his sensory perception. His questioning of the reality status of his perception is – similar to that of Hamlet – linked to the issue of (morally) legitimate action, and Clotaldo ultimately takes a classic ‘skeptical position;’ he does not act himself, he ‘abstains from making a decision,’ and he passes the responsibility for the resolution of his problem to the king (or to ‘destiny’). As will be shown in the following analysis of the main plot, in Calderón’s *comedia* – unlike the other

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acero y mi persona” vv. 2902–2913). So far, as a supplement, a brief outline of the further course of this storyline. The focus will here be placed on the main plot, as explained above.

**278** It is these references to the skeptical discourse popular at the time that has led to the play’s categorization as a ‘philosophical drama.’ (Cf. already Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, “Dramas filosóficos. Conferencia quinta” [1881], in: Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Calderón y su teatro*, printed in: M. Menéndez Pelayo, *Estudios y discursos de crítica histórica y literaria*, ed. Enrique Sánchez Reyes, 7 vols., Madrid/Santander 1941–1942, vol. 3 [1941]: *Teatro: Lope, Tirso, Calderón* [Edición nacional de las obras completas de Menéndez Pelayo, ed. Miguel Artigas, vol. 8], pp. 209–232, here pp. 223–230). This *comedia* is not only one of Calderón’s most frequently performed works but it is also one of the most commented on of his oeuvre – probably of 17th century Spanish drama as a whole (for an overview of this research [until 1994] see Jesús A. Ara Sánchez, *Bibliografía crítica comentada de La vida es sueño* [1682–1994], New York/Berlin/Frankfurt am Main 1996; cf. as well Kurt Reichenberger/Roswitha Reichenberger, *Bibliographisches Handbuch der Calderón-Forschung/Manual bibliográfico Calderoniano*, 5 vols., Kassel 1979–2009, vol. 2,1 [1999], pp. 528–573); see also: Humberto Piñera, “¿Descartes en Calderón?”, *La Torre* 6 (1958), pp. 145–165; Henry W. Sullivan, “*Tam clara et evidens*. Clear and Distinct Ideas in Calderón, Descartes, and Francisco Suárez, S. J.,” in: Alva V. Ebersole (ed.), *Perspectivas de la comedia*, 2 vols., Valencia 1978, vol. 2: *Ensayos sobre la comedia del Siglo de Oro español, de distintos autores*, pp. 127–136; Anthony J. Cascardi, *The Limits of Illusion: A Critical Study of Calderón*, Cambridge/London/New York 1984, pp. 11–23; Everett W. Hesse, “The Role of Deception in *La vida es sueño*,” in: Bruno M. Damiani (ed.), *Renaissance and Golden Age Essays in Honor of D. W. McPheeters*, Potomac, MD 1986, pp. 120–129; Bárbara Mujica, “Calderón’s *La vida es sueño* and the Skeptic Revival,” in: Arturo Pérez-Pisonero/Ana Semiday (eds.), *Texto y espectáculo: Nuevas dimensiones críticas de la ‘comedia’*, New Brunswick/El Paso 1990, pp. 23–32; Daniel L. Heiple, “Life as Dream and the Philosophy of Desillusionment,” in: Frederick A. de Armas (ed.), *The Prince in the Tower: Perceptions of La vida es sueño*, Lewisburg/London/Toronto 1993, pp. 118–131; Joachim Küpper, “*La vida es sueño*. ‘Aufhebung’ des Skeptizismus, Recusatio der Moderne,” in: Joachim Küpper/Friedrich Wolfzettel (eds.), *Diskurse des Barock: Dezentrierte oder rezentrierte Welt?*, Munich 2000, pp. 383–426; William Egginton, “Psychoanalysis and the Comedia. Skepticism and the Paternal Function in *La vida es sueño*,” *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 52 (2000), pp. 97–122; Andrés Lema-Hincapié, “¿Existir en sueño o en vigilia? Las respuestas de Calderón y Descartes,” *Daimon* 34 (2005), pp. 53–68.

dramas discussed in this study – the discourse of skepticism is referred to explicitly; and in order to facilitate its expression the playwright makes use of a dramatic tool that functions like a ‘play within a play.’ In order to explore this we must first review the plot as a whole.

The true identity of Segismundo and how he came to be imprisoned for life are revealed to the audience/reader a few scenes into the play, via a long explicatory speech made by the old king Basilio at the Polish court when explaining why it is that his nephew Astolfo and his niece Estrella (vv. 589–843) will succeed him.<sup>279</sup> Segismundo is Prince of Poland, Basilio’s son and rightful heir. Segismundo’s birth was, however, ill-omened (“BASILIO: [. . .] los cielos / se agotaron de prodigios” vv. 662 f.). The prediction that led to his son’s exile was that he was going to be a haughty, cruel man and a tyrannical ruler (“que Segismundo sería / el hombre más atrevido, / el príncipe más cruel / y el monarca más impío” vv. 710–713), whose reign would cause the empire to fall apart and become a hotbed of betrayal and vice (“por quien su reino vendría / a ser parcial y diviso, / escuela de las traiciones / y academia de los vicios;” vv. 714–717); eventually, his son’s fierce rage would also drive his father into submission and humiliation (“y él, de su furor llevado, / [. . .] / había de poner en mí / las plantas, y yo rendido / a sus pies me había de ver: / [. . .] / siendo alfombra de sus plantas / las canas del rostro mío” vv. 718–725). Basilio therefore decided to let it be known that his newborn son had died and then hid him in a secret tower in the mountains, to be raised alone by Clotaldo and kept in ignorance of his true identity.<sup>280</sup> While the King of Poland is introduced by Astolfos as “[. . .] inclinado / a los estudios [. . .]” (vv. 535 f.), Basilio himself emphasizes his reputation as a scholar, particularly his scientific activities: “[. . .] yo en el mundo / por mi ciencia he merecido / el sobrenombre de docto;” (vv. 604 ff.). Basilio considers himself a master of astrology, which is also what led to the ill-fated predictions regarding Segismundo:

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**279** Astolfo is the son of the younger of Basilio’s two sisters, who married the Prince of Muscovy, and Estrella is the daughter of the older sister. Both claim to be the heirs to the supposedly childless Basilio. He has now decided that their marriage will bring an end to the dispute (cf. vv. 515–554).

**280** “BAS.: Publicóse que el infante / nació muerto y, prevenido, / hice labrar una torre / entre las peñas y riscos / de dos montes, donde apenas / la luz ha hallado camino, / por defenderle la entrada / sus rústicos obeliscos. / Las graves penas y leyes, / que con públicos editos / declararon que ninguno / entrase a un vedado sitio / del monte, se ocasionaron / de las causas que os he dicho. / Allí Segismundo vive / mísero, pobre y cautivo, / adonde sólo Clotaldo / le ha hablado, tratado y visto: / éste le ha enseñado ciencias; / éste en la ley le ha instruido / católica, siendo solo / de sus miserias testigo” (vv. 738–759).

Ya sabéis que son las ciencias  
 que más curso y más estimo,  
 matemáticas sutiles,  
 por quien al tiempo le quito,  
 por quien a la fama rompo  
 la jurisdicción y oficio  
 de enseñar más cada día;  
 pues *cuando en mis tablas miro*  
*presentes las novedades*  
*de los venideros siglos,*  
*le gano al tiempo las gracias*  
*de contar lo que yo he dicho.*

[. . .]

esos orbes de diamantes,  
 esos globos cristalinos  
 que las estrellas adornan  
 y que campean los signos,  
 son el estudio mayor  
 de mis años, *son los libros,*  
*donde en papel de diamante,*  
*en cuadernos de zafiros,*  
*escribe con líneas de oro*  
*en caracteres distintos*  
*el cielo nuestros sucesos*  
*ya adversos o ya benignos.*  
*Éstos leo tan veloz,*  
 que con mi espíritu sigo  
 sus rápidos movimientos  
 por rumbos y por caminos.<sup>281</sup>

(vv. 612–643; my italics)

Feeding into Basilio's belief in his prediction<sup>282</sup> was a dream that his wife Clorilene repeatedly had during her pregnancy, in which she gave birth to a monster, "un monstruo en forma de hombre," "[la] víbora humana del siglo," who then killed her.<sup>283</sup> When Clorilene subsequently died in childbirth this

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**281** It should be noted that historically and for many centuries, astrology was considered a science, rather than pseudo-science or occult, in which the cosmos was understood as a hierarchically-structured whole, with the constellation and stars, being closer to God in the hierarchy, reflecting the pattern of events to occur on earth.

**282** "BAS.: Yo, acudiendo a mis estudios, / en ellos y *en todo* miro / que Segismundo sería / el hombre más atrevido, / el príncipe más cruel / y el monarca más impío [. . .]" (vv. 708–713; my italics).

**283** "BAS.: En Clorilene, mi esposa, / tuve un infelice hijo, / en cuyo parto los cielos / se agotaron de prodigios. / Antes que a la luz hermosa / le diese el sepulcro vivo / de un vientre, porque el nacer / y el morir son parecidos, / su madre infinitas veces, / entre ideas y delirios /

gave additional validity to the idea of Segismundo as the ‘incarnate viper of our era,’<sup>284</sup> which was then further confirmed by the stars’ forecast of her death: “[...] los presagios cumplidos / (porque tarde o nunca son / mentirosos los impíos) [...]” vv. 678 ff.; “nació Segismundo, dando / de su condición indicios, / pues dio la muerte a su madre [...]” vv. 702 ff.). The disastrous, ‘deadly’ constellation at birth (“En este mísero, en este / mortal planeta o signo / nació Segismundo [...]” vv. 70 ff.), was compounded by a terrifying solar eclipse and a destructive earthquake, both of which occurred on the day of Segismundo’s birth.<sup>285</sup> As justification for his interpretation of the signs and the resulting decision to imprison his son and heir, Basilio refers to an aspect which – from the point of view of the play – was already an inherent problem of his interpretation, namely that his conclusions revolve around ‘self-love’ (“amor propio”). Basilio’s interest was to avert ‘damage’ (“daño”) primarily to himself, neglecting the interest of others: “¿Quién no da crédito al daño, / y más al daño que ha visto / en su estudio, donde hace / el amor propio su oficio?” (vv. 726–729).

Basilio tries to conceal the egocentrism of his actions from himself by developing the argument that he has saved Poland from a tyrannical king, but the ageing king is by no means blind to the problematic nature of his past decision. Ultimately, it is not his right to deprive his son of the privilege of birth to which he is entitled, and he himself has wronged his son in order to prevent him from committing crimes.<sup>286</sup> Basilio’s doubts about the correctness of his past actions

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del sueño, vio que rompía / sus entrañas atrevido / un monstruo en forma de hombre; / y entre su sangre teñido, / le daba muerte, naciendo / víbora humana del siglo” (vv. 660–675).

**284** For the image of the viper, see the interpretation by Frederick A. de Armas, “The Serpent Star. Dream and Horoscope in Calderón’s *La vida es sueño*,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 19 (1983), pp. 208–223, here pp. 210 ff.

**285** “BAS.: [N]ació en horóscopo tal, / que el sol, en su sangre tinto, / entraba sañudamente / con la luna en desafío; / y siendo valla la tierra, / los dos faroles divinos / a luz entera luchaban, / ya que no a brazo partido. / El mayor, el más horrendo / eclipse que ha padecido / el sol, después que con sangre / lloró la muerte de Cristo, / éste fue; porque anegado / el orbe entre incendios vivos, / presumió que padecía / el último parasismo. / Los cielos se escurecieron, / temblaron los edificios, / llovieron piedras las nubes, / corrieron sangre los ríos” (vv. 680–699). Basilio uses solar eclipses and earthquakes, perceived as events connected to the death of Christ (cf. *Mt* 27,45 and 51 ff.; *Lk* 23,44 f.) as a way to illustrate the scope of the monstrosity of the event, but these do not form part of his interpretation of the signs, which given the deeply Christian nature of the play, already points to a problem in his interpretation.

**286** “BAS.: Aquí hay tres cosas: la una / que yo, Polonia, os estimo / tanto que os quiero librar / de la opresión y servicio / de un rey tirano, porque / no fuera señor benigno / el que a su patria y su imperio / pusiera en tanto peligro. / La otra es considerar / que si a mi sangre le quito / el derecho que le dieron / humano fuero y divino, / no es cristiana caridad, / pues ninguna ley ha dicho / que por reservar yo a otro / de tirano y de atrevido, / pueda yo serlo,



explicitly refer to the epochal theological controversy of free will versus determined fate:

BAS.: [...]
   
el ver cuánto yerro ha sido
   
dar crédito fácilmente
   
a los sucesos previstos;
   
pues aunque su [Segismundo's] inclinación
   
le dicte sus precipicios,
   
quizá no le vencerán,
   
porque el hado más esquivo,
   
la inclinación más violenta,
   
el planeta más impío,
   
*sólo el albedrío inclinan,*
  
*no fuerzan el albedrío.* (vv. 781–791; my italics)

At this point, although the king seems about to renounce his – from the point of view of the play – erroneous assessment of the past, he still lacks the strength to correct his mistake. Instead he believes that he has found a ‘way out’ (“remedio” v. 794) of the dilemma. Basilio decides to put his son to the test. He will release Segismundo and place him on the throne on the following day.<sup>287</sup> If he shows himself to be a good ruler, thereby disproving the prediction, he shall succeed to the throne: “[...] siendo / prudente, cuerdo y benigno, / desmintiendo en todo al hado / que dél tantas cosas dijo, / gozaréis el natural / príncipe vuestro [...]” (vv. 808–813). If, however, he behaves “soberbio, osado, atrevido / y cruel [...]” (vv. 817 f.), letting emotions and vices reign unbridled (“con rienda suelta / corre el campo de sus vicios” vv. 818 f.), he shall be imprisoned forever – “siendo el volverle a la cárcel / no crueldad, sino castigo” (vv. 824 f.) – and Astolfo and Estrella will ascend the Polish throne as a worthy royal couple (vv. 831–835). All present welcome the decision of the king (“TODOS: Danos al príncipe nuestro / que ya por rey le pedimos” vv. 850 f.) and he promises that Segismundo will be seen in the palace the next day (“BAS.: [...] / que mañana le [Segismundo] veréis” v. 856).

At the beginning of the second *jornada* Basilio and Clotaldo discuss the test to come. At the behest of Basilio, Clotaldo gives Segismundo a narcotic (“CLOT.:

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supuesto / que si es tirano mi hijo, / porque él delitos no haga, / vengo yo a hacer los delitos” (vv. 760–779).

**287** “BAS.: Yo he de ponerle mañana, / sin que él sepa que es mi hijo / y rey vuestro, a Segismundo / [...] / en mi dosel, en mi silla, / y, en fin, en el lugar mío, / donde os gobierne / y os mande / y donde todos rendidos / la obediencia le juréis;” (vv. 796–804).

[...] la bebida [...] / que el opio ['opium'], la adormidera ['poppy'] / y el beleño ['Henbane'] compusieron [...]” vv. 1022ff),<sup>288</sup> which causes him to fall into a deathlike sleep (“[...] apenas / pasó desde el vaso al pecho / el licor, cuando las fuerzas / rindió al sueño, [...] / [...] de modo, / que a no saber yo que era / muerte fingida, dudara / de su vida. [...]” vv. 1067–1075). He is then brought to the royal chamber in the palace where, once the effect of the sleeping potion wears off, servants would immediately be at his disposal (“hasta tu cuarto [de Basilio] le [a Segismundo] llevan, / donde prevenida estaba / la majestad y grandeza / que es digna de su persona. / Allí en tu cama le acuestan, / donde al tiempo que el letargo / haya perdido la fuerza, / como a ti mismo, señor, / le sirvan, que así lo ordenas” vv. 1079–1087). Clotaldo reveals that he administered the potion only after he had, with the intention of ‘emotionally preparing’ Segismundo for the plan (“Para levantarle más / el espíritu a la empresa / que sollicitas [...]” vv. 1034 ff.), had a discussion with Segismundo about rulership, as exemplified by the eagle, the king of the skies (cf. vv. 1436–1047). Segismundo immediately flew into a violent rage, declaring that unlike the eagle, he could be dominated only by force, for he would never surrender freely to any other human being.<sup>289</sup> Following Clotaldo’s report, the king explains the context to him and repeats the concerns he had previously voiced before the court: “quiero examinar si el cielo / [...] / o se mitiga o se templa / por lo menos, y vencido / con valor y con prudencia / se desdice [...]” (vv. 1102–1110). He wants to see whether heaven might not yield, whether it might not take

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**288** Clotaldo’s detailed description of the potency of the potion refers to the proximity of sleep and death, and also serves to highlight the field of medicine and its ‘natural secrets,’ emphasizing knowledge gained through experience (“Con la apacible bebida, / que de confeciones llena / hacer mandaste, mezclando / la virtud de algunas yerbas / cuyo tirano poder / y cuya secreta fuerza / así al humano discurso / priva, roba y enajena, / que deja vivo cadáver / a un hombre, y cuya violencia, / adormecido, le quita / los sentidos y potencias ... / No tenemos que argüir, / que aquesto posible sea, / pues tantas veces, señor, / nos ha dicho la experiencia, / y es cierto, que de secretos naturales está llena / la medicina, y no hay / animal, planta ni piedra / que no tenga calidad / determinada; y si llega / a examinar mil venenos / la humana malicia nuestra, / que den la muerte, ¿qué mucho / que, templada su violencia, / pues hay venenos que maten, / haya venenos que aduerman? / Dejando aparte el dudar / si es posible que suceda, / pues que ya queda probado / con razones y evidencias;” vv. 990–1021).

**289** “CLOT.: [...] en tocando esta materia / de la majestad, discurre / con ambición y soberbia; / porque, en efecto, la sangre / le incita, mueve y alienta / a cosas grandes, y dijo: / ‘¡Que en la república inquieta / de las aves también haya / quien les jure la obediencia! / En llegando a este discurso / mis desdichas me consuelan; / pues por lo menos si estoy / sujeto, lo estoy por fuerza; / porque voluntariamente / a otro hombre no me rindiera.’ / Viéndole ya enfurecido / con esto, que ha sido el tema / de su dolor, le brindé / con la pócima [...]” (vv. 1049–1068).

back what it seems to have predicted; he sees his own plan as a way of overcoming the predictions with courage and wisdom (“vencido con valor y con prudencia”).<sup>290</sup> He then repeats the parameters of the test: “Esto quiero examinar, / trayéndole donde sepa / que es mi hijo, y donde haga / de su talento la prueba. / Si magnánimo se vence, / reinará; pero si muestra / el ser cruel y tirano, / le volveré a su cadena” (vv. 1112–1119). The reason for bringing Segismundo to the palace asleep was that should he fail the test, they could always tell him that it was all just a dream, and thus prevent him from descending into suicidal desperation.<sup>291</sup> The test would constitute an ‘objective’ measure of his character, for in the state of wakefulness, he would behave according to his thoughts and ideas: “[...] Con esto llega[n] / a examinarse [...] / su condición [...], / pues él despierto procede / en cuanto imagina y piensa” (vv. 1137–1141). Regarding the idea of life as a dream, Basilio formulates here, for the first time, the metaphor of the play’s title, which will in the course of the play, and in view of the ‘transformation’ of the protagonist, become increasingly relevant, and itself subject to a change in meaning: “y hará bien cuando lo entienda, / porque *en el mundo*, Clotaldo, / *todos los que viven sueñan*” (vv. 1147 ff.; my italics).<sup>292</sup> Though Clotaldo reacts by saying to himself that he has an abundance of evidence to show that Basilio was mistaken, he does not elaborate on this, both because the king’s decision is unchangeable

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**290** Basilio’s reference to the *prudencia* alludes to the category of ‘practical action.’ It will be the aspect of ‘right action’ or Segismundo’s recognition of the relevance of this register that forms the basis for his ‘transformation’ to a ‘good, prudent ruler’ in the last third of the play.

**291** “Agora preguntará, / que para aquesta experiencia, / qué importó haberle traído / dormido desta manera; / y quiero satisfacerte / dándote a todo respuesta. / Si él supiera que es mi hijo / hoy, y mañana se viera / segunda vez reducido / a su prisión y miseria, / cierto es de su condición / que desesperara en ella; / porque sabiendo quién es / ¿qué consuelo habrá que tenga? / Y así he querido dejar / abierta al daño esta puerta / del decir que fue soñado / cuanto vio. [...]” (vv. 1120–1137). See furthermore: “y el consuelo la segunda, / pues aunque agora se vea / obedecido, y después / a sus prisiones se vuelva, / podrá entender que soñó [...]” (vv. 1142–1146).

**292** While the corresponding meaning within the context of the Segismundo plot remains to be discussed, according to the reading supported here, this reference to ‘life is a dream’ is connected to the skeptical notion of the indistinguishability of waking and sleeping. If Basilio implies that because of this it would be irrelevant whether Segismundo lives in a palace or in a prison, this can be seen as a reference to the skeptics’ moral indifference. The problem here is – and this represents from the play’s point of view a configuration directed against skepticism – that Basilio applies this indifference only to the life of his son but not to himself, since the aim of his own actions is to prevent being deprived of his status.

law, and because Segismundo begins to awaken.<sup>293</sup> Basilio then instructs Cotaldo to proceed to the palace and he himself withdraws.<sup>294</sup>

Before discussing the first awakening of the protagonist – the first scene of, as it were, the play (within the play) that Basilio stages – it is important to draw attention to the play's intertextual relationship to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, its function with regards to the 'play within the play' and the events of *La vida es sueño* as a whole. What is striking here, above all, is the differences from the Sophoclean background.<sup>295</sup> Sophocles' king abandons his infant son to die in the wilderness in order to prevent the prophecy from becoming true. Basilio imprisons his son in a remote tower, because he believes that in all probability he will become a tyrannical ruler and usurp him, and then enacts a test in order to determine whether the prophecy is accurate. The conclusions Basilio drew from his observations in the context of Segismundo's birth are of a provisional nature. They do not have the status of unbreakable truth to him. He wants to 'check' whether the negative prophecy actually proves to be correct. Basilio is a scientist, he is "[...] a literary model of emerging Empiricism [...]]"<sup>296</sup> '[his] [...] acting is a means of preventing contingency in an essentially modern sense, in a sense that in fact determines modernity. [...] It is based on probability calculations. The intention is to minimize the defects of the world through one's own actions, instead of making them bearable through interpretation [...]]' ('[Basilios] [...] Handeln [...] ist Prävention von Kontingenz in einem essentiell modernen, ja die Moderne fundierenden Sinne. [...] Es gründet auf Probabilitätenkalkül. Die Intention dabei ist, die Mängel der Welt, anstatt sie durch Interpretation erträglich zu machen, durch eigenes Handeln zu minimieren [...]').<sup>297</sup> Within the play's world view Basilio thus represents the concept

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**293** "CLOT.: Razones no me faltaran / para probar que no aciertas, / mas ya no tiene remedio, / y según dicen las señas, / parece que ha despertado / y hacia nosotros se acerca" (vv. 1150–1155).

**294** Cf. vv. 1156–1165.

**295** For this aspect in general, see, e.g., Eli Rozik, "The Generation of *Life is a Dream* from *Oedipus the King*," in: Hanna Scolnicov/Peter Holland (eds.), *The Play Out of Context: Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*, Cambridge/New York 1989, pp. 121–134; see also the analysis of Sofie Kluge, "Calderón's Anti-Tragic Theater. The Resonance of Plato's Critique of Tragedy in *La vida es sueño*," *Hispanic Review* 76 (2008), pp. 19–52, here pp. 24–50.

**296** Küpper, "Hamlet and *La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 2), p. 398. See also esp. Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 278), pp. 392–399.

**297** P. 395 (directly following to this then the reference to Francis Bacon).

of modernity, and his failure reinforces the play's message, namely that modernity itself fails to achieve its ends.<sup>298</sup>

An essential basic assumption of empiricism emerging as a paradigm of knowledge in early modernity is the provisional status of knowledge gained through observation of nature. No definitive epistemological truth can be obtained in this manner, only provisional ones. There are no certainties, only probabilities. The philosophical basis of this strand of modern epistemology is skepticism<sup>299</sup>: sensory perception can be deceptive and its results therefore always subject to potential revision. If Calderón's play, as outlined above, formulates a critique of the emerging paradigm of empiricism within modernity, it is also an implicit criticism of (here: Academic) skepticism as well.

The stage direction: "(*Salen músicos cantando, y criados, dando de vestir a SEGISMUNDO, que sale como asombrado.*)" begins the scene of Segismundo awakening in the palace. He is deeply disorientated in this completely unknown environment:

¡Válgame el cielo! ¿Qué veo?  
 ¡Válgame el cielo! ¿Qué miro?  
 Con poco espanto lo admiro,  
 con mucha duda lo creo.  
 ¿Yo en palacios suntuosos?  
 ¿Yo entre telas y brocados?  
 ¿Yo cercado de criados  
 tan lucidos y briosos?  
 ¿Yo despertar de dormir  
 en lecho tan excelente?  
 ¿Yo en medio de tanta gente  
 que me sirva de vestir?  
 Decir que sueño es engaño,  
 bien sé que despierto estoy.  
 ¿Yo Segismundo no soy?  
 Dadme, cielos, desengaño.

<sup>298</sup> This in reference to Küpper's interpretation of the text as '*Recusatio of Modernity*,' see esp. pp. 396–399. See also Küpper, "*Hamlet and La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 2), pp. 396–399.

<sup>299</sup> The reference point being primarily Academic skepticism (as opposed to Pyrrhonian skepticism). This presumes that deception cannot be excluded in principle, but that 'credibility' (*probabilitas*) temporarily assumes the function of certainty. The probable is, as it were, a sufficient 'substitute' for the truth (which can never be obtained), and thus a viable basis for action – albeit always to be understood only provisionally. See also the brief explanations in chap. 1.1 as well as the chapter on Francisco Sánchez (chap. 1.2.2).

Decidme qué pudo ser  
 esto que a mi fantasía  
 sucedió mientras dormía,  
 que aquí me he llegado a ver.

(vv. 1224–1243)

This famous passage is replete with a classical skeptical topos: Segismundo questions whether he is awake or dreaming, casting doubts on the reality of his sensory impressions (cf. '[...] ¿Qué veo? / [...] ¿Qué miro? / Con poco espanto lo admiro, / con mucha duda lo creo' vv. 1224–1227; 'Decir que sueño es engaño, / bien sé que despierto estoy. / ¿Yo Segismundo no soy? / Dadme, cielos, desengaño' vv. 1236–1239). The connection between dreams and doubt over the reality of what is mediated by the senses, refers to one of Pyrrhonian skepticism's main arguments against the reliability of sensory perception: the so-called dream trope. In the fourth of the 'ten modes' in Sextus Empiricus' *Hypotyposesis*, which use mostly perceptual impressions to demonstrate the relativity of any judgment, it is stated that sensory perception does not provide a basis for certain knowledge, for the information conveyed by the sensory organs is dependent on the state in which one finds oneself at the moment of perception; accordingly, the following would apply with regard to the waking state, sleep, and dream:

Sleeping and waking [...] give rise to different impressions, since we do not imagine when awake what we imagine in sleep, nor when asleep what we imagine when awake; so that the existence or non-existence of our impressions is not absolute but relative, being in relation to our sleeping or waking condition. Probably, then, in dreams we see things which to our waking state are unreal, although not wholly unreal; for they exist in our dreams, just as waking realities exist, although non-existent in dreams.<sup>300</sup>

Early Modern skepticism also made use of the Pyrrhonian argument of the undecidability of the waking and dream states. It is present in Montaigne,<sup>301</sup>

**300** Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hyp.* I, 104 (Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines* [cf. note 6], p. 62/63). See also above, chap. 1.1, pp. 11–14, esp. p. 12; as well as chap. 1.2.3, pp. 58 ff. with note 164.

**301** Cf.: "Il semble que l'ame retire au-dedans, et amuse les puissances des sens. Par ainsin et le dedans et le dehors de l'homme est plein de foiblesse et de mensonge. Ceux qui ont apparie nostre vie à un songe, ont eu de la raison, à l'avanture plus qu'ils ne pensoyent: Quand nous songeons, nostre ame vit, agit, exerce toutes ses facultez, ne plus ne moins que quand elle veille; mais si plus mollement et obscurément; non de tant certes, que la difference y soit, comme de la nuit à une clarté vifve: ouy, comme de la nuit à l'ombre: là elle dort, icy elle sommeille: Plus et moins; ce sont tousjours tenebres, et tenebres Cymmeriennes. Nous veillons dormants, et veillants dormons. Je ne voy pas si clair dans le sommeil: mais quant au veiller, je ne le trouve jamais assez pur et sans nuage. Encore le sommeil en sa profondeur, endort par

among others, and is the subject of extensive discussion in Descartes in particular.<sup>302</sup> For the 'I' of the *Meditationes*, however, it serves as a preparatory moment for establishing the solid basis of certainty. Ultimately, when the ratio and the explanatory pattern of the world based on it function as principles of certainty, Sextus Empiricus' dream argument is rejected and it is determined that dream and reality can be held distinct from each other. In addition to coherence and order, it is continuity that serves as the relevant criterion for differentiation – i.e. the existing or non-existing connection of what is perceived with the rest of life experience.<sup>303</sup> When Segismundo interjects that the

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fois les songes: mais nostre veiller n'est jamais si esveillé, qu'il purge et dissipe bien à point les resveries, qui sont les songes des veillants, et pires que songes. Nostre raison et nostre ame recevant les fantasies et opinions, qui luy nayssent en dormant, et authorizant les actions de noz songes de pareille approbation, qu'elle fait celles du jour: pourquoy ne mettons nous en doute, si nostre penser, nostre agir, est pas un autre songer, et nostre veiller, quelque espece de dormir?" (Montaigne, II, 12: *Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde* [cf. note 71], pp. 633 f. For the aspect of the dream in Montaigne, see Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani, "Veiller en dormant, dormir en veillant. Le songe dans les *Essais*," in: Françoise Charpentier [ed.], *Le Songe à la Renaissance*, Saint-Étienne 1990, pp. 231–238).

**302** In the First Meditation it reads, e.g.: "Quasi scilet non recorder a similibus etiam cogitationibus me alias in somnis fuisse delusum; quae dum cogito attentius, tam plane video nunquam certis indicibus vigiliam a somno posse distingui, ut obstupescam, & fere hic ipse stupor mihi opinionem somni confirmet" (Descartes, *Meditationes* [cf. note 161], p. 19)/"As if I did not remember other occasions when I have been tricked by exactly similar thoughts while asleep! As I think about this more carefully, I see plainly that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep. The result is that I begin to feel dazed, and this very feeling only reinforces the notion that I may be asleep" (Descartes, *Meditations* [cf. note 161], p. 13). For Descartes' confrontation with skepticism and the argumentation of *Meditationes*, see chap. 1.2.3 of this book.

**303** Cf.: "[...] non amplius vereri debeo ne illa, quae mihi quotidie a sensibus exhibentur, sint falsa, sed hyperbolicae superiorum dierum dubitationes, ut risu dignae, sunt explodendae. Praesertim summa illa de somno, quem a vigilia non distinguebam; nunc enim adverto permagnum inter utrumque esse discrimen, in eo quod nunquam insomniam cum reliquis omnibus actionibus vitae a memoria conjungantur, ut ea quae vigilantibus occurrunt; [...]. Cum vero eae res occurrunt, quas distincte, unde, ubi, & quando mihi adveniant, adverto, earumque perceptionem absque ulla interruptione cum tota reliqua vita connecto, plane certus sum, non in somnis, sed vigilantibus occurrere" (Descartes, *Meditationes*, pp. 89 f.)/"[...] I should not have any further fears about the falsity of what my senses tell me every day; on the contrary, the exaggerated doubts of the last few days should be dismissed as laughable. This applies especially to the principal reason for doubt, namely my inability to distinguish between being asleep and being awake. For I now notice that there is a vast difference between the two, in that dreams are never linked by memory with all the other actions of life as waking experiences are. [...] But when I distinctly see where things come from and where and when they come to me, and when I can connect my perceptions of them with the whole of the rest of my life

perceptions that are so doubtful to him could not be a dream, since he knows with certainty that he is awake ('Decir que sueño es engaño, / bien sé que despierto estoy' vv. 1236 f.), and then, attempting to reassure himself, asks: '¿Yo Segismundo no soy?' (v. 1238), it is this argument, later used by Descartes, of 'comparing' the situatively doubtful sensory impressions with the experiences of the previous life, which Segismundo uses (unsuccessfully) to gain certainty. It is precisely his previous experience as 'Segismundo imprisoned in the tower' that cannot be reconciled with his present perception of himself in the palace. One could even speak here of a complicating affirmation of the classical dream trope (and thus also of a devaluation *ante litteram* of Descartes' continuity argument): because Segismundo's previous life was 'delusion,' his true identity as prince in the royal palace must appear to him again as delusion. In a ritual and formulaic way, i.e., not quite intentionally directed, but from the point of view of the play fundamentally correct, gripped with uncertainty he pleads to heaven to 'disappoint,' to 'dis-illusion' him, to free him from doubts ('Dadme, cielos, desengaño' v. 1239), to shed light on what has happened to him, that he should now find himself in this state ('Decidme qué pudo ser / esto que a mi fantasía / sucedió mientras dormía, / que aquí me he llegado a ver' vv. 1240–1243). At first Segismundo leaves this (implied) 'right way.' The last verses of the monologue that immediately follow his plea for *desengaño* read: "Pero sea lo que fuere, / ¿quién me mete en discurrir? / Dejarme quiero servir, / y venga lo que viniere" (vv. 1244–1247). Segismundo decides that whether he is dreaming or not, has no bearing on his actions. He wants to take full advantage of his current state and the amenities and comforts that he subjectively perceives as real ('Dejarme quiero servir, / y venga lo que viniere' vv. 1246 f.). As a result of his unresolvable doubt, Segismundo decides that his only option is action guided by hedonistic principles,<sup>304</sup> and this characterizes the rest of the palace scene.

When Clotaldo approaches and pays his respects, Segismundo is amazed to recognize his 'jailer' ("Clotaldo es: ¿pues cómo así, / quien en prisión me

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without a break, then I am quite certain that when I encounter these things I am not asleep but awake" (Descartes, *Meditations*, pp. 61 f.). The references to the skeptical 'dream trope,' and the connection to Descartes' argumentation, are already to be found in Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 278), esp. pp. 399 f., p. 400 with note 46 and p. 401, note 50.

**304** In the (Freudian) formulation by Everett W. Hesse: "Since no *desengaño* is forthcoming to relieve the anxiety arising from his inability to explain his predicament, he [Segismundo] finds it easier to allow his behavior to follow the pleasure principle [. . .]" ("The Role of Deception in *La vida es sueño*" [cf. note 278], pp. 121 f.; my italics); on the implication of hedonism, see Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 278), pp. 406 f.



maltrata, / con tal respeto me trata? / ¿Qué es lo que pasa por mí?” vv. 1264–1267). As discussed with Basilio, Clotaldo informs him of his royal descent, the circumstances that led to his life in isolation, and tells him that, trusting that he, as a ‘magnanimous man’ (“magnánimo varón”), could ‘triumph over the stars’ (“que vencerás a las estrellas”), he has been brought from the tower to the palace while asleep; his father, the king, will soon come to him and explain everything.<sup>305</sup> Segismundo’s reaction, however, is one of fierce anger rather than magnanimity. He calls Clotaldo “[...] vil, infame y traidor” (v. 1295); and says that now that he knows who he really is, he will show his pride and power (“¿Qué tengo más que saber, / después de saber quién soy / para mostrar desde hoy / mi soberbia y mi poder?” vv. 1296–1299). He declares that Clotaldo, by keeping him hidden and denying him his rightful position, had betrayed the country, ingratiated himself with the king, turned cruelly against him, and violated the law, and therefore was deserving of death and that he, Segismundo, wanted to kill him (“[...] que mueras / a mis manos” vv. 1310 f.; in total vv. 1300–1311). Only the intervention of the servants prevents Segismundo from carrying out the deed.<sup>306</sup> When Clotaldo warningly cries out, while leaving, how arrogant Segismundo showed himself without knowing that he was dreaming, the ‘play within the play’ nature of the scene becomes manifest. Segismundo, without being aware of the part he is playing, is the ‘protagonist’ of this play. According to Basilio’s ‘script,’ precisely because Segismundo acts as a ruler in the manner of a ‘soberbio,’ he will be reincarcerated and told that what happened in the palace was not real, but merely a ‘dream.’

Segismundo then meets Astolfo and subsequently Estrella, who welcome him as the new ruler and want to pay him reverence as protocol demands.

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**305** Clotaldo begins by saying that he wanted to free him from all *doubts* that the bewildering new state would certainly cause (“Con la grande confusión / que el nuevo estado te da, / mil dudas padecerá / el discurso y la razón; / pero ya librate quiero / de todas (si puede ser) / porque has, señor, de saber / que eres príncipe heredero / de Polonia. Si has estado / retirado y escondido, / por obedecer ha sido / a la inclemencia del hado, / que mil tragedias consiente / a este imperio, cuando en él / el soberano laurel / corone tu augusta frente. / Mas fiando a tu atención / que vencerás las estrellas, / porque es posible vencellas / a un magnánimo varón, / a palacio te han traído / de la torre en que vivías, / mientras al sueño tenías / el espíritu rendido. / Tu padre, el rey mi señor, / vendrá a verte, y dél sabrás, / Segismundo, lo demás” vv. 1268–1294).

**306** See vv. 1311–1316. Here is Segismundo’s warning, later put into action, to ‘throw’ anyone who stands in his way ‘out of the window’ (“[...] No / me estorbe nadie, que es vana / diligencia; ¡y vive Dios!, / si os ponéis delante vos, / que os eche por la ventana” vv. 1311–1315).

Segismundo immediately feels provoked by Astolfo, who he feels does not show him the respect he deserves.<sup>307</sup> Entranced by Estrella's beauty ("¿Quién es esta diosa humana[?] / [...] / ¿Quién es esta mujer bella?" vv. 1386–1389), he immediately goes to kiss her hand, contrary to etiquette ("Dadme a besar vuestra mano, / en cuya copa de nieve / el aura candores bebe. / ESTRELLA: Sed más galán, cortesano" vv. 1404–1407). Astolfo of course, does not react well to his behavior: "Si él toma la mano, yo / soy perdido. [...]" (vv. 1407 f.) – after all, he plans to marry Estrella and ascend to the Polish throne with her, and it is left to a servant to explain to Segismundo the illegitimacy of his actions in light of the understanding of the code of honor as a law ('la ley') customary in the literary usage of the time: "CRIADO 2.º: [...] El pesar sé / de Astolfo, y le estorbaré [a Segismundo]. / Advierte, señor, que no / es justo atreverte así, / y estando Astolfo ... " (vv. 1409–1413). Segismundo's reaction turns his egocentric and hedonistic attitude into a maxim: "Nada me parece justo / en siendo contra mi gusto" (vv. 1417 f.). What is now crucial for the plot and message of the play is that the situation continues to escalate, to the point where Segismundo in a rage at this servant, who he feels is not submissive enough, throws him out of the window to his death in the sea below.<sup>308</sup> When Astolfo exhorts him to moderation, Segismundo threatens him with violence as well.<sup>309</sup> Astolfo then

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**307** "SEGISM.: Cansóme cómo [Astolfo] llegó / grave a hablarme, y lo primero / que hizo, se puso el sombrero. / CRIADO 2.º: Es grande. SEGISM.: Mayor soy yo" (vv. 1368–1371). Segismundo misunderstands the servant's explanation that his cousin Astolfo is a 'grande,' a senior member of the nobility, and thus quite rightly covers his head before him, the king (cf. the comment to the passage by the editor of the edition used here). Something similar happens before, when Segismundo welcomes Astolfo with the expression "Dios os guarde" (v. 1351) that is not befitting the social status, Astolfo corrects him emphasizing his high rank ("El no haberme conocido / sólo por disculpa os doy / de no honrarme más. Yo soy [...] / [...] prim[o] vuestro; / haya igualdad en los dos" vv. 1352–1357), and Segismundo therupon answers indignantly: "Si digo que os guarde Dios, / ¿bastante agrado no os nuestro? / Pero ya que, haciendo alarde / de quien sois, desto os quejáis, / otra vez que me veáis / le diré a Dios que no os guarde" (vv. 1358–1362).

**308** "SEGISM.: [...] [O]jiste decir / que por un balcón a quien / me canse sabré arrojar. / CRIADO 2.º: Con los hombres como yo / no puede hacerse eso. SEGISM.: ¿No? / ¡Por Dios, que lo he de probar! [stage direction: (Cógele en los brazos y éntrase, y todos tras él, y torna a salir.)] / [...] SEGISM.: Cayó del balcón al mar; / ¡vive Dios que pudo ser!" (vv. 1422–1431).

**309** Astolfo connects Segismundo's behavior with his growing up far from civilization, his admonition integrates the interrelated dichotomies 'raw behavior' vs. 'prudent, appropriate action,' 'wild beast' vs. 'human being,' 'nature' vs. 'civilization,' 'monte' vs. 'palacio': "ASTOLFO: Pues medid con más espacio / vuestras acciones severas, / que lo que hay de hombres a fieras, / hay desde un monte a palacio. / SEGISM.: Pues en dando tan severo / en hablar con entereza, / quizá no hallaréis cabeza / en que se os tenga el sombrero" (vv. 1432–1439; see also already the allusion to Segismundo's origins at his welcoming: "[...] salís como el sol / de

leaves the hall, and King Basilio, summoned to the scene by the noise, arrives. When Segismundo tells him calmly about what just transpired (“[. . .] Nada ha sido; / a un hombre que me ha cansado / de ese balcón he arrojado” vv. 1440 ff.), the king reacts with concern about his son’s deed (“un grave homicidio”) and attitude (“rigor”)<sup>310</sup> and refuses him – in renewed fear – the originally intended demonstration of fatherly affection (“[. . .] aunque en amorosos lazos / ceñir tu cuello pensé, / sin ellos me volveré, / que tengo miedo a tus brazos” vv. 1472–1475). This is followed by a violent verbal exchange between father and son. Segismundo calls Basilio “Tirano de mi albedrío” (v. 1504), who “como a una fiera me cría, / y como a un monstruo me trata / y mi muerte solicita” (vv. 1482 ff.), and judges “y pedirte cuentas puedo / del tiempo que me has quitado / libertad, vida y honor;” (vv. 1514 ff.), whereupon Basilio in turn accuses him of a savage lack of self-control and of arrogance (“Bárbaro eres y atrevido: / cumplió su palabra el cielo; / y así, para él mismo apelo, / soberbio, desvanecido” vv. 1520–1523). The confrontation ends with Basilio’s warning, addressed directly to Segismundo, and a repetition of what Clotaldo had already stated: “Y aunque sepas ya quién eres, / y desengañado estés, / y aunque en un lugar te ves / donde a todos te prefieres, / mira bien lo que te advierto: / que seas humilde y blando, / porque quizá estás soñando, / aunque ves que estás despierto” (v. 1524–1531). Applied to the perspective level of the ‘play within the play,’ it is now the ‘director’ himself who points the unsuspecting ‘actor’ to the (potential) fiction and simultaneously to the serious dimension; whether the events and the part that Segismundo plays prove to be (permanently) real or transitory depends on his abilities and his ‘performance,’ his behavior. Basilio’s admonishment that Segismundo should act with humility and benevolence, for even if he now knows who he is, he still does not know with certainty whether or not he is awake or dreaming, expresses the problematic nature of perception as propounded in skepticism, to which Segismundo had referred shortly after his awakening in the palace and which is taken up again here. Now, however, Segismundo revises the doubt he expressed at the beginning about the reliability of his sensory perception: “¿Que quizá soñando estoy, / aunque despierto me veo? / No sueño, pues toco y creo /

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debajo de los montes!” vv. 1346 f.); Segismundo’s answer: “Pues en dando tan severo / en hablar con entereza, / quizá no hallaréis cabeza / en que se os tenga el sombrero” (vv. 1436–1439).

**310** “BAS.: ¿Tan presto una vida cuesta / tu venida el primer día? / [. . .] / Pésame mucho que cuando, / príncipe, a verte he venido, / pensando hallarte advertido, / de hados y estrellas triunfando, / con tanto rigor te vea, / y que la primera acción / que has hecho en esta ocasión / un grave homicidio sea” (vv. 1444–1455).

lo que he sido y lo que soy” (vv. 1532–1535). He reassures himself that what he is experiencing is real, because he now knows who he is (“No sueño, pues toco y creo / lo que he sido y lo que soy.”; “sé quién soy, y no podrás[,] / [...] / quitarme el haber nacido / desta corona heredero;” vv. 1538–1541). While initially skeptical about the reality of his current perceptions given their discrepancy with his perception of himself as a prisoner in the tower he is now certain that the current situation is real, since it coincides with what Clotaldo told him about his past when he awoke (“sé quién soy, / [...] / [...] [he] nacido / desta corona heredero; / y si me viste primero / a las prisiones rendido, / fue porque ignoré quién era; / pero ya informado estoy / de quién soy [...]” vv. 1538–1546). But he also clings to his self-description from the prison: “[...] y sé que soy / un compuesto de hombre y fiera” (vv. 1546 f.). Accordingly, in the last palace scene, with Rosaura, Segismundo continues to follow the guiding principle of a radical fulfillment of his own desires (see ‘Dejarme quiero servir, / y venga lo que viniere’ vv. 1246 f.; ‘Nada me parece justo / en siendo contra mi gusto’ vv. 1417 f.), the principle associated with the element ‘fiera.’

Shortly before Segismundo meets Rosaura, who is actually on her way to Estrella, he is asked by the *gracioso* Clarín which of the things he encountered that day he admired the most, to which he replies: “[...] si admirar hubiera / algo en el mundo, la hermosura fuera / de la mujer. [...]” (v. 1560 ff.). Thus he is also immediately fascinated by Rosaura, who has removed her disguise and has been introduced to the court by Clotaldo as Astrea, a lady-in-waiting of Estrella. Segismundo believes (rightly) that he has seen her somewhere before, but cannot remember where: “Pero ¿qué es lo que veo? / [...] / Yo he visto esta belleza / otra vez. [...] / [...] / [...] Ya hallé mi vida. / ¿quién eres? Que sin verte / adoración me debes, y de suerte / por la fe te conquisto, / que me persuado a que otra vez te he visto. / ¿Quién eres, mujer bella?” (vv. 1578–1590). Rosaura at first doubts what she sees (“Lo mismo que estoy viendo, dudo y creo” v. 1579), but then recognizes Segismundo as the prisoner from the tower: “[...] Yo, esta pompa, esta grandeza / he visto reducida / a una estrecha prisión” (vv. 1581 ff.). She does not, however, reveal, her own identity or acknowledge their previous encounter: “Disimular me importa” (v. 1591). Segismundo immediately begins to woo Rosaura, but when she does not respond and tries to leave (“SEGISM.: No has de ausentarte, espera. / ¿Cómo quieres dejar desamano / a oscuras mi sentido?” vv. 1624 ff.), he reacts with anger and threatens her (“SEGISM.: Harás que de cortés pase a grosero, / porque la resistencia / es veneno cruel de mi paciencia” vv. 1631 ff.), he verbally and physically prepares to rape her (“[...] arrojaré tu honor por la ventana” v. 1645; “[...] dejadnos solos, y esa puerta / se cierre y no entre nadie” vv. 1664 f.). Violence is only averted by the intervention of Clotaldo, who had returned with

the intention of persuading Segismundo to act appropriately, and who had witnessed, unobserved, the increasingly threatening 'conversation' between Segismundo and Rosaura. Segismundo's rage is now (again) directed at Clotaldo ("SEGISM.: Segunda vez me has provocado a ira, / viejo caduco y loco. / ¿Mi enojo y mi rigor tienes en poco?" vv. 1671 ff.). When Clotaldo once again admonishes Segismundo that if wanted to rule he should behave in a much more measured manner, and that as ruler he should not act aggressively against his subjects, and finally again suggests that perhaps everything is but a dream, Segismundo's *rabia* is only stirred up even more; he wants to draw his sword and kill Clotaldo. Then one would see, he cries out, whether the events were dream or reality.<sup>311</sup> Clotaldo grasps Segismundo's sword and kneels before him, but even this attitude of humility cannot appease Segismundo. The two begin to fight and Astolfo, who had hurried to the fight and stands against Segismundo with his sword drawn, manages to prevent Clotaldo from being killed. Only the appearance of Basilio prevents a duel from being fought.<sup>312</sup> Segismundo admits to the king that he wanted to kill Clotaldo. When Basilio asks his son whether he had not felt any respect for Clotaldo's age, the 'grey hair' ("¿Respeto no tenías / a estas canas?" (vv. 1712 f.), he replies – recalling the image from Basilio's prophecy of the feared humiliation<sup>313</sup>: "Acciones vanas, / que que que tenga yo respeto a *canas*; / pues aun ésas podría / ser que viese a *mis plantas* algún día, / porque aún no estoy vengadoado / del modo injusto con que me has criado" (vv. 1714–1719; my italics).<sup>314</sup> With these

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311 "CLOT.: [A] decirte que seas / más apacible, si reinar deseas, / y no por verte ya de todos dueño, / seas cruel, porque quizá es un sueño. / SEGISM.: A rabia me provocas, / cuando la luz del desengaño tocas. / Veré, dándote muerte, / si es sueño o si es verdad" (vv. 1676–1683).

312 At this Astolfo emphasizes – and because of the feudal law not to carry weapons openly at court and in the presence of the ruler, he must also do so – that he was only defending himself – i.e. not attacking the heir to the throne ("ASTOLFO: Yo defiendo / mi vida; así la majestad no ofendo" vv. 1706 f.).

313 'y él, de su furor llevado, / [...] / había de poner en mí / las plantas, y yo rendido / a sus pies me había de ver: / [...] / siendo *alfombra de sus plantas / las canas del rostro mío*' (vv. 718-725; my italics).

314 It should already be noted that in the last scene of the third act the astrological prediction finally seems to be true: Basilio prostrates himself in front of his son, also recalling that his hair was a white carpet at Segismundo's feet: "Si a mí buscándome vas, / ya estoy, príncipe, a *tus plantas*, / sea *dellas blanca alfombra / esta nieve de mis canas*. / Pisa mi cerviz, y huella / mi corona; postra, arrastra / mi decoro y mi respeto, / toma de mi honor venganza, / sírvete de mí cautivo; / y tras prevenciones tantas, / cumpla el hado su homenaje, / cumpla el cielo su palabra" (vv. 3146–3157; my italics). Clotaldo's kneeling, which anticipates this scene, has no effect on Segismundo, who is caught up in *ira*. The reaction of the 'transformed' prince to Basilio's subjugation at the end of the play corresponds to the humility demanded here:

threatening words to his father Segismundo leaves the hall. Then Basilio notes: “Pues antes que lo veas, / volverás a dormir adonde creas / que cuanto te ha pasado, / como fue bien del mundo, fue soñado” (vv. 1720–1723). The decision is made to drug Segismundo and return him to the tower and let him believe that what happened in the palace was merely a dream. It should be pointed out here that Segismundo's radically self-referential acting in the palace episode, lacking any regard for ethical and moral norms (three attempted killings, one murder, attempted rape, ‘denial’ of all due respect), is, firstly, presented as a consequence of his seemingly inextricable doubt about the reality of his perception, and thus – on the level of the play – a polemical warning against skepticism, with the implication that if there are no certainties with regard to reality, the satisfaction of immediate physical needs becomes the ‘most sensible’ course of action.

The next scene of the main plot<sup>315</sup> again takes place in the tower and shows the protagonist sleeping on the floor – chained and dressed in furs as at the beginning of the play (stage direction: “*Descúbrese SEGISMUNDO como al principio, con pieles y cadena, durmiendo en el suelo. [...]*”). King Basilio, too, has come to the tower, hooded and, as he says, driven by ‘foolish curiosity’ to observe Segismundo's reaction upon awakening (“BAS.: La necia curiosidad / de

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Segismundo, for his part, will throw himself at the feet of his defeated father (and he, in turn, will appoint him ruler).

**315** The episode in between, also characterized by a play between seeming and being, focuses on the complicated ‘love triangle’ of Rosaura-Astolfo-Estrella (see vv. 1724–2017). Estrella accuses Astolfo of insincerity in his oaths of love because, as she had seen in their first encounter, he still carried the portrait of another woman. In order to prove his loyalty to her, Astolfo fetches this picture – a portrait of Rosaura. Estrella takes her court lady Astrea (Rosaura), into her confidence and instructs her to bring her the picture of the (supposedly) foreign lady from Astolfo. In a monologue, Rosaura laments her miserable situation, for she had promised Clotaldo, to whom she is grateful, not to promote her own affairs but to remain silently at the court under the name of Astrea and to patiently hope for the restoration of her honor; but how could she possibly pretend before Astolfo? When Astolfo recognizes her, she first denies her true identity. When he refuses to hand over her portrait to her, she angrily tries to snatch it from him, and the two scuffle at which point Estrella comes in. Appearances, however, are kept up, because Rosaura explains that a portrait of herself that she was carrying with her had fallen to the ground, which Astolfo picked up and was now refusing to return to her. Estrella demands it back from Astolfo and seeing that it portrayed Rosaura or, as she thinks, Astrea, returns it to her. Rosaura withdraws, relieved at having regained her locket, which – if it were found in Astolfo's possession – would reveal both her dishonor and her true identity. (“ROS.: [*Aparte.*] Yo he cobrado mi retrato, / venga aora lo que viniere” vv. 1994 f.). Astolfo, now in need of explanation, since there is no longer a *retrato* to hand over to his ‘future bride,’ is left behind in uncertainty by the offended Estrella (see “ESTRELLA: [...] Eres / villano y grosero amante” vv. 2007 f.).

ver lo que pasa aquí / a Segismundo [. . .] / deste modo [i.e. rebozado, 'hooded'] me ha traído" vv. 2050–2053).<sup>316</sup> Standing with Clotaldo, he observes Segismundo speaking in his sleep just before he wakes up. Thus, within the framework of the dream they have enacted, this is also Segismundo's 'real' dreaming; a 'dream within a dream' in miniature, which, of course, needs to be specified in such a way that the 'framing' dream is a fictitious one; a play within the play, and its ignorant protagonist will then be told that the 'real experience' in the palace was nothing but a dream:

SEGISM.: (*En sueños.*) Piadoso príncipe es  
el que castiga tiranos:  
muera Clotaldo a mis manos,  
bese mi padre mis pies.

CLOT.: Con la muerte me amenaza.

BAS.: A mí con rigor y afrenta.

CLOT.: Quitarme la vida intenta.

BAS.: Rendirme a sus plantas traza.

SEGISM.: (*En sueños.*) Salga a la anchurosa plaza  
del gran teatro del mundo  
este valor sin segundo.

Porque mi venganza cuadre,  
vean triunfar de su padre  
al príncipe Segismundo. (*Despierta.*)

Mas ¡ay de mí! ¿Dónde estoy?

(vv. 2064–2078)

This passage, on the one hand, addresses themes previously experienced in the waking state (attempted murder of Clotaldo, confrontation with Basilio); on the other hand, it anticipates future events (victory over the father). In this respect, it combines two main strands of the understanding of dreams in the Early Modern period. These, in principle, correspond to earlier conceptions in which, on the one hand, dreams take on a 'supernatural,' prophetic dimension, represented primarily in the tradition of Artemidorus of Daldis (*Oneirocritica*, 2nd

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**316** It is striking that it is from Basilio, the scientist, that an explicit mention of *curiositas*, (by Christianity) traditionally qualified as sinful is made. The specification as 'foolish' ('*neicia*'; '*curiositas stulta*') makes the predicate of vice, the contrast to the legitimate thirst for knowledge ('*studiositas*') all the clearer. This may be a further indication of the reservations about modernity, which the drama presents, among other things, by means of the character of Basilio. On the change of the '*curiositas*'-concept from the ideological order still or once again underlying Calderón's texts to the discourses whose approaches are criticized in the *comedia*, see Hans Blumenberg, *The 'Trial' of Theoretical Curiosity [Der Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde* (1973)], in: Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (cf. note 65), pp. 229–453 (Part III), esp. pp. 309–375.



century CE) and Macrobius (*Commentarium in somnium Scipionim*, 4th century CE), and, on the other hand, are part of a divination-skeptical explanatory model, as expounded in Aristotle, that locates the dream within a materialist and perceptual-physiological framework.<sup>317</sup> According to the latter, what Segismundo utters while sleeping would have to be subsumed as a classic 'day residue dream.'<sup>318</sup> Ultimately, however, above all the aspect that dreams reflect

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**317** A third strand, which is added by the 'dream theory' of Christianity, is the 'deceptive' dream of diabolical origin.

**318** In his treatise *De insomniis*, Aristotle describes dreams as perceptions that "[...] by day, while the senses and the intellect are working, [...] are extruded and obscured" (cf. in total 460b 28–461a 7, here 460b 33–461a 1), and as a "[...] remnant of a sensory impression taken when sense was actualizing itself;" (cf. 461b 21) (Aristotle, *On Dreams*, trans. John I. Beare, in: *The Complete Works of Aristotle* [cf. note 99], vol. 2, pp. 1600–1614, p. 1608 and p. 1610). In Early Modern Spain, Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) is the representative of the divination-skeptical strand of Aristotelian thinking, especially his work *Somnium et vigilia in Somnium Scipionis* (1520). Vives, like most of his contemporaries, also acknowledges the category of the divinely inspired dream ('*somnium coeleste*') and deals with the concomitant problem of being able to recognize these dreams as such and to differentiate them from both 'natural' and 'diabolically' inspired ones (see Richard L. Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1990, p. 41); furthermore, it should be noted that he discusses the phenomena of sleep and dream in the 13th and 14th chapters of the second book of his *De anima et vita* (1538) (Juan Luis Vives, *Tratado del alma*, in: Juan Luis Vives, *Obras completas*, trans. and ed. Lorenzo Riber, 2 vols., Madrid 1947–1948, vol. 2 [1948], pp. 1147–1319, here pp. 1220b–1226b; on the aspect 'day residue': "Con frecuencia soñamos lo que hicimos o presenciamos durante aquel mismo día. Ello sucede o porque la fantasía está fresca y ágil, no distraída por otras representaciones, como ocurre a los niños, o porque nos entregamos al descanso, ocupados en aquel pensamiento que se nos presenta inmediatamente al espíritu y en él se graba. Esto mismo acontece en las visiones impresas por una fuerza superior que actúa en nosotros, como son los pensamientos fijos y constantes o una pasión enérgica sostenida, como el miedo, el amor, el deseo, la ira o la envidia. Ello se debe a que la fantasía se apodera rápidamente del sentido común y de la atención, obligándole a fijarse sólo en el objeto que ofrece con radical omisión de todos los otros, como a menudo es dable apreciar en los enamorados y en todos aquellos a quienes domina alguna perturbación anímica vehemente" [p. 1224a]). With regard to the play's second 'real' dream, the repeated dream of Clorilene shortly before Segismundo's birth, it should be noted that this dream could also be integrated both into the model of interpretation of the line of Artemidor and Macrobius and into the explanatory pattern of the Aristotelian tradition. That what it predicted comes true, namely that Clorilene dies at birth, serves the 'dream interpreter' Basilio as further proof for the prognosticated disastrous future which Segismundo would bring to him and the country. In a system of future-orientated dream interpretation, the multiple repetition of the dream, the dreamer's social rank (queen) and condition (pregnant) as well as the dream motif (birth of the future ruler) provide the basis for the prophetic status of the dream. Clorilene's nightmare, the dream of a pregnant woman about a bloody birth, in which she dies, could also be seen as a 'residual dream of the day' according to Aristotle. That it came true, a high probability in



a person's 'desires,' uncontrolled by reason and ideas of morality, that come 'to the surface' in the dream, is relevant here.<sup>319</sup> It is striking that the 'desires' that Segismundo articulates in his sleep (murder of Clotaldo, revenge on Basilio and his subjugation) do not differ in their radicality from those already expressed in

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view of the significant mortality rate of mothers in Early Modern Europe, could then simply be subsumed under the category of coincidence (on the aspect of 'coincidence,' cf. Aristotle, *De divinatione per somnum* 463b 1–11 [Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, trans. John I. Beare, in: *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (cf. note 99), vol. 2, pp. 1616–1624, here pp. 1618 f.]; and in Vives: "Pero se dirá que a veces los ensueños resultan verídicos. Ello será por puro azar y accidentalmente, no en virtud de una cualidad natural suya, como cuando, aterrados por efecto de alguna pasión o, por el contrario, halagados por alguna esperanza, soñamos con peligros que nos amagan o con venturas que nos sonríen. Hay más; cuando alienta el alma un proyecto vehemente y exclusivo, éste es el que se presenta cuando estamos dormidos" [Vives, *Tratado del alma*, p. 1226a]).

**319** Already Plato describes the dream in the ninth book of *Politeia*, using physiological explanations, as the regnum of unreason, as a space in which desires come to light ("[...] pleasures and appetites[,] [...] desires [...] that are awakened in sleep when the rest of the soul, the rational, gentle and dominant part, slumbers, but the beastly and savage part, replete with food and win, gambols and, repelling sleep, endeavours to sally forth and satisfy its own instincts. You are aware that in such case there is nothing it will not venture to undertake as being released from all sense of shame and all reason" [571a–573c, here 571b–c; Plato, *Politeia/The Republic*, Greek-English, ed. and trans. Paul Shorey, 2 vols., London/Cambridge, MA 1963, vol. 2, pp. 334–345, here pp. 334–337]). In addition to the treatment of 'natural' dreams, links to the supernatural, 'divine,' 'prophetic' dream – which is typical of the premodern concept of the dream – can also be found in Plato: the reference of 'wild' dreams to melancholy and frenzy in the context of the Platonic 'poet's *mania*,' one of the four forms of 'divine *mania*' that enable participation in the knowledge of the gods, the soul's access to wisdom (cf. *Politeia* 573a–c [pp. 342–345]); regarding the Platonic *mania*, cf. Plato, *Phaidros* 265a (Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in: Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson, Indianapolis/Cambridge 1997, pp. 506–557, pp. 542 f.; cf. as well 244a–245a [pp. 522 f.]; the dream as potential access to a higher level of truth: "[n]o man achieves true and inspired divination when in his rational mind, but only when the power of his intelligence is fettered in sleep or when it is distraught by disease or by reason of some divine inspiration" [Plato, *Timaios* 71e (Plato, *Timaeus*, in: Plato, *Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles*, Greek-English, ed. and trans. Robert Gregg Bury, London/Cambridge, MA 1942, pp. 1–253, p. 186/187)). For Freud's central conception of the dream as wish fulfillment, see the third chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* ("III. A Dream Is the Fulfilment of a Wish") as well as in the following chapter ("IV. Distortion in Dreams") Freud's "[...] formula [...] to express the nature of dreams: *a dream is a (disguised) fulfilment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish*" (Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in: [Sigmund Freud], *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, Anna Freud, Alix Strachey, and Alan Tyson, 24 vols., vol. 4, London 1971 [1st ed. 1953], p. 160; italics in the original).

his waking state.<sup>320</sup> In Segismundo's dream nothing 'comes to light' that had previously been 'censored.' The radical wish fulfillment of his waking state thus corresponds to what is generally attributed to the dreamworld. Paradoxically, these wakeful experiences will soon be declared a dream. At this point, the viewer/reader is reminded again of Segismundo's extreme and uncontrolled behavior in the palace, while at the same time, the evocation of his real dream, fed by the real experiences of the palace, highlights the contrast to his awakening in the familiar surroundings of the tower prison that immediately follows and the ensuing disorientation felt by the protagonist (here: 'Mas ¡ay de mí! ¿Dónde estoy?' v. 2078). It is, furthermore, worth noting the metaphor of the 'great theater of the world' put into the mouth of the protagonist dreaming of rule and power ('Salga a la anchurosa plaza / del *gran teatro del mundo* / este valor sin segundo' vv. 2072 ff.; my italics), which Calderón famously elaborated on as an allegory in the *auto sacramental* of the same name, probably written in the 1630s.<sup>321</sup>

When Segismundo regains consciousness, he assumes, in view of the tower's familiarity, that what he experienced in the palace was a dream. Here, then, once again, the continuity argument, later made prominent by Descartes, is invalidated as a guarantor of reliability ("¿Soy yo por ventura? ¿Soy / el que preso y aherrojado / llego a verme en tal estado? / ¿No sois mi sepulcro vos, / torre? Sí. ¡Válgame Dios, / qué de cosas he soñado!" vv. 2082–2087). This impression is immediately confirmed by Clotaldo, who, to complete the deception ("CLOT.: A mí me toca llegar / a hacer la deshecha agora" vv. 2088 f.)<sup>322</sup> refers to the conversation he had had with Segismundo before giving him the first sedative, and who now asks him about the content of his 'dream' ("¿Todo el día te has de estar / durmiendo? ¿Desde que yo / al águila que voló / con tarda vista seguí, / y te quedaste tú aquí, / nunca has despertado? / [. . .] / Lo que soñaste

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**320** It should be recalled that the intention to kill Clotaldo was twice close to 'realization' (cf. vv. 1305–1316; vv. 1680–1693); cf. as well vv. 1716–1719 (Revenge on Basilio). The aspects of his previous actions, that are not being 're-addressed' here, are his sexual desire and his willingness to satisfy it with violence (Segismundo's attempt to rape Rosaura) as well as the actual murder of the servant.

**321** The use of theatrical metaphors and the context of *theatrum mundi* will be examined in more detail in the following chapter on Lope de Vega's drama *Lo fingido verdadero* (chap. 4.1).

**322** In the meantime, Basilio has retreated in order to be able to observe the scene unnoticed; not without reminding Clotaldo once again to act according to their plan, i.e. to make Segismundo believe that his experiences as heir to the throne had only been dreamed ("BAS.: Pues a mí no me ha [Segismundo] de ver; / ya sabes [Clotaldo] lo que has de hacer. / Desde allí a escucharle voy" vv. 2079 ff.).

me di.” vv. 2092–2108). Given the intensity of his experience at the palace, now declared a dream, and the equal intensity of his experience of his current, familiar, situation, Segismundo begins to doubt its reality as well: “[N]i aun agora he despertado, / que según, Clotaldo, entiendo, / todavía estoy durmiendo. / Y no estoy muy engañado; / porque *si ha sido soñado, / lo que vi palpable y cierto, / lo que veo será incierto;*” (vv. 2098–2104; my italics). The quality of his perception does not appear, to Segismundo, to be related to either state (of sleep or waking). It would not be surprising, says Segismundo, since his dream had seemed so real, the waking should seem so dreamlike: “y no es mucho que rendido, / pues veo estando dormido, / que sueñe estando despierto” (vv. 2105 ff.).<sup>323</sup> He then tells Clotaldo about what he supposedly dreamed (“Supuesto que sueño fue, / no diré lo que soñé, / lo que vi, Clotaldo, sí” vv. 2109 ff.); about the fact that he had woken up in a royal chamber, had been revered as ruler, been given presents and been prince of Poland and that he, Clotaldo, had been the one to explain everything to him. He further relates that he Segismundo had not, however, rewarded him for this, but had instead called him a traitor and unscrupulously tried to kill him twice. And he had ruled over everyone, and taken revenge on everyone, loving only one woman (although leaving out his attempted rape of Rosaura), and this is what he considers to be reality, for even if everything else was over now, this feeling still persisted.<sup>324</sup> To reassure Segismundo that what he had experienced was in fact

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**323** Cf. the similar argumentation in Descartes in the first *Meditatio* (see the passage cited above note 302 as well as more explicitly: “Quibus etiam duas maxime generales dubitandi causas nuper adjeci: prima erat, quod nulla unquam, dum vigilo, me sentire crediderim, quae non etiam inter dormiendum possim aliquando putare me sentire; cumque illa, quae sentire mihi videor in somnis, non credam a rebus extra me positis mihi advenire, non advertēbam quare id potius crederem de iis quae sentire mihi videor vigilando” [Descartes, *Meditationes* (cf. note 161), *Meditatio VI*, p. 77]/“To these reasons for doubting, I recently added two very general ones. The first was that every sensory experience I have ever thought I was having while awake I can also think of myself as sometimes having while asleep; and since I do not believe that what I seem to perceive in sleep comes from things located outside me, I did not see why I should be any more inclined to believe this of what I think I perceive while awake” [Descartes, *Meditations* (cf. note 161), p. 53] [see also the reference in Küpper, “*La vida es sueño*” (cf. note 278), p. 401, note 47]). See in this regard, furthermore, the already cited quote from Montaigne’s *Apologie* (see above note 301).

**324** “SEGISM.: Yo desperté, y yo me vi / ¡qué crueldad tan lisonjera! / en un lecho que pudiera, / con matices y colores, / ser el catre de las flores / que tejó la Primavera. / Allí mil nobles, rendidos / a mis pies, nombre me dieron / de su príncipe, y sirvieron / galas, joyas y vestidos. / La calma de mis sentidos / tú trocaste en alegría, / diciendo la dicha mía; / que, aunque estoy desta manera, / príncipe en Polonia era. / CLOT.: Buenas albricias tendrías. / SEGISM.: No muy buenas; por traidor, / con pecho atrevido y fuerte / dos veces te daba muerte. / CLOT.: ¿Para mí tanto rigor? /

only a dream, Clotaldo provides a plausible explanation for its content: since their conversation, immediately before he had fallen asleep, was about the majestic eagle, he had dreamed about lordly power.<sup>325</sup> More important, however, is Clotaldo's admonition: "mas en sueños fuera bien / entonces, honrar a quien / te crió en tantos empeños, / Segismundo, que *aún en sueños / no se pierde el hacer bien*" (vv. 2143–2147; my italics). This maxim, articulated here for the first time and then expressed repeatedly by Segismundo during the third act, stating that even in one's dreams it is important 'to do good; to do right,'<sup>326</sup> is followed by the protagonist's well-known monologue concluding the second act:

Es verdad; pues reprimamos  
 esta fiera condición,  
 esta furia, esta ambición,  
 por si alguna vez soñamos.  
 Y sí haremos, pues estamos  
 en mundo tan singular,  
 que el vivir sólo es soñar;  
 y la experiencia me enseña,  
 que el hombre que vive, sueña  
 lo que es, hasta despertar.  
 Sueña el rey que es rey, y vive  
 con este engaño mandando,  
 disponiendo y gobernando;

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SEGISM.: De todos era señor, / y de todos me vengaba; / sólo a una mujer amaba; / que fue verdad, creo yo, / en que todo se acabó, / y esto sólo no se acaba" (vv. 2112–2137).

325 "CLOT.: Como habíamos hablado / de aquella águila, dormido, / tu sueño imperios han sido;" (vv. 2140 ff.). This conversation was mentioned by Clotaldo to Basilio at the beginning of the second act, when he told him how Segismundo had been put to sleep and transported from the tower to the palace; the image of the eagle served to prepare Segismundo for the idea of rulership (see above p. 112). There it says: "Para levantarle más / el espíritu a la empresa / que solicitas, tomé / por asunto la presteza / de un águila caudalosa / que despreciando la esfera / del viento, pasaba a ser / en las regiones supremas / del fuego rayo de pluma / o desasido cometa. / Encarecí el vuelo altivo / diciendo: 'Al fin eres reina / de las aves, y así, a todas es justo que te prefieras.' / Él no hubo menester más; / que en tocando esta materia / de la majestad, discurre / con ambición y soberbia;" (vv. 1034–1051).

326 See vv. 2399 ff., vv. 2423 f.; see in this regard the following discussion of the third *jornada*. Important to mention here that a more metaphysical Catholic framing of this concept, elaborated on more clearly later in the play, constitutes the *comedia's* message. As Bárbara Mujica writes: "The truth comes to Segismundo not through reflexion or observation but through revelation. Clotaldo, the teacher, articulates God's message, even though he does not identify it as such: 'aún en sueños / no se pierde el hacer bien' [ . . . ]. Man must act, for it is through his actions that he will be judged after death" ("Calderón's *La vida es sueño* and the Skeptical Revival" [cf. note 278], p. 29).

y este aplauso que recibe  
 prestado, en el viento escribe  
 y en cenizas le convierte  
 la muerte (¡desdicha fuerte!);  
 ¡que hay quien intente reinar  
 viendo que ha de despertar  
 en el sueño de la muerte!  
 Sueña el rico en su riqueza  
 que más cuidados le ofrece;  
 sueña el pobre que padece  
 su miseria y su pobreza;  
 sueña el que a medrar empieza,  
 sueña el que afana y pretende,  
 sueña el que agravia y ofende;  
 y en el mundo, en conclusión,  
 todos sueñan lo que son,  
 aunque ninguno lo entiende.  
 Yo sueño que estoy aquí  
 destas prisiones cargado,  
 y soñé que en otro estado  
 más lisonjero me vi.  
 ¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.  
 ¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,  
 una sombra, una ficción,  
 y el mayor bien es pequeño,  
 que toda la vida es sueño,  
 y los sueños, sueños son.

(vv. 2148–2187)

Even if he actually wakes up in the environment originally familiar to him as the only ‘reality’ and Clotaldo makes it plausible to him that what happened in the palace was a dream, Segismundo cannot rule out that this reality is only supposedly real, for the experience in the ‘dream’ had been just as real to him (cf. vv. 2102 ff.). The consequence of Segismundo’s doubt about the reality of what he perceives after awakening in the tower constitutes the skeptical thesis of fundamental doubt concerning the reliability of sensory perception, expressed here. Life (‘la vida’ vv. 2182 ff.) was a frenzy (‘frenesí’), an illusion (‘ilusión’), a shadow (‘sombra’), a fiction (‘ficción’), the whole of life was a dream (‘toda la vida es sueño’ v. 2186; see also v. 2154: ‘[. . .] el vivir sólo es soñar’), as Segismundo concludes (‘la experiencia me enseña’ v. 2155), by which he means, according to J. Küpper, “[. . .] not in the sense that one would always be dreaming, but in the sense that everything we experience is unreliable.” “[. . .] [Segismundo] draws a conclusion that we could understand as the transition from the literal meaning of the concept of ‘dream’ to a metaphorical

one. [...] One could call this step in Segismundo's intellectual development the stage of classical Pyrrhonian Scepticism [...]."<sup>327</sup>

This central monologue, however, already hints at ideas that will become increasingly clear later in the play and substantiate its final message. It starts with Segismundo agreeing with ('[e]s verdad' v. 2148) Clotaldo's statement that even in a dream one should 'act rightly' and declaring his desire to carry this out so that in the future he will restrain 'wild nature, fierce anger, and lust for power' ('pues reprimamos / esta fiera condición, / esta furia, esta ambición' vv. 2148 ff.), and suppress those impulses to which he had given free reign in the palace. Images regarding the transience of earthly goods and all earthly existence are evoked ('Sueña el rey que es rey, y vive / con este engaño mandando, / disponiendo y gobernando; / y este aplauso que recibe / prestado, en el viento escribe / y en cenizas le convierte / la muerte [¡desdicha fuerte!]' vv. 2158–2164; see as well vv. 2168–2177), and the concept of the Christian afterlife alluded to: '[...] el hombre que vive, sueña / lo que es, *hasta despertar*' (vv. 2156 f.; my italics).

Calderón's *comedia* references Pyrrhonian skepticism's argument of the indistinguishability of dream and waking states; the dream functions – at this stage of the play – as a metaphor for the unreliability of sensory perception ('que toda la vida es sueño' v. 2186). But the drama does not remain in the classic-skeptical position, brought about in the context of a 'play within the play' structure, with the result that, as already indicated, the content of the dream-life-metaphor soon shifts. In the same way that Descartes enacts doubt in order to reach a rationalist formula of certainty pointing towards modernity, Calderón's play continues to radicalize doubt to reach, however, a contrary position.

In Act 3 the 'empiricist play director's' attempt to control the action and have his son remain imprisoned and Astolfo succeed him, are foiled by events beyond Basilio's control. In the third *jornada*, rebel soldiers seek to free Segismundo from his prison.<sup>328</sup> The people are revolting against King Basilio's decision to

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**327** Küpper, "Hamlet and *La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 2), p. 372; see also Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 278), pp. 401 f.

**328** Segismundo's encounter with the rebels is preceded by a scene characteristic of Spanish drama of the period, namely, the inclusion of comic elements even in plots of a serious nature. The soldiers see Clarín, the *gracioso* (the figure of the servant/jester) and assume that he is Segismundo (see vv. 2228–2275). For the purposes of contextualization: After Clarín expressed compassion for Segismundo, who was still asleep, he was locked in a prison dungeon in the tower at Clotaldo's behest in order to prevent a 'divulgence of secrets' by the 'trumpeter' ("CLOT.: [...] [H]a de estar / guardado en prisión tan grave, / Clarín que secretos sabe, / donde no pueda sonar" vv. 2034–2037; the scene in total: vv. 2022–2047). If the second *jornada* ended with the above-discussed monologue of the re-incarcerated Segismundo, the third begins with a monologue by Clarín (vv. 2188–2227), which can be understood as a parodistic mirroring. Points

hand the crown to a foreigner, the Muscovite Prince Astolfo, instead of the legitimate Polish heir of whom they are now aware.<sup>329</sup> As a rebel soldier declares, Segismundo shall now leave the tower, at the head of the army loyal to him, with whose help he shall regain the dignity of sovereign he is entitled to and be king

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of reference are provided both by the protagonist's monologue of lament from the first *jornada* (vv. 102–172; see above pp. 102 f. with note 266) and by the second act's action and final monologue. While Segismundo, although he had greater freedom of will, laments his lack of freedom in comparison to the animals (fish, bull, bird), Clarín's lament ("Lástima tengo de mí;" vv. 2194) focuses on the lack of food and conversation; hunger and silence are unbearable to him, the animals he can observe are less impressive, they are rats and spiders ("[...] [P]ara mí este silencio / no conforma con el nombre, / Clarín, y callar no puedo. / Quien me hace compañía / aquí [si a decirlo acierto], / son arañas y ratones" vv. 2197–2202, etc.). The beginning of the soliloquy reads: "En una encantada torre, / por lo que sé, vivo preso. / ¿Qué me harán por lo que ignoro, / si por lo que sé me han muerto?" (vv. 2188–2191; my italics). 'Knowledge' vs. 'ignorance' is closely linked to the preceding action: Segismundo is unable to say with 'certainty' whether he is awake or dreaming. He does not 'know' that he is indeed the Polish prince and (again) Basilio's captive. The fact that Clarín calls the tower 'enchanted' ('encantada torre') also reflects Segismundo's experience, since he found himself for a short time in an environment and position contrary to the one he was accustomed to, which seemed just as real to him as the reality of the tower, known to him, but declared to him as a dream. After the dream-orchestration in the second act and Segismundo's metaphorically conceived conclusion that life is a dream and that sensory perception is generally unreliable, Clarín also speaks of a dream he had in the tower prison: "De los sueños desta noche / la triste cabeza tengo / llena de mil chirimías, / de trompetas y embelecós, / de procesiones, de cruces, / de disciplinantes; y estos, / unos suben, otros bajan; / otros se desmayan viendo / la sangre que llevan otros; / mas yo, la verdad diciendo, / de no comer me desmayo; / que en esta prisión me veo, / donde ya todos los días / en el filósofo leo / Nicomedes, y las noches / en el concilio Niceno" (vv. 2204–2219). The effect that the nightmare of a flagellants' procession has on the *gracioso* is limited to the concrete physical need of hunger, and this is again broken down – here by means of a homonymous wordplay – to the level of comedy: what Clarín talks about also means roughly 'neither do you, nor do I get anything to eat,' for from the name of the philosopher mentioned one can hear 'ni comedes' ('comedes': 2nd Person Plural Present Indicative of the verb *comer* ['to eat'], the intervocalic -d- is eradicated on the way to the modern Spanish form ['(vosotros) coméis']), the adjective of the mentioned Council of Nicaea is homonymous with 'ni cenó' ('cenó': 1st Person Singular Present Indicative of the verb *cenar* ['to eat dinner']). The *gracioso's* playing with serious material (functionally probably best understood as carnivalesque in the sense of Bakhtin) demonstrates on the one hand his lack of education, and on the other hand, indicates that all his statements are to be received with reservation from the perspective of the implicit author. In contrast to what is often read in research literature, the *gracioso* in Spanish *comedia*, including this one, is by no means the author's mouthpiece.

**329** "SOLDADO 1.º: Gran príncipe Segismundo[,] / [...] / [t]u padre, el gran rey Basilio, / temeroso que los cielos / cumplan un hado, [...] / [...] / [...] pretende / quitarte acción y derecho / y dársela a Astolfo, duque / de Moscovia. Para esto / juntó su corte, y el vulgo, / penetrando ya y sabiendo / que tiene rey natural, / no quiere que un extranjero / venga a mandarle. [...]" (vv. 2276–2292).

of his people.<sup>330</sup> Although this twist in the plot accords well with the character traits Segismundo has evinced up until now, insofar as he is capable of learning he now finds himself confronted with the problem of the unreliability of his perception. Thus, in response Segismundo says: “¿Otra vez (¿qué es esto, cielos?), / queréis que sueñe grandezas / que ha de deshacer el tiempo? / ¿Otra vez queréis que vea / entre sombras y bosquejos / la majestad y la pompa / desvanecida del viento? / ¿Otra vez queréis que toque / el desengaño, o el riesgo / a que el humano poder / nace humilde y vive atento?” (vv. 2307–2317). He is loath to submit once again to the frustrating experience of being powerful, but only for a limited time (“Pues no ha de ser, no ha de ser” v. 2318) and, therefore, rejects the insurgents’ request to fight for the crown and ascend the throne. Since, in his experience, sensory perception is unreliable, Segismundo believes that what he is now experiencing is also an illusion:

[. . .] [S]é  
 que toda esta vida es sueño,  
 idos, sombras, que fingís  
 hoy a mis sentidos muertos  
 cuerpo y voz, siendo verdad  
 que ni tenéis voz ni cuerpo;  
 que no quiero majestades  
 fingidas, pompas no quiero,  
 fantásticas ilusiones  
 que al soplo menos ligero  
 del aura han de deshacerse[.]  
 [. . .]  
 Para mí no hay fingimientos;  
 que, desengañado ya,  
 sé bien que *la vida es sueño*.

(vv. 2320–2343; italics in the original)

When one of the soldiers attempts to refute Segismundo’s suspicion of deception by pointing, as evidence of the reality of their request, to the multitude of

**330** See: “SOLDADO 1.º: [. . .] Y así, / [el pueblo] haciendo noble desprecio / de la inclemencia del hado, / te ha buscado donde preso / vives, para que, valido / de sus armas y saliendo / desta torre a restaurar / tu imperial corona y cetro, / se la quites a un tirano. / Sal, pues que en ese desierto / ejército numeroso / de bandidos y plebeyos / te aclama, la libertad / te espera, oye sus acentos. / VOCES: [*Dentro*.] ¡Viva Segismundo, viva!” (vv. 2292–2306). It is not said how the insurgents – as was emphasized at the beginning of the play – were able to find and storm the ‘secret and well-guarded’ tower (cf. v. 297, v. 749).



his subjects whom he could see in the mountains outside,<sup>331</sup> Segismundo replies – using a formulation prominent in Descartes' philosophy – that he had already seen all this, the reverence directed at him, just as clearly and distinctly as he was seeing it now, and that it had been a dream: “Ya / otra vez vi aquesto mesmo / *tan clara y distintamente* / como agora lo estoy viendo, / y fue sueño. [...]” (vv. 2348–2352; my italics). Segismundo's expression of doubt refers to the unreliability of perception: even if it is ‘clear and distinct’ it cannot provide any certainty about the ontological status of the perceived; which can just as easily turn out to be deception.<sup>332</sup> In Descartes, however, and this difference is central, the formula ‘clear and distinct’ (*clare et distincte*) appears in the context of the requirements for concepts that are bound to the guarantors of certainty of the innate ideas.<sup>333</sup> Rationalist epistemology excludes sensory

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331 “SOLDADO 2.º: Si piensas que te engañamos, / vuelve a esos montes soberbios / los ojos, para que veas / la gente que aguarda en ellos / para obedecerte. [...]” (vv. 2344–2348).

332 See, in this regard, once more Segismundo's classification after his second awakening: ‘[...] si ha sido soñado, / lo que vi palpable y cierto, / lo que veo será incierto;’ (vv. 2102 ff.).

333 See, e. g., the first of the four main rules of the ‘Method of rightly conducting one's reason and seeking the truth in the sciences’ formulated in the *Discours*: “Le premier [précepte] était de ne recevoir jamais aucune chose pour vraie, que je ne la connusse évidemment être telle: c'est-à-dire, d'éviter soigneusement la précipitation et la prévention; et de ne comprendre rien de plus en mes jugements, que ce qui se présenterait *si clairement et si distinctement à mon esprit*, que je n'eusse aucune occasion de le mettre en doute” (Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* II, 7 [cf. note 100], p. 18; my italics)/“The first [rule] was never to accept anything as true if I did not have evident knowledge of its truth: that is, carefully to avoid precipitate conclusions and preconceptions, and to include nothing more in my judgements than what presented itself *to my mind so clearly and so distinctly* that I had no occasion to doubt it’ (Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* [cf. note 100], p. 120); see also the explanation in the *Principia philosophiae* (1644) I, 45 (‘De principiis cognitionis humanae’): “[‘Quid sit perceptio clara, quid distincta.’] [...] Claram voco illam, quae menti attendenti praesens & aperta est: sicut ea clare a nobis videri dicimus, quae oculo intuenti praesentia, satis fortiter & aperte illum movent. Distinctam autem illam, quae, cum clara sit, ab omnibus aliis ita sejuncta est & praecisa, ut nihil plane aliud, quam quod clarum est, in se contineat” (Descartes, *Principia philosophiae* [cf. note 149], p. 22)/[‘What is meant by a clear perception, and by a distinct perception] [...] I call a perception ‘clear’ when it is present and accessible to the attentive mind – just as we say that we see something clearly when it is present to the eye's gaze and stimulates it with a sufficient degree of strength and accessibility. I call a perception ‘distinct’ if, as well as being clear, it is so sharply separated from all other perceptions that it contains within itself only what is clear’ (Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* [cf. note 149], I, 45 ‘The Principles of Human Knowledge’, pp. 207 f.); see, furthermore, with regard to the *ideae innatae* and to sensory perception's lack of clarity and distinctness: e.g., *Discours de la méthode* II and IV (cf. note 100), pp. 11–22 and pp. 31–40 (*Discourse on the Method* [cf. note 100], pp. 116–122 and pp. 126–131); *Meditationes* (cf. note 161), esp. pp. 37–40 (*Meditatio III*), pp. 68–71 (*Meditatio V*), pp. 78 ff. (*Meditatio VI*) (*Meditations* [cf. note 161], pp. 26–28, pp. 47 ff., pp. 54 ff.). For the terminology common to Calderón and Descartes,

perception as leading directly to reliable knowledge. In the radicality of this rejection, Calderón and Descartes set themselves apart from empiricism. As becomes clear in the further course of the play, however, Calderón by no means shares Descartes' thesis that a God-given, but in its mundane function, autonomous, reason can use sensory perceptions, by means of (mathematical) concepts, to serve as a reliable determinant of the materially understood, worldly reality. Whether this is 'dream' or 'truth' ultimately remains forever an open question. But, according to the Calderonian line of thought, there is – beyond the radical position of skepticism – certainly a level of a reality that is absolutely reliable: that of the hereafter, and, furthermore, the level of (worldly) action that elevates this fact to be its guiding principle.

While in the palace Segismundo's actions, assuming the role of ruler and indifferent to the reality or illusion of the experience, were entirely focused on the fulfillment of his subjective desires, in the scene above, he at first refuses to 'act' altogether. This alludes to a central aspect of skepticism and its impact on

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but placed in different contexts, see the *Disputationes metaphysicae* (1597) of the Spanish Jesuit scholastic Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), as particularly Henry W. Sullivan has worked out ("*Tam clara et evidens*" [cf. note 278]; see also Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" [cf. note 278], p. 408, note 71). According to Aristotelian-scholastic tradition, Suárez, however, defends the reliability of sensory perception and it is precisely in this context that his *clare et distincte* stands: "[...] [N]am humana cognitio a sensu incipit, unde *per sensum accipit claritatem et certitudinem*; quo ergo fuerit cognitio de rebus a sensu remotior, eo erit minus certa [...]" (*Disputationes metaphysicae*, Disputatio I, Sectio V, 22 [quoted after: Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, in: Francisco Suárez, *Opera omnia*, ed. Michel André and Charles Berton, 28 vols., Paris 1856–1878, vol. 25 (1861), p. 43a; my italics]; the passage in Spanish translation: '[...] el conocimiento humano comien[za] por los sentidos, recibiendo, por consiguiente, de ellos su claridad y certidumbre; y así, cuanto más un conocimiento se distancie de los sentidos, tanto menos cierto será [...]' [Francisco Suárez, *Introducción a la metafísica: 1ª de las Disputationes metaphysicae*, trans. Joaquín Adúriz García, Buenos Aires 1943, p. 153]); see as well: "[...] fortasse in aliquo statu posse metaphysicam humanam esse perfectiorem et certioram quam sint mathematicae; nam, licet acquirendo hanc scientiam solis naturalibus viribus et ordinario modo humano, non possit tam perfecte obtineri, si tamen noster intellectus iuветur ab aliqua superiori causa in ipso-met discursu naturali, vel si ipsa scientia modo supernaturali fiat, licet res ipsa sit naturalis, potest forte esse *tam clara et evidens*, ut mathematicas superet" (Disputatio I, Sectio V, 26 [Suárez, *Opera omnia*, vol. 25, p. 44a; my italics])/'[...] tal vez en algún caso la metafísica humana pueda ser más perfecta y producir más certidumbre que las matemáticas; porque aunque no se la puede obtener con perfección cuando se la adquiere con las solas fuerzas naturales y en la manera humana común, con todo si una causa superior ayuda a nuestro entendimiento en su mismo raciocinar natural, o si el conocimiento aun versando en una cosa por sí misma natural se realiza de un modo sobrenatural, puede tal vez suceder que esta ciencia adquiera tal claridad y evidencia que supere a las matemáticas' [Suárez, *Introducción a la metafísica*, p. 156]). (See regarding this as well Sullivan "*Tam clara et evidens*," pp. 132 ff.).

praxis. In the same way that the skeptic abstains from judgment, he likewise abstains from action. Non-action, in the sense of avoiding an action that goes beyond the everyday actions according to the rules dictated by tradition, characterizes the typically skeptical attitude of serenity or indifference. Thus, Segismundo's refusal to act is an expression of the problematic implication of persisting in a skeptical position, which the play, as stated above, ultimately shares in epistemological terms. Non-action, in the world of the play, not only leads to Segismundo's continued imprisonment, but also, as the rebels warn, to the fall of Poland to foreign domination under Astolfo's rule.<sup>334</sup>

Ultimately, Segismundo is persuaded to change his mind. The soldier responds to the prince's objection that he had already seen himself clearly and distinctly as a ruler, albeit in a dream, by interpreting the dream as a prophecy ("anuncio").<sup>335</sup> Segismundo accepts this interpretation as a possible option (and not as a certainty that would prove his current experience as absolutely real), and pronounces himself ready to 'dream once again': "Dices bien, anuncio fue, / y caso que fuese cierto, / [...] / soñemos, alma, soñemos / otra vez; [...]" (vv. 2356–2360). However, certain premises are of relevance in this enterprise: "[...] [H]a de ser / con atención y consejo / de que hemos de despertar / deste gusto al mejor tiempo[.] / [...] / Y con esta prevención / de que cuando fuese cierto, / es todo el poder prestado / y ha de volverse a su dueño, / atrevámonos a todo" (vv. 2360–2372). It is his new-found awareness of the transience of earthly power, the result of his previous experience, and his new acceptance of the authority of divine omnipotence ('hemos de despertar / deste gusto'; 'es todo el poder prestado / y ha de volverse a su dueño') – introduced here quite abruptly into the play – that impel Segismundo to 'venture anything' ('atrevámonos a todo'). He accepts the responsibilities of his position as rightful heir, decides to take action, and is ready to save the people from 'foreign subjugation,' fight courageously against and defeat his father, and by doing so ensure that heaven's predictions come true. He addresses the cheering rebel army with the words: "Vasallos, [...] / [...] en mí lleváis / quien os libre, osado y diestro, / de extranjera esclavitud. / Tocad al arma, que presto / veréis mi inmenso valor. / Contra mi padre pretendo / tomar armas y sacar / verdaderos a los cielos. / Presto he de verle a mis plantas" (vv. 2373–2382). It is not in his own interest, but in the general interest, that he again enters into the state of dreaming himself to be a ruler.

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334 With regard to the aspects just addressed, see as well Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" [cf. note 278], pp. 407 ff.

335 "SOLDADO 2.º: [...] Cosas grandes / siempre, gran señor, trujeron / anuncios; y esto sería, / si lo soñaste primero" (vv. 2352–2355).

In the subsequent scene, the text then specifies the *actio* concept and sharpens the Christian connotation of the dream metaphor. When Clotaldo sees Segismundo, the liberated prince at the head of a powerful army, he immediately throws himself at his feet, assuming that he will become a victim of his deadly wrath: “CLOT.: [...] [*Aparte.*] En mí / su crueldad prueba. [...] / [...] / [Señor,] [a] tus reales plantas llego / ya sé que a morir. [...]” (vv. 2388–2392). Segismundo, however, offers him his hand, expresses his appreciation for the education given to him and desires that Clotaldo serve him as his confidant.<sup>336</sup> He further explains to an astounded Clotaldo: “Que estoy soñando, y que quiero / obrar bien, pues no se pierde / obrar bien, aun entre sueños” (vv. 2399ff.). When Clotaldo replies that his loyalty is to King Basilio and therefore he can not assist Segismundo as an advisor (cf. vv. 2403–2410), this good intention is put to the test for a moment. But Segismundo demonstrates, so to speak, his completely changed moral being by now being able, by invoking heaven, to bridle his violent *ira* (“SEGISM.: [...] ¡Villano, / traidor, ingrato! Mas ¡cielos!, / reportarme me conviene, / que aún no sé si estoy despierto” vv. 2410–2413). He even shows an understanding of Clotaldo’s motives, praises his courage, and lets him go unharmed with the comment that they will meet again on the battlefield (cf. vv. 2414–2417). Then he calls his men to arms, saying: “A reinar, fortuna, vamos; / no me despiertes, si duermo, / y si es verdad, no me duermas. / Mas sea verdad o sueño, / obrar bien es lo que importa; / si fuere verdad, por serlo; / si no, *por ganar amigos / para cuando despertemos*” (vv. 2420–2427; my italics). It is the ‘*obrar bien*,’ ‘to do good; to do right,’ which the protagonist elevates to a maxim of his actions. And this imperative applies in waking as well as in dream states. One’s actions on earth (understood metaphorically as the dream state) carry over into the afterlife (metaphorically: the waking state): ‘*por ganar amigos / para cuando despertemos.*’ What is being expressed here is what, in spite of all continuity in epistemological terms, ultimately fundamentally distinguishes Calderón’s view from Pyrrhonian skepticism. From a skeptical perspective, the category of the ‘waking state’ understood in this way does not exist; there can be no ‘awakening’ from deception, there can be no certainty in the form implied here. For Calderón, as he expresses discretely in the play, the issue of certainty is shifted from this world to the next. One does good in this world (whether dream or reality) to ensure one’s place in the world to come (the only true guarantee of awakening).

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336 “SEGISM.: [...] Levanta, / levanta, padre, del suelo; / que tú has de ser norte y guía / de quien fie mis aciertos; / que ya sé que mi crianza / a tu mucha lealtad debo. / Dame los brazos. [...]” (vv. 2392–2399). Segismundo refers to the admonitory words of his teacher immediately before his monologue at the end of the second act (cf. vv. 2143–2147).

By being liberated by the soldiers and meeting a Clotaldo who showed his devotion to him, Segismundo is confronted with the realization that everything that had happened in the palace was probably reality and not a dream, as he had been led to believe. While in principle this is actually a confirmation of his own perception ('[...] vi aquesto mesmo / tan clara y distintamente / como agora lo estoy viendo' vv. 2349ff.), it is not, however, interpreted (in the sense of the later Cartesian continuity argument) as a guarantee of certainty (see, e.g., '[q]ue estoy soñando [...]' v. 2399; 'que aun no sé si estoy despierto' v. 2413; '[...] sea verdad o sueño' v. 2423). Segismundo's doubts about the reliability of sensory perception remain and, moreover, are even intensified. When Rosaura approaches him sometime later – she has come to join Segismundo's troops on the battlefield in order to gain his support for the restoration of her honor<sup>337</sup> – and explains to him that they are actually meeting for the third time,<sup>338</sup> he once again finds himself confronted with the problem of evidence:

Cielos, si es verdad que sueño,  
suspendedme la memoria,  
que no es posible que quepan  
en un sueño tantas cosas.  
¡Válgame Dios, quién supiera,  
o saber salir de todas,  
o no pensar en ninguna!  
¿Quién vio penas tan dudosas?  
Si soñé aquella grandeza  
en que me vi, ¿cómo agora

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**337** See the outline of the Rosaura-plot above, note 277.

**338** "ROS.: Tres veces son las que ya / me admiras, tres las que ignoras / quién soy, pues las tres me has visto / en diverso traje y forma. / La primera me creíste / varón en la rigurosa / prisión, donde fue tu vida / de mis desdichas lisonja. / La segunda me admiraste / mujer, cuando fue la pompa / de tu majestad un sueño, / una fantasma, una sombra. / La tercera es hoy, que siendo / monstruo de una especie y otra, / entre galas de mujer / armas de varón me adornan" (vv. 2711–2727). See, furthermore, vv. 2876–2885 (reference to Segismundo's captivity and the now executed revenge on his father) as well as vv. 2914–2918 (reference to Segismundo's attempts of sexual assault in the palace). – Segismundo himself seems to recognize her immediately as the woman he desired in the palace and whom he loved 'even beyond the dream' (see his remark to Clotaldo after he 'had learnt' that the experiences in the palace had been only a dream: 'sólo a una mujer amaba; / que fue verdad, creo yo, / en que todo se acabó, / y esto sólo no se acaba' vv. 2134–2137); his feelings towards Rosaura have not changed, he comments on her arrival by saying: "SEGISM.: [...] Su luz me ciega. / [...] / El cielo a mi presencia la restaura" (vv. 2687 ff.).

esta mujer me refiere  
 unas señas tan notorias?  
 Luego fue verdad, no sueño:  
 y si fue verdad, que es otra  
 confusión y no menor,  
 ¿cómo mi vida le nombra  
 sueño? ¿Pues tan parecidas  
 a los sueños son las glorias,  
 que las verdaderas son  
 tenidas por mentirosas,  
 y las fingidas por ciertas?  
 ¿Tan poco hay de unas a otras  
 que hay cuestión sobre saber  
 si lo que se ve y se goza,  
 es mentira o es verdad?  
 ¿Tan semejante es la copia  
 al original, que hay duda  
 en saber si es ella propia?

(vv. 2922–2949)

The initial irritation, triggered by the encounter with Rosaura, is related to the interweaving contexts of events that he had thought separate from one another – with one real and one a dream.<sup>339</sup> In subjective terms it represents a seemingly unsolvable challenge to his capacities of memory and thought ('suspendedme la memoria, / que no es posible que quepan / en un sueño tantas cosas[.] / [. . .] [i]quién supiera, / o saber salir de todas, / o no pensar en ninguna!' vv. 2923–2928), which he experiences as singularly tormenting ('¿Quién vio penas tan dudosas?' v. 2929). If the palace had been a dream, how could Rosaura possibly have any knowledge of it? (vv. 2930–2933). The conclusion that it must not have been a dream but was instead reality ('Luego fue verdad, no sueño;' v. 2934), does not, however, provide a satisfying explanation but instead reinforces Segismundo's now total confusion ('[. . .] es otra / confusión y no menor' vv. 2935 f.) and leads to the culmination of his (skeptical) doubt about the reliability of the sensory perception. Even if Segismundo, reassured by Rosaura (as well as by the soldiers who liberated him from the tower, and by the fact of liberation itself and the subsequent experiences), could be selectively certain that what he had considered to be a dream was actually real, the question of certainty remains unsolvable at the moment of each

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**339** From the perspective of the protagonist, the encounter with Rosaura in the palace would be part of a dream, which indicates the first encounter in the tower as part of his reality. Whether he should classify the current state as a definite reality or a dream, remains for him – as showed in the scenes with the soldiers and Clotaldo – something that cannot be answered with certainty.

singular, instantaneous perception. If anything, certainties can only be produced in retrospect; in other words, only by viewing events from a purely theoretical perspective with regard to potential action to be taken in the respective situation. Accordingly, the doubt he experiences becomes all-encompassing. From Segismundo's perspective, there is no way to reliably distinguish between reality and dream, fact and illusion, truth and deception, original and copy.<sup>340</sup> Similar to the assumption (which only the audience knows to be false) that the experience in the palace was a dream, that it was in fact the result of Basilio's actions, even the knowledge gained through the assurance of third parties – that the events in the palace were not a dream – could in consequence be a mere deception, the result of an all-encompassing deceit, in the sense of Descartes' later *genius malignus* hypothesis.<sup>341</sup> Along this line, especially in view of the immanently plausible but eminently artificial construction that forms the basis of the radical stage of doubt that becomes apparent here, one could certainly speak of a 'hyperbolic doubt.' As Descartes later posits, the view into the abyss of absolute doubt brought about by reasoning is intended to create in the readers/audience a willingness to accept the logical leap that follows – in Descartes<sup>342</sup> as in Calderón – without which it is not possible to reach the safe ground of certainty.

The solution to the problem of uncertainty presented in Calderón's *comedia* lies, in contrast to Descartes, in the metaphysical framework of Christian dogma; namely the understanding that this world is transient and true reality is achieved only in the hereafter. In this conception the opposition between dream and reality fades into insignificance and only that of transience and eternity is of any importance:

SEGISM.: Si es sueño, si es vanagloria,  
¿quién, por *vanagloria humana*,  
pierde una *divina gloria*?  
¿Qué pasado bien no es sueño?

**340** See vv. 2938–2949: '¿[. . .] [T]an parecidas / a los sueños son las glorias, / que las verdaderas son / tenidas por mentirosas, / y las fingidas por ciertas? / ¿Tan poco hay de unas a otras / que hay cuestión sobre saber / si lo que se ve y se goza, / es mentira o es verdad? / ¿Tan semejante es la copia / al original, que hay duda / en saber si es ella propia?'

**341** See Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" (cf. note 278), p. 404, n. 57; Lema-Hincapié, "¿Existir en sueño o en vigilia?" (cf. note 278), p. 59, who both compare the Basilio of the first and second acts with Descartes' 'demonic deceiver.' Regarding the *genius malignus* hypothesis, see chap. 1.2.3, esp. pp. 63 f. with note 174.

**342** It should be remembered that Cartesian autonomous realism ultimately functions only with the exclusion of the thesis of the *genius malignus* as ruler of the world.

¿Quién tuvo dichas heroicas  
 que entre sí no diga, cuando  
 las revuelve en su memoria:  
 sin duda que fue soñado  
 cuanto vi? Pues si esto toca  
*mi desengaño*, si sé  
 que es el gusto llama hermosa  
 que la convierte en cenizas  
 cualquiera viento que sopla,  
*acudamos a lo eterno*,  
*que es la fama vividora*,  
 donde ni duermen las dichas,  
 ni las grandezas reposan.

(vv. 2969–2985; my italics)

The problem of the insurmountable discrepancy between perception and reliability is rendered irrelevant. Christian faith is the guarantor of safety for Segismundo, the disoriented human being. It is only a matter of living with an eye on the eternal, the 'divina gloria' (v. 2971). This includes a propagation of Christian morality as a basis for action in this world ('obrar bien'). Given the equation of (earthly) life and dream ('la vida es sueño') as well as the premise that our actions on earth effect, for good or bad, our lives in eternity, the maxim of 'right action' must always be followed, whether in the dream or in the waking state: '[. . .] sea verdad o sueño, / obrar bien es lo que importa; / si fuere verdad, por serlo; / si no, por ganar amigos / para cuando despertemos' (v. 2423–2427), as Segismundo notes.<sup>343</sup>

Between the passage articulating Segismundo's (earthly possible) 'desengaño' (v. 2978)<sup>344</sup> (vv. 2969–2985) and the radical doubt analyzed above at the beginning of the monologue (vv. 2922–294), there is, however, once again the temptation to let moral indifference prevail in view of uncertainty and to give in to *passio*, sensual desire<sup>345</sup>: "[S]epamos aprovechar / este rato que nos toca, / pues sólo se goza en ella / lo que entre sueños se goza. / Rosaura está en mi poder, / su hermosura el alma adora, / gocemos, pues, la ocasión, / el amor las leyes rompa / del valor y confianza / con que a mis plantas se postra" (vv. 2954–2962). However, in Segismundo, this newly actualized

<sup>343</sup> See also once more vv. 2146 f., vv. 2399 ff. as well as the end of the play: vv. 3313–3316.

<sup>344</sup> In the sense of understanding that this world, juxtaposed against the eternal, the 'true being,' the 'unquestionable truth' ('desengaño'), is only deception ('engaño'), earthly reality, enjoyment, vanity and possessions are void and action is to be oriented towards the 'divina gloria'. For the complex of the *engaño/desengaño* in general see Hansgerd Schulte, *El desengaño: Wort und Thema in der spanischen Literatur des goldenen Zeitalters*, Munich 1969.

<sup>345</sup> This is also in accordance with the dogma that *luxuria* is not the most severe, but is the most persistent sinful impulse.



Christian believer, the *ratio* immediately gains the upper hand<sup>346</sup>: “Mas ¡con mis razones propias / vuelvo a convencerme a mí!” (vv. 2967 f.), and the above cited explanation is given (see ‘quién, por vanagloria humana, / pierde una divina gloria? vv. 2970 f.; ‘acudamos a lo eterno’ v. 2982).<sup>347</sup> Suppressing his own desires, Segismundo now wants to ensure, as “príncipe” (v. 2987), the restitution of Rosaura’s honor. He wants to continue on to win the crown and leads his troops into battle.<sup>348</sup> Under his leadership, the rebels defeat the king’s army and Basilio, Astolfo, and Clotaldo flee,<sup>349</sup> only to be caught in the

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**346** This now is specifically Catholic, Tridentine dogma: it is possible for the baptized, in the state of *gratia sufficiens* brought about in this way, to resist the sinful temptation by means of God-given reason.

**347** One could also say: the reason (of the baptized) successfully controls the will. This is not connected to the possibility of gaining assured knowledge, which does not exist from the perspective of the drama; ultimate certainty for man is only possible retrospectively, ‘after awakening’ (in the true life of the beyond). There is assurance about providence and the fact that a man’s actions can influence his salvation; and in traditional Christian moral theology, it is primarily prudence (*prudencia*) that determines good worldly actions. On ethics and hierarchy of the virtues, cf. the reference text theologically substantiating the Spanish Counter-Reformation: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* I<sup>a</sup> II<sup>ae</sup> q. 55–67 (cf. esp. q. 57 a. 4–6, q. 58 a. 2 and a. 5, q. 61, q. 65 a. 1–2, q. 66, a. 3 and a. 5) (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* [Complete English edition], trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols., Westminster, MD 1981, vol. 2: I<sup>a</sup> II<sup>ae</sup> QQ. 1–114, pp. 819–877 [cf. esp. pp. 830–833, pp. 834 f. and pp. 836 f., pp. 846–850, pp. 860–863, pp. 867–868 and pp. 869–870]; used edition for the Latin text: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* [Latin-German], trans. Dominicans and Benedictines of Germany and Austria, ed. Katholischer Akademikerverband, Salzburg/Heidelberg/Graz/Cologne 1933–, vol. 11 [1940], pp. 103–354 [cf. esp. pp. 151–163, pp. 168–172, pp. 179–182, pp. 221–240, pp. 284–294, pp. 314–317, pp. 321–326]).

**348** “SEGISM.: Rosaura está sin honor; / más a un príncipe le toca / el dar honor que quitarle. / ¡Vive Dios, que de su honra / he de ser conquistador, / antes que de mi corona! / Huyamos de la ocasión, / que es muy fuerte. – ¡Al arma toca, / que hoy he de dar la batalla[!]” (vv. 2986–2994).

**349** See vv. 3060–3070: “[stage direction:] (*Suena ruido de armas. Salen el REY, CLOTALDO y ASTOLFO, huyendo.*) BAS.: ¿Hay más infelice rey? / ¿Hay padre más perseguido? / CLOT.: Ya tu ejército vencido / baja sin tino ni ley. / ASTOLFO: Los traidores vencedores / quedan. BAS.: En batallas tales / los que vencen son leales, / los vencidos los traidores. / Huyamos, Clotaldo, pues, / del cruel, del inhumano / rigor de un hijo tirano.” Even though a more detailed commentary of the scene immediately following the quotation cannot be made here, it should nevertheless not go unmentioned: In this *comedia*, Calderón lets the *gracioso* die. Clarín who had ‘out of cowardice’ hidden himself from the approaching troops in the rocks (vv. 3044–3059) is nevertheless fatally struck by bullets (vv. 3070–3095; in his last words he declares: “Huyendo [de la muerte], topé / con ella, pues no hay lugar / para la muerte secreto;” [vv. 3078 ff.] and warns: “[M]irad que vais a morir / si está de Dios que muráis” vv. 3094 f.). Clarín, beside the servant murdered by Segismundo in the second act, is the only character in the drama who dies. A description of the bloody conflict in the country between the followers of Astolfo and the supporters of Segismundo, however, is given earlier by Estrella: cf. vv. 2460–2475. Astolfo’s decision to go into battle in order

mountains by Segismundo and his soldiers (vv. 3136–3145). With the encounter between the defeated father and victorious son the drama nears its end. Basilio humbly prostrates himself before his son, saying, in reference to his prophecy, that despite all the measures he had taken to prevent it, destiny has fulfilled its vow and heaven kept its word, and he is now ready to submit himself to his fate:

Si a mí buscándome vas,  
ya estoy, príncipe, *a tus plantas,*  
*sea dellas blanca alfombra*  
*esta nieve de mis canas.*  
Pisa mi cerviz, y huella  
mi corona; postra, arrastra  
mi decoro y mi respeto,  
toma de mi honor venganza,  
sírvede de mí cautivo;  
y tras prevenciones tantas,  
cumpla el hado su homenaje,  
cumpla el cielo su palabra.<sup>350</sup>

(vv. 3146–3157; my italics)

It appears that the astrological prediction has come to pass.<sup>351</sup> In the last instance, however, what Basilio has extrapolated from the constellation of stars, celestial signs, dream events, and natural events is fulfilled, but in a very different way to what he had predicted. For a reformed Segismundo is true to his

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to 'earn' the 'obedience' of the people: vv. 2444–2451 ("que si Polonia, a quien mandar espero, / hoy se resiste a la obediencia mía, / es porque la merezca yo primero" vv. 2447 ff.); Basilio's insight that he himself is to blame for the destruction of his empire through his actions: "Quien piensa que huye el riesgo, al riesgo viene; / con lo que yo guardaba me he perdido; / yo mismo, yo mi patria he destruido" (vv. 2457 ff.) and his decision to battle his 'ungrateful son' and defend his crown: "[...] yo en persona / vencer valiente a un hijo ingrato quiero; / y en la defensa ya de mi corona, / lo que la ciencia erró venza el acero" (vv. 2484–2487).

**350** See Basilio's prophecy that his hair would be a white carpet for Segismundo's feet: 'BAS.: y él [Segismundo], de su furor llevado, / [...] / había de poner en mí / las plantas, y yo rendido / a sus pies me había de ver: / [...] / siendo alfombra de sus plantas / las canas del rostro mío.' (vv. 718–725; my italics) and Segismundo's reference to this image in the palace scene: 'Acciones vanas, / querer que tenga yo respeto a canas; / pues aun ésas podría / ser que viese a mis plantas algún día, / porque aún no estoy vengado / del modo injusto con que me has criado' (vv. 1714–1719; my italics).

**351** Cf. the partial prophecy '[...] [el] reino vendría / a ser parcial y diviso [...]' (vv. 714 f.), which seems to have been fulfilled with the fight between the rebels led by Segismundo and the troops led by Basilio and Astolfo, from which Segismundo emerges victorious.

decision to live the '*obrar bien*.' He submits to his father ("[...] humilde aguarda / mi cuello a que tú te vengues: / rendido estoy a tus plantas" vv. 3245 ff.), who for his part renounces revenge and hands the crown over to his son (vv. 3248–3253). The '*Oedipus christianus*'<sup>352</sup> Segismundo not only overcomes his anger towards his father, he renounces his desire for Rosaura and orders Astolfo to restore her honor and marry her<sup>353</sup>; he himself will marry Estrella (vv. 3278–3287). Clotaldo, too, is in his favor (vv. 3288–3291) out of respect for his loyalty to King Basilio. The rebel soldier who led the uprising against Basilio and liberated Segismundo, upon coming to claim his reward, is however punished as a traitor and imprisoned for life in the tower (vv. 3292–3301). In accordance with the *dénouement* characteristic of the genre, Calderón's *comedia* ends with the restoration of order. The kingdom is pacified, the reign stable, the uprising is over, lost honor is restored by marriage, and the dynastic problems resolved through a marriage of convenience. At the end of the play, the disastrous predictions do not come to pass, Segismundo is not a '*víbora humana del siglo*' (v. 675), but is instead portrayed as the ideal Christian prince. Nevertheless, as the defeated Basilio is prostrate at his feet, Segismundo emphasizes in his speech to the "Corte ilustre de Polonia" (v. 3158) that the stars do not lie: "Lo que está determinado / del cielo, y en azul tabla / Dios con el dedo escribió, / de quien son cifras y estampas / tantos papeles azules / que adornan letras doradas, / nunca mienten, nunca engañan;" (vv. 3162–3168). However, it is not the arbitrary and abusive predictions of what is 'written by God' done by Basilio:

porque quien miente y engaña  
es quien, para usar mal dellas,  
las penetra y las alcanza.  
Mi padre, que está presente,  
por excusarse a la saña

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352 Kluge, "Calderón's Anti-Tragic Theater" (cf. note 295), pp. 24–50; see also Rozik, "The Generation of *Life is a Dream* from *Oedipus the King*" (cf. note 295). It should be noted that there are also approaches that do not interpret Segismundo's transformation in terms of a '*príncipe cristiano*' but in terms of Machiavellianism (cf. e.g. Alice Homstad, "Segismundo. The Perfect Machiavellian Prince," *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 41 [1989], pp. 127–139; for the opposite assessment see Kluge, "Calderón's Anti-Tragic Theater," pp. 32–35; Küpper, "*La vida es sueño*" [cf. note 278], pp. 412 ff. with note 83).

353 Cf. vv. 2958–2992 and vv. 3005–3015 as well as: "SEG.: Pues que ya vencer aguarda / mi valor grandes vitorias, / hoy ha de ser la más alta: / vencerme a mí. Astolfo dé / la mano luego a Rosaura, / pues sabe que de su honor / es deuda, y yo he de cobrarla" (vv. 3255–3261). Only after Clotaldo publicly confesses to his daughter and thus clarifies "[...] Rosaura es tan noble / como tú, Astolfo [...]" (vv. 3268 f.), the latter agrees (vv. 3277 f.).

de mi condición, me hizo  
 un bruto, una fiera humana;  
 de suerte que, cuando yo  
 por mi nobleza gallarda,  
 por mi sangre generosa,  
 por mi condición bizarra,  
 hubiera nacido dócil  
 y humilde, sólo bastara  
 tal género de vivir,  
 tal linaje de crianza,  
 a hacer fieras mis costumbres:  
 ¡qué buen modo de estorbarlas!<sup>354</sup>

(vv. 3169–3185)

For it applies: “No antes de venir el daño / se reserva ni se guarda / quien le previene; [...]” (vv. 3220ff.). Fate’s possible negative implications must be countered with *prudencia* and *temperantia* – as Segismundo ultimately shows: “la fortuna no se vence / con injusticia y venganza, / porque antes se incita más; / y así, quien vencer aguarda / a su fortuna, ha de ser / con prudencia y con templanza” (vv. 3214–3219). What God has decreed is eternal law, man cannot grasp it in advance and must not seek to change it for his own sake; although to a certain degree precautions can be taken, the ‘*daño*’ may only be repelled at the moment of its appearance<sup>355</sup> (among other things by means of ‘prudence’ and ‘temperance’). It is noteworthy that Segismundo qualifies the action, the ‘spectacle/play’ (“espectáculo”) in this respect as an ‘example’ (“ejemplo”):

*Sirva de ejemplo* este raro  
 espectáculo, esta extraña  
 admiración, este horror,  
 este prodigio; pues nada  
 es más, que llegar a ver  
 con prevenciones tan varias,  
 rendido a mis pies a un padre,

<sup>354</sup> Explicit once again at the end of the speech: “[...] Señor, levanta, / dame tu mano; que ya / que el cielo te desengaña / de que *has errado en el modo / de vencerle*, humilde aguarda / mi cuello a que tú te vengues: / rendido estoy a tus plantas” (vv. 3241–3247; my italics).

<sup>355</sup> “[...] aunque / puede humilde (cosa es clara) / reservarse dél [del daño], no es / sino después que se halla / en la ocasión, porque aquésta / no hay camino de estorbarla” (vv. 3222–3227).

y atropellado a un monarca.  
*Sentencia del cielo fue;*  
*por más que quiso estorbarla*  
*él, no pudo; [...]*

(vv. 3228–3238; my italics)

In the closing verses of Calderón's drama, spoken by the transformed Segismundo,<sup>356</sup> the dream motif and title metaphor are referred to again:

¿Qué os admira?, ¿qué os espanta,  
*si fue mi maestro un sueño*  
 y estoy temiendo en mis ansias  
 que he de despertar y hallarme  
 otra vez en mi cerrada  
 prisión? Y cuando no sea,  
*el soñarlo sólo basta:*  
*pues así llegué a saber*  
*que toda la dicha humana*  
*en fin pasa como sueño,*  
 y quiero hoy aprovecharla  
 el tiempo que me durare,  
 pidiendo de nuestras faltas  
 perdón, pues de pechos nobles  
 es tan propio el perdonarlas.<sup>357</sup>

(vv. 3305–3319; my italics)

It is the enactment of a dream that forms the basis for the unfolding of the *comedia's* central dream motif, which first refers metaphorically to unreliability of sensory perception and is then used allegorically.

In the following section, the results of this textual analysis will be briefly summarized in relation to the central questions of this study. Before then, however, the paradoxical metaphor of the *comedia's* title needs to be discussed. The play, by equating life, connected to the waking state, with dream or sleep, establishes this contrast from the beginning.<sup>358</sup> In the context of the theologeme underlying the play's message and the phrase '*la vida es sueño*,' earthly life is only a dream in relation to the 'true reality' into which one awakens after death ('[...] el hombre que vive, sueña / lo que es, hasta despertar' vv. 2156 f.). Security in this transient

356 "BAS.: Tu ingenio a todos admira. / ASTOLFO: ¡Qué condición tan mudada! / ROS.: ¡Qué discreto y qué prudente!" (vv. 3302 ff.).

357 With regard to the last five verses (vv. 3315–3319), dropping out of the role and turning to the real audience at the end of a performance to ask for understanding for any mistakes made by the actors was quite common in the theater of the time.

358 Note that the Spanish word *sueño* contains both meanings: dream and sleep.

life of deception (*engaño*) is offered by placing one's trust in the promise of *desengaño*, eternal life, a lasting awakening from the sleep of earthly existence ('[...] si sé / que es el gusto llama hermosa / que la convierte en cenizas / cualquiera viento que sopla, / acudamos a lo eterno, / que es la fama vividora, / donde ni duermen las dichas, / ni las grandezas reposan' vv. 29778–2985). Even if, however, life is conceived of as a dream, and earthly existence, in the face of the eternal life beyond, appears invalid, it is nevertheless necessary to meet moral standards and to 'act good' even in dreams ('[...] no se pierde / obrar bien, aun entre sueños' vv. 2400 f.). Against the metaphysical background of 'true life after death,' the paradoxical image of the '*vivo cadáver*,' emphasized at the beginning of the chapter, ultimately becomes consistent as well. Note, for example, the following verses from Segismundo's monologue at the end of the second act: '¡que hay quien intente reinar / viendo que ha de despertar / en el sueño de la muerte!' (vv. 2165ff.). Although here the image of death as sleep is also evoked ('en el sueño de la muerte'), this 'last' sleep, death, is followed by the Christian implication of awakening ('despertar'): life is a dream embedded in a 'real reality' into which man awakens after his death.

One of Pyrrhonian skepticism's central arguments regarding the general unreliability of perception is that one cannot use sensory perception to reliably distinguish between dream state and waking state. In its engagement with skepticism, Calderón's drama refers to this aspect, which is so entrenched a part of the skeptical tradition. The doubt presented in *La vida es sueño*, however, is a hyperbolic one; although methodologically reminiscent of Descartes, its intention, as explained above, points in an entirely different direction. This doubt sets the stage for the final argument of the drama, which itself marks a return to a pre-Renaissance worldview.<sup>359</sup> The dramatic strategy of representation here is

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**359** Note that within the research that sees in *La vida es sueño* deep ties to skepticism, there is also the view that the drama remains committed to a skepticist standpoint until its final argument. Cf., e.g., Egginton, "Psychoanalysis and the Comedia" (cf. note 278), pp. 114–120 ("It is clear that Calderón is trying to distance himself from a purely skeptical position in *La vida es sueño* as well. The problem is that the attempt simply doesn't work. *El gran teatro del mundo* benefited from the medieval conventions of allegorical representation to illustrate a literally God's-eye-view of humanity's ephemeral role-playing essence. But *La vida es sueño* is theater, a modern form of spectacle exhibiting the moral problematics of a modern, theatrical humanity [...] whose knowledge of the relativity of theatrical space [...] is incompatible with a certainty concerning God's will. So although Calderón makes the occasional attempt to frame Segismundo's development of an ethics of self-mastery within the medieval pragmatics of punishment and reward, such a pragmatics is insufficient as an ultimate justification" [p. 114]; "What eventually convinces Segismundo to curtail his enjoyment [...] is not the threat of punishment when he awakes or the promise of reward for keeping his dreams virtuos, but

a structure akin to a 'play within a play.' Segismundo's skepticism is generated by Basilio's pretense of a dream. The extreme situations enacted in the drama explore not only the problem of epistemological certainty, but also a related ethical-practical dimension. Calderón's answer, in this *comedia*, to the views of

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rather the knowledge that, if he assumes he is dreaming and refuses on his own accord the satisfaction of his desires that the dream proffers as real, his *desengaño* – the disappointment accompanying the revelation of his true situation – will be less. [...] In the absence of the father, skepticism is his own justification" [pp. 115 f.]; "[...] [I]t is his [Basilio's] actions that teach Segismundo the patient skepticism that he, Basilio, should have had, and that eventually allow Segismundo to assume to power and restore the moral order" [pp. 117f]; "[...] [I]n regimes depending on a diffuse and representational deployment of power, skepticism functions [...]. Skepticism bridges the gap between individual psychic development and social cohesion, because it is precisely the individual's acceptance of the paternal function, of the name of father as the marker of the limits of his own knowledge [...] that founds the sense of obligation to the law required for such a system of social organization" [pp. 119 f.]. According to the reading represented in this study, however, it is not the Pyrrhonian skeptics' 'maxim of action' to orient their behavior to the values and customs traditional in the society (for this aspect, see chap. 1.1, pp. 19 ff.), which underlies Segismundo's action at the end of the play, but the acceptance of the category of transcendence, eternity and the transferring of the question of certainty to the 'beyond'; and, as a consequence, the expectation of a 'heavenly life' or the fear of the opposite, hell. In Calderón skepticism is not 'overcome' (epistemologically). The question of whether sensory perception is reliable is irrelevant for earthly existence. Of relevance is what follows and how this 'true' existence is being 'acquired' through action on earth. With the dream metaphor, the earthly existence characterized by uncertainties is represented, the awakening from this dream, i.e. the physical death, thus marks the entry into 'true reality.' At the end of the *comedia* stands not skeptical *epoché*, or epistemology, but dogma. Mujica ("Calderón's *La vida es sueño* and the Skeptic Revival" [cf. note 278]) situates Calderón's *comedia* in the context of the alliance between skepticism and fideism present in the 16th and 17th centuries (see p. 30), her conclusion reads: "Once Segismundo abandons his skeptical attitude, he runs astray because he acts on misleading images. As long as Segismundo and Basilio adhere to dogmas based on their own faulty perception, they are unable to progress morally because they are unable to transcend the closed, fixed order that is of their own making. It is only when Segismundo once again accepts doubt as the only sound approach to life that he becomes ripe for salvation" (ibid.). This might be positioned against the negative implications of a skeptical attitude with regard to the practice presented by the play, as highlighted in the analysis; the anti-skepticist impetus also results from the 'extreme situation' that the drama enacts and which, at the time of the play's origin, corresponds to other historical-ideological constellations that no longer permit a 'harmonious' interplay between skepticism and faith, as it was still possible in the 16th century (e.g. in the case of Erasmus). With regard to the criticized standpoints it can be further remarked that the actions of the reformed Segismundo correspond de facto to the skeptical argument in the matter of moral philosophy; he is the prince of the kingdom of Poland (successfully recatholized by the Jesuits), in this respect, by becoming a 'good Christian,' he does no more than conform to the 'tradition of the fathers.' What is decisive, however, is that the reasons given for this are

skepticist discourse is drawn from the ideas of the Counter-Reformation. The skeptical argument of the unreliability of sensory perception is not epistemologically refuted; rather, the question of certainty is transferred to the 'true reality' of the hereafter, and thus rendered essentially irrelevant. This implies that any attempt to establish worldly foundations of certainty is potentially rejected. In light of the perspective of the Eternal, earthly doubt is dismissed as immaterial; instead it is one's actions on earth that are important because what counts – and this is the promise – is that by means of '*obrar bien*' man can 'earn' true life after death. It should be noted that the fact that the play promises to provide a solution to the questions raised by skepticism is what distinguishes it markedly from Shakespeare's drama. However, the subsequent constraints of this 'solution' and the conditions under which it becomes persuasive are discussed below, in the discussion of Calderón's *auto sacramental La vida es sueño*.<sup>360</sup>

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completely different from those in the skeptical tradition. Segismundo does not become a believer, because faith is the 'usual norm,' he becomes a believer because of insight that is suddenly granted to him, which he then understands as irrevocable truth, and above all – here again the differences become apparent – as a standard of an highly active action, which is already in clear contrast to the skeptical maxim of non-acting, of 'acquiescing to what is.' In accordance with Counter-Reformation theology, one can see in this transformation the work of the *gratia efficax*, by which the baptized person (in the state of *gratia sufficiens*) can be blessed as soon as he seriously sets out on the search for the truth (on the theology of time, see the still exemplary outline by Henry W. Sullivan, *Tirso de Molina and the Drama of the Counter-Reformation*, Amsterdam 1976, pp. 13–69, here pp. 28–34).

**360** It should be noted that Calderón has also dealt with skepticism elsewhere, namely, in the *comedia En esta vida todo es verdad y todo mentira* (comp. 1658–1659, publ. 1664), whose title already bears the structure of *isosthenia*. See already Bárbara Mujica, "The Skeptical Premises of Calderón's *En la vida es verdad y todo mentira*," in: Bárbara Mujica (ed.), *Texto y espectáculo: Selected Proceedings of the Symposium on Spanish Golden Age Theater, March 11, 12, 13, 1987, The University of Texas at El Paso*, Landham/New York/London 1989, pp. 117–126 and in more detail Joachim Küpper, "Calderón's *En la vida todo es verdad y todo mentira*: Anti-skeptizistische Hyperbolisierung des Zweifels als Propädeutik des Fideismus (mit Bemerkungen zu Corneilles *Héraclius*)," *Romanistisches Jahrbuch* 48 (1997), pp. 316–346, here pp. 316–338. Even if this drama cannot be discussed in more detail here, it should nevertheless, with regard to the discussion carried out in this study as a whole and on *La vida es sueño* in particular, be said that the staging of skeptical doubt and the (earthly) indistinguishability of seeming and being presented there is also linked to a 'play within the play' structure. In order to enable Focas to find out which of the two young men who had been discovered – Heraclio and Leonido – is his son and which is the son of Mauricio, his predecessor on the imperial throne, the magician Lisipo creates a magical scenario: In the course of one day he, Focas, shall be able to see all the things that would happen within the next year, whereby Heraclio and Leonido as well as Focas and Lisipo would be integrated into the magic spell ("LISIPO: [. . .] / ¿tendrás ánimo de ver, / en fantásticos objetos, / a la breve edad de un día / reducido hoy el entero / círculo de un año, en que / representados sucesos, / antes de verlos, te digan / todos los acaecimientos / que en el año vieras? / [. . .] / [. . .] dentro / del encanto



### 3.2 On Calderón's *auto sacramental La vida es sueño*

Calderón composed two other plays with the same title as the *comedia* discussed here. A first version of the *auto sacramental* called *La vida es sueño* is believed to have been written in 1636, at around the same time as the *comedia*, and a second version, provided with a *loa*, was written later, on the occasion of the Corpus Christi celebration in Madrid in 1673. The latter was first

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han de ser reales / personas. / [...] / Tú, yo y ellos” [Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *En la vida todo es verdad y todo mentira*, in: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Comedias*, ed. Santiago Fernández Mosquera and Luis Iglesias Feijoo, 6 vols., Madrid 2006–2010, vol. 3 (2007): *Tercera parte de comedias*, ed. Don William Cruickshank, pp. 17–144, here pp. 76 f.]. The setting is ‘a magnificent building built on wind’ (“verás una suntuosa / fábrica que, sobre el viento / fundada . . . [...]” [p. 78]); in this castle (‘in the air’) the two princes are subsequently ‘put to the test’ several times (see “FOCAS: Si hoy, fortuna, / el curso del año abrevio, y en él me dice un examen / lo que me calla un silencio, yo me vengaré de . . . [...]” [p. 78] and Lisipo before the last enacted scene: “[...] veré si consigo / la última experiencia [...]” [p. 111]); but even at the end of Lisipo’s magical fiction, at the end of the ‘play within the play,’ so to speak – the ‘magical scenes’ make up a not inconsiderable part of the second and third acts (pp. 89–119) – there is no clear result for Focas about the identity of the two tested (cf. pp. 120). Later, however, Lisipo tells him that Leonido was his son, whereupon Focas orders the killing of Heraclio (cf. p. 129). This is prevented by the arrival of the troops of Heraclio’s cousin, there is a battle (cf. pp. 133–138), Focas’ army is defeated, Heraclio kills the already injured Focas (cf. pp. 142 f.) and is proclaimed emperor (cf. pp. 142 f.). The doubt about the reality of what has happened to him – immediately after the end of the palace scene that Lisipo had ‘staged,’ Leonido and himself again found themselves dressed only in furs in the woods (cf. the discussion there about the problem of reality, pp. 121–124) – and the knowledge of the transience of earthly goods connected with it makes him at first hesitate (“HERACLIO: No sé / si me atreva. / [...] / Porque aun todavía dudé / si es mentira o si es verdad / todo cuanto llego a ver. / [...] / Como ya me vi / en majestad otra vez, / y otra vez en un instante / me volví a mi antigua piel” [p. 143]). Lisipo then reveals to him that the events in the palace had been an illusion produced by his art (“LISIPO: Ése fue engaño / que hizo aparente mi saber” [ibid.]). Heraclio, on condition that he abstains from practicing his magic in the future, refrains from punishing Lisipo, he also spares Leonido and promises to always treat him as a brother, and the latter in turn always wants to be his most loyal and devoted vassal; then the new ruler asks Cintia to become his wife, who agrees, and he concludes the play with the words: “[...] . . . Esperando / que será felice rey / el que entra con desengaños / de que no hay humano bien / que no parezca verdad / con duda de que lo es” (p. 144). The unquestionable truth (‘desengaño’) accordingly consists in the fact that in this earthly life (‘humano bien’) there is no unquestionable truth, no certainty about reality – *implicitely* this refers to the life in the beyond as the regnum of reality and to an omniscient God –, and this recognition offers hope for an (initially) earthly well-being (‘felice rey’). From the point of view of this drama, which is permeated by *isosthenia* orchestrations, and which problematizes the skeptical concept of *epoché*, one could formulate that radical skepticism, which cannot be overcome epistemologically and which is also not to be overcome epistemologically, can only be countered by believing in a God who governs everything and by acting according to (Christian) moral standards.

printed in 1677 in the *Primera parte de autos sacramentales*.<sup>361</sup> It is not the intention here to interpret these allegorical religious dramas as an allegorical explanation of the *comedia*. Rather, the dream-*auto* will be used to supplement and illustrate aspects of Calderón's dramatic confrontation with the problems posed by skepticism, as argued in the discussion above, though without any claim to be exhaustive.

"Dios por el hombre encarnó / y padeció por el hombre / y al hombre en manjar se dio. / ¿Qué maravilla alcanzó / de las tres mayor renombre?"<sup>362</sup> This motto, expressed in the "Coro de Música," marks the beginning of the *loa* (prelude) to Calderón's *auto sacramental* *La vida es sueño*. The allegorical figures of the five senses (La Vista, El Oído, El Olfato, El Gusto, El Tacto), armed with bow and arrow, then appear and repeat the question of which of the three miracles – Incarnation, Passion, or Transubstantiation during the Eucharist – carried out by God for the salvation of man, constituted the most glorious one. No clear answer is reached,<sup>363</sup> at least not until the end of the *loa* in the form of a gloss (*glosa*), and being a *loa sacramental* it is of course the miracle of Corpus Christi that is given priority.<sup>364</sup> A drumbeat sounds and gives the senses the 'signal to eat' ("OÍDO: La caja a comer tocó.").<sup>365</sup> They are joined by the figure of "Discurso," who appears as a young man ("*de galán*"), who asks them what this sign and their warlike appearance mean. Oído then explains that in order to educate their children to become good warriors and train them in archery from an early age, the Tartars' custom was to deposit food for the children on a tree, which they could only get by shooting it down for themselves with a bow and arrow. Following this example, they, the five senses, too, will be now trained in archery by the human body, whose nutrition they were responsible for.<sup>366</sup> As the drums start to sound again, a venerable old man appears on

**361** See Fernando Plata Parga, "Introducción," in: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño: Edición crítica de las dos versiones del auto y de la loa*, ed. Fernando Plata Parga, Kassel/Pamplona 2012, pp. 11–64, here pp. 25 ff., pp. 35–38, pp. 45 ff.

**362** Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Loa para el auto intitulado La vida es sueño*, in: Calderón, *La vida es sueño: Edición crítica de las dos versiones del auto y de la loa* (cf. note 361), pp. 83–101, p. 83, vv. 1–5.

**363** See vv. 11–28.

**364** Cf. vv. 321–375, esp. vv. 351–355, vv. 357–362, and vv. 371–375. (It should be mentioned that this gloss poem found its way into Johann Nikolaus Böhl von Faber's anthology of Spanish poetry [*Floresta de Rimas Antiguas Castellanas*, 3 vols., Hamburg 1821–1825, vol. 1 (1821), p. 34 (no. 54)]).

**365** Calderón, *Loa para el auto intitulado La vida es sueño* (cf. note 362), v. 29.

**366** Cf. vv. 65–97. The example of the educational methods of the Tartars is referred to as "letra" (v. 83), i.e. 'literal sense,' and the image of the senses as archers alimenating the body

stage, representing the body. He points to a mountain on which a cross rises with a host and chalice (stage direction: “[...] *ábrese un monte en que subirá, en elevación, una Cruz y, en su remate, Hostia y Cáliz.*”),<sup>367</sup> and he instructs the senses to shoot with their bow at this ‘tree’ and only those whose arrow hits the target, the “pan de ángeles,”<sup>368</sup> will be able to taste this ‘bread that makes one happy’ (“CUERPO: Feliz será el que le [el pan] coma ... / [...] / Llegad [los sentidos], pues, [...] os digo, / porque solo el que le acierte / le ha de gustar; [...]”).<sup>369</sup> Vision, “principal / sentido humano,”<sup>370</sup> is the first to step up to compete, saying: “sobre aquel árbol diviso / pan; y pues miro que es pan, / no puedo errar lo que miro.”<sup>371</sup> But his shot misses the target (“[*Dispara al aire la flecha.*] / DISCURSO: Que ve pan dijo. / MÚSICA Y TODOS: ¡Vaya, vaya, la Vista / que ha errado el tiro!”).<sup>372</sup> The sense of touch, smell, and taste also fail.<sup>373</sup>

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is categorized as the corresponding “glosa” (v. 84), as ‘explanation,’ ‘interpretation,’ and thus placed within the framework of an interpretation system that corresponds to one to which *loa* and *auto sacramental* as a whole are subject. It should be noted that the appearance of the human senses as allegorical figures in this *loa sacramental* with regard to the *auto sacramental* in general and to Calderón in particular is not unusual. They are, for instance, also part of the allegorical characters in Calderón’s last *auto*, *La divina Filotea* (1681) (with regard to the insufficiency of sensory perception in connection with the mystery of transubstantiation – which is still to be explained in the above discussion – cf. there esp. vv. 1449–1496 and vv. 1589–1702 [used edition: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *La divina Filotea*, ed. Luis Galván, Kassel/Pamplona 2006]). The allegory of the five senses of man as archers is already contained in the form of a prologue in the *loa* to the *auto sacramental* *Las bodas entre el Alma y el Amor divino* (1599, publ. 1604) by Lope de Vega. Plata Parga (“Introducción” [cf. note 361], p. 56) refers to this following Georges Cirot (“L’allégorie des tireurs à l’arc,” *Bulletin Hispanique* 44 [1942], pp. 171–174).

**367** Calderón, *Loa para el auto intitulado* *La vida es sueño* (cf. note 362), p. 88; “CUERPO: En la cumbre de aquel monte / en forma de pira, un risco / un árbol eleva, en cuya / copa está la del racimo / de Caleb, prensando el mosto / con el blanco, terso y limpio / pan de ángeles, de quien / el real profeta predijo / que el hombre le comería” (vv. 117–125).

**368** V. 123.

**369** Vv. 135–140.

**370** Vv. 157 f.

**371** Vv. 172 ff.

**372** Vv. 175 ff.

**373** “TACTO: [...] aunque dista por agora / de mí el blanco pan, afirmo / que, cuando le toco, es pan[,] / [...] / [*Dispara la flecha.*] / DISCURSO: Tocar pan dijo. / MÚSICA Y TODOS: ¡Vaya, vaya el Tacto, / que ha errado el tiro!” (vv. 182–190); “OLFATO: [...] / de aquel pan en que pan huelo / el triunfo a lograr aspiro. / [*Dispara*] / DISCURSO: Oler pan dijo. / MÚSICA Y TODOS: ¡Vaya, vaya el Olfato, / que ha errado el tiro!” (vv. 207–211); “GUSTO: [...] / ¿cómo me puedo engañar / no acertando, cuando digo / que es pan el que como pan / me da el sabor que percibo? / [*Dispara.*] / DISCURSO: Gustar pan dijo. / MÚSICA Y TODOS: ¡Vaya, vaya el Gusto, / que ha errado el tiro!” (vv. 216–222).

This questioning of the validity of these four levels of sensual perception, vividly illustrated here in the image of archers failing to meet their target, is situated within an explicitly theological context and touches on an aspect that is still, to this day, of central confessional significance. The *autos sacramentales* were performed as part of the celebrations of the Eucharist and the mystery of transubstantiation. The doctrine of transubstantiation, reaffirmed by the Council of Trent, holds that the substances of bread and wine in the Mass actually contain the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, into which they are transformed. A tenet of the Catholic Church that was fiercely contested by Protestantism,<sup>374</sup> the doctrine of transubstantiation is based on the idea that even though the senses are unable to distinguish between consecrated host and non-consecrated bread and wine, the essence of the former is entirely different from the latter, and thus is the secret to the power of the Eucharist to bring about the salvation of the soul.<sup>375</sup>

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**374** See the 'Decree on the Sacrament of the Eucharist' issued by the Council of Trent at its 13th session (1551). Concilium Tridentinum, *Canones et Decreta/Canons and Decrees (1545–1563)*, trans. Peter McIlhenny, sessions 1–16, John Coventry, sessions 17–25, in: Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols., Washington, DC 1990, vol. 2, pp. 657–799: Sessio XIII, 11. Oct. 1551 "Decretum de sanctissimo eucharistiae sacramento," pp. 693–702, esp. Caput I "De reali praesentia domini nostri Iesu Christi, in sanctissimo eucharistiae sacramento," pp. 693 f., Cap. IV "De transubstantiatione," p. 695 ("[...] per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiae panis in substantiam corporis Christi domini nostri et totius substantiae vini in substantiam sanguinis eius. [...]") as well as Canones, 1, 2, 4, and 8, pp. 699 ff./Session 13, 11 October 1551 'Decree on the most holy sacrament of the eucharist,' pp. 693–702, esp. chap. 1 'On the real presence of our lord Jesus Christ in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist,' pp. 693 f., chap. 4 'On transubstantiation,' p. 695 ('[...] by the consecration of the bread and wine, there takes place the change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood [...]'), as well as Canons 1, 2, 4, and 8, pp. 699 ff.

**375** On the unreliability of sensory perception in connection with the sacrament of the Eucharist, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III<sup>a</sup> q. 75 a. 5, esp. co., ad. 2 and ad. 3 (Aquinas, *Summa* [English] [cf. note 347], vol. 5, pp. 2444 f.; Aquinas, *Summa* [Latin] [cf. note 347], vol. 30 [1938], pp. 69–72); see also *Catechismus Romanus* II, cap. 4, sect. 25 ("This Sublime Mystery is not to be judged of by the Senses. [...] [The] pastors [shall], first of all, teach them [the faithful] that the mind and understanding must, as much as possible, be withdrawn from the dominion of the senses; for, were the faithful to persuade themselves, that in this sacrament is contained nothing but what they perceive by the senses, they must be led into the greatest impiety, when, discerning by the sight, the touch, the smell, the taste, nothing else but the appearance of bread and wine, they would come to the conclusion that in the sacrament there is only bread and wine. Care must, therefore, be taken, that the minds of the faithful be withdrawn, as much as possible, from the judgment of the senses, and excited to the contemplation of the boundless virtue and power of God" [*Catechism of the Council of*

When it is Oído's turn to draw the bow, he, and this is crucial, invokes Faith:

La Fe que allí hay cuerpo y alma  
y carne y sangre me ha dicho;  
y pues sentido de Fe  
es solamente el Oído,  
crea el Oído a la Fe  
y no a los demás sentidos.  
Que si la Vista, el Olfato,  
el Tacto y el Gusto han visto,  
tocado, olido y gustado  
pan, es porque no han creído  
que solos los accidentes  
duran en aquel divino  
milagro de los milagros,  
prodigio de los prodigios,  
no la substancia de pan,  
pues con poder infinito  
transubstanció la substancia  
del pan en carne y del vino  
en sangre. [...] <sup>376</sup>

Hearing belongs to faith ('sentido de Fe / es solamente el Oído')<sup>377</sup> and thus, in contrast to the other senses, is able to 'understand' the miracle of the Eucharist and to 'believe' that Christ is wholly present in the bread, the host (and the wine) ('que allí hay cuerpo y alma / y carne y sangre'). The explanation of the mystery ('aquel divino / milagro de los milagros') articulated by Oído also stresses the insufficiency of sensory perception. The judgment of the four other senses cannot be trusted here ('crea el Oído a la Fe / y no a los demás sentidos'), because what they convey – namely, the visual appearance, the tactile traits, the smell and the taste of bread ('han visto, / tocado, olido y gustado / pan') – only refers to the accidents ('solos los accidentes / duran'),<sup>378</sup> not the substance of the bread, the 'transubstantiation' ('con poder infinito /

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*Trent*, trans. Rev. Jeremiah Donovan, Dublin 1867, p. 200]; for the Latin, see *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad parochos Pii V. Pont. Max. iussu editus*, Parma 1600 (1st ed. Rome 1566), p. 279]).

<sup>376</sup> Calderón, *Loa para el auto intitulado La vida es sueño* (cf. note 362), vv. 223–241.

<sup>377</sup> See *Rom* 10,17 ("Ergo fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi"/'So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ').

<sup>378</sup> See above note 365.

transubstanció la substancia / del pan en carne') – without the help of faith – is beyond their ability to grasp.<sup>379</sup> Then the allegory of Oído continues with an aspect that is decisive for the miracle of transubstantiation, first referring to the institution of the sacrament by Christ at the Last Supper (“[. . .] ¿Quién es la misma / verdad que imperiosa dijo: / ‘Este es mi cuerpo y mi sangre’ / con alma y vida?”<sup>380</sup>) and then relating to the consecration: “[. . .] y pues rindo / mi afecto a cinco palabras, / en fe dellas solicito / el tiro acertar y así, / cerrados los ojos, digo / que, transubstanciado el pan / de aquellas palabras cinco, / no es pan, carne y sangre sí; / con que veréis que el Oído / deja, a pesar de los cuatro, / su entendimiento cautivo.”<sup>381</sup> Believing in ‘five words,’ meaning the formula of the consecration *Hoc est enim corpus meum* [For this is my body], which the priest speaks as Christ’s representative in the Eucharistic ceremony when the bread is being transubstantiated,<sup>382</sup> he now, even with his eyes closed, was able to hit the target with his arrow (‘cinco palabras, / en fe dellas solicito / el tiro acertar y así, / cerrados los ojos, digo’). The bread, transubstantiated by the words of consecration, was now ‘flesh and blood’ (‘no es pan, carne y sangre sí’). Oído shoots his arrow and ‘hits,’ thus receives the host and chalice.<sup>383</sup> Hearing wins the archery competition; it is the sense by which the human being who has faith can have the mystery of transubstantiation revealed to him, enabling him to hit the miracle of the Eucharist in its meaning (the real presence of Christ, with body and soul, under the shapes of bread and wine). Only the (right) faith is relevant (“[. . .] viva el Oído, / pues creyendo lo que

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**379** See on this subject the Corpus Christi hymn attributed to Thomas Aquinas *Adoro te devote, latens Deitas*, in which it says: “Visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur. / Sed auditu solo tuto creditur” [Seeing, feeling, tasting are deceptive in you, but hearing alone gives firm faith]. (The indication to this reference point in Plata Parga, “Introducción” [cf. note 361], p. 57 and already in Cirot, “L’allégorie des tireurs à l’arc” [cf. note 366], p. 174).

**380** Calderón, *Loa para el auto intitulado* *La vida es sueño* (cf. note 362), vv. 241–244.

**381** Vv. 244–254.

**382** At the sanctification of the wine follows accordingly: *Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei, novi et æterni testamenti* [For this is the chalice of my blood, of the new and eternal testament]; reference point is the tradition, e.g., in 1 Cor 11,23–26; Mt 26,26–28; Lk 22,19 f.; Mk 14,22–24.

**383** Stage direction: “*Dispara y a este tiempo descende la Cruz hasta donde pueda llegar el Discurso y, quitando della Hostia y Cáliz, le pone en manos del Oído.*” and: “DISCURSO: Que es carne y sangre dijo. / MÚSICA Y TODOS: ¡Viva, viva, pues solo / no ha errado el tiro! / ¡Viva, viva el Oído, / pues creyendo lo que oye, / merece el Víctor!” (Calderón, *Loa para el auto intitulado* *La vida es sueño* [cf. note 362], vv. 255–260. Oído’s ‘prize,’ the Eucharistic gift, is then distributed and celebrated among all the characters (“OÍDO: Para partírlle con todos / solamente le recibo, / pues aunque la fe del cielo / le bajó al efecto mío, / para todos es la dicha. / TODOS: ¡Pues todos con regocijos / la celebremos!” vv. 273–279).

oye, / merece el Víctor!"<sup>384</sup>) – Oído relies on it – whereas reason, which receives its information through the senses, is not able to comprehend on its own the dogma of transubstantiation (cf. ‘con que veréis que el Oído / deja, a pesar de los cuatro [sentidos], / su entendimiento cautivo.’ and ‘cerrados los ojos’). In its function as a kind of ‘explanatory prologue’ to the subsequent *auto sacramental* this allegorically depicted critique of the senses as unreliable in the *loa* (in the context of the doctrine of Eucharistic transubstantiation in accordance with the genre and committed to Counter-Reformation ideology) and the associated emphasis on the relevance of faith, can be seen as an indication of the tenor of what is then elaborated on in the *auto sacramental*. First of all, it is worth drawing attention to the focus on the specifically Christian reservations about sensory perception contained in the ‘Paradise scene’ of the play. Although it is not within the scope of this chapter to give a detailed description of the entire plot of the *auto* *La vida es sueño*, a concise review of its content is necessary for a better understanding of the passage in question and subsequent references. Furthermore, please note that the discussion is referring here only to the later *auto* (comp. 1673; publ. 1677).<sup>385</sup>

The play's action is typical of the *auto sacramental* genre, and follows a basic symbolic structure of Creation, Fall, and Redemption. It begins with the representation of Chaos or Nothingness.<sup>386</sup> The Four Elements: Agua, Aire, Tierra, and Fuego, fight against each other until God in His Trinity, represented by Poder, a “viejo venerable,” Sabiduría, and Amor (both presented as “galanes”) appear. This marks the beginning of Creation. Nature is created, order and meaning are assigned to the elements, who subject themselves to and praise God. They explain to their ruler that their dispute for supremacy was also

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**384** Vv. 258 ff.

**385** Apart from the length (the first version counts 1404 verses, the second version 1943 verses), there is a difference between the earlier and the later *auto*, e.g. in the extension of the allegorical characters: the figure of El Verbo (representing God) in the first version, becomes in the second play – referring to the Trinity – three personifications of divine qualities, the figures ‘Power’ (El Poder) – God Father, ‘Love’ (El Amor) – Jesus Christ, and ‘Wisdom’ (La Sabiduría) – Holy Spirit. The diabolic counterpart La Sombra (Shadow) is extended by Satan (El Príncipe de las Tinieblas) or the allegorical figure of sin (El Pecado). Plata Parga, “Introducción” (cf. note 361), pp. 11–24, gives a brief overview regarding the interpretation and relation of the two *autos* to each other and to the *comedia*.

**386** “FUEGO: Un globo y masa confusa, / que poéticos estilos / llamarán ‘caos’ y ‘nada’ / los profetas / compusimos los cuatro; [...]” (vv. 29–33; references are to the edition: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Auto sacramental intitulado La vida es sueño [segunda versión; 1673]*, in: Calderón, *La vida es sueño: Edición crítica de las dos versiones del auto y de la loa* [cf. note 361], pp. 105–199).



because God, or rather Poder, had no heir or favorite (“[. . .] no teniendo heredero / tú que pueda preferirnos”<sup>387</sup>), no ‘viceroy’ (“virrey”<sup>388</sup>) for the earth, the ‘Colony of Heaven’ (“reino aparte de tu imperio / y colonia de tu Imperio”<sup>389</sup>), who could ensure the preservation of peace and justice. They ask him to appoint one to whom they could be subjects in his name (“a quien en tu nombre demos / la obediencia [. . .]”<sup>390</sup>). Poder then turns to his ‘royal court’<sup>391</sup> and reveals the following ‘secret’<sup>392</sup> – it is first the account of Lucifer’s rebellion of angels against God. When he had informed his ministers of his decision to marry ‘Human Nature’ and to designate their son as heir to the throne,<sup>393</sup> one of his vassals, “el más sabio, hermoso y lindo,”<sup>394</sup> instigated a rebellion against him. Sabiduría answers the subsequent question, “si en la segunda criatura, / sujeto hermoso que elijo / para mi heredero, había / de sucederme lo mismo.”<sup>395</sup> The ‘second creature’ chosen as potential heir is Man, but also he, as she had foreseen by virtue of her omniscience, will turn out to be ungrateful like “el ángel,” thus plunging the whole human race into misfortune (meaning the Fall of Man), so that in the end she herself will be forced to take on human form to repair the damage (redemption).<sup>396</sup> Amor states that since the world was created for Man, he too has to be created, and adds an aspect that is relevant for the course and

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387 Vv. 238 f.

388 V. 244.

389 Vv. 230 f.

390 Vv. 246 f.

391 “PODER: Gran corte del universo, / leales vasallos míos[.]” (vv. 258 f.) It should be noted that there is an obvious parallel to the *comedia*: King Basilio’s speech before the Polish court, in which he reports on the existence of his son Segismundo and on his intention to let him have a trial rule (see there vv. 602–843).

392 “quiero un secreto deciros / que hasta ahora de mi mente / para ninguno ha salido” (vv. 263 ff.).

393 “cercado de los ministros / que más hermosos, más puros / crié para mi servicio, / les revelé cómo había / [. . .] / para mi esposa elegido, / y reina suya, a la humana / naturaleza, cuyo hijo / heredero por la gracia / sería del imperio mío” (vv. 277–287).

394 V. 289.

395 Vv. 318–321.

396 The definition of divine omniscience: “SABIDURÍA: Yo, que sé todas las ciencias[.] / [. . .] / yo, para quien el presente / tiempo solamente es fijo, / pues, si miro hacia el pasado / y si hacia el futuro miro, / es tiempo presente todo / futuro o pasado siglo;” (vv. 324–337); the fall of man and the consequences for humanity: “[. . .] no menos / ingrato y desconocido / te será el hombre que el ángel, / poniendo en tan gran conflicto / a todo el género humano / que a sombra de su delito, / sea el ámbito del orbe / tan heredad del abismo, / que nazcan de sus raíces / el pasmo, el susto, el peligro, / el adulterio, el rencor, / el hurto y el homicidio” (vv. 350–361); the possibility of salvation through Christ: “Pero, ¿qué mucho, si, habiendo / una vez introducido / la palidez de la muerte / sus últimos parasismos, / será tan universal / el



theological message of the play: man is to be endowed with the soul's faculties *intellectus* and *voluntas*. Understanding would make man capable of distinguishing between good and evil, and free will would enable him to choose between bad or good (“[...] le has de dar / [...] / [...] tres potencias [...] / y [...] uno razón y juicio, / [...] que el Entendimiento, / con el racional distinto, / le advierta del bien y el mal, / dándole un libre albedrío / con que use del mal o el bien”<sup>397</sup>). Man is to be endowed with the knowledge that it is up to him alone to earn participation in God's kingdom or squander it. Finally, the actual creation of Man is decided. Poder informs his subjects: “a sacar me determino / de la prisión del no ser, / a ser, este oculto hijo / que, ya de mi mente ideado / y de la tierra nacido / ha de ser príncipe vuestro.”<sup>398</sup> However, this reign is ‘on probation’ only (“[...] por dejar abierto / a la experiencia un resquicio”<sup>399</sup>). Without knowing who he is, Man will be taken (from his prison of ‘non-existence’) to a ‘splendid palace,’ ‘paradise’ (“a un hermoso alcázar rico, / que [...] / será verde paraíso”<sup>400</sup>), and, furthermore, the figure of Gracia, ‘divine grace’ is to be given to him for a wife (“le dará el raro prodigio / de la Gracia por esposa”<sup>401</sup>). If he acted properly, i.e. “[...] benigno, / atento, prudente y cuerdo,”<sup>402</sup> they were to be subservient to him forever, but if his actions were characterized by arrogance and disobedience, he will be denied rule and expelled, for (endowed with reason and free will) the result of this ‘trial’ was in the hands of man himself (“puesta su suerte en sus manos / el logro o el desperdicio / o por sí le habrá ganado, / o por sí le habrá perdido”<sup>403</sup>). Agua, Tierra, Aire, and Fuego agree to everything, Poder decides to carry out the creation (“[...] al hombre hagamos”<sup>404</sup>) and sends the Elements to the palace in order to ceremoniously welcome *el hombre*. In the subsequent scene, the opponent characters enter the action: La Sombra (the shadow, darkness) – a symbol of guilt, as opposed to

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morir? Pues si yo mismo / en tu nombre, para enmienda / de sus errores, admito / humano ser [...]” (vv. 362–369).

**397** Vv. 392–400.

**398** Vv. 427–431. It should be noted that the ‘figurative nature,’ the allegorical dimension of the action is made explicit beforehand in the text itself: “SABIDURÍA: [...] he previsto / que, si del lóbrego seno / de la tierra, el duro silo / de sus entrañas, el ciego / vientre de su obscuro limbo, / donde sin ser alma y vida, / discurso, elección, ni aviso, / *en metáfora de cárcel* / hasta ahora le has tenido, / le sacas a luz [...]” (vv. 341–350; my italics).

**399** Vv. 433 f.

**400** Vv. 437 ff.

**401** Vv. 443 f.

**402** Vv. 445 f.

**403** Vv. 454–457.

**404** V. 472.

light as symbol of grace<sup>405</sup> – and Lucifer, El Príncipe de las Tinieblas, lament the creation of Man, his God-ordered liberation from the prison of darkness into the light of freedom, and his intended role as ruler.

On a rock, the representative of humankind, El Hombre, covered in furs, appears accompanied by the figure of grace, La Gracia, who is carrying a light. His first words after ‘awakening’ are to question his existence, questions repeated again and again afterwards; the only thing he knew was that he did not know what he was, had been, or would be.<sup>406</sup> Gracia answers: “Sigue esta Luz y sabrás / della lo que fuiste y eres; / mas della saber no esperes / lo que adelante serás, / que eso tú solo podrás / hacer que sea malo o bueno.”<sup>407</sup> If Man follows the Light, accepting divine grace, he will know who he is, what he makes of this ‘offer’ is, however, up to him. Whether his future self turns to the good or to the bad, he will help shape by his actions. El Hombre clumsily follows the light and laments his lack of freedom<sup>408</sup> and knowledge (“[. . .] hasta ahora no sé / quién soy, quien seré, quién fui, / ni más de que ví y oí, / vuelva a sepultarme dentro / ese risco, en cuyo centro / se duela mi autor de mí”<sup>409</sup>). An essential element for man’s possibility of understanding and forming awareness is the ‘enlightenment’ brought about by divine grace. The light of grace (Gracia/Luz) explains to man, El Hombre: “[. . .] aunque [tu autor] te ha dejado / a manera de dormido, / tus sentidos sin sentido, / de mirarte a ti admirado, / desa suerte transformado / irás tras mi Luz al real / palacio, / donde leal aplauso todos te den. / [. . .] / Y pues en ventura igual / la Gracia te lleva a que sepas del bien, / no apagues su Luz y sepas del mal.”<sup>410</sup> Sombra and Príncipe de las Tinieblas forge a plan to thwart God’s plan and deprive his chosen ‘príncipe’ of power. What is being set up – on the level of the underlying *histoire* – is the seduction of Adam and Eve and the fall of humanity into sin, brought about by their transgression of the only commandment imposed on them by God in Paradise – not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good

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**405** “SOMBRA: símbolo a la Luz harán / de gracia, de culpa a mi. / [. . .] / [. . .] la Luz, por mi desgracia, / será imagen de la gracia / y la Sombra, de la culpa” (vv. 578–585).

**406** “¿Qué acento, qué resplandor / vi, si es esto ver; oí, / si es oír esto; que, hasta aquí, / del no ser pasando al ser, / no sé más que no saber / qué soy, qué seré o qué fui?” (vv. 646–651).

**407** Vv. 652–657.

**408** See vv. 662–711 (Compared to the sun [element fire] he had “más alma” and yet “menos libertad,” to the bird [element air] “más vida,” to the bull [element earth] “más instinto” and to the fish [element water] “más aliento” and yet “menos libertad”). (To this passage, cf. Segismundo’s first lamenting monologue, *La vida es sueño*, vv. 102–172).

**409** Vv. 706–711. “Sí hará” (v. 712) is Gracia’s reply.

**410** Vv. 712–723.

and Evil. The consequence of breaking this prohibition is death, the mortality of man.<sup>411</sup> “[...] [H]ay precepto que romper,”<sup>412</sup> Sombra points out and continues, “La sombra, ¿imagen no es / de la culpa? / [...] / La culpa, si introducida / se ve, ¿que será, no advierte, / otra imagen de la muerte? / [...] Mientras la vida durare, ¿también el sueño / de la muerte no será / otra imagen? [...]”<sup>413</sup> Darkness – as the antagonist of the divine light of grace – represents guilt, sin. From a Christian perspective, sin is the ‘image of death,’ because the consequence of the first sin, man’s pride in disobeying God’s law, is physical death. The mortality of man refers to his ‘inherited’ sinfulness. Sleep, too, is an ‘image of death.’<sup>414</sup> Sombra’s and Príncipe’s plan, based on these premises, now consists in giving El Hombre a ‘poison’ that will put him to sleep, a state in which he will, being ‘out of his senses’ (i.e. here ‘disregarding reason’), violate the divine order, and fall humiliated, destroyed, and ruined into a dreadful sleep (this refers to the troubles and suffering of earthly life), so that he, incapable of succeeding to power, will awake from his true royal state (which he had been given in paradise).<sup>415</sup> After having also established the seductive serpent as a figure of the devil – “SOMBRA: [...] ‘áspid’ me han de llamar / y a ti [Príncipe de las Tinieblas] ‘basilisco’ [...]”<sup>416</sup> – the two Satanic representatives go to the Garden of Eden to execute their plan.

The next scene shows the arrival of El Hombre, guided by Gracia, in the palace. He is received by the Elements with music and dance, dressed for the occasion, and accepted as their new ruler. Luz/Gracia repeats the ‘rules’ of the test (“servidle, hasta ver si, atento, / para rey y espoco mío, / usa bien de su Albedrío / o mal de su Entendimiento”<sup>417</sup>). Also present are Entendimiento and Albedrío, the allegories for the two faculties of the soul, understanding and will. Surprised and unsettled, El Hombre notes the radical change of his environment and his condition – a moment ago in the sad prison in the dark inner world of the earth, now revered ruler in a magnificent palace, endowed with senses and (soul)

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411 Cf. *Gen* 2,16 f.

412 Calderón, *Auto sacramental intitulado La vida es sueño* (cf. note. 386), v. 764.

413 Vv. 767–775.

414 Regarding this, see above chap. 2, pp. 90 ff.

415 “SOMBRA: Luego, posible es mi empeño, / si al hombre en su paz le asombra / sueño que de muerte es / imagen, muerte, después, / que es culpa y culpa que es sombra. / Conficionemos, pues, lleno / de opio, beleño y cicuta, / en flor, en planta o en fruta, / tal hechizo o tal veneno, / que de sentidos ajeno / rompa el precepto y, postrado, / deshecho y aniquilado, / duerma letargo tan fiero, / que inhábil para heredero / despierte del real estado” (vv. 776–790).

416 Vv. 796 f.

417 Vv. 822–825.

faculties<sup>418</sup> – and again questions his existence (“¿Otra vez vuelva a dudar, / y otras mil, quién soy, quién fui / o quién seré?”<sup>419</sup>). To this reason and free will, visually at his command as Entendimiento and Albedrío,<sup>420</sup> each respond differently, referring to the respective roles that they will take later in the course of events as advisors to man. Entendimiento’s answer speaks of humility: “polvo fuiste, polvo eres, / y polvo después serás,”<sup>421</sup> while Albedrío flatters him by emphasizing his excellence and encouraging him to enjoy it: “[. . .] y eres / la más perfecta criatura / [. . .] / y pues a todas prefieres, / [. . .] en ser príncipe heredero / del rey, que hoy te declaró, / ¡goza la felicidad, / sin que te entristezca nada!”<sup>422</sup> When Sombra and the devil, now called “Pecado” (‘sin’) – accompanied by the warning verses of the music choir – enter the scene disguised as gardeners, they view Entendimiento as a potential obstacle to the execution of their plan, but also refer to the possibility that Albedrío could persuade man to act differently than what reason would advise him. When El Hombre asks whether he was the rightful heir of this kingdom, Entendimiento points out that this is only when he has the good fortune to have Gracia as his wife at his side, thus receiving the confirmation of divine grace, and he warns about the danger threatening this good fortune: “[. . .] se ocultan / basilisco y áspid donde / puede ser que alguna fruta / avienada . . . [. . .].”<sup>423</sup> If he was a king’s son, El Hombre asks, how could his cradle have been a grave? Entendimiento (Albedrío, on the other hand, declares that he is not responsible for these kinds of questions) also answers this question: The righteous judgements of his father, the king, had not yet been revealed to him, saying that the fact that the inner world of the earth had been his prison showed him that if he did not obey the law, his cradle and grave would be made of the same

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**418** “Cielos, ¿qué es esto que veo? / ¿qué es esto, cielos, que miro, / que, si lo dudo, me admiro / y me admiro, si lo creo? / ¿Yo, de galas adornado, / de músicas aplaudido, / de sentidos guarnecido, / de potencias ilustrado? / ¿En este instante no era / del centro la masa dura / mi triste prisión obscura? / Pues, ¿quién me trujo a una esfera / tan rica, tan sumptuosa / y tan florida, que en ella / la más reluciente estrella / aun no se atreve a ser rosa?” (vv. 835–850) (cf. Segismundo’s monologue, as he awakens in the palace, *La vida es sueño* [comedia], vv. 1224–1247).

**419** Vv. 851 ff.

**420** “HOMBRE: Saber de los dos intento, / quién sois en servicio mío. / ALBEDRÍO: Yo soy tu libre albedrío. / HOMBRE: ¿Y tú, quién? ENTENDIMIENTO: Tu entendimiento” (vv. 875–878).

**421** Vv. 855 f.

**422** Vv. 862–872.

**423** Vv. 934–937; earlier: “[. . .] no lo eres, / hasta lograr la ventura / de que, confirmado en Gracia, / ella sea esposa tuya” (vv. 929–932).

material.<sup>424</sup> (As before, the statement at this point includes El Hombre both as a protagonist of the 'Fall of Man' narrative and as a representative of all 'historical' human beings who have to bear the consequences of these actions.) Hombre, however, is already clearly turning away from Entendimiento – “no me hables más, que me afliges”<sup>425</sup> – and towards Albedrío, who is wooing him with flattery.<sup>426</sup> At his behest, the Elements offer man various (symbolic)<sup>427</sup> gifts: Agua hands a mirror, Fuego a sword, Aire a magnificent hat, and Tierra flowers. Sombra keeps trying to place the deadly poison, but fails, because despite the diabolical nature of the gifts each also references the Divine and its power for redemption, which cause the devil to shy away. In this way, the mirror, as a symbol of *superbia/vanitas*, offers a favorable opportunity, because “[. . .] basilisco me anuncian / que es veneno de la vista,”<sup>428</sup> as Pecado notes, but, full of terror, Sombra also sees in it the figure of St. Mary Immaculate (“un rasgo, viso o figura / de un espejo no manchado, / cuya siempre intacta luna / no ha de empañar el aliento / de la Sombra de la culpa”<sup>429</sup>). In the meantime, El Hombre is gazing in astonishment and admiration at his image in the mirror: “[. . .] la más perfecta / criatura soy. [. . .].”<sup>430</sup> Although Entendimiento agrees, the Creator after all had created him ‘according to his likeness’ (“te hizo a semejanza suya” [*ad imaginem et similitudinem*]), he also rebukes him for his vain arrogance. Perfection had been given to him by God, so he could not rightly

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424 “Los justos juicios del rey, / tu padre, por causas justas / hasta hoy no te declararon; / y ser las entrañas duras / de la tierra tu prisión / fue porque en alta fortuna / tengas entendido . . . [. . .] / Que si a la ley no te ajustas, / quedó en la cuna labrada / la materia de la tumba” (vv. 949–958). The equation of ‘cuna’ and ‘sepultura,’ of cradle and grave, birth and death, is based on the concept developed many times in this era (under the Christian premise of this world and the hereafter) that birth marks the beginning of the earthly, limited life and thus refers also to death; earthly death, however, is at the same time the cradle of the new, ‘real’ life. (See e.g. Francisco de Quevedo’s treatise *La cuna y la sepultura* [1634]).

425 Vv. 961.

426 “Y dime tú, que me adulas, / ¿sobre príncipe heredero, / es verdad que la criatura / más perfecta soy del orbe?” (vv. 962–965).

427 For this aspect and the references made above, cf. the respective notes in the commentary of the editor of the edition used here as well as the discussion of the passage in his “Introducción” (cf. note 361), p. 15 f.

428 Vv. 969 f.

429 Vv. 974–978. The same applies to the remaining symbols; for example, although the sword, as the “áspid de acero” (v. 1011), is a sign of sin, of the devil, it also has the form of a cross, a sign of salvation and a Christian symbol *par excellence*, which makes Sombra fearfully shrink back from the execution of the evil deed.

430 Vv. 997 f.

boast over something that was not his (“pero, si dél recibiste / la perfección que te ilustra, / ¿de qué te glorias, supuesto / que la gozas sin ser tuya?”).<sup>431</sup> When El Hombre is given the sword, Entendimiento explains to him that the four cardinal virtues appear in it, so if he used the sword in the wrong way, he would harm himself, but if he used it correctly (i.e. if he used *iustitia*, *fortitudo*, *temperantia* and *prudencia* as the basis of his actions), he would defeat his enemies. El Hombre also reacts to this advice with ignorance and arrogance (*superbia*), it would be hard to find a creature that would even remotely be able to oppose him.<sup>432</sup>

The fact that El Hombre seems annoyed by the advice and warnings given of Entendimiento, that he prefers to turn to indulgence and let himself be guided by Albedrío, continues in the next scene<sup>433</sup> and prepares us for the momentous escalation. When it is Tierra's turn to pay homage to the new ruler and delight him with the scent of flower blossoms,<sup>434</sup> Pecado hands over the main prop of the Fall of Man drama to his ally Sombra: “PECADO: [D]este prodigioso árbol, / que a su sombra nos oculta, / toma esta manzana; en ella / nuestras iras ejecuta / y, [. . .] / pon el veneno en la fruta.”<sup>435</sup> When she appears before El Hombre, he is immediately captivated by her beauty (“¿Quién eres, bella zagala, / que sobre la Tierra triunfas, / [. . .] / [. . .] nueva aurora segunda[,] / [. . . .]?”<sup>436</sup>) and by what she says, namely that she is able to recognize the ‘hidden qualities’ of things and to ‘read’ nature,<sup>437</sup> so that he utters with fascination: “¡Qué raro bello prodigio! / Albedrío, ¿viste nunca / hermosura más discreta?”<sup>438</sup> Albedrío then declares that while he himself knows nothing about beauty, what mattered to him was that El Hombre took joy

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431 Vv. 998–1004.

432 Vv. 1025–1039.

433 Aire brings a hat decorated with feathers. When Entendimiento warns against ‘vanity,’ the reaction is as follows: “HOMBRE: Este sabio Entendimiento / mucho mi paciencia apura. / ALBEDRÍO: Pues para que te diviertas, / sin que si vejez te pudra, Tierra, llega, llega, y goce / en tis flores la blandura / de sus aromas. [. . .]” (vv. 1067–1073).

434 As signs of *vanitas* the flowers could indeed function as carriers of poison, but since they are also symbols of Mary (here: white lily, rose, iris), the devil again refrains from it (cf. vv. 1073–1084).

435 Vv. 1085–1090.

436 Vv. 1105–1114.

437 “Soy no tan solo en la tierra / agricultora que estudia / esmerar sus obras, pero / tan sabia, que en ella apura, / y en los demás elementos, / la[s] cualidades ocultas. / Caracteres para mí / en valles, montes y grutas, / son sus plantas; las estrellas, / en su campaña cerúlea, / mis oráculos de fuego / son; del agua las espumas / mis libros; y porque lea / lo que sus velos anoncian, / siendo para mí del año / cualquiera estación fecunda, / los pájaros en el viento / forman abriles de plumas” (vv. 1115–1132).

438 Vv. 1133 ff.

in it. Entendimiento warns him of the fatal deception of his senses, saying that in the garden there is a serpent in human form, whose beauty cunningly concealed her true being: “Advierte, señor, que anda / con humano rostro una / serpiente en estos jardines, / tan incautamente astuta, / que Agua, Fuego, Tierra y Aire, / siendo negra noche obscura, / de su belleza engañados, / por aurora la saludan.” He further says that El Hombre should be on his guard against her, and the seductive nature of sin, because his downfall could be in letting himself be led by her appearance and her words: “Teme, pues, que puede ser, / si la miras, si la escuchas, / tu culpa escucharla y verla.”<sup>439</sup> Hombre, however, rejects this advice and the ‘accusation’ directed against his senses; this beauty he sees could not possibly be connected with guilt (“¿Qué importará, si, en disculpa / de esa culpa, mis sentidos, / por más que tú los acusas, / en viendo sus bellos ojos, / quedan vanos de su culpa?”<sup>440</sup>). When Sombra then gives him the ‘golden apple’ (“esta dorada poma”) with the promise that the ‘tasting’ of this fruit (“si una vez su sabor gustas”) would make him omniscient and immortal, give him eternal fame and power, avenge his imprisonment in the dark interior of the earth and make him equal to the king (his creator, who had forced this law upon him),<sup>441</sup> El Hombre is immediately inclined to follow the call of his senses (“Mucho me ofreces y mucho / de la poma la dulzura / brindando está al apetito.”<sup>442</sup>). Albedrío encourages him to eat from the tempting fruit (“[. . .] ¿qué esperas? [. . .] / llega y come della. . .”<sup>443</sup>), while Entendimiento vehemently tries to stop him by talking about the potential dream status of his happiness and the awakening from it that turns everything into nothing (“Mira / que quizá en el aire fundas / altas torres y que suelen / ser soñadas las venturas; / y podrá ser, si despiertas, / que entre fantasmas confusas / todo esto vuelva a la nada.”<sup>444</sup>). Thereupon Hombre insults Entendimiento and threatens to throw him down on the rocks if he keeps standing in his way. Entendimiento warns him that this would not be possible without destroying himself as well.<sup>445</sup> Full of anger

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**439** Vv. 1141–1151.

**440** Vv. 1152–1156.

**441** “SOMBRA: [T]oma esta dorada poma; / si una vez su sabor gustas, / verás que no solamente / en ti mis ciencias infunda, / pero que inmortal te haga, / para que no puedas ninca, / igualándote al poder / del rey, perder desta augusta / majestad la acción, que hoy / no puedes decir que es tuya. / Del tiempo que allá en la tierra / te ocultó venga la injuria: / come y como el rey serás / eterno edades futuras” (vv. 1161–1174).

**442** Vv. 1175 ff.

**443** Vv. 1178 f.

**444** Vv. 1183–1189.

**445** “ENTENDIMIENTO: [. . .] Atiende, que usas / muy mal de tu Entendimiento, / si atropellado le injurias. / HOMBRE: Peor usas tú de tu dueño, / pues atrevido le luchas, / sin ver que desde

("¡Nadie a mi furia se oponga, / o teman todos mi furia!"<sup>446</sup>) he eventually, with Albedrío's help, hurls Entendimiento down into the abyss.<sup>447</sup> With this, Pecado sees the enterprise as a success ("Bien se ha logrado la industria."<sup>448</sup>), because now, after having brutally rid himself of his intellect, Man is eating the 'forbidden fruit': "HOMBRE: [...] Despeñar / a mi Entendimiento y, una / vez despeñado, sin él / comer la vedada fruta[.]"<sup>449</sup> With the first bite earthquakes and darkness set in and the light of grace goes out ("[...] la pura / Luz de la gracia apagada / de la Sombra de la culpa"<sup>450</sup>) The original sin has taken place: "LUZ: ¡Ay dé!, pues será tu error / miserable herencia suya!"<sup>451</sup> Now, abandoned as well by Albedrío and the four elements, El Hombre is left alone lamenting in the darkness and falls into a death-like sleep.<sup>452</sup>

In this staging of the Fall of Man, a critique of the senses as unreliable takes on a specifically Christian dimension. It is the senses that deceive man about what brings death. El Hombre's enjoyment at the sight of the young woman's beauty renders him unable (or unwilling) to recognize her true being as Sombra/Culpa the serpent of the devil. It is the sweet taste of the apple that fools El Hombre into thinking that it is not a 'poisoned' fruit. What is established is a connection between the senses (i.e. the body) and sin. Relevant to this is also human reason, embodied by Entendimiento who, as the opponent of Sombra/Pecado, constantly warns Man against the transgression of Divine Law, against the original sin of *superbia* and against the deception of the senses. The ominous transgression of the set rule – illustrated in the consumption of the apple – only takes place after El Hombre hurls Entendimiento down into the rocky abyss; when reason is made to disappear, nothing else stands in the way of sin. In this way, the play also makes explicit the concept of sin as a constant rebellion of the senses, of the body against reason. The stylization of Albedrío is also significant. For Calderón, it is clear that the will is by no means a neutral

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ese muro / puedo arrojarte a esas duras / peñas. ENTENDIMIENTO: No podrás sin que / a ti mismo te destruyas" (vv. 1192–1200).

446 Vv. 1207 f.

447 "HOMBRE: [...] Llega, Albedrío; / tú a despeñarle me ayuda. / ALBEDRÍO: Sí haré, pues sin mí no puedes" (vv. 1203 ff.), the stage direction: "*Arrójanle entre los dos al vestuario, como precipitado.*"

448 Vv. 1210.

449 Vv. 1211–1214.

450 Vv. 1224 ff.

451 Vv. 1229 f.

452 Cf. vv. 1231–1286; the lamenting monologue vv. 1245–1284, whose last verses are: "¿Qué mucho, pues, ¡ay de mí!, / si todos me desahúcian, / que en brazos de letal sueño, / negra Sombra de la culpa, / pues dejó a la muerte viva, / deje a la vida difunta?"



authority. Although it is not considered, as it is in Protestantism, to be the automatic instrument of sin (*servum arbitrium*), it is – even before the Fall – considered as rather problematic. Only by subordinating himself to Entendimiento, to (God-given) reason and understanding, is Man able – as he was in the *comedia* – to go in the right direction (but as a second condition, effective only in historical times, baptism is added to provide access to the *gratia sufficiens*). The ‘autonomous’ will, on the other hand, leads only to downfall.

Poder, Sabiduría, and Amor discuss what has happened and formulate again the divine plan for the salvation of the now fallen man. This, however, is understood as going to take place far into the future.<sup>453</sup> In the next scene El Hombre – dressed again in furs – wakes up in the dungeon. He speaks the first words of the monologue while still asleep, articulating the supposed certainty about his existence, which is based on his experiences and the promises made by Sombra. He acknowledges that he has been born out of the earth, but since he had acquired Sombras (secret) knowledge, he could challenge the authority of his divine father and be the immortal ruler of the world (“Ya, ya sé quién soy y, aunque / la Tierra fuese mi madre, / competir puedo a mi padre, / pues sé sus ciencias y sé / que inmortal príncipe soy del orbe. Y pues ya me vi / su dueño. . .”<sup>454</sup>). However, waking up he perceives his surroundings, and this feeling of security is suddenly replaced by doubt and disorientation. The discrepancy between the present state, which in his perception corresponds to the ‘first’ state that he is able to remember, that of non-existence (“[. . .] Adónde estoy? / ¿Esta no es de mi fortuna / la primera prisión fiera? / ¿No es esta aquella primera / bóveda que fue mi cuna? / ¿No es esta la desnudez en que primero me vi?”<sup>455</sup>), is compared to the experience of paradise-palace, which to his sorrow has now vanished into nothing.<sup>456</sup> This leads El Hombre to the conclusion that the latter must have been a dream,

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**453** The verdict of Poder is that man should be left back in the depths of the earth, abandoned by Gracia and the elements, in the hands of the beast Sombra, who had triumphed over his mind; in misery and sorrow he should feel the consequence of his sin, while had he slept in his first cradle in the arms of grace, he was now awakened in those of guilt. When Amor objects that, according to the heavenly decision, man was capable of correction, and Poder in turn points out that man could not repent of eternal sin (since committed against ‘the Eternal’) by his own repentance, Sabiduría refers to her role in the plan of salvation: “[. . .] la humanidad conjunta / a la Sabiduría, como / hipostáticas se unan, / satisfacción infinita / tendra la infinita culpa” (vv. 1355–1359; the scene in total, vv. 1287–1373).

**454** Vv. 1381–1388.

**455** Vv. 1389–1395.

**456** “¿Qué se hicieron, ¡ay de mí! / la majestad, la altivez, / el obsequio, el aparato, / las músicas, los olores, / plumas, cristales y flores, / y, en fin, el sublime ornato / de reales ropas, cercado / de gentes, cuyo desvelo / me asistió? [. . .]” (vv. 1396–1404).

but a dream that had shown him his true identity (“[. . .] ¡Válgame el cielo, / que de cosas he soñado! . . . / Pero ¿qué me desconfia / presumir que sueño fue, / si por lo menos saqué / dél, según mi fantasía, / saber quién soy? [. . .]”<sup>457</sup>), with the result that he does not consider this life in captivity, but rather the ruler status granted to him in paradise as being right for him (“[. . .] No encerrado / viva, pues; salga a buscar / el alcázar y a cobrar, / pues es mío, el alto estado / en que me vi . . . [. . .]”<sup>458</sup>). In his inner struggle, he rejects this plan for a short moment, drawing on the offence that was responsible for his ‘fall’ (“orgullo”), only to allow himself to be guided again shortly afterwards by this very attitude: “Pero, cielos, / el orgullo reprimamos, / por si ahora también soñamos . . . / Mas no, que heroicos anhelos / me llaman y así iré; [. . .]”<sup>459</sup> But when he then wants to leave the ‘place of his birth’ in order to return to the palace he realizes that his present state differs fundamentally from that of his first ‘awakening.’ This is where the consequence of the Fall becomes fully manifest. He discovers that he is chained, unable to free himself from his prison (“[. . .] ¡ay, triste, / que aún es hoy mayor mi pena, / de lo que fue! ¿Qué cadena / es esta, que me resiste / que salir pueda? [. . .]”<sup>460</sup>), and, furthermore, that the elements have turned against him, that nature is now hostile to him; in contrast to the gifts laid at his feet in paradise, now the world offers him only “pan de Dolores” and “agua de lágrimas.”<sup>461</sup> The realization of this radical change leads him to doubt his own ability to differentiate between dream and waking and to be unsure about his ‘being’: “¿Quién me dirá cuál ha sido / en mis mudanzas más cierto, / lo que allá soñé despierto / o lo que aquí veo dormido?”<sup>462</sup> When he then calls upon Luz, it is not the ‘light of grace’ that appears, but Sombra, who is now a constant and accusing companion to him, man, his ‘inescapable guilt,’ blacksmith of the ‘chain of (original) sin’ holding him captive (“HOMBRE: [. . .] ¿eres mi culpa? SOMBRA: Sí. / HOMBRE: De ti huiré. SOMBRA: ¿Cómo podrás, / si [. . .] / [. . .] / [. . .], aherrojado, / llevas arrastrando al

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457 Vv. 1404–1410.

458 vv. 1410–1414.

459 Vv. 1414–1418.

460 Vv. 1418–1422.

461 “[. . .] Y aun no / para en eso mi fortuna, / pues no hay criatura ninguna / de quien ya no tiemble yo, / viendo en todas cuatro esferas, / que afilan contra mí graves / uñas y picos las aves, / presas y garras las fieras. / Si miro al sol, me da enojos, / pues no me alumbrá y me abrasa; / frío el aire me traspasa; / si piso, toda es abrojos / la tierra; el agua, que fue / claro espejo, me retrata / feo; si la sed me mata, / turbia está; y si el hambre ve / frutas, que a ellas no me atreva / dice, y por partido toma / que pan de dolores coma / y agua de lágrimas beba” (vv. 1422–1441).

462 Vv. 1442–1445.

pie / la cadena que forjé / del yerro de tu pecado?”<sup>463</sup>). Nevertheless, in his conversation with Sombra, El Hombre comes to a decisive insight that marks a first step towards salvation. When Sombra notes that every past fortune was a dream (“[. . .] que, pasada, / ¿qué ventura no es soñada?”), El Hombre recognizes that, if one looked at things from a distance, in retrospect one could distinguish between the true and the fictitious (“La que pasó bien se ve / en la distancia que haber / suele entre cierto y fingido, / que uno no ha sido, otra ha sido, / aunque ha dejado de ser.”); in such a way, he knew, even if he was now in this state, that he was nonetheless “príncipe heredero,” that his majestic existence had not been a dream, and that he wanted to regain it (“Y así, pues sé que es verdad / que, aunque en este estado estoy, / príncipe heredero soy / y que aquella majestad / no fue sueño, irá a cobralla.”).<sup>464</sup> When Sombra then insists once again on the dreamlike nature of the undertaking, because ‘all life is a dream’ (“que toda la vida es sueño”), El Hombre finally replies: “Luego esta lo es, con que se halla / tu réplica convencida, / porque, si la vida es / sueño, ¿no es fuerza, después / que duerma esta triste vida, / que a mejor vida despierte?”<sup>465</sup> This life, its current state, was thus a dream (‘esta lo es’), but the ending of this dream, of this ‘unhappy life’ (‘después que duerma esta triste vida’) implies a potential ‘awakening’ into a ‘better life’ (‘que a mejor vida despierte’).

The accepted equivalence of life and dream refers to the temporally limited earthly existence. Instead it is the category of ‘eternity’ in which earthly life is embedded that is relevant. Man’s understanding of the perspective of an ‘awakening’ into a ‘better life’ of eternity from the ‘dream’ of physical existence marked by suffering includes the recognition of the all-determining principle of eternity or ‘the Everlasting’ and the insight that it is necessary to submit to this principle and orient one’s actions according to its laws. When El Hombre subsequently asks Poder for help to escape from Sombra’s clutches, lamenting the loss of his reason, which he himself had discarded, he gets back the lost ‘faculties’ of reason and free will. It should be noted that this scene represents the definitive Counter-Reformation position regarding the question of dominance between these two faculties of the soul, will and reason, which was hotly debated during this period, namely, that it is possible for will to be controlled by reason. Entendimiento, who reappears first, explains to El Hombre that, if he wished, he could, with his help, summon and govern Albedrío, who had been

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**463** Vv. 1462–1469; reference should be made to the homonymous ambiguity of the material of bondage: ‘*hierro*’ as ‘iron’ (< Latin *ferrum*), on the other hand, as ‘error,’ ‘fault,’ ‘sin’ (‘yerro’ < Latin *errāre*).

**464** Vv. 1475–1486.

**465** Vv. 1488–1494.

a “vasallo muy infiel”<sup>466</sup> to him. As a result, Albedrío is forcibly brought in by Entendimiento, who lays him at El Hombre’s feet. As Entendimiento tells him, he should finally conform his actions to what reason demanded. Thereupon El Hombre formulates his desires: he shall plead with his Creator Poder for forgiveness for the crime he committed.<sup>467</sup> With this pious request, over Sombras’ objection that it was impossible to eradicate a crime committed against the everlasting, Entendimiento tells him that heaven was to be softened in order to enable repentance, and the liberation from prison. He knew, through “La Fe” (faith) that this was possible.<sup>468</sup>

Before the ‘heavenly answer’ to man’s request for salvation is presented, a scene follows in which his need for salvation is made explicit once again. Sombra leaves the dungeon to consult with Lucifer. El Hombre sees this as a chance to escape and asks Entendimiento and Albedrío to free him from his chains, an enterprise doomed to failure, as he painfully discovers (“ENTENDIMIENTO: No es posible deshacerlas [las prisiones] / [. . .]. / HOMBRE: ¡Ay, infeliz, que venturas / que por mí pude perderlas / por mí no pueda ganarlas!”<sup>469</sup>). When El Hombre subsequently blames Albedrío for his misery, the controversial theological aspect of ‘freedom of will’ is once again emphasized. From an Orthodox-Christian perspective, the salvation of man’s soul is – to put it in simplified terms – based on a combination of divine grace and man’s free will (but in this form also God-given) ability to decide for or against the acceptance of this grace; thus man’s action, in which this choice of right or wrong is repeatedly reflected, effects eternal existence. Albedrío’s answer to the accusation that he inclined man to evil (sin) when (in paradise) that the choice was between good and evil is: “[. . .] Hicieras / lo que ahora, que el Albedrío / inclina, pero no fuerza.”<sup>470</sup> The final decision lies in the hands of

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**466** V. 1514.

**467** “ENTENDIMIENTO: Como él [Albedrío] te llevó tras sí, / tras ti puedes traerle a él, / o yo le traeré arrastrando, / como tú el afecto des. / HOMBRE: Sí doy. [stage direction: *Saca el Entendimiento al ALBEDRÍO como por fuerza.*] ENTENDIMIENTO: Pues ya está a tus pies. / ALBEDRÍO: Fuerza es que obedezca, cuando / trocado tu afecto vi, / pues del modo que cruel / puedes despeñarle a él, / puede él arrastrarme a mí. / ¿Qué me quieres, pues? ENTENDIMIENTO: Que apliques / una vez tu libre acción / al fuero de la razón . . . / HOMBRE: Que voluntario supliques / al Poder que me crió, / que perdone mi delito” (vv. 1516–1531).

**468** See vv. 1532–1549, quote: v. 1549.

**469** Vv. 1597–1602.

**470** Vv. 1607 ff. (before: “ALBEDRÍO: ¿De quién, siendo así te quejas? / HOMBRE: De ti, villano. ALBEDRÍO: ¿Hice yo / más que estar a tu obediencia? / ENTENDIMIENTO: Sí, pues entre bien y el mal, / al mal le inclinaste” vv. 1603–1607).

man himself, he had been able to handle it in the same way at that time as he does now – to show humility, to follow reason – will can only indicate inclination, it cannot force.

Announced as “alguna seña, / o viso, o rasgo, o bosquejo / en alegórica idea,”<sup>471</sup> in Entendimiento's words, Sabiduría appears disguised as a ‘foreign wanderer’ (“*de peregrino*”). At his pleading, she frees El Hombre from his iron bonds, puts them on herself and stays in his dungeon instead of him.<sup>472</sup> Here we find illustrated how Christ takes upon himself the guilt of man. The next action represents Christ's crucifixion. Sombra and Príncipe de las Tinieblas return to the dungeon with the aim of murdering El Hombre before he can be rescued. As they are hitting the prisoner, whom they believe to be El Hombre, with tree branches, Sabiduría's words predict the meaning of the event (“PRÍNCIPE: Toma y, pues su culpa fue / de un árbol la fruta, sea / de otro la rama el castigo. / [...] / SOMBRA: [...] ¡Muera / en su culpa el Hombre! SABIDURÍA: Antes / será para que sin ella viva, siendo en ambos troncos, / dél la culpa y mía la pena.”<sup>473</sup>); the ‘earth is shaking’ and the ‘sky is darkening’<sup>474</sup>; finally, Sombra and Pecado/Príncipe drop down dead at the feet of Sabiduría. And so what is presented to those returning (Hombre, Entendimiento, Albedrío) is this: “ALBEDRÍO: Al peregrino abrazado / a un cruzado leño, y puesta / la Sombra a sus pies y el fiero / Príncipe de las Tinieblas.”<sup>475</sup> In response to Man's question as to whether this ‘spectacle’ (“teatro”), showing ‘living death’ and ‘dead life’ (“viva muerte y muerte vida”), was actually a ‘victory’ (“victoria”) or a ‘tragedy’ (“tragedia”), Sabiduría/Jesus Christ himself explains the paradox: “Victoria y tragedia es, puesto / que, porque no te siguiera / y tú pudieras salvarte, / en tu prisión, con tus señas, / ellos me han dado muerte / y yo a ellos; de manera / que es tragedia y victoria, / pues que, supliendo tu ausencia, / he

471 Vv. 1613 ff.

472 The invocation takes place in harmony by reason and will: “HOMBRE: [L]lamadme ambos. ALBEDRÍO/ENTENDIMIENTO: ¡Peregrino! / SABIDURÍA: Si las dos voces concuerdan, / a un tiempo, de Entendimiento / y Albedrío, bien espera el Hombre que a ellas responda” (vv. 1636–1640); the ‘liberation’ as a whole: cf. vv. 1642–1697 (“SABIDURÍA: Ya estás libre, que yo solo / quebrantarlas pude. HOMBRE: [...] / [...] / [...] tú rompiste / las ataduras, que eran / eslabones de mi culpa; / [...] / SABIDURÍA: [...] Hombre, dejás / tus prisiones en mis manos, / [...] / [Pónese la cadena; recuéstase en la gruta.] Mas yo las haré tan mías, que a la Culpa lo parezcan, / hallándome en tu lugar: / sea cabal la fineza, / [...] / vistió la Sabiduría / de humana naturaleza” vv. 1662–1697).

473 Vv. 1718–1729.

474 Stage direction: “*Terremoto*.” “PRÍNCIPE: [...] cielos y abismos unos / se obscurecen y otros tiemblan” (vv. 1732 f.), later: “mortal terror o eclipse” (vv. 1742); cf., e.g., *Mt* 27,45 and 51.

475 Vv. 1750–1753.

dado a infinita culpa / infinita recompensa.”; the aspect of the ‘resurrection’ is supplemented by Sombra’s words: “Ya que, sincopado el tiempo / en representable escena, / el término de tres días / a solo un instante abrevias, / volviendo de mí triunfante / a segunda vida, vuelva / también yo a segunda ira.”<sup>476</sup> With this representative death, Sabiduría defeats the diabolical figures Sombra and Príncipe/Pecado, triumphs over death, and frees El Hombre from his guilt. The project for the salvation of man is now completed with the institution of the relevant sacraments Baptism and the Eucharist. Their ‘necessity’ manifests itself in the fact that the diabolical powers continue to lay claim to man, as becomes apparent in the objections expressed by Príncipe. At first he argues that, since the material from which man was formed was corrupted by his first sin and, consequently, his entire offspring are burdened, this guilt was by no means extinguished.<sup>477</sup> To free man from the ‘stain of original sin’ (“la común / mancha de una triste herencia”), Sabiduría explains, an ‘element’ of grace will serve as material (“habrá elemento que dé a la gracia / tal materia, / que en el umbral de la vida / esté a cobrarla a la puerta”).<sup>478</sup> With man’s turning to grace, the four elements are again in his service (“Vuelto él a la gracia, todos / volverán a la obediencia”<sup>479</sup>). Agua – the element of merciful baptism – enters the scene and ‘purifies’ Man from the damage caused by original sin (“[que] lave del Hombre la ofensa”) by baptizing him with water brought in a shell from the Jordan River (“[. . .] clara, pura, tersa, / natural agua [. . .] / del Jordán”).<sup>480</sup> Hereupon, the devil mentions another aspect: man’s inclination to sin, which potentially endangers his freedom, the eternal life to come. Even though the ‘first staining’ of man could be washed clean with the water (of baptism), nevertheless, if he sinned again, he would end up again in the ‘prison’ (of guilt, of death) (“PRÍNCIPE: cuando esa primera mancha / lavarse con agua pueda, / ¿quién de la culpa actual / librarle podrá, si es fuerza / volverle ella a la prisión / siempre que él a pecar vuelva?”<sup>481</sup>). Now it is Poder who provides the answer: “[. . .] [E]s obra del Poder / dar poder a quien absuelva, / como él su culpa confiese, / elemento habrá que tenga / materia también en quien / otro sacramento sea / preservación dese daño, / dando al espíritu fuerzas / con que

476 Vv. 1754–1774.

477 “PRÍNCIPE: Si, corrompida la masa / de su formación primera, / comprende su primer culpa / a toda su descendencia, / ¿cómo, si es deuda pagada, / queda obligado a la deuda?” (vv. 1786–1791).

478 Vv. 1792–1797.

479 Vv. 1802 f.

480 Vv. 1804–1821, quotes: vv. 1813 ff. and v. 1817.

481 Vv. 1822–1827.

en aumentos de Gracia / pueda durar en la enmienda.”<sup>482</sup> The sacrament of the Eucharist, which is what is meant here, would protect man – after the obligatory confession<sup>483</sup> – from the potential ‘damage’ of turning again towards sin, for with this sacrament’s help the (devout) spirit of man would be strengthened by the power of grace to remain on the ‘right path.’ While the four elements offered El Hombre in the ‘paradise-palace’ gifts that revealed his potential sin, and, as the ‘test’ had envisaged it, turned against him after his failure, they now participate in the salvation of man, each making a contribution associated with the sacraments of salvation. While Agua supplied the water for baptism, Tierra now provides bread and wine for the ‘supreme sacrament,’ Aire offers the words of transubstantiation, and Fuego the ‘eternal light’ of the tabernacle, the ‘flame of love/of the Holy Spirit.’<sup>484</sup> In the final scene, Poder turns to El Hombre to remind him not to again jeopardize his position in his kingdom, creation, which he had regained by grace, and refers once more to the image, elaborated in the play, of the paradoxical unity of life and death, of the waking and dream states: “PODER: Y pues cuanto vives sueñas, / porque al fin la vida es sueño, / no otra vez tanto bien pierdas, / porque volverás a verte / aun en prisión más estrecha, / si con culpa en el letal / último sueño despiertas.”<sup>485</sup> Instructing him to act correctly in the ‘dream of life’ in accordance with the ‘law of the eternal’ (“HOMBRE: La enmienda ofrezco a tus plantas.”), so that the end of this (earthly) life results in an ‘awakening’ into a ‘better life in everlasting freedom’ and not one in the ‘prison of darkness,’ El Hombre is supported

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**482** Vv. 1828–1837.

**483** Before that, the Sacrament of Penance is referred to, according to Orthodox-Christian doctrine the possible absolution of the ‘sinner’ after the confession of his sins, was spoken by the priest (‘[E]s obra del Poder / dar poder a quien absuelva [the priest], / como él [the sinful person] su culpa confiese’).

**484** “TIERRA: [...] [L]a Tierra[,] / [...] en las espigas [‘ears of grain’] y vides [‘vines’] / dará remota materia al más alto sacramento” (vv. 1839–1842); “AIRE: [...] [A]l Aire / formar y pronunciar veas / tan misteriosas palabras, / que el pan en carne convierta, / y el vino en sangre, la voz / de la Sabiduría inmensa / el día que diga ... SABIDURÍA: ... Esto es / mi carne y mi sangre mesma” (vv. 1854–1861); “FUEGO: [...] [E]l Fuego es Amor. AMOR: Ya Amor / el que hace la fineza, / puesto que, amando hasta el fin, / dejó ese tesoro en prendas; y pues la forma [...] / [...] es aquella. / FUEGO: Debajo de cuya blanca / nube de cándida oblea, / el fuego de Amor contiene, / con real, divina asistencia, / en carne y sangre, alma y vida;” (vv. 1874–1884).

**485** Vv. 1917–1923; see the preceding explanation: “PODER: Hombre, que hice a imagen mía, / yo te saqué de la tierra, / en el real alcázar te puse, / perdiole tu obediencia, / a la tierra te volví / y vuelvo a buscarte en ella, / donde, cobrando en mi Gracia, / quiero que tu esposa sea; / mira, pues, lo que me debes. / SABIDURÍA: Mira lo que a mí me cuestas. / AMOR: Mira lo que yo te amo” (vv. 1906–1916).

by Entendimiento, Albedrío, and the Light of Grace (“ENTENDIMIENTO: Yo, aconsejarle a la enmienda. / ALBEDRÍO: Yo inclinarle a lo mejor. / LUZ: Yo, a que siempre en mi luz tenga / auxilios que le iluminen.”)<sup>486</sup>; man is endowed with reason and free will; he can participate over and over again in the grace bestowed upon him by divine self-sacrifice through ritual repetition of the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The meaning of the play, within the context of the theological debate of the period and the explicit positioning of the *auto sacramental* genre (and its author Calderón) in the Counter-Reformation, is this: for will to be used for good and not for sin, requires not only the support of reason and faith, but also the Church, with its representatives and rituals. The strength of faith and will to right action must be renewed again and again through the offering of the sacrament of the host by the appointed representatives.

What then is the relationship between the two works – the *comedia* and *auto sacramental* described here? The detailed presentation of the dream-*auto* makes clear that the two pieces are distinct in terms of plot but share a general ideological orientation, above all with regards to the doctrine of practical action, which both proclaim. This is not, however, surprising. The *auto sacramental* especially can shed light on the reasons why Calderón addresses skepticism in his best-known work and why he dealt with it in the *comedia* in the way that he did. As much as Tridentine Catholicism follows the Thomistic tradition, and as much as Thomas Aquinas, particularly in terms of epistemology, is an Aristotelian, the *auto* renders immediately evident why an author of the Counter-Reformation ultimately cannot help but take a skeptical position as far as epistemology is concerned. With regard to the most sublime of the truths of faith, the real presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine, the senses do not lead the way to truth, they deceive – and not occasionally but systematically. What the believer sees and tastes is bread (and wine). The consequences of the ancient skeptics’ position of the unreliability of the senses, which results in the propagation of indifference and ‘acquiescence to that which is’ as a guiding principle for action, this step is, as the *auto* clearly shows, unacceptable from a Christian point of view. For that ‘which is’ is a fallen world; adhering to it would mean falling prey to sin. Christian ethics is decidedly activist. The ‘good’ Christian acts against the inclination towards the ‘world’ and the ‘sensual’ precisely because the world is a fallen one. It is God’s self-sacrifice that enables Man to resist that which was brought about by the fall of the first

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486 Vv. 1925–1928.



parents. But the ability to grasp this possibility is in the hands of the (free) will of the (baptized) individual. The effectiveness of this 'will to do the good' however, ultimately eludes all knowing and thus any philosophy. The right and good action is not (as in the case of the skeptics as well as the case of the anti-skeptical Descartes) based on knowledge; it is based on a higher, non-rational insight, the truth of which remains epistemologically unconfirmed and whose persuasive power can only be attained rhetorically. At the end of the *comedia*, Segismundo is (within the limits of earthly possibility and from the perspective of the context in which the play is situated) a happy man; he is free, he is king, the kingdom is pacified, he has reconciled himself with his father and will marry an adequate wife. This is where the limitations of the Counter-Reformation harmonism become apparent. If the *auto sacramental*, mediated by its allegorical encoding, is, by its own claims, limited to showing a 'general' (i.e.: an often, but not necessarily always given) development, in the *comedia* there is, unspoken, the promise that the right faith would be able, already here on earth, to bring about a positive resolution. However, one can counter such a 'skeptical' questioning of Calderón's dream-*comedia* with the fact that all approaches, even rationality, praised by Descartes as the optimal way of conducting oneself in the world, as well as the theorized probability of the empiricists, are ultimately nothing but promises.

## 4 Aspects of Skepticism in the Genesis Plays by Lope de Vega and Jean de Rotrou

### 4.1 Lope de Vega, *Lo fingido verdadero* (c. 1608/1621)

Lope de Vega's (1562–1635) 'tragicomedia' *Lo fingido verdadero* [The Feigned True or the True Feigned] first appeared in print in 1621 in Madrid in the sixteenth volume of his *comedias*, accompanied by a dedication letter addressed to none other than Tirso de Molina.<sup>487</sup> Believed to have been written around 1608,<sup>488</sup> around the time Lope published his poetological (and polemic) text *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* [New Art of Writing Plays in This Time] (1609), and originally titled *El mejor representante* [The Greatest Actor],<sup>489</sup> the play is one of several of Lope's dramatic works that focus on the lives of saints, a relatively minor theme within his extensive dramatic

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**487** [Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio], *Decimasexta Parte de las Comedias de Lope de Vega Carpio* . . . , Madrid 1621, fols. 259v–284v (“Dedica[torial] al R. P. Presentado F. Graviel Tellez Religioso de nuestra Señora de la Merced, Redencion de Cautiuos,” fols. 259v–260v). All references to the drama are from the edition: Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio, *Lo fingido verdadero*, ed. Maria Teresa Cattaneo, Rome 1992, and will be cited parenthetically by verse numbers in the text. Although the editor indicates 1620 as the year of the first publication of *Decimasexta Parte* (p. 51), the copy to which she refers (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, signature R/23476) must have appeared only in 1621: it differs from the other copies in the Biblioteca Nacional (signatures R/14109, R/13867, R/25145) only by the front page indicating 1620, which, however, belongs to the 13th partial edition of the *comedias* published this very year – the title page of the volume is provided with a damaged, glued note stating ‘Trezena’ –, furthermore in the Preliminaries the ‘Suma de Tasa’ is dated 27 September 1621. (Cf. regarding this also Maria Grazia Profeti, *La collezione* Diferentes Autores, 2nd ed., Kassel 1988, p. 196 [in Appendix 3, pp. 172–211, considering the various editions, there is a list of the 25 *partes* of Lope's *comedias*]; see as well the indication in Urszula Aszyk, “. . . pon el teatro, y prevén / lo necesario . . .”. Hacia una reconstrucción de la puesta en escena original de *Lo fingido verdadero*,” in: Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez/Rafael González Cañal/Elena Marcello [eds.], *El corral de comedias: espacio escénico, espacio dramático*, Almagro 2006, pp. 159–180, here p. 159, n. 1).

**488** Cf. Sylvanus G. Morley/Courtney Bruerton, *The Chronology of Lope de Vega's 'Comedias': With a Discussion of Doubtful Attributions, the Whole Based on a Study of His Strophic Versification*, New York 1966 (repr. of the edition New York/London 1940), p. 364.

**489** Cf. p. 198 as well as the reference in Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo (“*Lo fingido verdadero*” [1894], in: Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Estudios sobre el teatro de Lope de Vega*, ed. Enrique Sánchez Reyes, 6 vols., Santander 1949, vol. 1: *Autos, comedias de la sagrada escritura y de santos* [Edición nacional de las obras completas de Menéndez Pelayo, ed. Miguel Artigas, vol. 29], pp. 264–283, here p. 264). The reference to the former title is also articulated in the *comedia's* closing verses: “OCTAVIO: Aquí acaba la comedia / del mejor representante” (v. 3122 f.).

oeuvre.<sup>490</sup> As Ilse Nolting-Hauff states, the play provides an early example of ‘play within a play,’ has a metatheatrical dimension, and ‘is characterized by an astonishing similarity to 20<sup>th</sup>-century dramatic forms.’<sup>491</sup> She further continues that it ‘is the first play of the Spanish Baroque that uses the metaphor of the theater of the world and already expresses with great virtuosity the particularly Baroque theme of seeming and being in literature.’<sup>492</sup> David Castillejo, e.g., praised the play as “la obra cumbre, el *Hamlet*, de Lope.”<sup>493</sup> Despite this, the play has received comparatively little scholarly attention.<sup>494</sup>

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**490** Robert R. Morrison mentions (in terms of authenticity of authorship with reference to Morley/Bruerton, *The Chronology of Lope de Vega's 'Comedias'* [cf. note 488]) 21 comedias de santos that were certainly written by Lope de Vega, four that were probably written by him, as well as 29 others of questionable authorship (Robert R. Morrison, *Lope de Vega and the 'Comedia de Santos'*, New York 2000, pp. 321–325).

**491** Ilse Nolting-Hauff, “Lope de Vega: *Lo fingido verdadero*,” in: Volker Roloff/Harald Wentzlaff-Eggebert (eds.), *Das spanische Theater: Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Düsseldorf 1988, pp. 70–89, here p. 70 (“Darüber hinaus zeichnet es sich durch [...] eine [...] erstaunliche[re] Verwandtschaft zu Dramenformen des 20. Jahrhunderts aus.”).

**492** P. 83 (“[...] *Lo fingido verdadero* [ist] das erste Welttheaterdrama des spanischen Barock [...] und [setzt] die spezifisch barocke Sein- und Schein-Thematik bereits mit außerordentlicher Virtuosität literarisch um[setzt] [...]”).

**493** David Castillejo, *Las cuatrocientas comedias de Lope: Catálogo crítico*, Madrid 1984, p. 25. (However, he interprets it as a turning point regarding the main focus of Lope’s dramatic work: “[...] divide toda su producción teatral en dos partes: pasa de ser un escritor amateur a ser un escritor religioso” [p. 73], which had been influenced by his private love life, the relationship with the actress Micaela Luján: “Traza la crisis psíquica del propio Lope, als trasladar todo su amor físico por Micaela a un amor espiritual por un Dios masculino” [p. 25]); cf. the reference to Castillejo’s observation also in Victor Dixon, “‘Ya tienes la comedia prevenida . . . la imagen de la vida’: *Lo fingido verdadero*,” *Cuadernos de teatro clásico* 11 (1999), pp. 53–72, here p. 53, and Morrison, *Lope de Vega and the 'Comedia de Santos'* (cf. note 490), p. 194.

**494** This can at least be said with regard to German Romance Studies. Only Barbara Simerka, “Metatheater and Skepticism” (cf. note 2), discusses an explicit connection to skepticism (including a relation with *Le Véritable Saint Genest* that will be discussed later here). The study by Ilse Nolting-Hauff, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 491), is still fundamental. Urszula Aszyk, “Hacia una reconstrucción de la puesta en escena original de *Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 487), deals with the contemporary scenographic representation possibilities and reconstructs the production of *Lo fingido verdadero* on the corral stage, more precisely the Corral del Príncipe in Madrid. The drama is discussed in terms of metatheatrical aspects in particular in: Elaine M. Canning, “*Lo fingido verdadero* as Metaplay,” in: Elaine M. Canning, *Lope de Vega's 'Comedias de tema religioso': Re-creations and Re-presentations*, Woodbridge 2004, pp. 95–127; Elvezio Canonica, “De la ficción de la verdad a la verdad de la ficción en *Lo fingido verdadero* de Lope de Vega,” in: Irene Andres-Suárez/José Manuel López de Abiada/Pedro Ramírez Molas (eds.), *El teatro dentro del teatro: Cervantes, Lope, Tirso y Calderón*, Madrid 1997, pp. 99–110; María Teresa Cattaneo, “La doctrina dramática en *Lo fingido verdadero* y su proyección europea,” in: Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez/Rafael González Cañal/Elena E. Marcello (eds.), *El Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en su contexto europeo*,

*Lo fingido verdadero* is an adaptation of the life of Saint Genesius (Spanish: Ginés) that Lope de Vega probably gleaned from Jesuit priest Pedro de

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Cuenca 2010, pp. 179–193; Florence D’Artois, “El teatro en el teatro en *Lo fingido verdadero*. Nuevo intento de aproximación,” in: Christophe Couderc/Benoit Pellistrandi (eds.), “*Por discreto y por amigo*”: *Mélanges offert à Jean Canavaggio*, Madrid 2005, pp. 181–189; V. Dixon, “Ya tienes la comedia prevenida . . .” (cf. note 493); Susan L. Fischer, “Lope’s *Lo fingido verdadero* and the Dramatization of the Theatrical Experience,” *Revista hispánica moderna* 39 (1976/1977), pp. 156–166; Hugh Gaston Hall, “Illusion et vérité dans deux pièces de Lope de Vega: *La Fiction vraie* et *Le Chien du jardinier*,” in: Marie-Thérèse Jones-Davies (ed.), *Vérité et illusion dans le théâtre au temps de la Renaissance*, Paris 1983, pp. 41–54; Guillermo Serés, “Consideraciones metateatrales en algunas comedias de Lope de Vega,” *Teatro de palabras* 5 (2011), pp. 87–117; Alan S. Trueblood, “Role-Playing and the Sense of Illusion in Lope de Vega,” *Hispanic Review* 32 (1964), pp. 305–318; cf. as well William Egginton, *How the World Became a Stage: Presence, Theatricality, and the Question of Modernity*, New York 2003 and Dakin Matthews, “Metatheatricality and Conversion in Lope’s *Lo fingido verdadero*,” in: Susan Paun de García/Donald R. Larson (eds.), *Religious and Secular Theater in Golden Age Spain: Essays in Honor of Donald T. Dietz*, New York 2017, pp. 77–90. It is discussed in the context of ‘hagiographic drama’ in: Elma Dassbach, *La comedia hagiográfica del Siglo de Oro español: Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina y Calderón de la Barca*, New York 1997; Morrison, *Lope de Vega and the ‘Comedia de Santos’* (cf. note 490), pp. 186–195; Gerd F. Müller, *Studien zum hagiographischen Theater Lope de Vegas: Exemplarische Interpretation von sechs ‘comedias de vidas de santos’*, Diss. Cologne 1970, pp. 130–150. In connection with the contemporary debates on *licitud* it is explored in: Isabel Ibáñez, “El teatro hagiográfico en el centro de la controversia sobre la licitud de la comedia. Una poética ‘en acto’: *Lo fingido verdadero* de Lope de Vega,” in: Marc Vitse/Antonio Ortiz García (eds.), *Homenaje a Henri Guerreiro: La hagiografía entre historia y literatura en la España de la Edad Media y del Siglo de Oro*, Madrid 2005, pp. 725–739; Gerhard Poppenberg, “La licitud del teatro. Los argumentos del debate y el argumento del drama. A partir de *Lo fingido verdadero* de Lope de Vega,” in: Christoph Strosetzki (ed.), *Teatro español del Siglo de Oro: Teoría y Práctica*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 283–304. With regard to a comparative perspective (especialmente con Rotrou’s drama) cf. Maria Teresa Cattaneo, “Transformaciones de Ginés, actor y mártir,” in: Almudena García González/Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez (eds.), *La Comedia de Santos: Coloquio Internacional (Almagro, 1, 2 y 3 de diciembre de 2006)*, Almagro 2008, pp. 255–268; Urszula Aszyk, “*Lo fingido verdadero* de Lope de Vega y *The Roman Actor* de Philip Massinger. Puntos comunes y diferencias,” in: Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos/Oscar Cornado Bernal et al. (eds.), *En buena compañía: Estudios en honor de Luciano García Lorenzo*, Madrid 2009, pp. 67–77; Sibylla Laemmel, “Zur Adaptation einer ‘comedia de santo’ in Frankreich. *Le véritable saint Genest* von Rotrou und *Lo fingido verdadero* von Lope de Vega,” in: Küpper/Wolfzettel (eds.), *Diskurse des Barock* (cf. note 278), pp. 463–490; Noël M. Valis, “Rotrou and Lope de Vega. Two Approaches to Saint-Genest,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 6 (1979), pp. 346–359; Mary Ann Frese Witt, “From Saint Genesius to Kean. Actors, Martyrs, and Metatheater,” *Comparative Drama* 43 (2009), pp. 19–44. See, furthermore: John V. Bryans, “Fortune, Love and Power in Lope de Vega’s *Lo fingido verdadero*,” *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 9 (1985), pp. 133–148; Maria Teresa Cattaneo, “Il teatro del mondo e il

Ribadeneyra's hagiographic collection *Flos sanctorum* (1599–1601).<sup>495</sup> According to legend, Genesisius, known since the 13<sup>th</sup> century as the patron saint of actors, was a popular actor in Rome during the reign of Diocletian (r. 284–305), famous for portraying and ridiculing Christianity and Christian rites on stage. Ribadeneyra describes him as,

[...] farsante, insigne chocarrero y gracioso, [...] muy enemigo de Christianos el qual, parte por su mala inclinacion, y por la mala vida que trahia (como suelen los de aquel oficio) y parte por dar gusto al Emperador, y entretenimiento al pueblo, se dio mucho a perseguir a los Cristianos, y hazer burla dellos, y para esto quiso entender los misterios de nuestra santa Fè, y las ceremonias del Baptismo, para representarlos en sus comedias, y mouer a risa a los circunstantes.<sup>496</sup>

In the midst of a mocking portrayal of baptism, performed before the emperor, he is said to have actually converted to Christianity and then passionately

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mondo del teatro. Lettura di *Lo fingido verdadero* di Lope de Vega,” in: Lope de Vega, *Lo fingido verdadero*, ed. M. Cattaneo (cf. note 487), pp. 7–41; Menéndez Pelayo, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 489); Elena di Pinto, “‘Entre bestias anda el juego’ o la tradición animalística clásica en *Lo fingido verdadero* de Lope de Vega,” *Cuadernos de filología clásica: Estudios latinos* 17 (1999), pp. 199–217; Elida Maria Szarota, “Lope de Vegas *Lo fingido verdadero*,” in: Szarota, *Künstler, Grübler und Rebellen: Studien zum europäischen Märtyrerdrama des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Bern/Munich 1967, pp. 24–42; Gustavo Umpierre, “Una comedia metafísica de Lope de Vega: *Lo fingido verdadero*,” *La Torre* 28 (1980), pp. 161–192.

**495** Pedro de Ribadeneyra, “La vida de san Gines el Representante, Martir,” in: Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *Flos sanctorum, o libro de las vidas de los santos* (1599–1601), 2 vols., Madrid 1624, vol. 2, pp. 359b–361b (see the corresponding reference in Menéndez Pelayo [“*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 489), p. 266], which the subsequent research usually refers to). Cf. also the depiction of the *vita* in the equally popular collection of saints’ lives by Alonso de Villegas (“De san Gines representante martyr,” in: Alonso de Villegas, *Flos Sanctorum, y Historia general de la vida y hechos de Iesu Christo, Dios y señor nuestro, y de todos los Santos de que reza y haze fiesta la Yglesia Catolica*, Madrid 1588, fols. 120v–121r; there, Genesisius is mentioned among “Los santos Extrauagantes,” “[...] q[ue] ni son de los contenidos en el Breuiario Romano reformado, ni de los propios de España” [fol. 62r;]); see, furthermore, the “Passio Sancti Genesisii ex mimo martyris,” in: Thierry Ruinart (ed.), *Acta primorum Martyrum sincera et selecta*, Paris 1689, pp. 283 f.; as well as the corresponding entries in Johann Evangelist Stadler/Franz Joseph Heim/Johann Nepomuk Ginal (eds.), *Vollständiges Heiligen-Lexikon: Oder Lebensgeschichten aller Heiligen, Seligen etc.*, 5 vols., Hildesheim/New York 1975 (repr. of the edition Augsburg 1858–1882), vol. 2, pp. 371 f.; The Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine’s Abbey, Ramsgates (eds.), *The Book of Saints: A Dictionary of Servants of God Canonized by the Catholic Church*, London 1921, p. 121; on the origin and reception of the legend as a whole, see Bertha von der Lage, *Studien zur Genesisiuslegende*, 2 vols., Berlin 1898–1899.

**496** Ribadeneyra, “La vida de san Gines” (cf. note 495), p. 360a.

affirmed his new faith. As a result Diocletian had him arrested and tortured, and ultimately beheaded.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Genesisius is commemorated on 25th August, but the details given in the sources about his exact year of death differ; according to Ribadeneyra, he died in 303. In point of fact, there are several saints by the name of Genesisius being venerated in the Catholic Church (Stadler et al. [eds.], *Heiligen-Lexikon* [cf. note 495], vol. 2, pp. 370–373] lists fourteen saints named Genesisius [on Saint Genesisius of Arles, see below note 582 [‘San Ginés escribano’]] and there are also additional ‘Genesisius-figures,’ i.e. actor-martyrs, namely, Gelasius or Gelasinus, Ardalio, Porphyrius, and Philemon. Gelasius/Gelasinus, who is believed to have been martyred around 297 CE in Heliopolis in Phoenicia, and Porphyrius, whose martyrdom is said to have happened around 361 CE under Emperor Julian, according to legend, like Genesisius, confessed Christianity all of a sudden while mocking Christian baptism on stage. According to one version, the former is said to have been stoned to death by the people, according to another he was beheaded, and the latter is said to finally have been, after severe torture, executed by decapitation. Ardalio, whose martyrdom is told to have taken place in an unspecified city in Asia Minor during the reign of Maximian around 300 CE, was in the midst of mocking Christian customs on stage, but then while playing a Christian steadfastly professing his faith, he suddenly became a Christian and declared himself as such. He is said to have been burnt alive. (See Von der Lage, *Studien zur Genesisiuslegende* [cf. note 495], vol. 1, pp. 10–18; the entries in Stadler et al. [eds.], *Heiligen-Lexikon* [cf. note 495], vol. 1, pp. 304 f. [Ardalio]; vol. 4, p. 967 [7. Porphyrius]; vol. 2, p. 364 [6. Gelasius]). The *vita* of Philemon, which was given a prominent dramatized adaptation in Jakob Bidermann’s play *Philemon Martyr* (1610–1620), differs from the above stories, which are obviously very similar to that of the Roman Genesisius (Von der Lage assumes that they all originated from an Oriental archetype, that the Roman church transferred the legend to Rome and chose the name Genesisius as a symbol of reincarnation [*Studien zur Genesisiuslegende* (cf. note 495), vol. 1, p. 21 and p. 39]). Nevertheless, I will summarize it here: Philemon’s conversion and martyrdom takes place in Antinoë in Egypt during the Diocletian persecution of Christians. Philemon is paid to disguise himself as the deacon or lecturer Apollonius and sacrifice to the gods instead of him. Before the governor Arianus, Philemon professes to be a Christian. Arianus does not recognize him at first because of his disguise, and, when he is finally identified by his brother as Philemon, he considers Philemon’s confession to be a well-performed farce. After Philemon continues to profess Christianity, he is condemned by Arianus to torture and finally to death by beheading, as well as Apollonius who in the meantime has been seized and is openly professing his faith. According to the legend, even the praeses Arianus becomes a Christian: he had ordered that Philemon be shot with arrows, but all of them missed, including one that hit Arianus in the eye. This wound was suddenly healed when Arianus entered the tomb of the martyrs whose execution he had ordered, and he promptly converted to Christianity. (Cf. Stadler et al. [eds.], *Heiligen-Lexikon* [cf. note 495], vol. 4, pp. 884 f. [2. Philemon]) as well as “Martyrium Sanctorum Apollonii & sociorum ejus,” in: Ruinarat [ed.], *Acta primorum Martyrum sincera* [cf. note 495], pp. 539 ff.) At the end of his Genesisius narrative, Ribadeneyra mentions Porphyry and Ardalio as further examples of miraculous conversions of actors, and, furthermore, refers to another such case: “Y san Agustín escriuiendo a Alipio, epistola sesenta y siete, cuenta lo q[ue] acontecio a otro farsante, que se dezía Dioscoro, y era gra[n] burlador de los Christianos, y al cabo co[n]la enfermedad de su hija, y otros açotes, se hizo Christiano, y fue sieruo

In Lope's *comedia*, the life of Genesis only takes up the third act. The *vita*'s core motif, however, the idea that fiction becomes reality, is negotiated in the course of the play in many different ways. It is not only about the transition from *lo fingido* ('the feigned') to *lo verdadero* ('the true'),<sup>498</sup> but rather, as the title reflects, about the reciprocal dynamics between the two.<sup>499</sup> *Lo fingido verdadero* expresses the relativity of the boundary between fiction and truth, appearance and being, illusion and reality; themes that harbor affinities to the discourse of skepticism. This dynamic will be laid out in the summary of the plot that follows. A further analysis will pay special attention to the 'position' implied in Lope's drama regarding this problem.

The *comedia*'s first act describes Diocleciano's ascent from simple soldier to emperor. Lope's main source for this element of the plot is commonly assumed to be the *Historia imperial y cesárea* [Imperial History or Lives of the Roman Emperors] (1545) written by Pedro Mexía.<sup>500</sup> The play opens with Marcio, Curio,

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del Señor [...]” (“La vida de san Gines” [cf. note 495], p. 361b). However, the mentioned “farsante [...] Dioscoro,” whose mysterious conversion Augustine describes in a letter to Alypius, is most likely not a ‘comedian’ but a physician, or rather the *medicus princeps*. The mistake in profession probably results from a corrupt manuscript of the Augustinian letters, more precisely the confusion of the terms *architheater* and *archiater* (Latin: ‘senior physician’). The corresponding letter printed in *Patrologia Latina* as letter 227, not 67 reads: “Archiater etiam Dioscorus christianus fidelis est, simul gratiam consecutus; audi etiam quemadmodum: [...]”, the annotation then reads: “Edd., *Architheater*. At Mss. melioris notae, *Archiater*, id est medicus princeps” (Augustinus, Ep. CCXXVII “Augustinus Alypio seni, de Gabiniano recens baptizato, et de Dioscoro miraculis converso ad Christianismum,” in: *Patrologiae cursus completus [...] Series Latina*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, 217 vols., Paris 1844–1855, vol. 33 [1865 (1st ed. 1845)]: *Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Hipponensis Episcopi, Opera Omnia [III]*, cols. 1012 f., here col. 1012). Ribadeneyra probably took the reference to the converted ‘actor’ Dioscorus from the *Martyrologium Romanum*. There, in the notes provided by Caesar Baronius on April 14 (among others, commemoration day for Saint Ardalion) of the extended edition of 1586 the following sentence can be found: “legimus huius generis celebre exemplum de Dioscoro *architheatro* apud S. Augustinum epistula 67 ad Alipium” (*Martyrologium Romanum, ad novam Kalendarii rationem, et Ecclesiasticae historiae veritatem restitutum*, ed. Cesare Baronio, Rome 1586, p. 166, note E [my italics]; for the reference to this passage in the *Martyrologium Romanum* and the divergence in the Augustine letter, see Von der Lage, *Studien zur Genesislegende* [cf. note 495], p. 13, n. 18).

**498** It should be noted that, in the context of the *desengaño*-concept expressed at the end of the *comedia*, comparable to the final argument of *La vida es sueño*, it is precisely this perspective that is ultimately given.

**499** This interplay is difficult to express in translations of the title.

**500** Pedro Mexía, *Historia imperial y cesárea* (1545), Antwerp 1552; the chapters on Caro (in the play: Aurelio) and his sons Carino and Numeriano can be found on fols. 126r–127v (“[...] vida del emperador Caro solo deste nombre, y de Carino y Numeriano sus hijos, que tambien se llamaron Augustos [...]” [fol. 126r]), those on Diocleciano and Maximiano on fols. 127v–131v



Maximiano, and Diocleciano lamenting the poor pay and lack of supplies they are receiving as soldiers fighting with Emperor Aurelio Caro in a war in Mesopotamia, while back in Rome Aurelio's son Carino, who they despise, is reigning in his father's absence. Only Numeriano, Aurelio's second son, who they feel, in contrast to his vicious brother, would make a worthy emperor, prevents them from mutiny.<sup>501</sup> Camila, a young woman, approaches them offering bread for sale. Diocleciano has no money but jokes that he would pay her back for it and show his gratitude when he was Emperor of Rome (“[. . .] yo te le

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“[. . .] vida del emperador Diocleciano solo deste nombre, y Aurelio Maximiano emperadores [. . .]” [fol. 127v]); as authorities Mexía mentions, among others, the late antique Roman historians Flavius Vopiscus, Sextus Aurelius, and Eutropius (4th century), the Christian historians Paulus Orosius (c. 385–418) and Eusebius (c. 260–340), Isidore of Seville (c. 556–636), and the Italian humanist Julius Pomponius Laetus (1428–1498) (fol. 127v b and fol. 131v b). Although the events depicted in Lope's first act are highly condensed, especially with regard to their chronological order, they are to a large extent in line with historical facts, which were as follows: the assassination of the last Severan emperor Severus Alexander (r. 222–235) in 235 was followed by the rise to power of former soldier Maximinus Thrax (r. 235–238). The next fifty years saw some twenty emperors rise and fall from power, most of whom were former generals who used the support of the legions to gain control. The rule of each one sometimes only lasted a few months until they were usurped and ousted by their successors. During this period the Roman Empire was in a permanent state of war on several fronts, with the conflicts with the Teutons in the north and the Persian Sasanid Empire in the east being of particular and lasting significance. (Cf. Alexander Demandt, “Diokletian als Reformer,” in: Alexander Demandt/Andreas Goltz/Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen [eds.], *Diokletian und die Tetrarchie: Aspekte einer Zeitenwende*, Berlin/New York 2004, pp. 1–9, here p. 1; Alexander Demandt, *Die Spätantike: Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian 284–565 n.Chr.*, 2nd ed., Munich 2007, pp. 44–57). Marcus Aurelius Carus, who had been proclaimed Roman emperor by the troops in autumn 282, died in July 283 while campaigning against the Sasanids. He had elevated his sons Carinus and Numerianus to caesars. While Numerianus was involved in the Persian war, the elder brother Carinus remained in Gaul and was in charge of the administration of the West. After Carus' death, the two brothers were appointed *Augusti*. Numerianus was murdered in the summer of 284 on the army's return from the east, allegedly by his father-in-law, the praetorian prefect Aper. Diocletian was proclaimed emperor by the eastern troops after Numerianus' death on 20 November 284 in Nicomedia, but was defeated by Carinus in a battle in Moesia. Carinus, however, was assassinated in 285, leaving Diocletian the sole ruler of the empire. (Cf. p. 58 as well as the entries in: Carl Andresen/Hartmut Erbse et al. [eds.], *Lexikon der Alten Welt*, Zurich/Stuttgart 1965, col. 548 [Carinus], col. 551 [Carus], col. 2105 [Numerianus], cols. 745 f. [Diocletian], here col. 745, and Wolfgang Kuhoff, *Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie: Das römische Reich zwischen Krisenbewältigung und Neuaufbau [284–313 A.D.]*, Frankfurt am Main/Berlin/Bern 2001, pp. 17–27).

**501** This attribution of opposing character traits is already found in Lope's source: In Mexía, Numeriano is described as “virtuoso, sabio, erudito,” whereas Carino is introduced as “malo, desonesto, desordenado, y dado a todo genero de vicios” (*Historia imperial y cesárea* [cf. note 500], fol. 126r b).



pagaré / cuando sea Emperador / de Roma. CAMILA: Gracioso humor” vv. 97–99). Camila hands him the bread and prophecies: “[. . .] que cuando mareas / un jabalí [a boar], tú serás / emperador” (vv. 117–119). Both *burlas* will prove to be *veras* in the further course of the play. A heavy storm sets in, with numerous lightning strikes. Diocleciano comforts his friend Maximiano with the words “No tengas temor / ¿Cuándo has visto Emperador / romano muerto de rayo?” (vv. 190–192), which turns out to be a prediction of what happens immediately thereafter. Emperor Aurelio, in the midst of speech wrathfully challenging the heavens, is struck by lightning and dies.<sup>502</sup> After discovering his charred corpse, Numeriano, with the enthusiastic approval of the soldiers, takes over the command of the army as consul.

The following scene shows a change of place and register, a characteristic feature of Spanish *comedia*: accompanied by Celio (a servant), two musicians, and Rosarda (a woman dressed as a man), Carino roams the streets of Rome at night.<sup>503</sup> The group engages in a conversation about the ladies who live in the area. Talking about actresses, Celio jokingly compares their performances to the life of his master. The difference consisted in the fact that their *comedia* lasted only one and a half hours, whereas his would last his whole life and end with death (“La diferencia sabida, / es que les dura hora y media / su comedia, / tu comedia / te dura toda la vida. / Tú representas también, / mas estás de rey

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**502** Vv. 194–252 (e.g.: “¿Qué furia es ésta, cielo, / con que te opones a mi brazo airado, / si montañas de hielo, / si volcanes de llamas he pasado? / ¿No ves que son ensayos / contra mis fuerzas tu granizo y rayos? / [. . .] / Yo soy Aurelio Caro; / yo soy César de Roma; yo sustento / debajo de mi amparo / este mundo inferior; si el firmamento / es tuyo, el suelo es mío; / que así reina partido el poderío. / [. . .] / Vive, Júpiter santo, / que si ponemos monte sobre monte, / que te he de dar espanto; / fulminame después como a Tifonte, / con tal que mi venganza / ponga al poder de tu furor templanza. / A tu suprema esfera / osaré levantar mil escuadrones de gente armada y fiera. / ¡Parece que castigas mis razones! / ¡Oh, qué trueno tan fiero! / Fulminástemme, Júpiter; ya muero.”). Although Mexía also reports in his *Historia imperial y cesárea* that Emperor Aurelio Caro is killed by a lightning strike during his campaign against the Persians, he is not the only victim and it happens while he is gravely ill in his tent (“Pero llegando con su exercito alas riberas del rio Tigris, delos trabajos, y calor le dio vna graue enfermedad, de la qual estando muy agrauiado, sobreuino vn dia vna grande tempestad de truenos y relampagos, y cayo vn rayo en su tienda del emperador, y mato a algunos delos que enella estaua[n] y entre ellos a el mismo [. . .]” [Mexía, *Historia imperial y cesárea* (cf. note 500), fol. 126v a]).

**503** With the characters Celio and Rosarda, there are two further typical features of 17th century Spanish theater represented: the figure of the *gracioso* and the woman dressed as a man. For the latter, see the passage in Lope’s *Arte nuevo*: “Las damas no desdigan de su nombre, / y si mudaren traje, sea de modo / que pueda perdonarse, porque *suele / el disfraz varonil agradar mucho*” (vv. 280–283, my italics; quoted after the edition: Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* [1609], ed. Enrique García Santo-Tomás, 2nd ed., Madrid 2009, p. 146).

vestido / hasta la muerte, que ha sido / sombra del fin” vv. 363–370). Carino is angered by this comparison, saying that he was by no means playing a role. He was not an “emperador fingido” but a ruler “de veras” in life and in death; the law of mortal men did not apply to him:

[ . . . ] Yo soy el romano  
 César, señor soberano,  
 que no emperador fingido.  
 [ . . . ]  
 [ . . . ] yo [ . . . ] de veras soy  
 Rey, [ . . . ]  
 seré en vida y muerte; (vv. 392–405)

¿Qué es muerte? ¿Qué desatino  
 es decir que muere un Rey?  
 No llega la humana ley  
 al Emperador Carino. (vv. 411–414)

Somos los Emperadores,  
 [ . . . ] casi iguales  
 a los dioses celestiales:  
 somos del mundo señores,  
 como ellos lo son del cielo; (vv. 419–423)

When Carino makes this presumptuous speech, alluding to the elevation of the Caesars into deities that was accepted in pagan Rome, and expressing a hubris similar to that expressed by his father Aurelio before his death, they are standing in front of the house of Ginés. Ginés is introduced as an actor (‘representante’) and in fact Carino had already used him as an example to make it clear that actors are kings only within the time limit of a theater performance, while he, however, was an ‘immortal’ king (“Cuando sale a hacer Ginés / un rey en una tragedia, / reinará por hora y media, / y no lo será después” vv. 399–402); furthermore, he is described in this scene as a poet, who writes *comedias* himself (“CELIO: [ . . . ] también es poeta / y las comedias compone” vv. 447 f.), and as an *autor* (theater director, producer, head of a company of actors). Carino then immediately calls for Ginés to come out to the street.

Contrary to the typical depiction of the saint’s life (on which *Lo fingido verdadero* is based), which typically depicts Ginés as virulently anti-Christian, Lope’s Genesisus is presented primarily as the consummate actor, dramatist, and poet. When Carino calls him, he is in fact busy working on a *comedia* about the myth of Pasiphaë. Although he does not comply with Carino’s request to give a spontaneous performance, he does accept the proposition to have a play about Carino and Rosarda written by a famous poet and to perform it

himself.<sup>504</sup> In the course of this discussion, Carino appoints him court actor, “representante imperial” (v. 508), and a dialogue then takes place that touches upon—and here the contemporary poetic discourse is resonating – the theme of the proper composition and performance of *comedias*.<sup>505</sup> In a foreshadowing of events, when Ginés is asked by Carino about the women of his acting troupe, he mentions Lisarda. She was an actress who had converted to Christianity and now lived as a ‘new penitent’ in the mountains of Marseille (“una tenía gallarda, / que se llamaba Lisarda, / [...] / [...] cristiana se volvió. / [...] / Embarcóse presurosa / a ser nueva penitente / en las peñas de Marsella” vv. 472–480). The description of Lisarda is that of a ‘new Mary Magdalene’<sup>506</sup> or ‘Magdalene *typos*,’ and it further presages Ginés’ own transformation.<sup>507</sup> As will become clear, the play is replete with typologizing structures.

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**504** Carino does not aim for a theatrical performance of panegyric character, but rather has a comedy about jealousy in mind: Rosarda should be described as “muy discreta,” whereas he should be portrayed as “muy necio y celoso” (vv. 498 f.); after that Rosarda says: “Pagaréle yo también, / porque su ingenio famoso / te pinte amado e ingrato, / y a mí de mil celos llena” (vv. 501–504).

**505** “GINÉS: [...] hay poeta que tiene / la musa como mujer. / [...] / Es por lo que nos detiene, / aunque tú se lo pidieses, / hasta que el fruto declare, / pues cualquier comedia pare / al cabo de nueve meses. / [...] / CARINO: Ahora bien; busca a Aristeles [the poet who is to write the play about Carino and Rosarda] / y hárala con brevedad. / GINÉS: Guardará la propiedad. / CARINO: Representa como sueles; / que yo no gusto de andar / con el arte y los precetos. / GINÉS: Cánsanse algunos discretos. / CARINO: Pues déjalos tú cansar. / Deleita el oído, y basta, / como no haya error que sea / disparate que se vea” (vv. 524–545).

**506** According to a medieval legend, Mary Magdalena, together with her brother Lazarus, her sister Martha and other Christians ‘miraculously’ crossed the Mediterranean Sea to Marseille on a rudderless ship. She is said to have lived for thirty years in the wilderness of the Sainte-Baume mountains in a cave as a penitent. (Cf. the legend in Pedro de Ribadeneyra [“La vida de Santa Maria Madalena,” in: Ribadeneyra, *Flos sanctorum* (cf. note 495), vol. 1, pp. 460b–467b, here pp. 465b–466a]; the entry in Stadler et al. [eds.], *Heiligen-Lexikon* [cf. note 495], vol. 4, pp. 26–30, here pp. 28 f.).

**507** This is the interpretation of the passage given by Nolting-Hauff (“*Lo fingido verdadero*” [cf. note 491], p. 77), which I subscribe to. S. Laemmel, on the other hand, reads the passage about Lisarda as a biographical cipher: Marseille was often considered a place of worldly desire, and given the phonetic similarity of Marcela-Marsella, Ginés’ saying these words is actually an indication of his own desire (the relationship between Ginés and Marcela will be explained further on), Lisarda’s ‘new penitence’ refers to actress Elena Osorio, who – in analogy to Ginés’ Marcela – preferred another lover to the playwright Lope de Vega, and who he indirectly slandered as a prostitute. The contemporary theater audience might actually have been more aware of the scandal about Lope de Vega and Elena Osorio than of the Magdalena

After the encounter with Ginés, the group continues its nocturnal search for pleasures. Carino boasts of the satisfaction he feels depriving chaste, noble, and virtuous ladies of their honor, especially the wives of senators, particularly his rape of the wife of Consul Lelio.<sup>508</sup> They abruptly encounter an enraged Lelio himself, who declares that Carino had forfeited his honor and imperial dignity, when he, the one whose duty as ruler it was to preserve and defend the honor of all, had robbed him, Lelio, of his honor. He then stabs Carino to free Rome from a ‘new Nero.’<sup>509</sup> Dying, Carino formulates the insight that he had merely played a role in a tragedy that had now come to an end and which, according to his impression, like an authentic tragedy on stage, had not lasted longer than an hour and a half:

Representé mi figura:  
 César fui, Roma, rey era;  
 acabóse la tragedia,  
 la muerte me desnudó:  
 sospecho que no duró  
 toda mi vida hora y media.  
 Poned aquestos vestidos  
 de un representante Rey,  
 pues es tan común la ley  
 a cuantos fueron nacidos,  
 adonde mi sucesor  
 los vuelva luego a tomar,

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legend. Lope was, as Laemmel concludes, ambiguously playing here with the sublime and the profane. (“Zur Adaptation einer ‘comedia de santo’ in Frankreich” [cf. note 494], here pp. 481 f.). It should be noted that, considering Ginés’ conversion to Christianity in the third act, the account of an actress who has become a Christian is quite significant in the development of the play and the *comedia*’s structure, i.e., the complex preparation for this change. On the other hand, leaving aside the biographical aspect, Laemmel’s interpretation of the passage as a frivolous play on words can be combined with the implications foreshadowing Ginés’ conversion, in so far as this alludes, in condensed form, to the sensual love between Ginés-Marcela that is the focus of the second act, as well as to Ginés’ eventual turning towards the ‘true’ Christian love.

**508** “CARINO: Mucho me deleito y gusto / de quitar [...] el honor / a una mujer casta y noble / y virtuosa, y al doble / si es mujer de senador. / [...] / CELIO: Mil cosas, señor, escucho; / enmienda y ejemplo toma; / que Lelio el cónsul, a quien / tanto ofendiste el honor, / supo ya tu loco amor / y su deshonor también. / [...] / ROSARDA: Si su mujer le has forzado, / ¿es mucho que el cónsul Lelio / muestre enojo, Emperador?” (vv. 562–579). And shortly thereafter in Lelio’s words: “[Soy] [u]n cónsul de tu Senado, / cuya mujer has forzado / más en decirlo después, / que en hacer tan gran maldad” (vv. 584–587).

**509** Vv. 589–636 (“[...] quiero quitar / a Roma un nuevo Nerón” vv. 635 f.).

porque ha de representar,  
¡quiera el cielo que mejor!<sup>510</sup>

(vv. 641–654)

**510** In Mexía, Carino dies in battle against Diocleciano (“[. . .] vüieron vna batalla, que fue la postrera y mas cruel, enla qual Carino fue justamente vencido y muerto” [*Historia imperial y cesárea* (cf. note 500), fol. 127v b]). He does not go into the details about his death. However, it should be noted that the version in Lope’s drama was probably based on an anonymous so-called *Epitome de Caesaribus*, which, until the end of the 16th century, was attributed to Sextus Aurelius Victor, in which it is reported that the ‘criminal’ Carinus was murdered by a tribune whose wife he is said to have raped (“Hic Carinus omnibus se sceleribus inquinavit; Plurimos innoxios fictis criminibus occidit. Matrimonia nobilium corrumpit. Condiscipulis quoque, qui eum in auditorio verbi fatigatione taxaverunt, perniciosus fuit. Ad extremum trucidatur eius praecipue tribuni dextera, cuius dicebatur coniugem polluisse” [This Carinus defiled himself with all crimes. He killed many innocent people on the basis of made-up accusations. He destroyed the marriages of nobles. He was also dangerous for his fellow students, who had teased him with mocking remarks in the lecture room. He was slaughtered to death especially by the hand of his tribune, whose wife he was said to have violated] [Incertus Auctor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* XXXVIII, 7 f., in: Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus: Praecedunt Origo gentis Romanae et Liber de viris illustribus urbis Romae, subsequitur Epitome de Caesaribus*, ed. Franz Pichlmayr, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1993 (1st ed. 1911), pp. 131–176, here p. 163]. On the question of authorship and the authenticity of the title, see the passages in the editor’s introduction in: Sextus Aurelius Victor [Pseudo-Aurélius Victor], *Abrégé des Césars*, ed. and trans. Michel Festy, Paris 1999, pp. VII–XCIII, here pp. VIII–XXXVIII and pp. XLVIII–L). A similar variant on Carinus’ ruthless and excessive life and his related violent death can be found in Aurelius Victor’s *Liber de Caesaribus*. Here, Carinus is murdered in the course of the wars over power in the Roman Empire between him and Diocletian by his own soldiers in revenge for his offences of honor as well as out of fear of the continuance of his rule. (“At Carinus ubi Moesiam contigit, illico Marcum iuxta Diocletiano congressus, dum victos avidè premeret, suorum ictu interiit, quod libidine impatiens militarium multas affectabat, quarum infestiores viri iram tamen doloremque in eventum belli distulerant. Quo prosperius cedente metu, ne huius-cemodi ingenium magis magisque victoria insolesceret, sese ulti sunt” [After his invasion of Moesia, Carinus soon engaged at the Margus in a battle with Diocletian; while hastily pursuing the defeated, an assassination attempt of his people caused him death, for, uncontrolled in lust, he pestered the wives of the soldiers, whose angry men, meanwhile, had tried to suppress the anger and pain until the end of the war. When it took a rather fortunate course, however, they feared that a character of this kind would by the victory more and more fall into excess and they took revenge] [Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus* XXXIX, 11 f. (Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus/Die römischen Kaiser* [Latin-German], ed. and trans. Kirsten Groß-Albenhausen and Manfred Fuhrmann, Zurich/Düsseldorf 1997, p. 114)]; see as well Eutropius, *Breviarium* IX, 19,1 [Description of Carinus’ infamous deeds and announcement of his just punishment] and IX, 20,2 [Diocletian wins, since Carinus, hated on all sides, is betrayed by his own army] [Flavius Eutropius, *Breviarium ab urbe condita*, ed. Carlo Santini, Leipzig 1979, p. 61 f.]). Frank Kolb points out that the negative depiction of Carinus (as well as of Aper) in the Roman texts may serve a contrasting emphasis of the ruler Diocletian.

Meanwhile, Numeriano has fallen ill and the army is therefore marching back to Rome when they receive word of Carino's death and are told that the Romans are enthusiastically waiting to proclaim Numeriano emperor. The army immediately does so, but it turns out that Numeriano was already dead. His father-in-law Apro, with his own designs on the throne, had killed him and was transporting his body in a closed sedan under the pretext of a serious illness, as he himself reveals to the messenger Felisardo ("APRO: Enfermo en una litera / le he sacado a la ribera, / donde el campo le recibe, / aunque no le dejo ver, /  *fingiendo* su enfermedad, / que si va a decir verdad . . . / [...] / Yo le he muerto, y le he traído / así cubierto y tapado." vv. 732–740). The corpse is discovered when the soldiers ask to pay tribute to their emperor and to crown him with laurels according to custom. Suspicion is immediately aroused that Numeriano was poisoned by Apro, who, before he gave permission to look inside the sedan chair, strangely emphasized his own merits to the Roman army. In fact, Apro offers himself as the new Caesar, and even announces that he alone would deserve this position, although his murder of Numeriano is finally confirmed by Felisardo and in the end Apro even admits the deed himself.<sup>511</sup> Diocleciano recalls Camila's prophecy ("agüero") that he would become emperor as soon as he killed a wild boar. The meaning of this prediction, which was initially conceived as a joke, now takes on serious contours for him, for the name Apro is a derivative of the Latin *aper*, meaning wild boar<sup>512</sup>: "DIOCL.: si el Cónsul Apro se nombra, / que en nuestra lengua latina, / pues su maldad le transforma, / quiere decir jabalí, / sin duda se cumple ahora / el agüero prometido;" (vv. 894–899).<sup>513</sup> Diocleciano then stabs

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Furthermore, he regards Diocletian involved in the death of his opponent by corrupting Carinus' military officers (*Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie: Improvisation oder Experiment in der Organisation monarchischer Herrschaft?*, Berlin/New York 1987, pp. 11 f.).

**511** "MARCELO: Habiendo dado ponzoña / a tu yerno Numeriano, / nos parece injusta cosa. / APRO: ¿Yo, hijos, yo? FELISARDO: ¿Por qué niegas, / Apro, tu maldad notoria? / Tú me lo dijiste aquí, / y con ponzoña o con toca / quitaste la vida a un hombre / que en las romanas historias, / [...] / no dió tan alta esperanza / de hacer otra vez a Roma / cabeza y reina del mundo; / ¿pues es justo que te pongas / laurel que a tu yerno quitas? / APRO: Eso, soldados, ¿qué importa / si mi valor os agrada, / mis triunfos y mis historias?" (vv. 868–886).

**512** APER, APRI (m.): Latin 'wild boar.'

**513** The account of the prophecy can also be found in Mexía, who refers to the description in Flavius Vopiscus (cf. the passage in the *Historia Augusta*: Flavius Vopiscus Syracusius, "Carus et Carinus et Numerianus" [14 f.], in: *Scriptores historiae Augustae*, ed. Ernst Hohl, Christa Samberger, and Wolfgang Seyfarth, 2 vols., Leipzig 1965, vol. 2, pp. 234–248, here p. 243). But at the same time Mexía distances himself from his source and classifies such 'agüeros' from a Christian perspective as false, even 'harmful' (Mexía, *Historia imperial y cesárea* [cf. note 500], fols. 127v–128r): When a young soldier in Gaul Diocleciano had met a druidess who provided the soldiers with food. When she complained about Diocleciano's stinginess, he jokingly replied that

Apro, however, not without legitimizing this act by another augury: Numeriano's ghost had appeared to him in the night and ordered him to avenge his innocent death ("DIOCL.: [...] la imagen espantosa / de Numeriano, tu yerno, / convertida en negra sombra, / anoche me apareció, / y me dijo con voz ronca / que de su sangre inocente / diese esta venganza a Roma" vv. 926–932). This element is remarkable in several respects. Diocleciano reports here for the first time, and quite abruptly, his 'knowledge' of Numeriano's violent death. When the soldiers found the corpse of their beloved Caesar, it had been Diocleciano who had pronounced him dead,<sup>514</sup> while the subsequent accusation that Apro had murdered

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he would be more generous when he was emperor. Thereupon the druidess said that he should not be joking about it, because if he killed a wild boar, he would indeed become emperor ("[...] dixole entonces la Driade, pues no lo digays burlando, que quando vos mateys vn apro [como quien dixesse en castellano vn jauali] vos sereys emperador" [fol. 128r a]). Although Diocleciano had laughed at this prophecy, as the years went by and he saw Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus, and finally Carus become emperors, he always killed wild boars if the opportunity arose. When he killed the praetorian prefect and father-in-law of Numeriano, "[...] el qual [...] se llamaua Apro o jauali [...]" (ibid.), he then saw the druidess's prophecy come true ("[...] dixo estonces, Ya se ha cumplido mi aguero muerto he al Apro que me pronosticaua el imperio. Y assi tuuo por cumplida la diuinacion de Driade [...]" [ibid.]). Mexia stresses, however, that he integrated the account of this preannouncement of Diocleciano's rule into his chronicle simply for the sake of light and amusing entertainment ("[...] me parece gracioso, y por sacar vn rato al lector, de cosas graues y pesadas" [fol. 127v b]). Usually, he would not include the predictions and announcements about the rule of the Roman emperors handed down in his sources ("[...] el aguero o anuncio, que cada vno tuuo, de que de emperador emperador, antes que lo fuesse" [fol. 127v b]), because: "[...] las tengo por cosas de grande vanidad [...]" (fol. 127v a). The druidess's 'prophecy' was not to be taken seriously, it was not even a coincidence, Diocleciano had after all killed several wild boars, and only become emperor after killing a man by the name of 'wild boar' ("[...] me parece que es cosa de burla, y no de tomo, porque la adiuinadora no supo lo que se dixo, sino que fue acertamiento suceder, quanto mas que tan poco se puede dezir que acerto, por[que] a Diocleciano no le hizieron emperador, quando mato no vno sino muchos jaualies, y al cabo quando lo fue no mato, sino vn hombre, que tenia nombre de Apro, o jauali" [fol. 128r a]). Thus, Mexia sees in the reproduction of such narratives, for "[...] desta manera son todos los agueros que de estos imperios hallo escriptos [...]" (fol. 128r a), not only no benefit, but potential harm to the salvation of the Christian reader's soul: "[...] a ninguna cosa pueden traer prouecho, antes daño en hazer al Christiano mirar en agueros: cosa cierto perniciosissima, y que el demonio lo persuadia a estos infieles" (fol. 128r b).

**514** Diocleciano was about to give the laurel branch to Numeriano when he noticed – and he was no less surprised and moved than the other soldiers – that he was addressing his words to a dead man: "DIOCL.: Advierte, gran Numeriano, / que todo el mundo te adora; / mira que tus sienes cercan / estas hojas victoriosas, / que aunque parece que tú / honras las sagradas hojas, / muchas frentes han honrado: / no es posible que responda, / porque yo, soldados, pienso / que es muerto. MAX.: Su mano toma; / que ella te dirá si es vivo. / DIOCL.: Nunca en la frígida zona / carámbanos tan helados / vieron Finmarquia y Libonia; / muerto es el César.



Numeriano was articulated by Diocleciano's comrades ("MARCELO: No le ha muerto enfermedad, / ¡por Júpiter! MAXIMIANO: Eso es cosa / muy cierta, y que Apro le ha muerto. / CURIO: En lo que nos dijo ahora / se conoce bien que es Apro, / y que le ha dado ponzoña" vv. 841–846). While Camila's prophecy and Diocleciano's murder of Apro are recorded legends related to Emperor Diocletian's rise to power,<sup>515</sup> the appearance of Numeriano's ghost before Diocleciano to demand revenge, on the other hand, is an invention of Lope.<sup>516</sup> This immediately calls to mind the appearance of the ghost in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet's father appears before his son to tell him that he has been murdered and commands Hamlet to avenge his death. In view of the fact that much research has been devoted to identifying Shakespeare's source for this element,<sup>517</sup> the (mere) presence of this motif in *Lo fingido verdadero* offers the possibility of broadening the framework of interpretation, also with regard to

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CURIO: ¿Qué dices? / DIOCL.: Que es muerto, y que la corona / de siempre verdes laureles, / la muerte cipreses torna" (vv. 823–840).

**515** See above note 513.

**516** It should be mentioned that the transmission of such a dream would be nothing unusual by itself. There are numerous accounts of dreams and visions in the context of Roman emperors' accession to, course, and end of rule. This applies to Diocletian, too, but in the context of his rule only one dream was recorded which was the motivation for his ultimate abdication: In a recurrent dream he was given the order to hand over his power to Galerius (see Gregor Weber, *Kaiser, Träume und Visionen in Prinzipat und Spätantike*, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 213 ff.; the narrative is handed down in the so-called Anonymus post Dionem [fragment 13,6 in: *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, ed. Karl Müller et al., 5 vols., Paris 1841–1870, vol. 4 (1851), p. 198b], quoted and trans. by Weber, *Kaiser, Träume und Visionen*, p. 213 with n. 236). To mention more famous examples of dreams in connection with the gaining, preservation or loss of power in Roman imperial history, one could certainly refer to the dream of Constantine (r. 306–337, since 324 sole ruler) before the decisive battle against his opponent Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in 312, in which the future first 'Christian emperor' was assigned to provide the shields of his soldiers with the 'heavenly sign of God,' the Christian cross (this according to the account, influential for Christian historiography, e.g., in Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 44,5 [Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum/Die Todesarten der Verfolger* (Latin-German), trans. and ed. Alfons Städele, Turnhout 2003, pp. 200/202; English translation: Lactantius, *Of the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died*, trans. William Fletcher, in: Roberts/Donaldson/Coxe (eds.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (cf. note 234), vol. 7: *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries*, Buffalo 1886, pp. 301–322, p. 318]; for Constantine I's dreams and visions in pagan and Christian traditions, see Weber, *Kaiser, Träume und Visionen*, pp. 274–294, pp. 350–353, pp. 392–398). Moreover, one should mention the dreams and visions in the context of Julius Caesar's death: the dreams of his wife Calpurnia, foreseeing his murder (e.g. Plutarch, *Vitae parallelae: Caesar* 63,8–11) and the ghosts chasing Caesar's murderer Brutus (e.g. Plutarch, *Vitae parallelae: Brutus* 36–37,1 and *Caesar* 69,6–11) (cf. Weber, *Kaiser, Träume und Visionen*, pp. 432–435, pp. 437 ff.).

**517** See above chap. 2, pp. 72 f. with notes 194 and 195.



a more global view of cultural configurations and processes. The theory of the framework project in which this study was written conceives culture as a virtual network in which cultural material – conceptually as well as materially – is in continuous motion. Once it entered the cultural network, it was there to be used, regardless of its temporal and local origin.<sup>518</sup> Lope’s scene is therefore strong evidence for the thesis that *Hamlet’s* ghost is a motivic material floating in the cultural net. In contrast to the pivotal role played by the ghost in Shakespeare’s drama, Lope’s use of this ‘motivic material’ furthers the plot but otherwise has little significance. The mention of Numeriano’s ghost demanding revenge for his innocent death serves Diocleciano as additional legitimization to kill Apro before the eyes of the assembled army. He then asks his comrades not to rise up against him, repeating that he had killed a traitor who had deprived them of their good ruler, and adding that if anyone was offended by his actions, he was prepared to bear the consequences. Instead, the soldiers immediately acclaim Diocleciano as their emperor. He orders that the belongings of Apro and Numeriano be distributed among the troops and all leave for Rome.

At the beginning of the second act, Diocleciano, the ‘son of a slave’ (“DIOCL.: [...] soy hijo de un esclavo;” v. 909) was now emperor and had been received jubilantly in Rome. He promises generous payments to the army, a feast for the Senate, and announces public festivities with gladiator fights and wild animals. He also elevates his friend Maximiano to be emperor with him.<sup>519</sup> When Camila comes before him and asks him to keep the promise he had made her, he

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**518** See Joachim Küpper, *The Cultural Net: Early Modern Drama as a Paradigm*, Berlin/Boston 2018.

**519** Vv. 1045–1108 (esp.: “César te hago; no ignores / la paz de nuestros estados; / que como fuimos soldados / seremos Emperadores. / Cuando partimos el pan / quitado a los enemigos, / éramos buenos amigos; / hoy que este Imperio nos dan / los benignísimos cielos, / pártamosle entre los dos[,] / [...]. / Dadme un laurel” vv. 1073–1085). Diocletian appointed his companion Maximian (M. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus) as Caesar probably at the end of 285 and as second Augustus on April 1, 286. In 293, he extended this dyarchy to the tetrarchic system of rule: These two Augusti – Diocletian ruled the eastern part of the empire, Maximian the western part – were each joined by a Caesar as junior emperor, who was adopted by the senior emperor and destined to succeed him. Constantius (I., ‘Chlorus,’ Flavius Valerius Constantius) was elevated to Caesar for the West, he was also married to Theodora, Maximian’s stepdaughter; Galerius (C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus) was appointed junior emperor of the East and married Diocletian’s daughter Valeria. The first Tetrarchy ended with the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in 305, Constantius and Galerius ascended to Augusti and in turn were given new Caesars. (Cf. Demandt, *Die Spätantike* [cf. note 500], pp. 58 f., p. 72; Kolb, *Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie* [cf. note 510], pp. 22–87; Andresen/Erbse et al. [eds.], *Lexikon der Alten Welt* [cf. note 500], cols. 745 f. [Diocletian], col. 1872 [Maximian]; Kuhoff, *Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie* [cf. note 500], pp. 28–35, pp. 107–135, pp. 297–326).

complies with her request to have free access to the imperial chambers and to always be near him. In the same way that Camila's prediction that Diocleciano would become emperor as soon as he kills a wild boar ultimately proved true after he had killed the consul Apro, this statement, originally conceived as a *burla*, also becomes *verdad*; play has turned serious.<sup>520</sup> It is important to point out here that the turn from play to seriousness thus constitutes a structural element in the world of the play. This model of a 'structured reality' can be seen as standing in opposition to a reality dominated by chaos and coincidence. Long before it is mentioned in the play, this element refers to the idea of the single God directing the whole world down to the smallest detail.<sup>521</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Ginés appears before the emperor. Diocleciano commissions him to perform a "gentil comedia" (v. 1206) that same day, during the feast for the Senate. The subsequent discussion over the appropriate play to choose contains several allusions to poetological debates taken place during the time *Lo fingido verdadero* was written. For example, when Ginés suggests works by the two most prominent representatives of Roman comedy, Terence and Plautus (*Andria* and *Miles Gloriosus*, respectively), Diocleciano replies: "Dame una nueva fábula que tenga / más invención, aunque carezca de arte; / que tengo gusto de español en esto, / y como me le dé lo verosímil, / nunca reparo tanto en los preceptos, / antes me cansa su rigor, y he visto / que los que miran en guardar el arte, / nunca del natural alcanzan parte" (vv. 1210–1217). When talking about what tragedies would be relevant, Camila interjects that performing a tragedy would be a bad omen. Diocleciano ultimately instructs Ginés to choose whatever play ('comedia') he wants, and the latter chooses one of his own.<sup>522</sup> After

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**520** The passage as a whole: vv. 1110–1190. Camila begins her speech with the statement "Las cosas que ordena el cielo / en sus secretos divinos, / van por tan raros caminos, / que no los entiende el suelo" (vv. 1110–1114), and describes once more what has happened explicitly as 'burlas verdaderas': "[E]n el Asia [...] Diocleciano, / [...] / [v]ivía en tanta pobreza, / que si algún pan me tomaba, / la paga que no me daba, / con risa y con gentileza / decía que remitía / cuando fuese Emperador; / yo [...] / por burla le respondía / que vendría a serlo cuando / diese muerte a un jabalí; / dió muerte al Cónsul, y así / llegó a ser César burlando. / Ya que *he visto verdaderas / a sus burlas y a las mías*[,] / vengo a ver si en tales días / paga las deudas primeras" (vv. 1117–1136; my italics).

**521** Regarding this, see, e.g., *Mt* 1,29 ("Nonne duo passeret assere veneunt? et unus ex illis non cadet super terram sine Patre vestro"/'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father').

**522** "Haré la mía. / Porque si acaso no te diere gusto / no pierda la opinión ningún poeta" (vv. 1263–1265). As the subsequent monologue (vv. 1292–1351), his conversation with Pinabelo (vv. 1352–1433), and especially the performance itself (vv. 1618–2098) show, the fact that the piece to be performed is 'his comedia' ('haré la mía') does not only refer to the

Diocleciano talks about Ginés' reputation as an actor who is famous for his portrayal of falling in love (“[...] imitas con extremo / un rey, un español, un persa, un árabe, / un capitán, un cónsul; mas [...] todo / lo vences cuando imitas un amante” vv. 1266–1269), Ginés explains what he considers to be the essentials of acting: acting was imitation (“El imitar es ser representante;” v. 1270), but to be effective it must contain a kernel of truth. To convincingly portray love's passions one must feel them, just as to write a convincing poem about love, the poet must be in love himself:

[...] el representante, si no siente  
 las pasiones de amor, es imposible  
 que pueda [...] representarlas;  
 una ausencia, unos celos, un agravio,  
 un desdén ríguroso y otras cosas  
 que son de amor tiernísimos efectos,  
 harálos, si los siente, tiernamente;  
 mas no los sabrá hacer si no los siente. (vv. 1276–1283)

The subsequent monologue on love (vv. 1292–1351), elaborates further on this aspect. Love itself, or rather ‘its fire,’ is the reason behind his outstanding acting and his reputation as an ‘extreme’ performance as lover: “Contento estarás, amor, / de hacer en mí con tu llama / más levantada mi fama / cuanto es mayor tu rigor. / Hasta el magno Emperador / llega de que represento / tu fuego, tu sentimiento / con tanto extremo [...]” (vv. 1292–1299).

The blurring of the boundaries between seeming and being and the difficulty of distinguishing between fiction and reality, play and seriousness, to which the subsequent events are subjected, is hinted at here: “[...] imito lo que siento; / pero en tanta propiedad / no me parece razón / que llamen imitación / lo que es la misma verdad;” (vv. 1301–1305). His will (*mi voluntad*) was the play (*comedia*), his intellect (*entendimiento*) the poet of the story (*fábula*), all his mad senses (*locos sentidos*), through the representation of similar figures (*figuras semejantes*), had become actors (*representantes*) of his own surrendered emotions (*afectos rendidos*), he continues (vv. 1306–1315). The passion (of love) dominates him in such a way that he ignores good advice and instead follows those that plunge him into ruin (“rompo los consejos sanos, / y los que me matan sigo” vv. 1336 f.), furthermore, he considers himself a person in whom live ‘a thousand houses of madmen’ (*mil casas juntas de locos*) (v. 1339). The

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fact of authorship, but has also a content-related dimension: the *comedia* written by Ginés and his own reality of life are closely interlinked.

monologue's final verses refer to the overlapping of reality and play and the potential effect of fiction on reality. If the author – in this case Ginés himself – did not proceed with care, the *comedia de amor* would be in danger of coming to a bad end, that is, not ending with the usual obligatory marriage (“[.] aunque es comedia de amor, / si el autor no la remedia, / no tendrá fin de comedia, / pues no ha de parar en bodas, / porque las figuras todas / las hace el dolor tragedia” vv. 1346–1351). The conversation between Ginés and Pinabelo, another actor, illuminates the context of the implied dilemma of love, revealing that Ginés is unhappily in love with the actress Marcela, who is in a relationship with Octavio, also an actor of the ensemble. Ginés does not want to fire his rival both because Octavio is one of his best actors and has the leading role in the current play, and because he would lose Marcela as well, who, in her despair over the loss of Octavio would lose her pleasure in acting. He further says that even though he had her father's blessing, he would not take that course. Instead, the lovesick Ginés plans to take advantage of the upcoming play to make Octavio jealous, with numerous moments in which he and Marcela embrace. Thus the “comedia [.] / [.] amorosa” will become a “[comedia] celosa” (vv. 1404 ff.) that strains the bond between the two lovers.<sup>523</sup>

After the spectators (the two emperors Diocleciano and Maximiano, the two senators Léntulo and Patricio, and Camila) take their seats, the first ‘play within the play’ of *Lo fingido verdadero* follows the conventions of Spanish *comedia* by beginning with a *loa*. Ginés here compares<sup>524</sup> his own efforts with those of the poet Tebano. In order to pay his respects to Alexander, who had arrived in Athens, the poet was kneeling down before the ruler. In doing so he dropped his gloves, which he had, according to custom, taken off beforehand, and upon picking them up mistakenly thought they belonged to Alexander and handed

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**523** “GINÉS: Compúsela con cautela / por darle [a Marcela] tantos abrazos, / cuantas prisiones y lazos / pone el alma que desvela; / aquel paso de furioso / le hice por tratar mal / a Octavio.” In response to that then Pinabelo says assessingly: “No tiene igual / tu pensamiento celoso” (vv. 1410–1417).

**524** Ginés' speech is embedded in two pieces of music. The first (vv. 1466–1489) is a jubilant song on Rome and the new Emperor Diocleciano (marking his triumphant entry in Rome and his accession to the throne, legitimized solely by his virtue and deeds). The second (vv. 1588–1617) praises the female beauty of “Lucinda” (v. 1588) or the grace of Camila, respectively, using the popular antithetical parallelism ‘bien puede ser / no puede ser’ and Petrarchist metaphors (e.g. “Que su boca celestial / no sea el mismo coral, / bien puede ser; / mas que no exceda la rosa / en ser roja y olorosa, / no puede ser;” vv. 1594–1599). ‘Camila Lucinda’ is the name of the lover to whom Lope de Vega dedicated numerous sonnets, which are believed to have been intended for the actress Micaela de Luján (cf. the editor's note, p. 109; as well as Canning, “*Lo fingido verdadero* as Metaplay” [cf. note 494], p. 111).

them to him. Ginés describes the ‘senses and faculties of the soul’ as ‘the soul’s gloves.’ He lay these gloves before Diocleciano, thus emphasizing that his performance shows the pure motions of his soul, undisguised by the rational faculties.<sup>525</sup> The response of the audience to the *loa* is so enthusiastic that Diocleciano presents him with a ring as a token of his appreciation.

The *comedia* then begins, with Ginés playing the *galán* Rufino, Marcela the *dama* Fabia. The first scene opens with Fabia’s gruff rejection of Rufino’s love (“[...] más que tú en quererme, / en aborrecerte siento” vv. 1622 f.). Only a few verses later, however, the dividing line between stage and real life is already crossed: Ginés does not address Marcela with her role name, but with her real name, when he accuses her of the affection she has for Octavio, who also bears the name Octavio in the play (“Bien sé, Marcela, que nace / el hacerme aqueste agravio / de que quieres bien a Octavio; / Octavio te satisface, / Octavio te agrada, ingrata; / por él me dejas a mí” vv. 1646–1651). Marcela breaks character (later: “Advierte que me has turbado, / volvamos al paso” vv. 1666 f.) and asks Ginés, whom she calls by his real name, whether he was still acting (“Ginés, ¿representas?” vv. 1652) and why he did not address her by her role name. The reason, he answers, was “Por hablarte / de veras, por obligarte / a que tu desdén se duela / de aqueste mi loco amor” (vv. 1655–1658). In response to Marcela’s question as to what she should answer, Ginés says that the best would be to return his love. Marcela’s reply, “Esto no está en la comedia” (v. 1662), shows that she only wanted to know how she was to react in the context of the play and the appropriate continuation of the performance, whereas Ginés was alluding to ‘real life.’ This scene not only confuses Ginés’ fellow actors, but the imperial audience as well. While Maximiano and Léntulo consider what has just happened on stage to be a simple lapse, attributed to nervousness, Diocleciano interprets the situation as part of the play and a sign of great acting: “Mas pienso que es artificio / deste gran representante, / porque turbarse un amante / fue siempre el mayor indicio” (vv. 1678–1681). Then the actor Fabricio appears in the role of old Tebandro, Fabia’s father. Rufino, not without referring to his pedigree as the son of a consul,<sup>526</sup> asks him for his daughter’s hand. Tebandro finally promises that

525 “[D]e toda el alma quité / los sentidos y potencias, / que se calza como guantes / según se ajustan en ellas, / y púselos, no en las manos, / aunque manos son la lengua, / que la lengua son las manos / del alma, pues que con ellas / se hace lo que dispone / y se obra lo que ordena. / [...] / se me cayeron [...] / todas las razones della; / [...] / [...] si en la presencia vuestra / por respeto se han caído / del alma las tres potencias, / no merezco ser culpado[,] / [...]” (vv. 1540–1572).

526 Rufino is “[...] hijo de Patricio, / que mereció la consular corona” (vv. 1716 f.). It is worth noting that this, albeit in a very subtle way, establishes a link between the levels of the inner

Fabia will become his wife, but asks Ginés/Rufino again to tell him his name, Ginés answers “Rufino” (v. 1737).<sup>527</sup> Meanwhile, the servants Octavio and Pinabelo (also in his case the name of role and actor are identical) have entered the stage and watch Rufino hugging Fabia. What Octavio cannot see however, is that this gesture of affection was entirely one-sided. Rufino had asked Tebandro for permission to hold his daughter’s hand as a sign of his consent to the wedding. Fabia had at first refused (her comment: “¿Qué notable desatino!” v. 1741), but then followed her father’s order to comply with this wish (“Obedecerte / es justo.”, then Rufino emphatically: “Ahora amor mi vida ofrezca / con esta mano y brazos a la muerte” vv. 1743–1745). In the following scene Rufino and Tebandro are off stage, having gone to visit Rufino’s father, and the lovers Octavio and Fabia meet. Their encounter, however, is at first completely dominated by Octavio’s intense jealousy. Rufino had left the stage saying: “¿Qué habrá que el amor no pueda?” (v. 1752) so Octavio remarks: “¿Qué habrá que no puedan celos?” (v. 1753) and then calls Fabia “ingrata” (v. 1755) and makes use of a misogynous *topos* of women’s inconstancy: “¡Ay Fabia, que eres mujer, / y eres la misma mudanza!” before finally threatening her: “La lengua injusta reporta, / que incitarás mi paciencia / a que te quite la vida” (vv. 1788–1790). Fabia asserts her innocence: “[. . .] no dando ocasión yo, / Rufino en mi casa entró, / a quien he dado forzada / la mano por obediencia / de mi padre; [. . .]” (vv. 1782–1787) and calls Octavio a “loco amante” (v. 1792) dominated by “furia” (v. 1793). She asks Pinabelo, who witnesses the dispute, for advice. He reminds them of their mutual deep affection, names the possibility of running off together by ship to Octavio’s homeland in order to escape the seemingly hopeless situation of their unhappy love and offers to help them in this undertaking. However, as the audience learns from an aside, this offer is insincerely meant, since Pinabelo wants Fabia for himself (“PINABELO: Hoy, amor cruel, / fuiste conmigo piadoso; / no la verá más Octavio, / aunque a mi lealtad agravio” vv. 1837–1840).<sup>528</sup> When Fabia and

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play and the stage audience, as among those attending the performance is a senator named Patricio. In Rotrou’s play, however, this type of linking will be highly complex, as Maximin is both spectator and character of the play being performed.

**527** Given that Fabricio is Marcela’s father in reality as well as on stage, it could also be an improvised addition by Fabricio due to the preceding confusions, in order to make sure whether Ginés speaks in his role as Rufino or expresses his desire ‘seriously’; however, this remains pure speculation.

**528** Regarding Pinabelo’s intrigue (Fabia’s abduction), which is apparently grounded in the inner play, see the comment and interpretation by Léntulo: “Ahora quiere el criado / ser traidor a su señor; / que Octavio, al padre traidor, / viene a quedar engañado. / De suerte que aquel Rufino / y este Octavio han de quedar / sin Fabia, y la ha de gozar / su esclavo” (vv. 1855–1861).

Octavio decide to take Pinabelo's advice and run away together the border between fiction and reality is further blurred: Marcela and Octavio 'fall out of their roles.' They wish nothing more than for the *comedia* to become reality ("¡Ay cielo, si verdad fuera / la comedia!" vv. 1843 f.). That Marcela and Octavio are speaking in earnest, becomes clear when Marcela mentions Ginés and Octavio addresses her by her real name ("MARCELA: Tan perdida estoy, / que quisiera que a Ginés / le hiciéramos este tiro. / OCTAVIO: Tu lealtad, Marcela, admiro" vv. 1845–1848). This ambivalence between acting and reality, between *fingido* and *verdadero* is remarked upon by inner spectator Diocleciano, who notes: "Sospecho que representan / estos su misma verdad" (vv. 1850 f.). A little later, the servant Celio tells Tebandro and Rufino, who had returned from their visit to Rufino's father, that he himself had been at the port and seen Fabia and Octavio boarding a ship to run away together to Spain. This puts Rufino in a rage and he launches into a passionate speech (in the words of the servant Celio: "No des, Rufino, la rienda / a tu amor con tanto exceso, / que es caballo desbocado" vv. 1955–1957). The spectators are deeply impressed by Ginés' acting talent, which has lived up to its reputation.

It is now that the actual theme of Lope's play comes into the fore. The senators remark to Diocleciano that Ginés' performance of a frenzied lover was nothing compared to his portrayal of a Christian. Diocleciano immediately declares that Ginés should demonstrate this the very next day: "Mañana, por hacer burla / destos que a Marte y a Venus, / a Júpiter y a Mercurio, / niegan el debido incienso, / quiero que Ginés me haga / y represente uno dellos, / por al vivo un cristiano / firme entre tantos tormentos" (vv. 1975–1982).

As it turns out, something is wrong, because Rufino's monologue should have ended long ago and Tebandro should have returned with Octavio and Fabia by now. Ginés assumes that the actors, who failed to appear on cue must still be in the dressing room and sends for them. In the meantime, he decides to fill in the time by further improvising his speech on jealousy.<sup>529</sup> This renewed intermeshing of the levels of stage life and real life, the associated doubts about distinguishing with certainty what is real and what is acting, characterize the 'play within the play' until its very end. Fabricio appears and announces that Octavio and Marcela (he does not say Octavio and Fabia) had disappeared and that the play had become truth ("[...] Octavio / hizo verdad este agravio[.] / [...] / [E]l mismo paso que hacía / Fabia, o Marcela, hija mía, / a quien amaba el autor, / han hecho tan

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529 "GINÉS: Celio, ¿qué te digo, Celio? / Di que salgan; que ya he dicho / de improviso todo esto; / mira que se acaba aquí / este romance. CELIO: Ya veo / que hablas sin papel. / GINÉS: Sin duda se están vistiendo; / repetir quiero otra vez / aquellos primeros versos;" (vv. 2000–2008).



verdadero, / que han salido del Palacio, / y [...] / [...] n[o] hay un hombre / que diga por dónde van” vv. 2017–2033). When, in response to this, Ginés asks Diocleciano to let Octavio, the ‘traitor,’ be persecuted, because otherwise it would be impossible to tell the end of the story,<sup>530</sup> it is still not clear to the emperor whether this is part of the fictional play or not, or whether it was a new way of acting or dramatic fashion to involve the audience in the improvisation and turn the spectators themselves into actors (“DIOCL.: ¿Es esto representar / y a la invención conveniente, / o quieres mostrar, Ginés, / que con burlas semejantes / nos haces representantes?” vv. 2042–2046). Thus, the suspension of the border between fiction and reality reaches a new level. Ginés disabuses Diocleciano of his assumption and answers that it was certain that Octavio was in love with Marcela and that the two had indeed fled together, and thus made use of his intended trick to have life imitate theater and inflicted on him the *engaño* that he himself had written.<sup>531</sup> Diocleciano, however, is not convinced of Ginés’ sincerity and reacts more and more indignantly to the confusion: “¡Por Júpiter, que sospecho, / y no sé si lo rehuse, / que quieres que represente! / ¿Hablas de veras o no?” (vv. 2054–2057). Thereupon, Pinabelo enters and announces that Octavio has returned. Fabricio instantly points out Ginés’ great acting to the emperor, and Ginés himself subsequently expresses his gratitude for the emperor’s participation in the play. Diocleciano, now in a good mood, interprets everything as a successful *burla*. Since, however, he himself had taken on a part in the play and had been an actor himself, he declared that he would not pay for today’s performance, which was now declared to be over. For the next day, however, he commanded the performance of a different play, in which Ginés should play the Christian: “[...] quiero ver / cómo finges un Cristiano” (vv. 2076 f.), to which Ginés himself replies that that is indeed what he did best: “Verás, señor soberano, / lo mejor que suelo hacer” (vv. 2078).<sup>532</sup>

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530 “[...] señor, / manda seguir al traidor / que se lleva esa mujer, / sin la cual es imposible / poder la historia acabar” (vv. 2037–2041).

531 “GINÉS: No, señor; muy cierto es / que Octavio amaba a Marcela, / y porque como a su autor / me mostró su padre amor, / trazaron esta cautela; / de suerte que yo compuse / el engaño que me han hecho” (vv. 2047–2053).

532 “FABRICIO: Mira, gran señor, si ha sido / Ginés buen representante. / GINÉS: Yo quiero de aquí adelante / darte, gran señor, partido, / pues tan bien me has ayudado / para proseguir mi intento. / DIOCL.: De la burla estoy contento, / y pues he representado / mi figura en vuestra historia, / no es razón que el tesoro / os pague. GINÉS: Por compañero / igual, lo tendré por gloria. / DIOCL.: Pues no paséis adelante; / pero mañana volved / para que os haga merced, / pues hoy soy representante; / y advierte que quiero ver / cómo finges un cristiano” (vv. 2060–2077).



While the spectators are still in the midst of leaving, Ginés asks Pinabelo whether he was telling the truth before and Marcela had indeed returned, or whether his message about Octavio's return was merely to diffuse the anger of the emperor. ("Saber, Pinabel, deseo / si es cierto el volver Marcela, / o fue porque no se enoje / el Emperador" vv. 2083–2086). Obviously, even Ginés was struggling to keep the two realms of fiction and fact separate, and therefore could not correctly identify how to understand Pinabelo's words. Was it the 'character' Octavio who had returned, or the actor? Pinabelo tells him that in fact no, Octavio had not returned and that Marcela and Octavio had actually run off together. Ironically, however, choosing the same mode of transport as the lovers in the play: "GINÉS: Luego mi agravio / es cierto. PINABELO: Y que ella [Marcela] y Octavio / se van, Ginés, a embarcar" (vv. 2089–2091). When Ginés then articulates the pain of his jealousy, his 'burning desire' for Marcela in the final verses of the second act, he consciously repeats parts of his character's speech. The emotions he portrayed in the role of Rufino when he learned of his bride Fabia's escape now correspond to his own, the pain and anger are real ("mi tormento es cierto" v. 2095), fiction has become reality.<sup>533</sup> His immediate reaction is to exclaim: "¡Oh, terrible desconcierto!" (v. 2092). On the one hand, this may refer to his inner turmoil – after all, his love has run away with his rival – on the other hand, it may refer to his plan that has been turned on its head and thus 'foiled.' It had, after all, been his intention to use the *comedia* to manipulate the real relationships to his advantage by fueling Octavio's jealousy and regaining Marcela's affection.

This sentence, however, also expresses a characteristic element of this second act, Ginés' *comedia de amor* – the first 'play within the play' in Lope's play presents a well-staged '*desconcierto*,' which problematizes the 'correct classification' of what is being perceived as 'real' or 'fictitious' and destabilizes the boundary between *fingido* and *verdadero*. To recap: Ginés, who is in love with Marcela, plays Rufino, who desires Fabia, who is played by Marcela; Octavio, who bears the same name in the play, is the rival of both Ginés (in the inner reality)/Rufino (in the inner play); Marcela (in reality) as well as Fabia (in fiction) love Octavio; Marcela's father Fabricio plays Tebandro, Fabia's

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533 "Quiero volver a decir, / pues que mi tormento es cierto, / que la [here: Marcela] tengan los cielos, / que mal la alcanzarán mis pensamientos / si camina por agua y yo por fuego" (vv. 2094–2098). These are verses that Ginés speaks twice in his stage role as Rufino. In Rufino's jealousy monologue applauded by the audience (vv. 1923–1954, here v. 1952 ff.: "pero tenedla, cielos, / que mal la [here: Fabia] alcanzarán mis pensamientos / si camina por agua y yo por fuego") and then once again as part of his improvisation to bridge the pause caused by the missing return of his fellow actors to the stage (vv. 2009 ff.).

father. Even though the viewer/reader, in contrast to the audience on stage, knows from the beginning about the relationships between the actors and the intention of the play's author, this knowledge does not necessarily result in being able to determine clearly between fiction and reality in the context of the play and the 'play within the play.' This pre-knowledge often actually complicates matters. The permeability of fiction and reality (in the conversation between Ginés/Rufino and Marcela/Fabia, the flight of Octavio/Fabia or Octavio/Marcela, etc.) causes those moments in the 'play within the play' not clearly marked as 'reality' (as, for example, when the actors real names are used) to, at least potentially, be 'under the suspicion' of also being 'true' and not belonging to the play. The blurring of the boundaries between fiction and reality in this scene includes the experience of the (imperial) audience, who are not only led to doubt the status of what they are seeing on the stage before them, (thereby manifesting the problematic distinguishability of 'real' and 'fake,' even in a framework that is clearly identified as 'fictitious') but are also subject to the 'extension of the stage' to the audience space<sup>534</sup>: 'De la burla estoy contento, / [...] he representado / mi figura en vuestra historia[.]' and '[...] hoy soy representante;', Diocleciano finally states, when he terminates the performance. Shortly before, Pinabelo had announced Octavio's return on stage. Unlike the internal audience, the viewer/reader knows at the end of the second act that this was not true, but, as Barbara Simerka puts it: "Here, the spectators can be confident about their own knowledge of the truth, but also see how easily truth can be manipulated."<sup>535</sup>

In the beginning of the third *jornada* Diocleciano and Camila confess their love for each other. Diocleciano is then informed about the *fieras* ('beasts/wild creatures') who have been brought to Rome in honor of the festivities.<sup>536</sup>

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534 See also Fischer's classification of the first play within the play: "Act II of Lope's *tragicomedia* is mainly concerned with the staging of a play-within-a-play that takes the form of an improvisation by Ginés' acting troupe" ("Dramatization of the Theatrical Experience" [cf. note 494], p. 161).

535 Simerka, "Metatheater and Skepticism" (cf. note 2), pp. 50–73, here p. 67.

536 Taking up nearly a hundred lines (vv. 2139–2236), the enumeration of the 'monsters' brought from all over the world includes real animals endowed with marvelous qualities, such as lion, bear, wild boar, panther, tiger, monkey, rhinoceros, crocodile etc., as well as mythical creatures, such as Pegasus ("un Pegaso" [v. 2203]), "un cinoprosopo" (v. 2167) – a creature with a dog's head and human body –, "un onocentauro ['donkey centaur'] / con rostro de hombre, y el cuerpo / de una bestia [...]" (vv. 2213 ff.) etc. This list of 'mythical creatures' was based primarily on Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, for this and other sources used by Lope for this material (especially Antonio de Torquemada, *El jardín de flores curiosas* [1570] and Pedro Mexía, *Silva de varia lección* [1540]), see E. di Pinto, "La tradición animalística clásica en *Lo fingido verdadero*" (cf. note 494). For di Pinto,

Camila notes that the wildest animal, however, that by far surpasses all the ones mentioned in cruelty, was love.<sup>537</sup> She also declares that she was unwilling to attend the spectacles if prisoners were to be thrown to the beasts, because she did not want to see them being killed, for they were human beings and she respected all human beings. Thereupon, Diocleciano decides to

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the monologue is ‘*enumeratio*’ (“[...] las referencias animalísticas no tienen una importancia simbólica; [...] tenemos una serie de animales [...] que forman parte de una mera *enumeratio* [...]” [p. 200]), and it had been able to appeal to the ‘ordinary people’ and the learned audiences alike (the former had been amazed, the latter had been demonstrated their versatile education and they could have found pleasure in tracing the references transported with the animals). It was to be understood as a scenery of words and was an indication for the metatheatrical dimension of Lope’s play, because: “[...] [L]os espectadores llegan a ver la escena descrita [...] porque ‘quieren’ creer en lo que [se] describe [...] implicándose en el juego de participar activamente en la representación” (cf. p. 212, quote: *ibid.*). However, the passage certainly also suggests an allegorical reading. Nolting-Hauff points to the presence of ‘traditional emblematic motifs’ (“traditionelle [n] emblematische[n] Motive”), which, according to her interpretation, ‘indicate that the focus here is on Diocleciano’s rise to power and his transformation into a tyrant’ (“[...] darauf hin [deuten], daß es hier [...] um den Aufstieg Diocleциanos und seine Wandlung zum Tyrannen geht”) (see “*Lo fingido verdadero*” [cf. note 491], p. 79 with notes 31–33 [p. 87], quote: p. 79). I would like to mention two examples, cited as well by Nolting-Hauff: “un pathaga semejante / [...] / al cocodrilo de Egypto, / que llora y que mata luego;” (vv. 2209–2212) and “[...] un dragón que, asido al pecho / de un elefante, le mata, / aunque no se alaba dello, / porque cayendo sobre él, / mata al que le mata, muerto[;]” (vv. 2228–2232). The emblematic meaning of the crocodile weeping for its victims is ‘false friendship’ (“falsche Freundschaft” [see Arthur Henkel/Albrecht Schöne (eds.), *Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1967, cols. 672 f.]). The emblematic meaning of the dragon who is dying himself when he kills an elephant is ‘deadly victory’ and ‘punished tyranny’ (“tödlicher Sieg,” “bestrafte Tyrannei” [cols. 411 ff.]). Nolting-Hauff points out that ‘the other animal names, too, seem to refer predominantly to the tyrant’s wrath and ingratitude’ (“Die übrigen Tiernamen scheinen ebenfalls vorwiegend auf Zorn und Undankbarkeit des Tyrannen zu verweisen”) (“*Lo fingido verdadero*,” p. 79, with note 32 and reference to Henkel/Schöne, *Emblemata* and the index printed there regarding Filippo Picinelli, *Mundus Symbolicus* [1681], cols. 2113–2196, here col. 2120 [boar], col. 2160 [lynx], col. 2125 [bison], col. 2190 [tiger], col. 2178 [rhinoceros]).

**537** The ‘fiera amor’ would not even fear death in its pursuit of pleasure, and, furthermore, which was far more serious, it would inflict harm to the soul (“ninguna [fiera] viene tan fuerte, / porque no teme a la muerte / adonde su gusto espera. / Ellas pueden hacer daño / en las vidas; pero amor / en las almas, que es rigor / más estupendo y extraño” [the passage in total vv. 2237–2252, here vv. 2245–2252]). – Also the description of love as the cruelest and invincible *fiera* is an allusion to traditional emblems: see Henkel/Schöne (eds.), *Emblemata* (cf. note 536), cols. 385 f. (“gezähmte Löwen vor dem Wagen Amors,” “gezähmter Löwe, auf dem Amor reitet” – “Macht der Liebe” [tamed lions hitched to Cupid’s carriage; a tamed lion on whom Cupid is riding – the power of love]). The reference to this in Nolting-Hauff, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 491), p. 87, note 31.

renounce this cruelty (“No se trate más / esta fiesta de las fieras, / que no es fiesta la crueldad: / véalas por novedad / Roma” vv. 2268–2272). This cancellation (of the accepted Roman practice of killing people for the purpose of entertainment) in the name of ‘love’ foreshadows the shift of the empire, slightly later in history, towards Christian humanitarian values. Ginés is then called and Diocleciano inquires into Marcela and Octavio’s whereabouts. Ginés reports that Marcela’s father had found them, they were married, and he had forgiven them and taken them back into the acting company, adding that he did not even feel jealous anymore. Diocleciano notes that this was a characteristic feature of poets, and repeats his commission: “La imitación / del cristiano bautizado, / porque es un extremo en ti. / [. . .] / pon el teatro, y prevén / lo necesario;” (vv. 2312–2318). When, after that, Ginés is alone, he expresses, in the form of a sonnet monologue and using traditional metaphors of Baroque love poetry, his realization of the duplicity of love and his own hitherto false way of loving. Love had pushed him into such misfortune during his youth that he had thought that in the ‘sea of its deceptions’ (“por el mar de sus engaños” v. 2327) he would not reach the port, but rather find his grave. However, although this fire (of love) lasted even in the ashes, he already felt its injuries far less strongly. He had loved jealously and now sought to distance himself from this understanding of love by classifying what he had previously called love as *locura* (madness): “amé con celos, mas con desengaños / no pienso que es amor, sino locura” (vv. 2331 f.). He continues: while living in deception, an offended lover’s sorrows might well remain in the faith of feigned, false love. It did not matter what the offended wished, because those who love jealously had already reached the beginning of oblivion.<sup>538</sup> It should be noted at this point that, in light of what is to happen later in the third act, Ginés’ abandonment of his previous love, which was marred by jealousy, is based on a shift or transition, of which the protagonist himself is not yet aware; namely, a turning away from worldly, deceptive, false, destructive love in the sense of desire, towards, eventually, ‘true’ Christian love. In the subsequent conversation between Ginés and Marcela, the events of the past day, specifically the *amor fingido* (v. 2341) are discussed. To Ginés’ question as to whether her love for him had been

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538 The sonnet in its entirety: “Amor me puso en tanta desventura / la verde primavera de mis años, / que pensé por el mar de sus engaños / en vez del puerto hallar la sepultura. / Y aunque este fuego en las cenizas dura, / ya con menos rigor siento sus daños; / amé con celos, mas con desengaños / no pienso que es amor, sino locura. / Bien pueden mientras viven engañados / conservarse en la fe de amor fingido, / de un ofendido amante los cuidados. / ¿Y qué importa que quiera el ofendido? / Que quien ama con celos declarados, / ya llega a los principios del olvido” (vv. 2325–2338).

'fictitious' Marcela answers that it was, but her love for the man she truly loved is sincere and faithful.<sup>539</sup> Here, once again, the overlap between fiction and reality that Ginés had instigated and which then slipped out of his control, becomes apparent. Marcela draws Ginés' attention to his own guilt, for it was only through the *comedia* he had written that she had become completely sure of her love for Octavio. Ginés replies that his intention had been quite different, but that he did not bear grudges and wished her all the best.<sup>540</sup> The two then engage in a somewhat flirtatious banter<sup>541</sup> that is immediately categorized by Ginés as 'play,' i.e. false, and which will serve him as a useful source for the scene of a future play ("A tus razones advierto: / dellas quiero aprovecharme / para escribir en un paso / esto que contigo paso, / pues parece que los dos / *representamos*" vv. 2377–2382; my italics). Octavio, now Marcela's husband, comes along and is obviously jealous.<sup>542</sup> From his perspective, fictitious love, whether in the form of Marcela's flirting with Ginés or her acting on stage, and real love are indistinguishable, both appearing to him as true ("Celos son todos, quimeras; / haz, Marcela, lo que te digo, / que aun las burlas, no las veras / que representa [Ginés] contigo, / me parecen verdaderas" vv. 2404–2408).

Ginés, now alone, prepares for his stage role as a Christian martyr ("[...] bueno será / pensar en esta figura / [...]; [...] un cristiano [...] / que firme en su ley está. / ¿Cómo haré yo que parezca / que soy el mismo cristiano / cuando al tormento me ofrezca? / ¿Con qué acción, qué rostro y mano / en que alabanza merezca?" vv. 2414–2423). He rehearses for his role as a Christian who

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539 Vv. 2344–2348.

540 "MARCELA: [...] tú, que compusiste / la comedia en que me diste / a Fabia, que a Octavio amó, / y el camino me enseñó, / luego la culpa tuviste. / GINÉS: Compuse que te ausentabas / de tu padre con Octavio, / a quien con extremo amabas, / para sentir el agravio / con que entonces me tratabas, / mas no para que te fueses. / MARCELA: Pues yo lo entendí mejor. / GINÉS: Que muy contenta estuvieses / querría" (vv. 2354–2367). Besides his intention to make his competitor Octavio jealous with the *comedia*, Ginés also expresses here the wish, through Marcela's temporary disappearance that he wrote into his play, to be able to feel even more clearly his own pain, which he really feels and experiences on stage, over this hurt. The set of issues of *fingido amor* does not only include the problem of potentially false, feigned love on an interpersonal level due to the complicated interweaving of stage role and 'real' life of the lovers or rejected lovers, but also involves the level of play/fiction, inasmuch as love and emotions are 'faked' for the audience.

541 "GINÉS: Tengo a tus mudanzas miedo. / MARC.: Si me mudo, te amaré. / GINÉS: ¿Y mudaraste? MARC.: No sé. / GINÉS: Con buena esperanza quedo. / MARC.: ¿No dices que he de mudarme? / GINÉS: Sí. MARC.: Pues si lo sabes, cierto / no harás mucho en aguardarme" (vv. 2370–2376).

542 See, e.g.: "¿Qué comedia prevendrán? / Honra y vergüenza reporta / celos que los dos me dan" (vv. 2386 ff.).

dies for his faith, beginning with the visualization of elements of Christian beliefs and rites that he considers relevant to perfect his portrayal. He discusses how he will first invoke Christ and Mary – a scene which he declares is very well written (“[...] pienso que muy bien / todo aquel paso escribí” vv. 2427 f.). He will then plead with the saints, tear down the idols in anger, show himself as if he were being tortured, and become aware of how the firmament was opening and a martyr was speaking to him or he to him. This scene too he praises with the words “¡bravo paso, industria brava!” (v. 2441). Finally, he will end by scolding the emperor for being a cruel man. He then recites an impassioned speech, continuing to comment on his own performance (“bien voy, bien le muestro furia” v. 2445; “¡Qué bien levanto la voz!” v. 2453). While rehearsing, however, Ginés apparently works himself more and more intensively into the state of a Christian martyr, to the extent that he pleads to receive the grace of baptism:

Ahora volverme quiero  
al cielo, y llamar los santos,  
como que su gloria espero  
para ser uno de tantos  
por este tormento fiero.  
Santos mártires, rogad  
a Cristo, en cuya Pasión  
hallasteis facilidad  
para tormentos, que son  
de menos atrocidad.  
Que me dé esfuerzo y valor;  
y pues no puedo, en rigor,  
porque lo decís vos mismo,  
ir a vos sin el bautismo,  
dadme el bautismo, Señor.

(vv. 2454–2468)

When he speaks these words, ‘heaven opens’ and the Holy Mary, Jesus Christ, and God the Father appear on the heavenly throne, surrounded by several martyrs.<sup>543</sup> Ginés does not react to this phenomenon – the impressive image is obviously visible to the spectators/readers but not to the protagonist, or, rather, it is suggested that he does not (yet) want to see it. Ginés does notice, however,

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**543** The stage direction says: “Con música se abran en alto unas puertas en que se vean pintados una imagen de Nuestra Señora y un Cristo en brazos del Padre, y por las gradas de este trono algunos mártires.” (in the edition used here on p. 138). For the contemporary realization of the scene in terms of stage machinery, see Aszyk, “Hacia una reconstrucción de la puesta en escena original de *Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 487), p. 173.

that his request for baptism is not in the script (“¿Cómo dije que pedía / bautismo, pues no escribí / lo del bautismo aquel día?” vv. 2469–2471),<sup>544</sup> and that he has heard celestial sounds (“¿Y cómo en el cielo oí / tanto aplauso y armonía?” vv. 2472 f.), but he immediately rejects this as a sensory delusion (“Mas débome de engañar;” v. 2474). With the aim of being able to play his role as a Christian even more convincingly in the performance before the emperor (because: “¿qué mejor puedo imitar / si fuera el cristiano mismo / que se pretende salvar?” vv. 2476–2478), he repeats the plea for baptism.<sup>545</sup> Thereupon, a voice announces him that his acting will not be in vain, but that he will be saved (“VOZ: No le imitarás en vano, / Ginés; que te has de salvar” vv. 2487 f.). The visibly confused Ginés concludes that one possible explanation for what he just heard is that one of the actors from his group, having observed his rehearsal, had given him this cue from afar.<sup>546</sup> However, he also immediately considers that what he heard was not an imitation, not part of the play, but actually the voice of Christ calling him with the promise of the salvation of his soul through baptism:

[. . .] salvarme es llegar,  
Cristo, a bautizarme yo.  
Aunque en burlas, con mal celo,  
Ginés, imitar esperas  
a los cristianos, recelo  
que debe de ser veras  
ir los cristianos al cielo.  
La voz que todo mi oído  
me ha penetrado el sentido,  
sospecho que fuera bien  
pensar que es Cristo, si es quien  
me ha tocado y me ha movido.

(vv. 2497–2508)

Ginés’ thoughts now revolve around Christian beliefs and his own inner reaction, still inexplicable to him, to this ‘call from heaven,’ which he is not sure is

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**544** Thus, it can be assumed that the explicit request for baptism has so far not been part of Ginés’ repertoire in the role of the Christian. The interpretation that Ginés previously performed himself into a state of frenzy remains an interpretation that is in principle only possible in retrospect.

**545** “Ea, pues: a decirlo vuelvo: / santos, rógadse lo a Dios, / pues a serlo me resuelvo; / tenga yo el cielo por vos. / ¡Que de quimeras revuelvo, / con deseo de acertar / a imitar este cristiano / que el César manda imitar!” (vv. 2479–2486).

**546** “[. . .] sería, / aunque lejos de este puesto, / alguien de mi compañía / que me vió tratando desto. / ¡Oh, qué bien me respondió! / La voz del cielo imitó;” (vv. 2490–2495).

authentic or sensory deception (“¿Qué me espanta / que penetre mi sentido / su nombre con fuerza tanta?” vv. 2531–2533). According to the Christians, Ginés continues, Jesus Christ died in torment for mankind and thereby opened for them the gate of heaven closed by sin. Baptism was necessary to enter heaven, those who moved away from God would go to hell, and therefore it was not surprising that Christians died for their Lord.<sup>547</sup>

So absorbed is he in his thoughts that he does not even seem to notice that the young actor Fabio has joined him (“FABIO: Divertido, / no me ha visto” vv. 2530 f.) and he is therefore hardly able to follow Fabio’s words. The latter complains to Ginés that Marcela had just assigned him the role of the angel, which was supposed to be her role, and voices his concern that given this late assignment he does not know his text and is concerned that the performance will be a failure as a result. This leads to several misunderstandings. When Ginés apologizes to Fabio for his inattentiveness by saying that when he played the Christian, he was so ‘beside himself’ and ‘enraptured’ that he thought the ‘sublime angel’ had spoken to him (“Perdona, que divertido / en imitar al cristiano / fuera me vi de sentido, / pensando que el soberano / ángel me hablaba al oído” vv. 2554–2558), Fabio does not really understand what Ginés is talking about, and replies: “Yo soy quien de ángel te hablé” (v. 2560), for he had been talking to him *about* the angel (“GINÉS: ¿Tú del ángel? FABIO: Ginés, sí.” v. 2561). Ginés interprets this sentence according to his first assumption about the ontological status of the words he had heard, namely that he was not playing in vain and that his soul would be saved. Consequently, it had not been a heavenly voice, but Fabio, who had approached him ‘*as* angel’ (also “de ángel”), as actor in the role of an angel: “Luego en la voz me engañé, / que ser del cielo entendí” (vv. 2562 f.). Fabio then attempts to explain Ginés’ supposed encounter with the supernatural by attributing it to his worldly desire for love, in particular his love for Marcela. A theory that Ginés rejects: “Como Marcela es tu cielo, / y el ángel había de hacer, / pensando en ella recelo / que piensas que ha de poder / glorificarte en el suelo” (vv. 2564–2568). Shortly thereafter, Ginés reiterates his doubts about what he had perceived: either he had been deceived by heaven, or heaven had truly spoken to him, and he immediately reverts back to the explanation that it must have been Fabio’s voice (“O el cielo de burlas anda, / o sentí su voz suave. / Mas Fabio debió de ser / que en lo del ángel me habló” vv. 2572–2575). Regarding the last words spoken in this scene – “¡Cristo mío, pues sois Dios, / vos me llevaréis a vos, / que yo desde ahora os sigo!” (vv. 2586–2588) – it cannot be clearly determined, however, whether Ginés expresses himself here as Ginés,

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547 Vv. 2509–2516, vv. 2518–2520, vv. 2537–2540.



i.e. whether he ‘speaks in earnest’ and thus already at this point his ‘inner transformation’ to Christian faith has taken place, or whether the utterance is made ‘in play,’ i.e. in the role of the Christian, inasmuch as shortly beforehand Ginés announced that he wanted to go through the text again with Fabio (v. 2584).

Diocleciano, Camila, Maximiano, and Léntulo take their seats and the second ‘play within the play’ of *Lo fingido verdadero* begins, this one however is not a comedy but a tragedy (“CAMILA: Silencio, que comienza la tragedia” v. 2601). As in the second act, the actual performance is preceded by a short piece of music that outlines the foundations of Christian faith, the incarnate Logos and Jesus Christ’s redeeming death as well as martyrdom as a guarantor for an eternal life in the kingdom of God (vv. 2602–2613). This not only sets the theme for the inner play, but also foreshadows the later events of the last act, and it is preceded by a *loa* presented here by Marcela (vv. 2614–2679). According to tradition, the *loa* is addressed to whatever rulers are present and evokes their generosity. For this purpose, the image of the *generoso elefante* (v. 2614) is used. The naturalists told of the strange and incredible characteristics of this animal, begins Marcela’s speech and she goes on to mention the case of an elephant who had learned to write (vv. 2619–2629), and an elephant who had sadly plunged into the sea after another had been preferred to him in war (vv. 2630–2637). These were individual cases, but they were said to have two things of a general nature, which were useful to express her (Marcela’s) intention. First, when elephants passed through a herd of lambs, they would push them aside with their trunks so that they would not trample over them; second, if a herd of elephants reached a river, they would always let the smaller ones pass first and safely reach the other bank, fearing that if large and small animals crossed the river at the same time, the water could rise to such an extent that the smaller ones would be in danger of drowning (vv. 2642–2655).<sup>548</sup> Marcela then relates this image of the ‘magnanimous elephant’ panegyrically to the performance situation: the actors are compared to a ‘poor, humble herd of gentle lambs’ who had come to the field with their ‘*autor*’ Ginés and served the Caesars devotedly. She hoped that the emperors, to whom the whole world surrendered, would use their ‘invincible

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**548** The qualities of elephants presented by Marcela, both those of the ‘astonishing individual cases’ as well as the latter two, can be found in Pliny (cf. *Naturalis historia* VIII, chap. 5 [When crossing waters they first let the small elephants pass; Suicide of an elephant out of disgrace, here, however, by starvation]; VIII, chap. 3 [an elephant that was able to write]; VIII, chap. 7 [Elephants behave considerately against weaker animals, they push aside sheep with their trunk in order to not step on them] [Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis historia/Natural History*, Latin-English, trans. and ed. Harris Rackham, 10 vols., London/Cambridge, MA 1958–1966, vol. 3 (1961), pp. 6–19]).

hands' to brush aside their humility (that of the 'actors-lambs') ("Si dos Césares contemplo / que en aqueste campo asisten, / donde, cual tiernos corderos, / manada pobre y humilde, / vienen con su autor Ginés, los que humildemente os sirven, / bien será que desviéis / con las manos invencibles / nuestra humildad, siendo a quien / toda la tierra se rinde;" vv. 2656–2665). It was due to them, the emperors, that they could all cross the great waters unscathed – i.e., that the performance would run well – thus, Marcela asks the imperial highness to step aside and watch them from the outside until they (the actors) safely reached the other side – that is, to clear the stage for the theater performance ("y si en mar de tal grandeza, / [. . .] / habemos de estar, señores, / advertid que no es posible / que nos dejéis anegar; / y así es justo que que os suplique / que la Majestad se aparte, / y desde fuera nos mire / hasta que estemos en salvo, / porque ninguno peligre; / haced nos este favor [. . .]" vv. 2667–2676).

As Nolting-Hauff<sup>549</sup> points out, the images evoked in the *loa* are emblematic: 'Elephant lets a lamb pass' ("Elefant läßt Lamm vorbeigehen") means 'humility overcomes pride' ("Demut überwindet Hochmut"), 'Elephant lets lambs pass' ("Elefant läßt Lämmer vorbeigehen") stands for 'leniency of the ruler' ("Milde des Herrschers").<sup>550</sup> She also draws attention to another dimension of the simile: allegorically elephants also stand for 'terrible sinners who Christ converts and uses for the ornament of the Church' ("Elephanten [. . .] designare possunt immanes peccatores, quos convertens Christus, utitur illis ad ornamentum Ecclesiae [. . .]," as it says in Hieronymus Lauretus' *Silva allegoriarum*).<sup>551</sup> Consequently, according to Nolting-Hauff, 'the two pagan emperors are reproached here with the counter-image of their successors converted to Christianity.'<sup>552</sup> Another aspect of the images used in the *loa* also seems worth mentioning in the context of Christian symbolism (*pastor* and *agnus*) and thus with regard to the anticipation of the coming events in the play: if, in the comparison that Marcela draws between the actors and a flock of lambs, Ginés, in his role as *autor* is compared to a shepherd, this may already allude to the fact that he later actually professes himself to Christ, the 'good shepherd,' and is prepared to die a martyr's death for his faith, which in turn represents an *imitatio* of the Passion of Christ, the sacrificial death of the 'Lamb of God.'

549 Nolting-Hauff, "Lo fingido verdadero" (cf. note 491), pp. 78 f. with note 29 (p. 87).

550 Henkel/Schöne (eds.), *Emblemata* (cf. note 536), cols. 414 ff.

551 Hieronymus Lauretus, *Silva allegoriarum totius sacrae scripturae* (1570), intr. Friedrich Ohly, Munich 1971 (repr. of the 10th edition: Cologne 1681), p. 384.

552 Nolting-Hauff, "Lo fingido verdadero" (cf. note 491), p. 79 ("[. . .] den beiden heidnischen Kaisern [wird] das Gegenbild ihrer zum Christentum bekehrten Nachfolger vorgehalten [. . .]"), with note 30, p. 87.

At the beginning of the play, Ginés, accompanied by soldiers, enters the stage as a captive Christian<sup>553</sup> who joyfully looks forward to martyrdom and death (“Contento a la muerte voy. / [...] / Maltratadme, despreciadme, / mostrad en mí vuestras furias, / decidme infamias e injurias, / y a vuestro gusto llevadme; / que por Cristo todo es gloria” vv. 2683–2692). The immediate reactions of Diocleciano and Maximiano to this performance already point to aspects that will soon be relevant on the level of ‘reality’ of the play. Diocleciano’s remark, “¡Qué bien comienza la historia! / Este cristiano va preso” (vv. 2695 f.), shows explicitly, for the first time, his (historically accurate) character as a harsh persecutor of Christians and points to the arrest of the ‘Christian Ginés’ that he later orders be carried out. Maximiano’s statement, made as a compliment to the acting performance, “Representale Ginés / que parece que lo es, / y verdadero el suceso” (vv. 2697 ff.), manifests the difficulty of distinguishing between *fingido* and *verdadero*. As will become apparent in the further course of the ‘play within the play’ and the merging of fiction and reality, what the audience – not least because of the convention, i.e. the situation designated as ‘play’ – classifies as a perfect representation precisely because it accurately reflects the imitated original, actually corresponds to reality. Ginés’ acting persona ellides with Ginés the person. When Ginés then asks for baptism, not without mentioning the possibility of ‘blood baptism’ (“¡Ay, Señor! ¡Quién estuviera, / ya que es vuestro, bautizado[!] / [...] / [...] bien sé que basta / mi sangre” vv. 2700–2705), one of the players representing the soldiers notes that these lines were not in the text, but another immediately refers to Ginés’ talent for improvisation, saying that he was probably embellishing the performance in order to impress the emperor. An angel appears above the stage and asks Ginés to come up to him so that he could baptize him (“ÁNGEL: Sube, sube, llega a verme; / que te quiero bautizar” vv. 2716 f.; the stage direction reads: “UN ÁNGEL en lo alto.”). Ginés follows this command, saying that his innermost wish will now be fulfilled (“Señor, aunque no sé hablar, / Tú sabes bien entenderme; pues este lenguaje mudo / de mi pensamiento entiendes; / llévame donde pretendes” vv. 2718–2722; stage direction: “Sube Ginés donde está el ángel.”). The scene is again commented on by both the actors and the spectators. While the former discuss the deviation from the intended play (“CAPITÁN: El fin deste paso dudo; / que no se ensayaba así” vv. 2723 f.), the latter explain it to each other in the context of the Christian conception of faith, which they condemn.<sup>554</sup> Ginés’

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<sup>553</sup> The Capitán addresses Ginés with “León” (“CAPITÁN: Mucho, León, replicáis.” [v. 2682]), this, however, is the only reference in the entire drama to Ginés’ stage role name as a Christian.

<sup>554</sup> E.g.: “DIOCL.: Ginés / finge ahora que después / que a Jesucristo adoró, / que es el Dios de los cristianos, / aquel ángel viene a verle, / a enseñarle y defenderle. / MAX.: ¡Qué de encantamientos vanos!” (vv. 2729–2735).

baptism has just taken place, and he had now disappeared behind a curtain<sup>555</sup> (and is standing on the corridor above the stage): music sounds and four angels with corresponding objects (baptismal font, aquamanile, white baptism candle, and baptism bonnet) become visible above the stage (for the spectator/reader as well as for the internal audience).<sup>556</sup>

Ginés' speech that follows these events (vv. 2744–2757), is in sonnet form and addressed to the Christian God. In it he praises God's omniscience<sup>557</sup> and potency, referring to persons and events of both the Old and the New Testament that prefigure the 'proclamation of God' or the salvation of a sinner.<sup>558</sup> Likewise, he, Ginés, a 'sinner converted to the true faith,' strives, through his life or rather by his death, to be 'the proclaimer of faith.'<sup>559</sup> Ginés formulates his willingness to sacrifice himself ("benedicid este pan, pues vuestro es" vv. 2754) and asks God to 'play' with him together from now on: "Representad conmigo desde hoy más; / haced vos las piedades de Jesús, / que yo haré los martirios de Ginés" (vv. 2755 ff.). The spectators continue to be full of praise for what they still consider a performance. Their enthusiasm culminates in Léntulo's paradoxical statement: "No hay diferencia / desto al verdadero caso" (vv. 2760 f.).<sup>560</sup> The scene seems so well done that from

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555 "CAPITÁN: ¿Adónde va por allí? / SOLDADO: No sé; mas ya se cubrió / de una cortina" (vv. 2727 ff.).

556 The stage direction reads: "Descúbrese con música, hincado de rodillas, un ángel; tenga una fuente, otro un aguamanil levantado, como que ya le echó el agua, y otro una vela blanca encendida, y otro un capillo" (p. 147). For the practical realization of the scene on the *corral* stage, see Aszyk, "Hacia una reconstrucción de la puesta en escena original de *Lo fingido verdadero*" (cf. note 487), pp. 175 f. (*en lo alto* refers to a corridor above the stage, which could be reached via a staircase inside the dressing-room. The Corral del Príncipe, the theater which Aszyk refers to in her scenographic reconstruction, was equipped with two such corridors above the stage. When Ginés [or more precisely the actor playing Ginés] disappears behind the curtain, he goes via the dressing-room up to the *corredor superior*, where the actor who played the angel that called for Ginés was previously standing. It is from here that Ginés gives the subsequent monologue. Then the curtain of the upper stage level closes again and the actor returns to the main stage through the dressing room.)

557 "Señor divino, que miráis y oís / los pensamientos, porque en fin, sois Dios" (vv. 2744 f.).

558 Mention is made of the prophet Amos ("[...] un profeta hacéis de un rudo Amós" v. 2746), the apparition of Jesus on the road to Emmaus ("y os mostrasteis ser Dios en Emaús" v. 2753), the salvation of Jonah from the belly of the whale ("vos, que del mar sacasteis a Jonás[,] [v. 2752]), the resurrection of Lazarus ("y un Lázaró difunto revivís" v. 2747) and the so-called 'good thief' ("vos que un ladrón donde reináis subís, / porque muriendo se convierte a vos;" vv. 2748 f.).

559 For this passage, see Nolting-Hauff's elaboration on the *typoi* referring to the protagonist: "*Lo fingido verdadero*" (cf. note 491), p. 77.

560 Cf. as well: "CAMILA: ¡Cuál estaba en el bautismo / imitando a los cristianos, / humilde y puestas las manos!", and Diocleciano's answer to this: "Parece que lo es él mismo" (vv. 2762–2765).

the stage audience's perspective there is no discernible difference between 'play' (the fake conversion and baptism) and 'reality' (true conversion). Only in retrospect will they begin to suspect that what they thought was fictitious must already have been reality itself. Ginés, who has returned to the actual stage (he had delivered his monologue while '*en lo alto*,' i.e. in the corridor above the stage)<sup>561</sup> proceeds with his speech and calls for his martyrdom ("¡Ea, amigos, que ya vengo / contento al martirio; vamos!" vv. 2774 f.). The actors are confused, since this part of the speech was not in the original script: "en todo el papel no tengo / ese paso ni ese pie" (vv. 2777 f.), says one of the soldier actors, and finally call several times for the prompter ("CAPITÁN: Dile que apunten allá, / que va perdido Ginés. / SOLDADO: ¡Hola! ¡Apunten!" [vv. 2794 ff.], a little later: "CAP.: Apunta, que va perdido. / Cuanto dice es de repente" vv. 2826 f.). Ginés, however, does not appear to be 'enraptured' in the sense that he is not capable of responding to his fellow actors.<sup>562</sup> In fact, he takes up the theatrical vocabulary used by them, integrates it into his speech as a new Christian who repents of his sins and looks forward to entering God's realm after death, expanding on the theatrical metaphor of life as the earthly 'stage' and the afterworld of the kingdom of God as true reality. God was his prompter, who had assigned him the role and the words:

Puso Dios en mi papel  
 estos pies; que no pudiera  
 seguirle si no pusiera  
 todos estos pies en él.  
 Con éstos le voy siguiendo  
 en la comedia y comida  
 de su mesa, y de la vida  
 y gloria que en Dios pretendo.  
 Y todo representante,  
 que todo el mundo lo es,  
 si no tuviere estos pies,  
 que se pierda no se espante.  
 [...]
 ¿[...] no ves  
 que el cielo me apunta ya,  
 desde que a un ángel oí  
 [...]:

<sup>561</sup> "Esto se cierre todo." (after the sonnet) and "Vaya saliendo de arriba, y bajando, Ginés." (after the comments by the audience), according to the stage directions (p. 148).

<sup>562</sup> In principle, it is still possible at this point, from the perspective of the audience/readers, to classify what is happening as the improvisation of the 'brilliant actor Ginés.'

“Camina, Ginés, camina,  
Ginés, que él lo dice así”?

(vv. 2782–2801)

Using acting metaphors, Ginés describes his conversion from sinner to Christian preacher of God. His role had been wrongly written, he had been mistaken,<sup>563</sup> but after the ‘angel from the heavenly dressing-room’ gave him the right cue, showed him the right way, he had given himself to God, had sincerely played the *comedia* before and for God and would now be “el mejor representante” (v. 2825), the ‘best actor,’ i.e. representative of faith<sup>564</sup>; he had learned all this, he adds, ‘through a miracle’ (“[...] milagrosamente / es todo aquesto aprendido” vv. 2828 f.).

The confusion on stage intensifies and extends to the audience, when Fabio finally enters the stage as an angel in order to perform the baptism of Ginés, as planned in the play. There is a dispute between Fabio and the Capitán, who reproaches Fabio for repeating the passage, since the scene of the baptism had after all already been played. Fabio replies that this was simply impossible, for he was entering the stage as an angel only now, for the first time.<sup>565</sup> At this point, in retrospect, it becomes clear that the first angel had been a real one, and that the first baptism actually took place. Diocleciano, angry about the argument on stage, demands that they respect his imperial presence and, after Ginés interjects to take the blame for the confusion, asks, indignantly, why they would put on a *comedia* in the first place, if they could not master it (vv. 2838–2845). At the Capitán’s request, however, Diocleciano attests to having seen the angel, but thinks, as do the rest of the audience and the other actors, that this had been the actor Fabio. Though the latter continues to assert that he had not previously appeared as an angel, neither the actors nor the audience believe him.<sup>566</sup> It should be noted that a structural element of

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563 “Estaba el papel errado: / donde Dios decir tenía, / demonio, amigos, decía, / y donde gracia, pecado; / donde cielo hermoso, infierno, / donde si errara me fuera, / donde vida, muerte fiera, / donde gloria, llanto eterno;” (vv. 2802–2809).

564 “pero después que apuntó / el ángel del vestuario / del cielo, y lo necesario / para acertar me enseñó, / yo dije a Dios mi papel / [...] / [...] / Oyeron de mi buen celo / la comedia, y era justo, / y en verdad que di gran gusto, / pues que llevan al cielo. / De Dios soy de aquí adelante, / que siéndolo de su fe, / dice el cielo que seré / el mejor representante” (vv. 2810–2825).

565 Cf. vv. 2830–2837.

566 “CAP.: ¿No vió aquí tu majestad / el ángel? DIOCL.: Sí. CAP.: Pues porfía [Fabio]/ que no ha salido, y quería / volver al paso. DIOCL.: Es verdad. / FABIO: Gran César, si se probare / que yo he salido, te pido / que me cortes la cabeza. / DIOCL.: ¿Pues no te he visto yo mismo? / CAMILA: ¡Hombre, ¿qué dices? Que yo / y todos te habemos visto! / FABIO: Señores, que no era yo; / mirad bien, que yo no he sido. / MAX.: Calla, necio, que estás loco” (vv. 2846–2858).

the first ‘play within the play’ of the second act is repeated here: the boundary between fiction and reality is crossed on the level of the relation between stage and audience. Rather than merely ‘watching’ the play, the spectators are now actively interacting with the actors.

Ginés now intervenes again, exonerates Fabio and provides the explanation for the incident. It was not Fabio, but rather a heavenly witness, a real angel, who had spoken (“Bien dice, que un Parainfo / del cielo, con voz divina, / todo su papel ha dicho. / [...] / Un ángel / que me enseñó un sacro libro, / donde vi lo que aprendí, / que es esto mismo que digo” vv. 2859–2865). Although keeping to theater imagery, Ginés now explicitly professes that he is no longer playing the part of a Christian, but is one in fact. His *autor* was Jesus Christ, the second act of this other, real, ‘play’ was about the wrath of the emperors, the third about his martyrdom: “Césares, yo soy cristiano: / ya tengo el santo bautismo: / esto represento yo, / porque es mi autor Jesucristo; / en la segunda jornada / está vuestro enojo escrito; / que en llegando la tercera / representaré el martirio” (vv. 2866–2873). He further declares, in response to the emperors’ question, that he is not jesting or deluded. He confesses his Christianity, in full earnestness; calls the emperors tyrants<sup>567</sup>; and renounces the Roman gods. The emperor, finally realizing that this is no longer a stage play, sentences Ginés to death and orders the arrest and interrogation of the other actors in the troupe.<sup>568</sup> The play has turned serious. Ginés is put in chains and taken away (vv. 2900–2905).

In the next scene the actors are being interrogated by Senator Léntulo.<sup>569</sup> He is compassionate, finding them harmless (“El veros me da dolor; / prenderos

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**567** “DIOCL.: ¿Hablas de veras, Ginés? / MAX.: Di, Ginés, ¿tienes juicio? / GINÉS: De veras hablo, tiranos” (vv. 2874 ff.). Here, too, the parallels to the first play within the play (see vv. 2034–2057) are worth mentioning. Having heard the news of Octavio’s and Marcela’s disappearance, Ginés turns directly to the Emperor with a request to look for them. Diocleciano does not know whether this is part of the play or not and asks “¿Hablas de veras o no?” (v. 2057). While in the first instance Diocleciano considers the confusion in the first case to be a successful *burla*, i.e. part of the performance, he here finally takes Ginés at his word and consequently condemns him to death.

**568** Even Diocleciano places his sentencing in the context of the stage, which becomes the tribunal, with him in the role of judge, and takes on (as a Roman ruler who persecutes of Christians) the role assigned to him by Ginés’ confession: “[...] yo quiero hacer mi dicho, / y morirás en comedia, / pues en comedia has vivido. / Siéntome como tribuno: / traedle aquí. / [...] / Pues yo te sentencio a muerte: / mira qué breve juicio; / y acabaré mi papel / con que Léntulo y Sulpicio / prendan y examinen luego / a cuantos vienen contigo” (vv. 2881–2893). The passage in total: vv. 2874–2897.

**569** Vv. 2906–2965

es crueldad;” vv. 2954 f.), believes that they are not Christians and releases them, but exiles them from Rome. However, this takes up only a fraction of the interrogation.<sup>570</sup> The emphasis in this scene is rather on their respective roles within the ensemble; they are asked their names and the roles they generally play.<sup>571</sup> Ginés enters in chains. In his monologue directed at God in the form of a sonnet, again using the contrasting pair ‘*burlas-veras*,’ which refers to the *comedia*’s motto, ‘*lo fingido verdadero*.’ In his monologue he again uses theatrical metaphors to describe his miraculous conversion to Christianity, the divine grace which he was thereby granted, and his willingness to die for his faith. He summarizes what has happened to him since the ‘call from heaven’ during his rehearsal of the role of the Christian, which had been at the time incomprehensible to him:

Mi Dios, cuando por burlas fui cristiano  
y me llamastes a tan altas veras,  
representaba burlas verdaderas  
en el teatro de mi intento vano.  
Mas como el auditorio soberano  
en las gradas de altísimas esferas,  
y vos por las celestes vidrieras  
vistes de mi comedia el acto humano,  
he pensado que lástima tuvistes  
que estuviese en tan mala compañía,  
y que para la vuestra me quisistes.

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**570** “LÉNT.: respondió con brevedad, / ¿sois cristianos? TODOS: No, señor. / LÉNT.: Pues con esa confesión / sólo salid desterrados / de Roma” (vv. 2956–2960).

**571** Octavio plays “galanes” (v. 2919), Sergesto “rufianes, / el soldadillo perdido, / el capitán fanfarrón, / y otras cosas de este modo” (vv. 2920–2923), Fabio “muchachos [...] / [...] príncipes, y otras cosas / de tierna edad” (vv. 2926 ff.), the actor Albino plays “graciosos, / desdichados no dichosos” and “pastores” (vv. 2931–2934), Fabricio “[...] los padres y reyes: / figuras de gravedad” (vv. 2942 f.), the actress Celia takes the parts of “[s]egundas damas, / las criadas y pastoras” (vv. 2946 f.) etc. Also in Ribadeneyra’s *vita*-version, the other actors are immediately suspected of being Christians like Ginés and shall be punished. However, there the argument takes place in direct confrontation with an extremely furious Diocleciano, there is no ordered interrogation. The actors not only deny that they are Christians, but they explicitly distance themselves from Ginés and curse the Christian god as proof. There is no mention of a banishment from Rome in the text, the emperor lets go of them to focus his anger fully on Ginés again. (“[...] [E]llos le [a Diocleciano] dixeron que no eran Christianos, ni estauan engañados como Gines: que lo que el Emperador crehia, crehian ellos, y adorauan a los dioses que el adoraua: que si lo pecò Gines, no era justo que lo pagassen todos. Y para que viesse el Emperador que no era[n] Christianos, dixeron grandes blasfemias contra Christo. Entonces el Emperador, dexando a los otros, se embraueció mas contra Gines [...]” [Ribadeneyra, “La vida de san Gines” [cf. note 495], pp. 360b f.]).



Dadme partido vos, que yo querría  
 estar con vos; pero si entero os distes,  
 en vos acabe la comedia mía.

(vv. 2966–2979)

The form of the sonnet, which occupies a special position in the polymetry of the Spanish *comedia*,<sup>572</sup> is used three times in Lope's drama. All three sonnets (vv. 2325–2338/2744–2757 and above) are spoken by the protagonist. While the position and content of the individual sonnets are already striking, comparing them to one another highlights a central aspect of the character: his transformation from a person devoted to worldly love to a person committed to Christian love who is prepared to die for his faith out of love for God. The first sonnet is situated at the beginning of the third act after Ginés' conversation with Diocleciano, in which he articulates his forgiveness and lack of jealousy towards the returned Marcela. In the sonnet, in what is a departure from the sensuality of this world – with Marcela as the object of desire – the idea of 'false' love emerges. Love consumed by jealousy appears to Ginés now ('con desengaños' v. 2331) as *locura* (v. 2332).<sup>573</sup> The second soliloquy/sonnet is delivered by Ginés during the second 'play within the play,' immediately after the baptizing scene (which, now in retrospect becomes apparent as having been authentic). He addresses himself to God, praises his omnipotence with reference to biblical examples, and expresses – using the theater metaphor – his own readiness to give himself completely to God and to die for his faith; asking God 'to play together with him' from now on, and declaring that he himself would perform 'the martyrdom of Ginés.' The central Christian conversion ritual is thus followed by an explicit (and in its consequence also extraordinarily extreme) acceptance of Christianity and request for divine grace, in other words,

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572 See, for instance, Georges Güntert, "Función del soneto en el teatro áureo: ¿pausa reflexiva del personaje o tematización del drama?", in: Itziar López Guil/Jenaro Talens (eds.), *El espacio del poema: Teoría y práctica del discurso poético*, Madrid 2011, pp. 205–223. However, in Lope's *Arte nuevo* it says in this regard only: "el soneto está bien en los que aguardan;" (v. 308 [Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (cf. note 503), p. 148]).

573 Regarding this passage, see also already above p. 202 (the sonnet once again: 'Amor me puso en tanta desventura / la verde primavera de mis años, / que pensé por el mar de sus engaños / en vez del puerto hallar la sepultura. / Y aunque este fuego en las cenizas dura, / ya con menos rigor siento sus daños; / amé con celos, mas con desengaños / no pienso que es amor, sino locura. / Bien pueden mientras viven engañados / conservarse en la fe de amor fingido, / de un ofendido amante los cuidados. / ¿Y qué importa que quiera el ofendido? / Que quien ama con celos declarados, / ya llega a los principios del olvido' vv. 2325–2338).

a conscious turning towards *agape*.<sup>574</sup> The third sonnet does not come in the context of internal fiction. Ginés has been sentenced to death by Diocleciano, and there is nothing standing in the way of his ‘real’ dying as a martyr. As a Christian, he no longer apostrophizes God with the general ‘[s]eñor divino’ (v. 2744), but with the possessive pronoun ‘my’ (‘Mi Dios’ v. 2966) and reflects on his unexpected change continuing to use the motif of *lo fingido-lo verdadero*. He now realizes that when he played the role of a Christian, he was a Christian for the sake of mockery, and when on the ‘stage of his vain intention’ the call of God, the truth, reached him and mockery changed to reality (‘Mi Dios, cuando *por burlas* fui cristiano / y me llamastes a tan altas *veras*, / representaba *burlas verdaderas* / en el teatro de mi intento vano’ vv. 2966–2969; my italics).

The central aspect presented here *in nuce* is that the borderline between play and seriousness, appearance and being, deception and truth, is a fragile and permeable one.<sup>575</sup> The grace of God, Ginés recognizes, has put him on the right path, proclaiming that ‘the audience of heaven’ (‘el auditorio soberano / en las gradas de altísimas esferas’ vv. 2970 f.) had watched his performance, and God had felt compassion because of his bad (acting) company and called him for his own (‘[. . .] lástima tuvistes / que estuviese en tan *mala compañía*, / y que para la vuestra me quisistes’ vv. 2974 ff.; my italics). Again, he asks for a role (in the divine play): ‘Dadme partido vos, que yo querría / estar con vos;’ (vv. 2977 f.), namely the martyrdom mentioned at the end of the second sonnet (‘yo haré los martirios de Ginés’ vv. 2754).

One of the prison guards enters, saying that Diocleciano had ordered Ginés’ death by impalement, which he intended to attend after the circus spectacle with the wild animals (vv. 2982 f.). Ginés continues his speech about his

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**574** For the second sonnet, see above p. 210 with notes 557, 558, and 559 (this sonnet in its entirety: “Señor divino, que miráis y oís / los pensamientos, porque, en fin, sois Dios, / y un profeta hacéis de un rudo Amós, / y un Lázaro difunto revivís; / vos que un ladrón donde reináis subís, / porque muriendo se convierte a vos; / vos, segunda persona de las dos, / en cuyo trono celestial vivís, / vos, que del mar sacasteis a Jonás, / y os mostrasteis ser Dios en Emaús, / bendecid este pan, pues vuestro es. / Representad conmigo desde hoy más; / haced vos las piedades de Jesús, / que yo haré los martirios de Ginés” vv. 2744–2757). The turning towards ‘true’ love implies a now conscious turning away from Eros, which was implicitly hinted at in the first sonnet. (Even if there is no explicit mention here of ‘amor [verdadero]’ or the like, this concept is of course, as core of the Christian faith and its message, always conveyed as well with the fields that are touched on in the sonnet – like ‘God’s omnipotence,’ ‘proclamation of God,’ ‘converted sinners.’).

**575** According to the world concept underlying this *comedia*, absolute knowledge is confined exclusively to the God who governs everything; what is left for man is faith (in what is right), and recognition, which is ultimately only possible from a retrospective view.

conversion – remaining in the imagery of theater and acting – and prepares himself for martyrdom. In this, he elaborates on the (from a Christian point of view classical) comparison between good and evil, sacred and diabolical, and evokes an image of two groups of actors that he had used in the second sonnet: on the one hand, “la compañía / del demonio” (vv. 2994 f.), of which he had been a member, and on the other hand, the “compañía / [...] de Jesús” (vv. 3000 f.), in which he was now playing.<sup>576</sup> The devil, director of the bad, evil theater troupe, is described as an arrogant, cruel actor, who “[...] por imitar a Dios, / erró el papel, que en los dos / es el saber muy distante [...]” (vv. 2997 ff.). With regard to the ‘divine’ company of actors, Ginés mentions, in addition to God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary (vv. 3001–3005), as well as a number of other ‘actors’ and their respective roles, i.e. relevant figures from the Bible and hagiography, such as John the Baptist, “[...] que hacer puede / pastores en el desierto, / y música a tal concierto, / que al de los cielos excede” (vv. 3006–3009), John the Evangelist (“hay un Juan que habla altamente” v. 3010), David (“hay un David, gran poeta, / y una comedia perfeta / de cantares excelente” vv. 3011 ff.), Peter (“un pontífice eminente / hace Pedro con gran fe” vv. 3014 f.), Mary Magdalene (vv. 3018 f.), Dismas – ‘the good thief’ (“Hay un famoso ladrón, / Dimas, de poco papel, / pero dijo más en él / que en sus libros Salomón” vv. 3020–3023), the Archangel Gabriel (vv. 3030 f.), Paul, who performed brave and strong men that had been disarmed (vv. 3034 f.), Saint Francis (“Francisco hará los que imitan / a Dios” vv. 3026 f.), and so on. For the members of the ‘*compañía del demonio*’ he names Judas, who played traitors, Roman emperors who represented cruelty and tyranny, Lucifer who is in charge of lies and perfidy, while ‘the world’ played the role of the juvenile lover and the flesh that of the beloved.<sup>577</sup>

In this passage, the category of demonic *fingir*, a malicious, potentially dangerous deception, comes into play for the first time through the agency of the devil.<sup>578</sup> A role that Ginés declares belongs to both the divine and the

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576 See vv. 2974 ff. It is interesting to note that ‘Compañía de Jesús’ is also the Spanish name of the *Societas Jesu*, the Jesuit Order, founded by Ignatius de Loyola in 1534, which played an influential role in the Counter-Reformation and the development of theater in Spain.

577 “En esotra compañía / Judas hacía traidores, / romanos Emperadores / la crueldad y tiranía; / Luzbel, mentira y porfía; / el mundo sabe vestir / un galán, y bien fingir / la carne damas de amor;” (vv. 3040–3047).

578 In Lope’s *comedia*, the possibility of a diabolical deception of perception is of no importance. This can be contrasted with the role of doubt in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, where Hamlet doubts the truth of his father’s ghost and wonders if it is not in fact of demonic origin (“[...] The spirit that I have seen / May be a devil, and the devil hath power / T’assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps, / Out of my weakness and my melancholy, / As he is very potent

diabolical theatre groups is that of the gravedigger. In the first case, it is played by Nicodemus, in the second, by the figure of the sinner. The difference is, however, that with the Christian promise of salvation, what follows earthly death is resurrection and eternal life: “Nicodemus mete muertos, / pero luego resucitan” (vv. 3038 f.) and “muertos mete el pecador, / mas no vuelven a vivir” (vv. 3048 f.), respectively. Ginés concludes by focusing on ‘his role’ and the prospect of his martyrdom: “Quiere verme / Dios, que suyo quiso hacerme, / para que el demonio espante, / que represente y que cante / por esta muerte después / en gloria, siendo Ginés / el mejor representante” (vv. 3053–3059). While Ginés illustrates his new belief with the comparison that he was now part of the divine cast of actors (more precisely: its *mejor representante*) and mentions further actors and the roles they were embodying in both this and the opposing *compañía del demonio*, it should be noted that the ‘worldly’ acting group that he had once directed was described primarily using concrete and contemporary repertoire of characters.<sup>579</sup> The following scene now shows the troupe, sentenced to exile, leaving Rome. They are discussing the loss of Ginés, who had been their manager, director, and best actor, and wondering both who could play his parts, and which plays they would perform, mentioning Ginés’ roles as Adonis and Paris.<sup>580</sup> They reach the Campus Martius, where the execution of Ginés is to take place. Octavio calls it the ‘theater’ in which Ginés plays out his life and death (“[. . .][e]l teatro / [. . .] / donde Ginés representa / su vida y muerte [. . .]” vv. 3096–3099). Marcela adds that he was speaking to those present there ‘in the last act’ (“[. . .] al pueblo circunstante / habla en el acto postrero” vv. 3101 f.). In the final image, the impaled Ginés appears (stage directions: “Descúbrase empalado Ginés”). In his last words, he focuses once again on his conversion and at the same time offers the ultimate ‘message’ of the drama in an explicit formulation of the *theatrum mundi* (‘theater of the world’) metaphor (though not without inconsistency). Until his conversion (“recibíome Dios” v. 3110) to a “cristiano representante” (v. 3111) playing in the

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with such sprits, / Abuses me to damn me. [. . .]’ [*Hamlet* 2.2, 594–599]) (see chap. 2 of this study).

**579** Vv. 2906–2965, see above p. 214 with note 571.

**580** The mention of these very roles refers again to Ginés’ life before his conversion, a life oriented towards worldly things and sensual love in particular, i.e., a ‘false’ life before his conversion to Christianity (cf. in this regard Nolting-Hauff, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” [cf. note 491], p. 77 [‘Ginés-related *typoi*’]). After all, they are two prominent lovers – especially for the physical beauty attributed to them – from Greek mythology, with whom a tragic end is connected (cf., e.g., Ovid, *Metamorphoses* X, vv. 503–559, vv. 708–739 [‘Venus and Adonis’] [used edition: Publius Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses* (Latin-English), trans. and ed. Frank Justus Miller, rev. George P. Goold, 3rd ed., 2 vols, Cambridge, MA 1984]).

‘divine *comedia*’ (“[comedia] divina” v. 3114), he had spent his entire life representing the world’s lies, vices, and malice (“yo representé en el mundo / sus fábulas miserables, / todo el tiempo de mi vida, / sus vicios y sus maldades;” vv. 3104–3107); he had played heathens and worshipped pagan gods (“yo fui figura gentil / adorando dioses tales;” vv. 3108 f.). The ‘human *comedia*,’ which consisted only of senselessness, was now over (“cesó la humana comedia, / que era toda disparates;” vv. 3112 f.): The world, with all its supposed reality is nothing more than theater, it is only appearance. Ginés speaks of the fundamental Christian virtues of *fides*, *spes*, and *caritas* and the reward awaiting him in heaven (vv. 3115–3119). After his death, “la segunda parte” (v. 3121) of the ‘*comedia divina*’ would await him, i.e. true and eternal life. Let us quote Ginés’ closing words again in their entirety:

Pueblo romano, escuchadme:  
yo representé en el mundo  
sus fábulas miserables,  
todo el tiempo de mi vida,  
sus vicios y sus maldades;  
yo fui figura gentil  
adorando dioses tales;  
recibíome Dios; ya soy  
cristiano representante;  
cesó la humana comedia,  
que era toda disparates;  
hice la que veis, divina;  
voy al cielo a que me paguen,  
que de mi fe y esperanza  
y mi caridad notable,  
debo al cielo, y él me debe  
estos tres particulares.  
Mañana temprano espero  
para la segunda parte.<sup>581</sup>

(vv. 3103–3121)

Lope’s version of the Genesius story differs from its source in several ways. In Ribadeneyra’s version of the story, the didactic conclusion focuses on God’s “omnipotencia, è infinita bo[n]dad,” that is able to “[...] que assi muda los coraçones, y conuierte [...] los perseguidores de Christo en martires de Iesu

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**581** The metaphor of the ‘theater of the world’ is inconsistent in the sense that the image of theater is also used for ‘eternal life,’ the ‘true reality in the hereafter,’ that is the ‘segunda parte’ of the ‘*comedia divina*.’

Christo[.]”<sup>582</sup> Furthermore, the representation of Ginés’ martyrdom differs with regards to the type of execution: death by impalement in Lope de Vega and decapitation in Ribadeneyra; as well as a much more minimal focus on the tortures of the saint that is an important part of typical of this genre. In Ribadeneyra’s *Flos sanctorum*, Ginés is publicly whipped with rods and beaten with clubs, then thrown into prison where he is cruelly tortured, laid on the rack, his sides torn open with iron claws, and burned with torches.<sup>583</sup> This

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**582** Ribadeneyra, “La vida de san Gines” (cf. note 495), p. 361b, where God’s miraculous activity is manifested spectacularly in Ginés’ conversion and martyrdom in the name of faith from the very beginning. The preceding “Vida de San Gines, Escruiano y Martir” (in: Ribadeneyra, *Flos sanctorum* [cf. note 495], vol. 2, pp. 359a–b) serves Ribadeneyra as a parameter of comparison. According to the legend, this martyr, also named Genesisius, was a court clerk in Arles during the reign of Diocletian and Maximian. He refused to write down orders concerning the persecution of Christians, threw his writing utensils at the judge’s feet and fled, but was caught and executed on the banks of the Rhône. Christians transported the abandoned corpse to the other bank of the Rhône and buried it there. Ribadeneyra supplements this *vita* with an account of a ‘posthumous miracle’ (“*posthumen Wunder[s]*”) characteristic of hagiography (cf. André Jolles, *Einfache Formen: Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz*, 8th ed., Tübingen 2006 [1st ed. 1930], [chap. ‘Legende’: pp. 23–61], pp. 30–33, quote p. 31, italics in the original): As witnessed by Hilarius, Bishop of Arles, it happened that on the occasion of the feast day celebrated in honor of this saint in Arles there were so many people on the bridge that had to be crossed to reach his church, that it collapsed, threatening to drown countless men, women, old people, and children in the river Rhône. After the bishop had called on Saint Genesisius for help, a short time later all people who had fallen into the water actually reached the shore completely unharmed. Although God’s work of miracles was shown in the martyrdom of Ginés of Arles and in the miracle performed by his name, the salvation of the people from the floods of the Rhône, the ‘milagro’ manifested in the actor Ginés had a different dimension, as in this case, the effect had been an ‘inner change,’ ‘a movement of the free human heart,’ as Ribadeneyra states in the introduction to the *vita* of “San Gines el Representante”: “[...] pero mucho mas marauilloso se mostrò [el Señor] en la conuersion de otro Gines, haziendole, de representante y burlador, y perseguidor de Christianos, confessor de su santa Fè, y verdadero martir de Iesu Christo. Mayor milagro es trocar vn coraçon, y sacar agua de la piedra, que librar a los hombres de las aguas: porque en lo vno ay sola la obediencia de la criatura, que està sujeta a la voluntad del Señor: y en lo otro ay mudança y rendimiento del coraçon humano, que es libre y señor de si, y resiste a lo que Dios quiere” (Ribadeneyra, “La vida de san Gines” [cf. note 495], pp. 359b f.).

**583** Ribadeneyra, “La vida de san Gines” (cf. note 495), p. 361a (“Mandole herir alli luego delante de todo el pueblo con varas, y apalea con gruesos palos, y lleua a la carcel: y otro dia mandò a vn Prefecto llamado Plauciano, que le atormentasse cruelmente, hasta q[ue] negasse a Christo. Pusieronle en el equuleo, desgarraronle los costados con vñas de hierro, abrasaronle con hachas encendidas. Deziale el Prefecto: Miserable de ti, obedece al Emperador, y sacrifica, y alcançaras su gracia, y viuiras. Respondio Gines: Procuren la gracia y Amistad destes Reyes, los que no temen aquel Rey que yo vi, y adore, y adoro: porq[ue] aquel es el verdadero Rey, que abriendose los cielos yo vi, y vsando conmigo de misericordia, me alumbrò con el agua del

element is completely lacking in Lope. In Ribadeneyra's text, the emperor is described as 'beside himself' with rage, after Ginés had declared before him to be a true Christian; he is so enraged that he almost kills Ginés by himself,<sup>584</sup> but this is more downplayed in Lope's play. It has already been mentioned that Ginés is not depicted as an explicit persecutor of Christians in Lope de Vega, in contrast to the model text.<sup>585</sup> Also striking is the change in the play that the actor Ginés is about to perform when his conversion to Christianity comes about. In *Lo fingido verdadero*, Ginés is the protagonist of a tragedy that revolves around the martyrdom of a Christian. In Ribadeneyra, however, the stage play is a kind of farce, more precisely, a very crudely comic mockery of baptism as a purifying ritual, with scatological implications.

[...] [Ginés] fingiò que estaua malo, y echose en vna cama, y llamò a los q[ue] le auia[n] de ayudar al entremes, y como que eran sus criados, dixoles, que estaua malo y pesado (porque era muy grueso de carnes) y que queria aliuiarse. Passaron algunas razones entre Gines, y sus criados, a este proposito, llenas de donaire y de chacota. Finalmente el dixo, que queria ser Christiano, y vno de los representantes se vistio de Exorcista y otro de Presbitero para baptizarle, haziendo burla con aquella representacion del santo Sacramento del Baptismo, y de la Religion, y ceremonias de los Christianos, con grande gusto del Emperador, y aplauso y regozijo de todo el pueblo. Pero (o bondad inmensa del

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Baptismo, y de burlador de los Christianos, me hizo Christiano, y me pesa en el alma de auer perseguido su santo nombre, y conozco que por ello merezco qualquiera pena y castigo. A este Emperador del cielo es justo que obedezca cuyo Imperio durara para siempre, y no a Diocleciano, que es hombre mortal, y su Imperio en el suelo, y presto se ha de acabar. Date (dize) priessa, aumenta las penas y tormentos que por mas que hagas, no apartaras a mi Señor Iesu Christo de mi coraçon. Auisò el Prefecto al Emperador de la constancia de Gines, y del esfuerço y alegria con que sufría los tormentos, y el Emperador le mandò a degollar, y assi se hizo [...]”).

**584** “[...] quien podra explicar como el Emperador quedò atonito y fuera de si? Y el furor y enojò con que mandò que todos los representantes fuessen traydos a su presencia, y alli açotados, pensando que ellos tambien, como Gines, eran Christianos? Pero ellos le dixeron, que no eran Christianos [...]. Y para que viesse [...] que no era[n] Christianos, dixeron grandes blasfemias contra Christo. Entonces el Emperador, dexando a los otros [representantes], se embraueciò mas contra Gines, y faltò poco que alli con sus manos no le matasse, segun estaua fuera de si” (pp. 360a f.).

**585** See the quoted passage from Ribadeneyra above p. 179; cf., furthermore, in the words of Ginés: “Antes de aora, siempre que yo ohia nombrar a los Christianos, ciego y loco en la idolatria, procuraua (como otros) perseguirlos, e incitar al pueblo para que los persiguiesse: y era tal el enojo que tenia contra ellos, q[ue] por esta causa dexè a mis padres y deudos, queriendo antes viuir pobre y desuenturado, que en mi patria entre Christianos. Con este mismo odio determinè estos dias de descudriñar y querer saber las cosas de los Christianos, no para creerlas, sino para mofar dellas y represe[n]tarlas en el teatro, y entretener y alegrar la gente como aueis visto” (Ribadeneyra, “La vida de san Gines” [cf. note 495], p. 360b).

Señor! o virtud y eficacia de la diuina gracia!) en el mismo tiempo que hazian escarnio de Christo, tocò el Señor el coraçon de Gines, y le alumbro con vn rayo de su luz, y le trocò la voluntad de manera, que no ya por burla, sino de veras deseasse ser Christiano, y recibir el Baptismo [. . .].<sup>586</sup>

In Christianity baptism, i.e., being sprinkled with or immersed in baptismal water (which is the instrument of divine grace) is necessary for salvation. Baptism transforms the baptized person into a member of the Church and, above all, *cleanses* him from the ‘maculation’ of the guilt of original sin and *frees* him from all past personal guilt.<sup>587</sup> The fecal comic *burla*, aimed here at the ‘santo Sacramento del Baptismo,’ is based on the double coding of ‘relieve’ (*aliviarse*) and on the fact that purification here is understood in purely bodily terms. When Ginés feels bad and suffers from a heaviness (*malo y pesado*) from which he wants to ‘liberate’ himself, and from which he seeks to ‘relieve himself,’ it is not the (physically invisible) burden of the original sin or personal guilt that ‘oppresses him’ and which would be taken from him with baptism, but pure physicality, for he is described as ‘*muy gruesso de carnes*.’ Therefore, if his desire for relief is purely physical in nature, his desire to become a Christian in the context of the subsequent representation of baptism implies a corresponding equation with regard to the causes of purification and the ritual of purification itself; the scene thus represents a crude ridiculing of this Christian sacrament.<sup>588</sup>

Although Lope’s drama corresponds to the structural scheme of the martyr’s *vita*, various elements are amplified or, conversely, minimized. The

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**586** Ribadeneira, “La vida de san Gines” (cf. note 495), p. 360a.

**587** See, e.g., Augustinus, *Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate* 17, 64: “[...] baptismatis mun[us], quod contra originale peccatum donatum est, ut quod generatione attractum est, re-generatione detrahatur; et tamen activa quoque peccata, quaecumque corde, ore, opere commissa invenerit, tollit” [the gift of baptism is given us as an antidote against original sin, so that what is contracted by birth is removed by the new birth (baptism), and moreover, it also takes away actual sins as well that have been committed in thought, word, and deed] (Aurelius Augustinus, *Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate/Handbüchlein über Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe* [Latin-German], trans. and ed. Joseph Barbel, Darmstadt 1960, p. 120). Cf. as well on the issue of baptism altogether Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* III<sup>a</sup> q. 66 (“De sacramento baptismi”/‘Of the Sacrament of Baptism’), esp. art. 1, 3, 7, 9 (Aquinas, *Summa* [Latin] [cf. note 347], vol. 29 [1935], pp. 147–199, esp. pp. 148–152, pp. 155–160, pp. 174–178, pp. 183–188; Aquinas, *Summa* [English] [cf. note 347], vol. 4, pp. 2373–2386, esp. pp. 2373 f., pp. 2375 f., pp. 2380 f., pp. 2382 f.).

**588** The fact that Ginés is described here as corpulent represents another detail of the changes made in *Lo fingido verdadero*. Lope’s Ginés is not only no longer the *farsante* as in Ribadeneira’s text, but a respected actor, manager and poet, and is described as *galán* instead of *gruesso de carnes*.



miracle of the conversion of Ginés from an actor who uses his skills to mock Christians to a true Christian is a selective event in the hagiographical model. In Lope de Vega's drama, however, this miracle is not an isolated event but is foreshadowed and prepared for in the text. The *gradual transition* from the play to the real Christian is probably one of the most striking modifications of the *Genesis-vita* in *Lo fingido verdadero*.<sup>589</sup> The Christian is a part that the actor Ginés is famous for playing convincingly and, one that he has already played numerous times before actually becoming a Christian. One could say that he has become a Christian by 'habitualization.' The concept of *hexis* – an ethical attitude achieved through habituation and practice – i.e. the idea that action results in conviction, has its origin in Aristotelian ethics<sup>590</sup> and was adopted by scholasticism.<sup>591</sup> This aspect of the play is relevant in light of the theological controversies being waged during this period. *Hexis* was in fact a central aspect of the Catholic doctrine of 'guiding' believers, and which Protestantism denied. According to the action-oriented religious education advocated by Catholicism, orthopraxis leads to right behavior. Action thus forms conviction – and not vice

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**589** The further aspects of the 'preparatory character' of the theologically complex drama already mentioned in the course of the outline of the plot will be discussed in more detail below.

**590** Cf. Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea* II, 1, 1103a 14–b 25 (as well as: II, 2–6, 1103b 26–1107a 23): "Excellence, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual excellence in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit [or custom] [εθος], whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word for 'habit' [εθος]. From this it is also plain that none of the moral excellences arises in us by nature; [. . .] [. . .] Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do excellences [virtues] [ἀρετή] arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit. [. . .] [B]ut excellences we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do, we learn by doing, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts. [. . .] Thus, in one word, states [characters] arise out of like activities. This is why the activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the states [characters] correspond to the differences between these. [ἕξις] It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference" (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. William D. Ross, rev. James O. Urmsen, in: *The Complete Works of Aristotle* [cf. note 99], vol. 2, pp. 3718–4009, pp. 3746 ff.).

**591** Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I<sup>a</sup>-II<sup>ae</sup> q. 49–55 (*habitus*); cf. i.a. esp. q. 51 a. 3; q. 52 a. 3; q. 55 a. 2; Thomas Aquinas, however, moreover, distinguishes between virtues 'acquired' through practice and repetition (*virtutes acquisitae*) and the virtues 'infused' by God (*virtutes infusae*) (cf. i.a. *Summa theologiae* I<sup>a</sup>-II<sup>ae</sup> q. 51 a. 4; q. 63 a. 3, q. 65 a. 2) (Aquinas, *Summa* [Latin] [cf. note 347], vol. 11 [1940], pp. 3–117, esp. pp. 54–60, pp. 74 ff., pp. 107–110; Aquinas, *Summa* [English] [cf. note 347], vol. 2, pp. 793–822, esp. pp. 805 f., pp. 809 f., p. 820).

versa, as Protestantism held.<sup>592</sup> The concept underlying Lope's drama not only refers to a post-Tridentine framework, but also illustrates the instability of the border between truth and pretense and the potentially problematic differentiability of (still) 'play' and (already) 'seriousness' that is focused on in the *comedia*.<sup>593</sup>

In Ribadeneyra's *Life of Genesis*, Ginés tells of the 'miracle of his conversion performed by God,' his actual baptism which took place during the play which then causes him to address the emperor and the people in order to proclaim his new faith and attempt to convert his listeners. This last element is missing in Lope ("[...] digo, que de oy mas confieso a Iesu Christo por verdadero Dios, y os amonesto que todos hagais lo mismo y que salgais de las tinieblas de que yo he salido, para que euiteis los tormentos que yo he euitado.")<sup>594</sup>: When they wanted to sprinkle him (on stage) with the baptismal water and asked him whether he believed in what the Christians believed, he saw, as he looked up, a hand from heaven laying down on him and angels with a fiery face reading a book about all the sins committed during his life, and then promising him deliverance from these sins through baptism, if he truly wished it. He did ask for it and, as the water poured down upon him, he had seen the entries in his book of sins immediately deleted. The angels admonished him to preserve his newly established purity and to no longer stain his soul with sin. He continues by saying that he had sought to please the earthly ruler, but that the

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**592** Part of the fundamental delineations of the Reformation from the Catholic Church's understanding and practice of faith is the negation of the 'justification by works,' which it replaces with the principles *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. Cf., e.g., Martin Luther, "Eynn Sermon von dem Ablasz unnd gnade" (1518), in: [Martin Luther], *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 120 vols. (4 sects.), Weimar 1883–2009, sect. 1, vol. 1 (1883), pp. 243–246 (for instance: "Es ist eyn großer yrthum, das yemand meyne, er wolle gnugthun vor seyne sund, so doch got die selben altzeit umbsunst auß unschetzlicher gnad vortzeyhet, nichts darfur begerend, dann hynfurder woll leben" [p. 245, 21–23]). For the Catholic position, cf. the 'Decree on Justification' adopted in the 6th session of the Council of Trent in 1547 (Concilium Tridentinum, Sessio VI "Decretum de iustificatione"/Session 6, 13 January 1547 'Decree on justification' [Canones et Decreta/Canons and Decrees (cf. note 374), pp. 671–683], esp. Cap. XVI "De fructo iustificationis, hoc est, de merito bonorum operum, deque ipsius meriti ratione"/chap. 16 'On the fruit of justification, namely merit from good works, and on the nature of that merit' [pp. 677 f.] and Canon XXXII [p. 681]).

**593** It needs to be noted that in the 'real' Spain of that period it also served as an argument for perfidious denunciation and persecution. *Conversos* and *moriscos* (up to their expulsion in 1609) were always vulnerable to the allegation (and its life-threatening consequences) that they were only 'pretending' to follow the Catholic rites. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in the context of the analysis of Cervantes' interlude (Chapter 5).

**594** Ribadeneyra, "La vida de san Gines" (cf. note 495), p. 360b.

ruler of heaven had looked at him with a benevolent gaze and welcomed him into his grace; he had wanted to make people laugh and thereby brought joy and jubilation to the angels.<sup>595</sup>

Lope's dramatization of these aspects – request for baptism, pretend baptism, and real baptism, appearance of the angels, change from 'earthly' to 'heavenly' actor – are developed in a complex way and in connection with the systematic blurring of *fingido* and *verdadero*. The actual performance is preceded by a rehearsal scene. While Ginés rehearses the role of the Christian martyr, he asks – as part of the play – for baptism. Heavenly music sounds, the sky 'opens' and the heavenly inhabitants become visible. This divine intervention, however, can only be seen by the spectators/readers. Ginés repeats his request for baptism and hears a voice that promises him that his acting is not in vain and promises him salvation. Ginés is unable to classify what he perceives and his subsequent inner reaction. He is not sure whether he was actually called by an angel or whether it was an actor of his theater company who spoke to him as part of the rehearsal, or whether it was simply a deception of the senses. This is further complicated by the conversation with Fabio. At the end of this prelude, it is not possible to determine whether Ginés already sees himself as a Christian or not. The subsequent 'play within the play' is characterized by a great fragility of the levels of illusion. When Ginés asks for baptism, his fellow players notice the deviation from the script, but attribute this to his penchant for improvisation. An angel appears above the stage and asks Ginés to come to him in order to baptize him. Ginés goes. The baptism is presented 'vividly' on the upper stage level (angels with baptismal utensils become visible; music sounds). From this point on, Ginés integrates metaphors of acting within his speeches about his conversion and his desire to die the martyr's death (e.g., God from now on provides the cues, he had so far played a wrong role, now he is part of the divine group of actors). The inner spectators comment on Ginés' performance as unique and indistinguishable from reality, whereas the other

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595 "Pero al mismo punto q[ue] querian echar el agua del Bautismo sobre mi cabeça, y me preguntaro[n] si crehia lo que los Christianos creen: leuantando los ojos en alto, vi vna mano que baxaua del cielo sobre mi, y Angeles con rostros de fuego, que en vn libro lehan todos los pecados que en mi vida cometi. Dixeronme los Angeles: Destos pecados seras libre con esta agua con que quieres aora ser bañado, si de veras y de todo coraçon lo deseas. Yo assi lo deseé y pedi, y luego cayò sobre mi el agua, vi la escritura del libro borrada, sin que en el quedasse señal alguna de letra. Dixeronme los Angeles: Ya has visto como has sido limpio desta culpa y manzilla, procura conseruar la limpieza que has recebido, y no manchar mas tu alma con pecado. [. . .] Yo procurè agradar al Emperador de la tierra, y el Emperador del cielo me mirò co[n] ojos benignos, y me admitiò en su gracia: quise causar risa a los hombres, y causè alegria y regozijo a los Angeles [. . .]" (ibid.).

actors are confused. When Fabio enters the stage in the role of an angel in order to perform the scene of Ginés' baptism, the confusion on the stage now reaches the internal audience. They all think that it was Fabio who had played the angel. Fabio vehemently denies this, and Ginés emphasizes the authenticity of his conversion and baptism, and the reality of the angel. Diocleciano is not immediately convinced. Only when Ginés is asked whether he was playing or speaking in earnest, and after Ginés' mockery of the gods and the emperor, does he condemn him and declare the performance to be over. The clarification of the question of who was the angel who appeared is not pursued by either the internal audience or the fellow actors.

In *Lo fingido verdadero*, the (second) 'play within the play' is a *tragedia* that deals with the martyrdom of a Christian (in contrast to the hagiographical model version), i.e. the action laid out in this inner play already anticipates the subsequent action in the frame-play. In this sense, it works as a dramatic *mise en abyme*.<sup>596</sup> Structures and content-related moments that generate a mirror effect and the alternation of *fingido* and *verdadero* are elaborated in manifold

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**596** More precisely, one could even classify it as a 'mise en abyme retro-prospective' (as the change of Ginés from an acting to a 'true' Christian is prepared in terms of structure and in terms of content). The device of *mise en abyme* – albeit in narrative texts – was studied and developed by Lucien Dällenbach (*The Mirror in the Text [Le récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme]*, Paris 1977), trans. Jeremy Whiteley and Emma Hughes, Chicago 1989, esp. pp. 41–113, here p. 60). George Forestier discusses the relation between 'theater within theater' and *mise en abyme* in the introduction to his seminal study on the 'play within the play' in 17th-century French theater: "La notion de théâtre dans le théâtre est [...] fréquemment confondue avec celle de *mise en abyme*. En fait la mise en abyme, qui suppose que l'œuvre se mire dans l'œuvre, est une figure littéraire qui ne ressortit pas exclusivement au domaine du théâtre, et qui d'ailleurs, est fort à la mode dans la littérature romanesque du XXe siècle, et particulièrement dans le roman français des vingt dernières années. En outre, la mise en abyme proprement théâtrale est loin de correspondre exactement à la notion de théâtre dans le théâtre. Celle-ci désigne un *dédoublement structurel*, et la première un *dédoublement thématique*, c'est-à-dire une correspondance étroite entre le contenu de la pièce enchâssante et le contenu de la pièce enchâssée. Il va sans dire qu'un petit nombre de pièces seulement présentent un tel jeu de miroir [...]. [...] [L]'on ne s'étonnera pas constater que les pièces les plus passionnantes de notre *corpus* associent cette figure à la structure du théâtre dans le théâtre" (Forestier, *Le théâtre dans le théâtre sur la scène française du XVIIe siècle* [cf. note 3], p. 13; the concrete application with reference to Dällenbach's terminology on pp. 149–171). Furthermore, Nolting-Hauff draws attention to the fact that in Lope's play some of the characteristic plot elements of the martyr's life genre, such as the capture of the protagonist and the confrontation between the martyr and the supreme persecutor of Christians, are implemented in the inner play in an even more distinctive form than in the outer play ("*Lo fingido verdadero*" [cf. note 491], pp. 73 f.; "[...] [Ei]nzeln typische Handlungsmomente der Märtyrervita, wie die Gefangennahme des Helden und die Konfrontation zwischen dem Märtyrer und dem

ways in Lope's *comedia*. It is significant that Lope, in this dramatic adaptation of the Genesis legend, has Ginés enter the stage *twice* for the entertainment of the imperial audience. Note the structural parallels between the second and third *jornada* in the context of the inner plays: Ginés prepares for his role ('un amante' or 'el cristiano bautizado'), converses with a fellow actor (Pinabelo in the second, Fabio in the third act), there is a short conversation among the inner audience, performance of a piece of music, performance of the *loa*, performance of the actual *comedia*; irritations during the performance, blurring of the boundaries between play and reality resulting in Diocleciano's termination of the performance. The first 'play within the play' is a *comedia de amor* or *comedia de celos*. This serves to introduce the theme of love in general, and posit the transience of corporal love<sup>597</sup> thus preparing the way for the message of eternal love that is the focus of the third act. Ginés' conversion to Christianity (on the internal level of play and on the internal level of reality) is an expression of both the love of God and *caritas* as central concept of Christianity (mentioned explicitly in Ginés' closing words). The change from *fingido* to *verdadero* is, in this case, the transformation of *amor fingido*, false worldly love, into *amor verdadero*, true Christian love. Analogous to the change from the erotic-earthly love to the love of God, the moment must also be seen in relation to *gracia* (grace). Ginés initially performs to gain the favor of Diocleciano, the earthly ruler. After his conversion, however, he strives instead for Divine Grace, which becomes the 'true' favor he seeks. He acquires the grace of the heavenly ruler by his acting/actions (without knowing it himself).

Regarding the thematization of theater,<sup>598</sup> Lope's play not only contains two different 'plays within the play' in which the boundaries between theatrical fiction and reality become blurred, it includes discussions about the composition and performance of theatrical works that relate to contemporary debates

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obersten Christenverfolger, [werden] im Binnenstück sogar in markanterer Form aktualisiert als im Außenstück").

**597** In addition to the love constellation on the first play level between the actors Ginés, Marcela, and Octavio, which is closely linked to the constellation developed on the second play level between Rufino (Ginés), Fabia (Marcela), Octavio (Octavio), there is also the love between Diocleciano and Camila. In this context, it is worth drawing attention again to the comparison of love as 'the cruelest of all beasts' (see vv. 2237–2252).

**598** That is, in a poetological perspective; the aspect of the 'theater of the world' will be discussed below. *Lo fingido verdadero* is discussed in terms of 'metadrama' i.a. by Canonica, "De la ficción de la verdad a la verdad de la ficción" (cf. note 494); Canning, "*Lo fingido verdadero* as Metaplay" (cf. note 494); Dixon, "Ya tienes la comedia prevenida..." (cf. note 493); Fischer, "Dramatization of the Theatrical Experience" (cf. note 494); D'Artois, "El teatro en el teatro en *Lo fingido verdadero*" (cf. note 494).

on the topic (cf. in the first act between Carino and Ginés, vv. 459–545; in the second act between Ginés, Diocleciano and Camila, vv. 1204–1265). Furthermore – with regard to the complex and to some extent ‘open’ composition of the play –, it should be noted that Lope used typical elements from several sub-genres of *comedia*, such as *comedia histórica* (Diocleciano’s rise to power), *comedia de capa y espada/de enredos* and *comedia de honor* (en miniature, so to speak: the Carino episode in the first act), *comedia de capa y espada/de enredos* (in the second act in a potential form), and *comedia de santos* (the martyr play of Ginés).<sup>599</sup>

The theme of the play, as reflected in its title, is not only played out in Ginés’ transformation from an actor playing a Christian to a true Christian, the whole play, including the political (first *jornada*) and the love (second *jornada*) subplots, in fact destabilizes the border between fiction and reality. Diocleciano’s rise to power (and the related relationship between Camila and Diocleciano) is also presented as closely linked to the aspect of *burlas verdaderas*. Diocleciano ‘realizes’ Camila’s statement, made in jest, that he would become Roman emperor by killing a boar, by stabbing Consul Apro. Camila, for her part, ‘realizes’ Diocleciano’s promise, also made in jest, to reward her for the bread she gave him, by demanding this from him when he became emperor. Camila’s remark: ‘Las cosas que ordena el cielo / en sus secretos divinos, / van por tan raros caminos, / que no los entiende el suelo’ (vv. 1110–1114), encapsulates other events of the first act as well. While essentially historically correct, the experience of their extreme condensation and repetition gives them a ‘didactic’ pointedness.<sup>600</sup> The violent death of Apro is the fourth in a ‘series’<sup>601</sup> of ‘sudden’ deaths of Roman rulers (or self-proclaimed aspirants as in Apro’s case). Emperor Aurelio is struck by lightning, Carino is stabbed by Consul Lelio, Numeriano is murdered by Apro. The events are contextualized ideologically and thus become anticipatory in Carino’s dying words, where he refers to the ‘world as a stage’ on which he had played a role that has now come to an end.

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<sup>599</sup> Cf. Canonica, “De la ficción de la verdad a la verdad de la ficción” (cf. note 494), pp. 102–109; Nolting-Hauff, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 491), p. 83; Laemmel, “Zur Adaptation einer ‘comedia de santo’ in Frankreich” (cf. note 494); cf. as well Bryans, “Fortune, Love and Power in Lope de Vega’s *Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 494), who examines the *comedia* in terms of fate, love, and power on the basis of the sub-genres *comedia de tiranos* and *comedia de mártires* that are merged in it.

<sup>600</sup> For this aspect, see as well Nolting-Hauff, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 491), pp. 74 ff.

<sup>601</sup> N. M. Valis regards these series of scenes even as a ‘dance of death’ (“Rotrou and Lope de Vega: Two Approaches to Saint-Genest” [cf. note 494] pp. 49 f.).

The merging of fiction, representation, and reality, the difficulty of an adequate distinction between appearance and being on the one hand, and the transformation of fiction into reality on the other hand, is inherent in the actor Ginés. In his speech on the art of acting, he postulates that ‘representar’ was only possible if one had oneself experienced the emotions being portrayed. In the moment of performance one had to access these emotions and experience them as if they were real.<sup>602</sup> As Fischer notes, “This is reminiscent of what has become the Stanislavsky approach of acting [...]”<sup>603</sup> In the course of the play, there are several references to the extreme intensity of Ginés’ acting (e.g.: ‘[...] imitas con extremo / un rey, un español, un persa, un árabe, / un capitán, un cónsul; mas [...] todo / lo vences cuando imitas un amante.’ vv. 1266–1269; ‘La imitación / del cristiano bautizado, / [...] es un extremo en ti’ vv. 2312 ff.; “DIOCL.: Bien

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**602** Let us recall the passage: ‘El imitar es ser representante; / pero como el poeta no es posible / que escriba con afecto y con blandura / sentimientos de amor, si no lo tiene, / y entonces se descubren en sus versos, / cuando el amor le enseña los que escribe, / así el representante, si no siente / las pasiones de amor, es imposible / que pueda, gran señor, representarlas; / una ausencia, unos celos, un agravio, / un desdén riguroso y otras cosas / que son de amor tiernísimos efectos, / harálos, si los siente, tiernamente; / mas no los sabrá hacer si no los siente’ (vv. 1270–1283; cf. also the subsequent explanation of this method in vv. 1292–1351). In his *Arte nuevo*, Lope writes about the art of writing plays and not the art of acting. It says there however, similarly: “Si hablare el rey, imite cuanto pueda / la gravedad real; si el viejo hablare, / procure una modestia sentenciosa; / describa los amantes con afectos / que muevan con extremo a quien escucha; / los soliloquios pinte de manera / que se transforme todo el recitante, / y con mudarse a sí, mude al oyente” (vv. 269–276 [Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (cf. note 503), p. 146; my italics]). Josef Oehrlein who, apart from Lope’s instructions in the *Arte nuevo*, refers here to the ‘catalogue’ of acting skills articulated by the protagonist in Cervantes’ *Pedro de Urdemalas* (1615) (act 3, vv. 768–801), summarizes this with the statement, ‘[...] that the actor literally has to play himself into the role’ (“[...] daß sich der Akteur regelrecht in die Rolle hineinspielen müsse”). And he continues: “The text provides impulses which are emotionally charged and intensified by linguistic and gestural expression, to such an extent that the actor makes the stage role transform into himself, that is, that he no longer merely plays its behaviours and emotions, but experiences them, so to speak” (“[...] Vom Text gehen Impulse aus, die durch sprachliche und gestische Gestaltung verstärkt, emotional aufgeladen werden, und zwar in einem solchen Maß, daß sich der Schauspieler die Bühnenrolle anverwandelt, das heißt deren Verhaltensweisen und Affekte nicht mehr nur spielt, sondern sie gewissermaßen durchlebt”) (Josef Oehrlein, *Der Schauspieler im spanischen Theater des Siglo de Oro (1600–1681): Untersuchungen zu Berufsbild und Rolle in der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt am Main 1986, p. 125; cf. in total pp. 123–128 [“Imitación de la naturaleza: Die Kunst des Schauspielers”], on *Lo fingido verdadero*, pp. 126 f.; regarding contemporary Spanish acting theory, cf. Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros, *Le técnica del actor español en el Barroco: Hipótesis y documentos*, Madrid 1998, esp. pp. 125–418, here p. 196).

**603** Fischer, “Dramatization of the Theatrical Experience” (cf. note 494), p. 161; see as well Egginton, *How the World Became a Stage* (cf. note 494), p. 71.



representa. MAX.: *En extremo*” vv. 1958)<sup>604</sup> and his talent for improvisation (cf. vv. 2705–2711). In the second act, Ginés takes on the role of a ‘love maniac.’ During his preparation he emphasizes the authenticity of his emotions, and refers to the reality of his ‘imitation’ ([...] imito lo que siento; / pero en tanta propiedad / no me parece razón / que llamen imitación / lo que es la misma verdad;’ vv. 1301–1305). He will perform ‘his *comedia*,’ he announces to Diocleciano (‘Haré la mía’ v. 1263). The play’s inner reality (the lovers Octavio and Marcela, Ginés’ jealousy) and the ‘play within the play’ are closely interwoven with one another and influence each other. But Ginés’ jealousy of Octavio and his desire for Marcela, passionate before, during, and immediately after the aborted *comedia de celos*, are no longer of any relevance to him a short time later when the couple returns, as Ginés emphasizes at the beginning of the third act. This, however, prefigures the fact that he will soon – without being aware of this himself – turn towards ‘true’ love. When, before his performance of the “[...] *comedia / del cristiano bautizado*” (vv. 2390 f.), he devotes himself to the role of the Christian martyr, he seems to be ‘carried away by his character’ through his intense acting and again premises acting as: ‘¿qué mejor puedo imitar / si fuera el cristiano mismo / que se pretende salvar?’ (vv. 2476ff.) so that he asks for baptism and hears a voice promising him salvation for his good acting. But for him, the fact that this was indeed a call from heaven, an angel, is only one possible explanation. During the performance of the inner play, as one could read it against the backdrop of Ginés’ conception of acting, the rapture and ecstasy of acting makes the actor indistinguishable from the character he portrays; imitation slips from the actor’s control and becomes reality.<sup>605</sup> Ultimately, Ginés does

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**604** Cf. the entry “EXTREMO” in the *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana, en que se explica el verdadero sentido de las voces, su naturaleza y calidad, con las frases o modos de hablar, los proverbios o refranes, y otras cosas convenientes al uso de la lengua* [= *Diccionario de Autoridades*], 6 vols., Madrid 1726–1739, vol. 3 [1732], pp. 700b–701b, here p. 701b).

**605** Cf. Oehrlein’s interpretation: ‘The end, which Ginés approaches as a consequence of his extremely authentic representation of feelings, may correspond to the convention of the legend, but it also results quite logically from the postulate that the actor must fully feel the emotions himself, which correspond to the behavior of the stage character: Ginés is so absorbed in a Christian’s world of feelings that he himself becomes a Christian and even accepts martyrdom for it’ (“Das Ende, dem Ginés als Konsequenz aus seiner äußerst wahrhaften Gefühlsdarstellung entgegengieht, mag zwar der Konvention der Legende entsprechen, es ergibt sich aber auch ganz folgerichtig aus dem Postulat, daß der Schauspieler die Emotionen selbst voll und ganz empfinden müsse, die dem Verhalten der Bühnenfigur entsprechen: Ginés steigert sich so sehr in die Empfindungswelt eines Christen hinein, daß er selbst zum Christen wird und dafür auch den Märtyrertod in Kauf nimmt”) (*Der Schauspieler im spanischen Theater des Siglo de Oro* [cf. note 602], p. 126).



not die in the framework of the play, but actually dies a martyr's death. Nevertheless, he has not only become a 'real Christian' through his acting, decisive in this are the work of divine grace and the sacrament of baptism.<sup>606</sup> Against the backdrop of contemporary controversies over the legality (*licitud*) of the theater and, in connection with this, the role of the actor,<sup>607</sup> Lope appears to claim here that rather than being evil, acting can lead to good, such as Ginés' conversion.

In Lope's drama, the 'levels of reality' interplay against each other, leading to different interpretations of what is perceived (on the part of the actors, on the part of the spectators within the play, on the part of the viewers/readers). What is explicitly declared fictitious becomes reality (in an explicitly fictitious framework: *comedia*): the representation of a Christian martyr is transformed into the object of the representation. Ginés professes Christianity and dies the martyr's death. (Play-internal) reality is transformed into fiction, which in turn has a retroactive effect on (play-internal) reality: Ginés, who is in love with Marcela and jealous of Octavio, writes a *comedia* on this subject, acted by those involved (the roles of Fabia/Octavio/Rufino) that he hopes will influence the 'real' relationships. This is an aspect that the viewers/readers are aware of, but not the inner audience. In the course of the performance, however, the fiction becomes fragile as Ginés 'breaks character.' The escape of Fabia (played by Marcela) and Octavio (played by Octavio), which is part of the play, turns into a real (at least temporary) disappearance of Marcela and Octavio. This influences the further progress of fiction: improvisation is necessary on stage, which

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**606** According to Catholic dogmatics of post-Tridentine character, 'baptism works by itself (*ex opere operato*). Cf. the 'Decree on the Sacraments' passed by the Council of Trent at its 7th session (1547): Concilium Tridentinum, Sessio VII, 3 mart. 1547 "Decretum primum [De sacramentis]"/Session 7, 3 March 1547 'First decree [On the sacraments]' (*Canones et Decreta/Canons and Decrees* [cf. note 374], pp. 684–689), "Canones de sacramenti in genere"/'Canons on the sacraments in general' (pp. 684–685), Canon 8 "Si quis dixerit, per ipsa novae legis sacramenta ex opere operato non conferri gratiam, sed solam fidem divinae promissionis ad gratiam consequendam sufficere: a[nathema] s[it]"/'If anyone says that grace is not conferred by the sacrament of the new law through the sacramental action itself, but that faith in the divine promise is by itself sufficient for obtaining the grace: let him be anathema' (p. 685).

**607** Regarding this, see Rodríguez Cuadros, *Le técnica del actor español en el Barroco* (cf. note 602), pp. 295–312; Oehrlein, *Der Schauspieler im spanischen Theater des Siglo de Oro* (cf. note 602), pp. 144–151; Wolfram Nitsch, *Barocktheater als Spielraum: Studien zu Lope de Vega und Tirso de Molina*, Tübingen 2000, pp. 44–52; Poppenberg, "La licitud del teatro" (cf. note 494); Manfred Tietz, "Die Debatte um die 'moralische Zulässigkeit des Theaters' im spanischen 17. Jahrhundert und ihre Folgen," in: Sybille Große/Axel Schönberger (eds.), *Dulce et decorum est philologiam colere: Festschrift für Dietrich Briesemeiser zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, Berlin 1999, pp. 705–732.

then leads to an interaction between the separate areas ‘stage’ and ‘audience’ and finally brings the performance to a premature end. It also affects the events and the real-life relationships: Marcela and Octavio get married. Thus Ginés’ attempt in the second act to influence reality by means of fiction, i.e. to strain the bonds of love between Octavio and Marcela in favor of his own (re)desired love relationship with Marcela, fails. Using acting to influence reality fails as long as the goal is a ‘false’ one, that is, earthly-erotic love. As soon as the goal is changed, acting does indeed bring about the desired end, even though the ‘right’ goal, the love of God, is not yet obvious to the actor himself. Ginés plays the role of a Christian and becomes a Christian himself during this ‘play’ – *lo fingido verdadero* – retrospectively recognizing the ‘truth’ of what was initially *burla* to him. This structure implies that the ‘avoidance of the wrong,’ of sin, ‘automatically’ leads to right, even if one does not yet know it or does not yet consciously strive for it. In the context of a period when long-held beliefs were being questioned and perhaps perceived as fragile, this must have been seen as the ‘great promise’ of Lope’s play.

One of the basic assumptions of Pyrrhonian skepticism outlined in the first ten tropes of the *Hypotyposesis* is the unreliability of sensory perception. The fact that perception is relative, that the world is not necessarily as it *seems* to be to us, stems from a skeptical point of view that maintains that no certain statements can be made about reality. Skepticism challenges the difference between being and appearing, and asks critical questions about claims of knowledge as well as practice: how is one to behave in the face of not being able to know? *Lo fingido verdadero* explores the fragile boundary between being and appearing and the difficulty of distinguishing between *fingido* and *verdadero* through the medium of acting. Theater and acting serve as a metaphor for doubt about the perception of reality, but only to a certain extent. Within Orthodox Christianity, which views the physical world as false and transitory and the afterworld as true and eternal, the theater also functions as a metaphor for the illusory nature of the earthly world as a whole. In this sense, Lope’s *comedia* represents the first Spanish dramatization of the concept of *theatrum mundi*. This *topos* of life as a play and the world as a stage was already used in antiquity, but was rediscovered and widely explored in Baroque literature.<sup>608</sup> The best known example of this, Calderón de la Barca’s *auto sacramental El gran teatro del mundo*, first

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**608** For the genesis of this *topos*, cf. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trusk, Princeton, NJ 1990, pp. 138–144; Antonio Vilanova, “El tema del gran teatro del mundo,” *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 23 (1950), pp. 153–188.

printed in 1655, probably originated in the 1630s, more than twenty years after Lope's drama.<sup>609</sup>

*Lo fingido verdadero* sets up this image of the world as a stage on which humans play a role assigned to them, with God in the role of director, and the earthly world as theater with the true eternal life coming after death from the very beginning. Celio tells Carino that the only difference between him and actors was the time limitation of the role. His *comedia* and thus his role as ruler lasted his whole life and ended with his death, he was 'de rey vestido / hasta la muerte' (vv. 368 f.). Carino is angry about this comparison, declaring that he and his position as ruler was not fiction, but true and valid beyond death (cf. vv. 392–405). But when he dies violently at the end of the scene, he, embraces the insight that he has only played a 'role' on the stage of the world, that the *tragedia* was over now, the costume had to be taken off, and that his successor shall play the 'role' better than him. In the third act, the 'theater of the world' metaphor is taken up again by Ginés in the 'play within the play' and, as shown above, used and expanded upon several times.<sup>610</sup> To illustrate this, the following passages are quoted again highlighting the relevant metaphors:

Puso Dios en mi papel  
 estos pies; [...]
   
 [...]
   
 Con éstos le voy siguiendo  
 en la comedia y comida  
 de su mesa, y de la vida  
 y gloria que en Dios pretendo.  
*Y todo representante,*  
*que todo el mundo lo es,*  
 si no tuviere estos pies,  
 que se pierda no se espante.

(vv. 2782–2793; my italics)

**609** The fact that *Lo fingido verdadero* is both the first dramatic interpretation of the 'world theater' theme in Spanish literature and an important precursor to Calderón's *auto* of the same title, is already indicated by Vilanova ("El tema del gran teatro del mundo" [cf. note 608], p. 172); cf. as well Dixon, "'Ya tienes la comedia prevenida. . .'" (cf. note 493), p. 59. A more detailed comparison regarding the treatment of the metaphor in *Lo fingido verdadero* and Calderón's allegorical drama, however, will not be carried out here (on Calderón's play *El gran teatro del mundo*, see below note 614).

**610** 'Representé mi figura: / César fui, Roma, rey era; / acabóse la tragedia, / la muerte me desnudó: / sospecho que no duró / toda mi vida hora y media. / Poned aquestos vestidos / de un representante Rey, / pues es tan común la ley / a cuantos fueron nacidos, / adonde mi sucesor / los vuelva luego a tomar, / porque ha de representar, / ¡quiera el cielo que mejor!' (vv. 641–654).

Césares, yo soy cristiano:

[. . .]

esto *represento* yo,  
 porque *es mi autor Jesucristo*;  
 en la segunda jornada  
 está vuestro enojo escrito;  
 que en llegando la tercera  
 representaré el martirio.

(vv. 2866–2873; my italics)

[. . .] *el auditorio soberano*

en las gradas de altísimas esferas,  
 y vos por las celestes vidrieras  
 visteis de mi comedia el acto humano,

(vv. 2970–2973; my italics)

At the end of the *comedia*, the protagonist, about to die, addresses the Roman people and reflects on his conversion, contrasting the ‘wrong role’ and the ‘wrongly oriented play’ to the now ‘right’ one, and on his impending earthly death, which marks the end of deception:

yo representé en el mundo  
 sus fábulas miserables,  
 todo el tiempo de mi vida,  
 sus vicios y sus maldades;  
 [. . .]  
 recibíome Dios; ya soy  
 cristiano representante;  
 cesó la humana comedia,  
 que era toda disparates;  
 hice la que veis, divina;  
 voy al cielo a que me paguen,  
 que de mi fe y esperanza  
 y mi caridad notable,  
 debo al cielo, y él me debe  
 estos tres particulares.  
 Mañana temprano espero  
 para la segunda parte.

(vv. 3104–3121)

The *theatrum mundi* metaphor thus forms the final argument of the drama.<sup>611</sup> This implies in consequence that illusion and reality can only be distinguished by dogmaticism. Those who believe in nothing are trapped in skepticism’s

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<sup>611</sup> Gaston Hall sees in Ginés’ final monologue the articulation of a Molinist position for the drama: “Toute la structure providentielle de la tragi-comédie est éclairée retrospectivement par ce

radical doubt and thus miss the point of their lives.<sup>612</sup> In Lope's drama, no epistemological answer is suggested to skepticism's challenge regarding the indistinguishability of illusion and reality, which in the play is based on theatrical illusion and the destabilization of the boundary between appearance and being at all levels of the plot. Instead the belief in the right and the corresponding right action are at the center of the message. Certainty does not exist in this world. The ultimate knowledge of the world lies only with God. Only the right faith and good acting of the (right) role offers man a reliable orientation. It should be pointed out again, however, that the 'theater of the world' metaphor in Ginés' final monologue is not quite consistently formulated, insofar as the image area of the theater also serves as a paraphrase of life after death, which would have to be understood as reality or truth and not as fiction: 'Mañana temprano espero / para *la segunda parte*' (vv. 3120 f.; my italics). In the 'sequel' of the *comedia divina*, in which Ginés acts as part of God's *compañia* and becomes the *mejor representante* by his martyrdom,<sup>613</sup> a new life awaits him, that is: the eternal reward for his good (resp. right) acting ('voy al cielo a que me paguen' vv. 3115).<sup>614</sup> The 'theological inconsistency'

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rappel de la doctrine de la grâce en anticipation des mérites, qui mériteraient à leur tour le salut: la grâce *post praevisa merita* préconisée par Molina dans son traité *De concordia* (1588)" ("Illusion et vérité dans deux pièces de Lope de Vega" [cf. note 494], p. 48). Forestier, who, moreover, emphasizes Lope as the inventor of the method of 'play within the play' in Spain, also emphasizes the Christian character of the play's 'theater of the world' metaphor and, furthermore, pointedly expresses the significance that this context entails for the conception of 'theater as such': "En effet, si le monde est théâtre, le théâtre proprement dit s'exprime en termes de théâtre dans le théâtre: le théâtre est inclus dans le théâtre du monde. On comprend qu'à un moment où l'inclusion d'une action dramatique dans une autre était, du point de vue technique, un problème à peu près résolu, la fortune de la conception philosophique du petit théâtre dans le grand théâtre ait pu influencer fortement sur le rapide développement du procédé. Il est tout à fait significatif que l'inventeur espagnol du procédé, Lope de Vega, ait choisi de l'utiliser dans une pièce où il illustrait la version chrétienne du thème, *Lo fingido verdadero* (l'histoire de saint Genest)" (*Le théâtre dans le théâtre sur la scène française du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* [cf. note 3], p. 39; italics in the original).

**612** The best example of this would be Shakespeare's Hamlet (see chap. 2 of this study).

**613** Regarding this, see again, e.g., vv. 2782–2793; vv. 2966–2979; vv. 3000–3005; vv. 3053–3059.

**614** Comparatively, Calderón's *auto sacramental* about 'the great theater of the world,' also lacks a clear (metaphorical) demarcation between the realms of life in this world and life beyond. EL MUNDO instructs the characters that have left the stage (of life), saying: "al teatro pasad de las verdades, / que este el teatro es de las ficciones" (Calderón, *El gran teatro del mundo*, vv. 1390 f.). Not only earthly life, but also what follows after its end is denoted as 'theater.' The former is called 'theater of fictions,' and the latter is not simply opposed to it as 'reality,' but represents its continuation as a 'theater of truth.' After the performance, the end of the play within the play, 'World' takes away all 'costumes and props' from the characters, they are told to leave behind all the earthly things, which are only borrowed (cf. "MUNDO: [. . .] deja,

(“theologische Inkonsistenz”) arising in the final formulation of the *theatrum mundi* metaphor, which was not untypical for Lope’s dramatic works, could, according to Nolting-Hauff, ‘be ascribed to the subjective perspective of the protagonist obsessed with theater or to a certain momentum of its own in the theater-*conchetto*’ (“[. . .] [kann man] der subjektiven Perspektive des theaterbessenden Protagonisten oder einer gewissen Eigendynamik des Theater-Conchetto zuschreiben”).<sup>615</sup> Simerka, on the other hand, sees in Ginés’ final words an “undermin[ing] [of the] orthodox theological message [of the play]”:

[. . .] [T]he many layers of reflexivity present in th[is] play[s] stimulate critical reflection concerning doubt and knowledge in response to the self-conscious staging of religious themes. The atmosphere of uncertainty concerning where performance ends and true existence begins is prominent in the final lines of the [. . .] play[s]. Theatrical metaphores are pervasive even in the dying words of the Lope’s martyr, who refers to earthly life as a “human comedy” and names afterlife a “sequel”. [. . .] [T]he linkage of the most important event of Christian dogma with theatricality – and hence pretense – serves to undermine the orthodox theological message. The ubiquity of self-conscious questioning of perception, reality and illusion throughout this drama paves the way for a heterodoxical interpretation of the concluding lines.<sup>616</sup>

While Simerka here notes the destabilization of the border between appearing and being, the staged blurring of fiction and reality (which is on a metaphorical

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suelta, quita la corona; / la majestad, desnuda, pierde, olvida. (*Quítaselo.*) / Vuélvase, torne, salga tu persona / desnuda de la farsa de la vida. / [. . .] / REY: ¿Tú no me diste adornos tan amados? / ¿Cómo me quitas lo que ya me diste? / MUNDO: Porque dados no fueron, no, prestados / sí, para el tiempo que el papel hiciste” vv. 1290–1301). Excluded from this, however, are the ‘good works,’ as EL MUNDO addresses LA DISCRECIÓN with the words “No te puedo quitar las buenas obras, / estas solas del mundo se han sacado” (vv. 1377 f.). They are the link between earthly existence and the so-called ‘last things.’ Man’s actions on earth, or rather, on the level of argumentation of the allegorical play: the way of fulfilling, playing the assigned role during the performance of the *comedia* with the significant title “Obrar bien, que Dios es Dios” has an impact on the salvation of the soul. Thus, what becomes quite obvious here are Counter-Reformation Catholicism’s central arguments of *liberum arbitrium* (the baptized person, in the state of grace bestowed upon him, is able to decide for or against ‘the right thing’) and *opera meritoria*. (Used edition: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *El gran teatro del mundo/Das große Welttheater* [Spanish-German], ed. and trans. Gerhard Poppenberg in coop. with Herle-Christin Jessen and Angela Calderón Villarino, Stuttgart 2012).

**615** Nolting-Hauff, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 491), p. 83. In contrast to Calderón, the qualities in Lope would consist not so much ‘in the strict subordination of all details to a unifying concept,’ but primarily ‘in the variety of ideas and artistic means’ (ibid. “[. . .] in der strengen Unterordnung aller Einzelheiten unter ein vereinheitlichendes Konzept [. . .]”; “[. . .] in der Vielfalt der Einfälle und der künstlerischen Mittel”).

**616** Simerka, “Metatheater and Skepticism” (cf. note 2), pp. 68 f. (The interpretation refers to both Genesis-dramas, Lope’s play and Rotrou’s *Le Véritable Saint Genest*).

level – in Ginés’ final words – maintained until the end), and its affinity with the discourse of skepticism, she places it in a different context of interpretation. In the final scene, she says, “the precarious relationship between illusion and knowledge” was of particular importance. Since the audience was always aware that the “corpse” would return after the fall of the curtain, the death on stage was “the most metatheatrical of dramatic moments.”<sup>617</sup> It was, furthermore, “a special form of the ‘play within the play.’”<sup>618</sup> According to Simerka, its extreme and melodramatic representation, as for example in Lope’s drama, was “an integral part of reflexivity,” since, according to convention, one would expect such a spectacle, but “the unreality of the scenes ma[de] it easier to confront death.”<sup>619</sup> Through the martyrs’ heroic confirmation of the conviction of faith, the martyr’s death on stage was “meant to encourage others to accept th[eir] new faith and[, because of the value of the ultimate reward,] profess it despite the consequences.”<sup>620</sup> The repetition of the *theatrum mundi* motif was all the more significant inasmuch as the “martyrdom of the persecuted believer” was staged. Simerka considers the (meta-)dramatic modeling of the Genesis legend in Lope de Vega (as well as in Rotrou) as a “radical affirmation of the skeptical mode of thought.” She concludes that:

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**617** P. 69 (in reference to Harry Berger, *Imaginary Audition*, Berkeley, CA 1989, p. 98; subsequently [p. 69 ff.] to the study: Richard K. Sanderson, “Suicide as Message and Metadrama in English Renaissance Tragedy,” *Comparative Drama* 26 [1992], pp. 199–217, here pp. 201–210, whose observations on stage death in Early Modern revenge drama she transfers to the martyrdom-scene in Lope’s *comedia* [and Rotrou’s *tragédie*]).

**618** Ibid.

**619** P. 70. According to Simerka, in reference to a study on metatheatrical aspects of death on stage in English Renaissance drama (see above, note 617), the use of the *theatrum mundi*-metaphor in death scenes constituted the main characteristic of the Early Modern ‘revenge tragedy,’ where “suicide and epistemological concerns” were sometimes “juxtapose[ed].” Moreover, death on stage was also “a form of ritual of death and rebirth.” The “transcendence” was of aesthetic, not theological, nature, so that art and not the Bible would function as a guarantor of truth. An anti-Christian reading of the metaphor of ‘life as a dream’ would lead to nihilism, which, as Simerka notes, is of course linked to a later phase of epistemological uncertainty. Nevertheless, Simerka argues, this observation of the death portrayed on stage in the English revenge drama could serve as a basis for understanding the metadramatic stagings of martyrdom presented by Lope (and Rotrou) as a “mediat[ion] of early modern forms of skepticism.” Even if the authors (Lope and Rotrou) believed in the power of theater to deal with miracles and redemption and to create epistemological certainty about life, death, and the hereafter, the conclusion could still be regarded as illusory, even though the beliefs of the recipients no longer coincided with those of the authors and the protagonist, especially since unorthodox philosophical and theological teachings were known among the contemporary audience. Cf. pp. 70 f. (also following Hall, “Illusion et vérité dans deux pièces de Lope de Vega” [cf. note 494], p. 43 [referring to ‘modern readers’]).

**620** P. 69.

[...] [T]he staging of martyrdom evokes the death of the first and most revered Christian martyr, but also distances the spectator and ruptures identity with Genesius and Christ through the reflexive nature of the actor's conversion and death. In the context of this narrative of the ultimate gesture of faith, the meta-artistry in these two plays can be seen as a *radical affirmation of the skeptical mode of thought*, questioning not only human ability to perceive the difference between theatrical illusion and material reality, but also human capacity to attain meaningful knowledge of the relationship between material reality and divine revelation.<sup>621</sup>

Considering the analysis of Lope's drama that has been carried out here so far, this interpretation appears problematic with regard to the 'message' of the play. Simerka for example makes no reference to the important theological implications of the drama that are not only present in Ginés' speeches as a converted Christian and his martyrdom, but also concern the complex overall composition (the multilayered preparation for Ginés' becoming a Christian, the change of the false worldly love to the true love of God; the transition from a played [*fingido*] to the 'lived right role' [*verdadero*]; etc.).<sup>622</sup>

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**621** P. 71 (my italics). In this context, Simerka's interpretation of Ginés' 'rehearsal scene' in the third act (vv. 2414–2588) should be mentioned, in which, as Ginés asks for baptism, the 'miraculous opening of the heavens' happens, though only visible to the audience, and he hears a voice that promises him salvation, but whose origin he does not know to clearly identify (Fabio or indeed a call from heaven): "For the 'real' audience, the Christian and the stage miracles are conflated, for even the devout spectator who believes that God did indeed intervene in the actor's life is still aware that the apparently miraculous revelation of the picture is actually a result of stage machinery. This may very well be *one of the most subversive moments of Lope's play*, for it demonstrates the ease with which miracles may be contrived. Although the play does appear to support belief in Christian ideology, through the representation of Genesius' heroic acceptance of martyrdom and his firm belief in a glorious afterlife, it simultaneously draws attention to the possibilities for deception. Not only everyday life, but also extraordinary occurrences are shown to be opaque rather than obvious, and subject to interpretation" (pp. 62 f.; my italics; cf. as well p. 65 regarding the corresponding scene in Rotrou).

**622** Cf. also the – polemically expressed – reference in Florence D'Artois in view of an ahistorical application of 'metatheater' concepts, given in his interpretation of the final scene: "[...] [P]ara Ginés, e[ll] fin no es sino el principio de otra vida. Tiene futuro en el teatro divino. Dice: 'Mañana temprano espero / para la segunda parte' (III, vv. 3120–3121). Hasta el último momento la fábula se anula y ostenta su anulación, pero para mejor evidenciar, otra vez, la estructura oculta de la fábula ideada por Dios. Al morir, Ginés no cae en un precipicio, sino que salta a la escena de Dios. Por lo tanto, desde esta perspectiva, su fábula no acaba. La estructura de *Lo fingido verdadero* sería incomprensible sin el horizonte de esta demostración. Más que laboratorio de *compositio* dramática, *Lo fingido verdadero* es un ejemplo de perfecta adecuación de una forma estética a una postura metafísica. Por más decepcionante que sea esta conclusión para un estudioso del siglo XXI, amante del formalismo y de la metateatralidad, ocultar las evidentes conexiones del procedimiento del teatro en el teatro con el *topos* del *theatrum mundi*, sería traicionar nuestro objeto de estudio" (D'Artois, "El teatro en el teatro en *Lo fingido verdadero*" [cf. 494], p. 188).



To further support the interpretation represented here, I shall now refer to the historical context (which was common knowledge at that period) in which the play is situated.

Ginés confesses himself a Christian before Emperor Diocleciano, whose (chaotic) rise to power takes up a considerable part of the *comedia's* plot as a whole, and his (Ginés') death as a martyr closes the play. This is significant in terms of the interpretation of the play and classification of the figure of Genesius. Mexía's *Historia imperial y cesárea*, Lope's source for the Genesius material, states: "[...] [D]etermino Diocleciano [...] de perseguir la yglesia, y fue esta la decima persecucio[n] general, despues de la de Nero[n], y la mas cruel de todas, y q[ue] mas tie[m]po duro [...]"<sup>623</sup> Diocletian was not only considered one of the cruelest persecutors of Christians, but also – and this is decisive – in principle the *last* major Roman emperor to do so.<sup>624</sup> His successor

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Cf., furthermore, Canning's examination of Lope's drama as "Metaplay," and her concluding comment: "Ultimately, Lope's play expresses a sense of disillusion with life. While the relationship between *amor divino* and *amor humano* is not the principal focus of *Lo fingido verdadero*, the play does discredit negative attitudes and forms of behaviour associated with human love, while divine love triggers Ginés' martyrdom and assumption of his true role." (Canning, "*Lo fingido verdadero* as Metaplay" [cf. note 494], here p. 127).

**623** Mexía, *Historia imperial y cesárea* (cf. note 500), p. 130r b. On pp. 130r a–130v b there is a more detailed description of persecution and cruelties that ends with the words: "Finalmente se hizieron crueldades nunca vistas, y fue grandissima la multitud los muertos, enel tiempo que duro esta persecucion" (p. 130v a–b).

**624** In his introduction to Lactantius' book *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, Alfons Städele sums up: 'From when and for what reasons there were persecutions of Christians, i.e. a state action that was predominantly or exclusively directed against Christians, is a matter of debate. In the Christian tradition, Nero was the first, Diocletian the last, great persecutor of Christians' ("Ab wann und aus welchen Gründen es Christenverfolgungen gegeben hat, ein staatliches Vorgehen also, das sich überwiegend oder ausschließlich gegen Christen richtete, ist umstritten. In der christlichen Tradition galt jedenfalls Nero als der erste, Diokletian als der letzte große Christenverfolger"). Given a 'minimum configuration of persecutor emperors' ("Mindestausstattung" an Verfolgerkaisern) – Nero, Domitian, Valerian, and Diocletian – there were usually ten or six major persecutions mentioned. (Alfons Städele, "Einleitung," in: Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* [cf. note 516], pp. 7–88, here p. 19 with note 23). In Lactantius, however, it is Galerius Maximianus, not Diocletian, who is represented as the actual author of the bloody persecutions (cf. *De mort. pers.* 10,5 f.; 11,8; 14,1 f. [pp. 116 f., pp. 120 f., pp. 122 ff.; Lactantius, *Of the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died* (cf. note 516), pp. 304 ff.]). The beginning of the official persecution of Christians marks an edict issued by Emperor Diocletian and his co-rulers (the second Augustus Maximian and the two Caesars Constantius Chlorus and Galerius) on 23 February 303 for the entire Empire. However, its implementation and development were different in the individual parts of the empire. On the persecution of Christians under Diocletian, cf. (the older studies:) Jacques Moreau, *Die Christenverfolgung im Römischen Reich*, 2nd ed., Berlin/New York 1971 (1st ed. 1961; *La persécution du Christianisme*

Constantine the Great (r. 306–337, sole ruler from 324) made Christianity the official religion of the empire.

Between the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in 305 and until Constantine became sole emperor in 324, the Roman Empire was ruled by an oft-shifting tetrarchy and experienced a period of tumultuous change. During the course of this period Christianity came to be increasingly accepted and tolerated.<sup>625</sup>

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*dans l'Empire Romain*, Paris 1956), pp. 98–119 and Joseph Vogt, *Constantin der Große und sein Jahrhundert*, 2nd ed., Munich 1960 (1st ed. 1949), pp. 121–133; as well as Demandt, *Die Spätantike* (cf. note 500), pp. 69 ff.; Kuhoff, *Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie* (cf. note 500), pp. 246–297. (For the Diocletian Tetrarchy, see above note 519).

**625** After the abdication of the two *Augusti* Diocletian and Maximian in 305, Constantine's father Constantius Chlorus in the West and Galerius Maximianus in the East, became emperors, and Flavius Valerius Severus and Maximinus Daia were appointed *Caesares*. In June 306, Constantine had himself proclaimed *Augustus* by the troops in Britain, after his father had died during a campaign. Galerius, as the highest-ranking emperor, recognized Constantine as *Caesar* but appointed Severus *Augustus* of the western part of the empire. With the claims to power of Maxentius, son of the resigned Maximian, – he also had himself proclaimed emperor in Rome in 306 – and of Maximian, who in turn had declared himself *Augustus*, the balance of power and the corresponding disputes became even more complicated. An imperial conference led by Diocletian convened in 308 to consolidate the system. It was decided to remove Maxentius and Maximian, downgrade Constantine back to *Caesar* in the West, and appoint Licinius as the new *Augustus* to replace the dead Severus. However, this led to no pacification of the rivals – Maxentius could assert his power in the center of the empire, but Constantine called himself *Augustus* on his own authority – and could not stop the continued dissolution of the Tetrarchy. The senior emperor Galerius died in 311. It is noteworthy that Galerius, who, together with his junior emperor Maximinus Daia, had most consistently executed the Diocletianic persecution decrees, issued an edict in the name of all four reigning emperors shortly before his death to tolerate the Christian religion, which enabled it to exist on equal footing with the other religions worshipped in the Roman Empire. Both Maxentius and Constantine – like his father before him – pursued a policy of tolerance towards Christians. This very rough summary of the events and situation between the years 305 and 312 is based on the accounts in Demandt, *Die Spätantike* (cf. note 500), pp. 75–103, here pp. 75–81; Andresen/Erbse et al. [eds.], *Lexikon der Alten Welt* (cf. note 500), cols. 1586 ff. (entry “Konstantin I d.Gr.”), here cols. 1586 f.; Vogt, *Constantin der Große und sein Jahrhundert* (cf. note 624), pp. 137–153; cf. as well the résumé (with reference to Vogt and András Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, Oxford 1948) in Joachim Küpper, *Discursive Renovatio in Lope de Vega and Calderón: Studies on Spanish Baroque Drama*, Berlin/Boston 2017, pp. 163–168, here pp. 164 ff. Regarding the subsequent set of events (extensively discussed in research), Constantine's conflict with Maxentius, the decisive battle at the Milvian Bridge, and the aspect of the traditional vision and conversion of the emperor, and the beginning of the dominance of Christianity attributed to it, see Vogt, *Constantin der Große und sein Jahrhundert*, pp. 154–166; Demandt, *Die Spätantike*, pp. 82 ff.; cf. as well Weber, *Kaiser, Träume und Visionen* (cf. note 516), pp. 274–292.

In the Christian version of events, however, that informed the ‘conception of history’ and what was known about the period in Lope’s time, the Roman Empire’s rejection of paganism and acceptance of Christianity as the one true religion was a sudden and miraculous event, exclusively linked with the first Christian emperor Constantine. The basis for this understanding was the account by Lactantius (c. 250–320 CE) in his *De mortibus persecutorum* [On the Deaths of the Persecutors]<sup>626</sup> and, in particular, the influential *Vita Constantini* [Life of Constantine] by Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 264–339/340 CE). According to Eusebius’ account, the story about Constantine’s ‘miraculous’ conversion to Christianity is that on the eve of the decisive battle between Constantine and Maxentius at Milvian Bridge in 312, Constantine sought divine assistance to win the day. Taking into account the failures of his predecessors who had worshipped pagan gods and the success of his father, who had already turned to the Christian faith, he decides to call on the God of the Christians (not yet ‘familiar’ to him) for help. (This is historically inaccurate, as by all accounts Constantine’s father Constantius Chlorus was not a Christian.<sup>627</sup>) Constantine began to pray and suddenly “a most remarkable divine sign” appears to him.<sup>628</sup> Before his eyes and those of the whole army a cross of light appears in the sky over the sun with the words “By this [sign] conquer!” (*toúto níka*).<sup>629</sup>

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**626** Cf. Lactantius *De mort. pers.* 44,1–10 (Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* [cf. note 516], pp. 200–204; Lactantius, *On the Manners in Which the Persecutors Died* [cf. note 516], p. 318); see above note 516.

**627** Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Constantini* I, 27 (Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Constantini/Über das Leben Konstantins* [Greek-German], introd. Bruno Bleckmann, trans. and ed. Horst Schneider, Turnhout 2007; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, Oxford 1999, pp. 79 f.; in the following, page numbers refer to the English translation). Eusebius previously contrasts Constantine’s father Constantius Chlorus with the other Tetrarchs, who are described as tyrannical persecutors of Christians (I, 13–18 [pp. 74–77]), where it reads about him: “When four men shared power in the Roman Empire, this man was the only one who adopted an independent policy and was on friendly terms with the God over all” (I, 13,1 [p. 74]) or as well: “When he had for a long time given proofs of his merit as an emperor, recognizing only the God over all and condemning the polytheism of the goddess, and had fortified his house all around with the prayers of holy men, he finally finished the course of his life serenely and undisturbed [. . .]” (I, 17,2 [p. 76]). Cf. also the following statement, which is made after having told about Constantius’ death and Constantine’s ‘adoption’ of his father’s imperial position: “In such a way then did God, the President of the whole world, of his own will select Constantine, sprung from such a father, as universal ruler and governor, that no man could claim the precedence which he alone possessed, since the rest owed the rank they held to election by others” (I, 24 [pp. 78 f.]).

**628** I, 28,1 (pp. 80 f.).

**629** “About the time of the midday sun, when day was just turning, he said he saw with his own eyes, up in the sky and resting over the sun, a cross-shaped trophy formed from light,

Constantine does not understand and “wonder[s] to himself what the manifestation might mean [. . .].”<sup>630</sup> That night, Christ appears to him in a dream and instructs him to use the sign of the cross in battle as a measure of defense against his enemies.<sup>631</sup> The next day he orders a magnificent banner to be made, bearing Christ’s monogram.<sup>632</sup> Furthermore, he asks Christian priests to explain to him the meaning of the sign of the cross and is introduced by them to the teachings of Christianity.<sup>633</sup> He then declares that he wants to study the Holy Scriptures himself, makes the priests his advisors, and determines “[. . .] to honour the God who had appeared to him with all due rites.”<sup>634</sup> Constantine then fights in the name of God<sup>635</sup> against the tyrannical ‘pagan’ Maxentius,

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and a text attached to it which said, ‘By this conquer’ [‘τὸυτῶ νικά’]. Amazement at the spectacle seized both him and the whole company of soldiers which [. . .] witnessed the miracle” (I, 28,2 [p. 81]). According to Eusebius, he had heard the account of the vision and events from Constantine himself (“If someone else had reported it, it would perhaps not be easy to accept; but since the victorious Emperor himself told the story to the present writer [. . .] and confirmed it with oaths, who could hesitate to believe the account[?] [. . .]” [I, 28,1 (p. 81)]).

**630** I, 29 (p. 81).

**631** I, 29 (“[A]s he slept, the Christ of God appeared to him with the sign which had appeared in the sky, and urged him to make himself a copy of the sign which had appeared in the sky, and to use this as protection against the attacks of the enemy” [p. 81]). Note the striking shift of emphasis and the elaboration towards a ‘miracle’ in Eusebius in comparison to the earlier text. In Lactantius, before Constantine’s battle against Maxentius, it reads only: “Commonitus est in quiete Constantinus, ut caeleste signum die notaret in scutis atque ita proelium committeret. Fecit, ut issus est, et transversa X littera, summo capito circumflexo Christum in scutis notat” (*De mort. pers.* 44,5 [Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* (cf. note 516), pp. 200/202])/ ‘Constantine was directed in a dream to cause *the heavenly sign* to be delineated on the shields of his soldiers, and so to proceed to battle. He did as he had been commanded, and he marked on their shields the letter X, with a perpendicular line drawn through it and turned round thus at the top, being the cipher of Christ’ (Lactantius, *On The Manner in Which the Persecutors Died* [cf. note 516], p. 318; italics in the original).

**632** See Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Constantini* I, 30 f. (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine* [cf. note 627], pp. 81 f.), the detailed description of the *labarum* in I, 31,1–2 (pp. 81 f.), then the foresight: “This saving sign was always used by the Emperor for protection against every opposing and hostile force, and he commanded replicas of it to lead all his armies” (I, 31,3 [p. 82]).

**633** See I, 32,1–2 (p. 82).

**634** I, 32,3 (p. 82).

**635** Cf. I, 37,1 (“So taking as his patron God who is over all, and invoking his Christ as saviour and succour, and having set the victorious trophy, the truly salutary sign, at the head of his escorting soldiers and guards, he led them in full force [. . .]” [p. 84]). Note that in Eusebius, Constantine’s vision is not immediately before the battle at the Milvian Bridge, but is set before the campaign against Maxentius and his conquest of parts of Italy (see I, 37,2 [p. 84]).

whose infamies and cruelties are described *in extenso*.<sup>636</sup> He wins a decisive victory “by God’s will”<sup>637</sup> when, attempting to cross the Tiber on a bridge that he had built across the river, a folding mechanism malfunctions and Maxentius and his troops are plunged into the water and drown. This is given further significance by comparing these events with the *Exodus* story of the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, an image that equates Constantine with the biblical Moses and his troops to the Israelites, the chosen people of God.<sup>638</sup> Constantine, joyfully received in Rome after the victory, immediately offers “[...] a prayer of thanksgiving [...]” to the Christian God, “[...] the Giver of his victory.”<sup>639</sup> He celebrates this victory of the cross with inscriptions and monuments and preaches his new faith (“The Godbeloved Emperor, proudly confessing in this way the victory-bringing cross, was entirely open in making the Son of God known to the Romans”),<sup>640</sup> accepts church dignitaries into his inner circle, supports Christian communities, and has churches built.<sup>641</sup>

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**636** Cf. I, 33–36 (pp. 82 f.).

**637** I, 38,4 (p. 84).

**638** I, 38 (pp. 84 f.); the comparison is in I, 38,2 (“Accordingly, just as once in the time of Moses and the devout Hebrew tribe ‘Pharaoh’s chariots and his force he cast into the sea, and picked rider-captains he overwhelmed in the Red Sea’ [Exodus 15: 4], in the very same way Maxentius and the armed men and guards about him ‘sank to the bottom like a stone’ [Exodus 15: 5], when, fleeing before the force which came from God with Constantine, he went to cross the river lying in his path” [p. 84]) and I, 38,4 f. (pp. 84 f.).

**639** I, 39 (p. 85), quote in I, 39,3 (p. 85).

**640** I, 40–41,1 (pp. 85 f.), quote in I, 41,1 (p. 86).

**641** See I, 42 (p. 86). Küpper stresses that the narrative in Eusebius is modeled according to the schema of the conversion of Saul to the Christian Paul: “The emperor is taken to be the analog of Saul/Paul, the world-historical turning point to be the analog of the salvation-historical turning point” (*Discursive Renovatio* [cf. note 625], p. 175; on the account in Eusebius, cf. as a whole pp. 171–176, on the Pauline pattern, cf. pp. 173–176; [the observations are part of the analysis of Calderón’s *auto sacramental La lepra de Constantino*: chap. 3.3.3 “The Incorporation of Post-History: *La lepra de Constantino*,” pp. 161–219]). Thus, the Eusebian version, unlike that of Lactantius, “[...] not only [...] shapes all events in accordance with a general conception of history as guided by God, [...] but that its author completely redesigned them according to a preexistent narrative schema” (p. 170; on the modeling of the story in Lactantius, cf. altogether pp. 168–170). According to the structural pattern given there, it forms the basis for the Christian tradition of depicting the change of epoch (see: “The subsequent Christian tradition [...] may be seen as the consistent organization of a material that, in its basic outlines, is already modeled according to its one ‘true’ structure in Eusebius” [p. 176]). However, what has been said in this regard must also be modified in view of Constantine’s exclusive attachment to the epochal turning point in such a way that this applies to the comparison with his imperial opponents. With the influential modeling of events in the early medieval Sylvester-legend, as Küpper points out, the significance of his role changes: “Constantine is no longer the main protagonist of the

Soon after his victory over Maxentius, Constantine, now ruler over the entire western part of the empire, favors the Christian cult, for instance by donating the Lateran to the Bishop of Rome.<sup>642</sup> In February 313, the two co-emperors Constantine and Licinius (ruler of the eastern part of the empire) published the so-called Edict of Milan, which guaranteed freedom of religion for Christianity as well as pagan cults but enhanced the status of Christianity and favored the Christian communities (e.g. by the restitution of goods and properties). Licinius continued to rule in the east until defeated by Constantine in 324. The conflict between them came to have a religious overtone, as Constantine was pro-Christian and Licinius was anti-Christian. With Constantine's victory, Christianity became the dominant religion of the empire. Constantine built numerous churches, privileged the clergy and Christian communities and transferred state tasks and rights to the Great Church. He also worked to strengthen the unity of the Christian cult. As early as 314, Constantine was active in this regard, intervening in what is known as the Donatist Controversy that year. In 325 he convened the Council of Nicaea to settle a dispute over the teachings of Arius and took an active part in it himself. He moved his seat of government to Byzantium and renamed the new capital after himself. The city's layout and the inauguration of Constantinople in 330 clearly emphasized that this 'New Rome' was a Christian one. Constantine died in 337, after having been baptized, and was buried in the mausoleum he had prepared in Constantinople near the Church of the Apostles,

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world-historical transition, but a subsidiary figure in the *vita* of the Roman bishop Sylvester, during whose pontificate this change is said to have taken place" (p. 178). In addition, cf.: "The basic schema is retained: there is, once again, the explicit modeling of historical development as orchestrated by God himself, including an abrupt change, presented as a conversion caused by a miracle. Yet the content that fills in the schema is altogether altered, specifically by an almost complete displacement of the actual historical substrate in favor of a now utterly miraculous [...] storyline" (p. 176; for the legend of Sylvester, cf. pp. 176–184; for the field of questions regarding the so-called 'Donation of Constantine' – the legend of Sylvester is an integral part of the forged document –, cf. pp. 184–197).

**642** The following summary is based on the accounts in Demandt, *Die Spätantike* (cf. note 500), pp. 85–103; Andresen/Erbse et al. (eds.), *Lexikon der Alten Welt* (cf. note 500), cols. 1586 ff. (entry "Konstantin I d. Gr."), here cols. 1587 f.; Vogt, *Constantin der Große und sein Jahrhundert* (cf. note 624), pp. 166–256 (on the 'Edict of Milan,' cf. pp. 168–171; for Constantine's politics regarding Christians, cf. i.a. esp. pp. 166 ff., pp. 174–184 [for the politics of Licinius, cf. pp. 184 ff.], pp. 194–199, pp. 202 f.; on Constantinople, cf. pp. 214–218, pp. 252 f.; on his death and burial, cf. pp. 253 ff.); Küpper, *Discursive Renovatio* (cf. note 625), pp. 164 ff.; Klaus Martin Girardet, *Der Kaiser und sein Gott: Das Christentum im Denken und in der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Großen*, Berlin/New York 2010, pp. 124–163; Hartwin Brandt, *Konstantin der Große: Der erste christliche Kaiser*, Munich 2006, pp. 68–89, pp. 108–145, pp. 156–167.

symbolically surrounded by the tombs of the twelve apostles, a ‘thirteenth apostle’ or even as Christlike. Under the reign of Theodosius (r. 379–394), Christianity (following the Nicene creed) was declared to be the exclusive state religion, and all other forms of worship (including divergent Christianities) were banned.

Constantine’s reign marks a religious-historical caesura of historical significance. However, questions about his motivations, the timing of his conversion, and about the status of his Christian convictions remain a topic discussed in research to this day.<sup>643</sup> The Christian tradition, as shown above, models this upheaval as an abrupt event, brought about by Constantine’s miraculous conversion at the hand of God who led him to victory over Maxentius and the predetermined triumph of ‘true faith’ over paganism. Viewed against this background, with its themes of salvation and historical veracity, Lope de Vega’s Ginés obtains an added dimension. In the *vita* of Ginés this miraculous shift – from paganism to Christianity – is in a sense prefigured: the immoral empire, addicted to lust and debauchery, ‘suddenly’ transforms into the refuge and guardian of true religion.<sup>644</sup> It is interesting to note a certain structural similarity, hinted at in

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**643** Cf. Bruno Bleckmann’s evaluation: “So unbestritten es also sein muß, daß mit der Regierung Konstantins ein völlig neues und folgenreiches Kapitel im Verhältnis zwischen Kirche und Staatsmacht beginnt, so unklar ist alles übrige, etwa die Frage, welche Motive Konstantin verfolgte und ob die Beziehung der Kirche zur Staatsmacht sich nicht ohnehin als Notwendigkeit abzeichnete, die auch von den Kaiserkollegen Konstantins wie Galerius oder Licinius erkannt wurde. In der Diskussion um die Konstantinische Wende kann eine alle überzeugende Lösung niemals gefunden werden” [While it cannot be denied that Constantine’s reign marks the beginning of a completely new and momentous chapter in the relationship between church and state power, everything else seems unclear, such as the question of what were Constantine’s motives and whether the relationship of the church to state power was not in any case a necessity, which had also been identified as such by Constantine’s emperor peers, e.g. Galerius or Licinius] (Bruno Bleckmann, “Einleitung,” in: Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Constantini* [cf. note 627], pp. 7–106, here pp. 7 f., with reference to the study by Klaus Martin Girardet, *Die Konstantinische Wende: Voraussetzungen und geistige Grundlagen der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Großen*, Darmstadt 2006 [cf. there pp. 41–56, esp. pp. 48–52]). Cf. also Städele’s summarizing remark: “[...] daß Konstantin sich bereits 312 zum Christentum bekehrt hatte, ist zumindest zweifelhaft. Heute nimmt, wer nicht mit Jacob Burckhardt und Henri Grégoire in ihm sowieso nur den von Glaubensfragen innerlich unberührten, reinen Machtpolitiker sieht, eher einen allmählich fortschreitenden Prozeß an” [it is at least doubtful that Constantine had already converted to Christianity in 312. Today, anyone who does not see in him, following Jacob Burckhardt and Henri Grégoire, only the pure power politician who is inwardly untouched by questions of faith, rather assumes a gradually progressing process] (Städele, “Einleitung” [cf. note 624], pp. 7 f. with note 3 [p. 8], there references to publications of the position that the Constantinian ‘shift’ had taken place in 312 and to ‘mediating’ studies).

**644** Although Ginés’ transformation from an acting to a real Christian has already been discussed, it is the abruptness of this ‘inner transformation’ that is being pointed out here.



Eusebius' writing, which is more broadly developed in *Lo fingido verdadero*. When Constantine prays to the Christian God before the battle he does not do so as a Christian, but rather prays, so to speak, 'on the off chance,' out of sheer expediency, in the hopes of receiving from this God the necessary support to be victorious.<sup>645</sup> At this point, he is not yet able to understand the miracle<sup>646</sup> that takes place during his prayers – the sign of the cross appearing in the sky with the words 'By this (sign) conquer!' The next day, having been visited by Christ in a dream, he follows his command to carry a copy of the sign into battle,<sup>647</sup> he instantly does so and fights under the 'cross-shaped trophy,'<sup>648</sup> without knowing its meaning: "At the time in question, stunned by the amazing vision, and determined to worship no other god than the one who had appeared, he summoned those expert in his words, and enquired who this god was, and what was the explanation of the vision which had appeared of the sign."<sup>649</sup> Thus, Constantine speaks and acts according to the role assigned to him by God, namely, as

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Furthermore, it is worth drawing attention once again to the explicit opposition of 'true faith,' 'right religion' and 'false' paganism, which is also expressed in Ginés' closing speech: 'yo fui figura gentil / adorando dioses tales; recibíome Dios; ya soy / cristiano representante;' (vv. 3108–3111).

**645** "Knowing well that he would need more powerful aid than an army can supply [...], he sought a god to aid him" (Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Constantini* [cf. note 627], I, 27,1; *Life of Constantine* [cf. note 627], pp. 79 f.; for the considerations already mentioned in the above description, which lead to his decision, see in total I, 27 [pp. 79 f.]).

**646** "This God [the god of his father, i.e. the Christian god] he began to invoke in prayer, beseeching and imploring him to show him who he was, and to stretch out his right hand to assist him in his plans. As he made these prayers and earnest supplications there appeared to the Emperor a most remarkable divine sign" (I, 28,1 [pp. 80 f.]; for the description of the miracle, cf. I, 28,2 [p. 81] and the explanations above).

**647** Cf. I, 29 (p. 81).

**648** Cf. I, 30 f. (pp. 81 f.).

**649** I, 32,1 (p. 82), the corresponding 'introduction' by the Christian priests then in I, 32,2 ("They said that the god was the Onlybegotten Son of the one and only God, and that the sign which appeared was a token of immortality, and was an abiding trophy of the victory over death, which he had once won when he was present on earth. They began to teach him the reasons for his coming, explaining to him in detail the story of his self-accommodation to human conditions" [p. 82]) Constantine, "[...] while he marvelled at the divine manifestation which had been granted to his eyes" (I, 32,3 [p. 82]), however, finally, considering "[...] the heavenly vision with the meaning of what was being said [...]" (ibid.), is "[...] convinced that it was as God's own teaching that the knowledge of these things had come to him" (ibid.). Now he turns 'consciously' towards Christianity: He considers his own study of the Book of Christians as important, appoints Christian priests as his advisors and decides on the ritual veneration of the Christian God (ibid.). He goes to war in the name of this god: "Thereafter, fortified by good hopes in him [the new God], he finally set about extinguishing the menacing flames of tyranny" (ibid.).



a Christian or as a victorious fighter in the name of God and the first Christian emperor, even before he is aware of accepting this for himself.

Ginés first plays the role of a Christian in the narrower, profane sense, that is, he mimes the figure of the Christian martyr on the stage. When, during rehearsal of this role, he addresses the request for baptism to God, which turns out to be unexpected for him as well, he hears a voice that promises him the ‘salvation of his soul.’ He is not able, however, to understand the meaning and ontological status of this perceived voice or his internal reaction to it. In the course of the subsequent performance, the merging of ‘stage role’ and ‘serious, conscious speech and action,’ which is now indistinguishable for spectators and actors, is condensed. The ‘play within the play’ ends with Ginés’ death sentence, which Diocleciano imposes on him, after he is certain that Ginés speaks these words ‘in earnest.’ The concept of a God-determined world and role assigned to human beings in God’s plan is explicitly articulated in Lope’s drama. Ginés integrates the Christian ‘world as a stage’ metaphor into his reflection on his conversion to Christianity – a miracle achieved through God’s grace – and his impending martyrdom. The fact that he is aware of his ‘new role’ while at the same time recognizing that he has unconsciously already ‘acted correctly’ is expressed in the first quartet of his last sonnet monologue: ‘Mi Dios, cuando por burlas fui cristiano / y me llamastes a tan altas veras, / representaba burlas verdaderas / en el teatro de mi intento vano’ (vv. 2966–2969). His readiness to embody the role intended for him despite the consequences is made clear by the final image. This shows an impaled Ginés, who, in his final lines declares the fictitiousness of all earthly things and the ‘false life’ he had led up to his conversion as opposed to the ‘true faith’ and the reward awaiting him in the hereafter. It should be noted that his antagonist Diocleciano (unconsciously) fits himself into the plan of the ‘divine director’ by, when he pronounces the death sentence on Ginés, putting that what will follow after it into the framework of a *comedia* and giving himself the position of an actor in it: ‘[. . .] quiero hacer mi dicho / y morirás en comedia / pues en comedia has vivido. / Siéntome como tribuno: / traedle aquí. [. . .] / [. . .] / [. . .] te sentencio a muerte[:] / [. . .] / y acabaré mi papel / con que Léntulo y Sulpicio / prendan y examinen luego / a cuantos vienen contigo’ (vv. 2881–2894; my italics). At the level of the play, this again blurs the line between reality and illusion – Diocleciano’s verdict ends the internal fiction – or rather: earthly reality is deprived of its epistemically superior status and degraded to ‘world theater.’

Several references have already been made to the figural-typological dimension of Lope’s drama. In Erich Auerbach’s formative essay on the concept

of figural interpretation<sup>650</sup> he writes: “Originally *figura*, from the same stem as *ingere*, *figulus*, *factor*, and *effigies*, meant ‘plastic form.’ Its earliest occurrence is in Terence [. . .].”<sup>651</sup> Both the reference to the etymological relationship between *ingere*, the source of the Spanish *ingir* with the participle *ingido*, as well as the mention of the first documentation of the term in Terence, an ancient writer of comedy, i.e. in a theater text, already establishes striking points of reference. Auerbach goes on to trace the development of the term *figura*, showing that it relates, among other things, to “movement and transformation,”<sup>652</sup> “[the meanings] ‘model,’ ‘copy,’ ‘figment,’ ‘dream image,’”<sup>653</sup> “[t]he sense of ‘appearance,’”<sup>654</sup> “[the] play on model and copy,”<sup>655</sup> “the shades of meaning between model and copy, [. . .] [the] changing form and the deceptive likenesses that walk in dreams,”<sup>656</sup> and finally “[. . .] the creative, formative principle, change amid the enduring essence, the shades of meaning between copy and archetype.”<sup>657</sup> The latter elements already show Christian influences on the term, and relate it to a second pool of referents, which the ‘figure’ points (forward) to, that of truth, *veritas*, or fulfillment (in Lope: ‘*lo verdadero*’). At the end of his study, Auerbach expresses a conception of the Christian figural concept of history:

[. . .] the figural interpretation of reality [. . .]: the idea that earthly life is thoroughly real, with the reality of the flesh into which the Logos entered, but that with all its reality it is only *umbra* and *figura* of the authentic, future, ultimate truth, the real reality that will unveil and preserve the *figura*. In this way the individual earthly event is not regarded as a definitive self-sufficient reality, nor as a link in a chain of development in which single events or combinations of events perpetually give rise to new events, but viewed primarily in immediate vertical connection with a divine order which encompasses it, which on some future day will itself be concrete reality; so that the earthly event is a prophecy or *figura* of a part of a wholly divine reality that will be enacted in the future. But this reality is not only future; it is always present in the eye of God and in the other world, which is

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650 Auerbach, “Figura” (cf. note 240); Auerbach, “Figura,” trans. (cf. note 240).

651 Auerbach, “Figura,” trans., p. 11; “Figura, vom gleichen Stamme wie *ingere*, *figulus*, *factor* und *effigies*, heißt nach seiner Herkunft ‘plastisches Gebilde’ und findet sich zuerst bei Terenz [. . .]” (Auerbach, “Figura,” p. 55).

652 P. 16; “Bewegung und Verwandlung” (p. 57).

653 P. 17; “[die Bedeutungen] Urbild, Abbild, Scheinbild, Traumbild” (p. 58).

654 P. 18; “das sinnlich Erscheinende” (p. 59).

655 P. 16; “Spiel zwischen Urbild und Abbild” (p. 58).

656 P. 21; “d[as] Spiel zwischen Urbild und Abbild, d[er] Gestaltwandel, d[as] täuschend nachahmende Traumbild” (p. 61).

657 P. 49; “[. . .] das Schöpferisch-Bildende, de[r] Wandel im bleibenden Wesen, das Spiel zwischen Abbild und Urbild [. . .]” (p. 74).

to say that in transcendence the revealed and true reality is present at all times, or timelessly.<sup>658</sup>

The events of this world do not stand for themselves, but take part in a comprehensive network of meaning, also within the framework of salvation history, whose vertical principle of order is embodied by the omniscient God.

The concept of figural interpretation is inherent in the title Lope chose for this *comedia*. The reciprocal dynamics of *lo fingido* and *lo verdadero*, made distinct there and then elaborated on in the play, corresponds precisely to the conception of the two poles *figura* and *veritas* (or fulfillment), because each of the terms contains an element or presence of the other as well, '*figura/umbra*' refers to its fulfillment, in '*veritas*' the figure is present. A typical prefiguration (or *typos*) would be Adam as a prophecy of Christ.<sup>659</sup>

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658 P. 72; “[...] die Figuraldeutung der Wirklichkeit [...] : daß das irdische Leben zwar durchaus wirklich sei, von der Wirklichkeit jenes Fleisches, in das der Logos einging, aber in all seiner Wirklichkeit doch nur *umbra* und *figura* des Eigentlichen, Zukünftigen, Endgültigen und Wahren, welches die Figur enthüllend und bewahrend, die wahre Wirklichkeit enthalten werde. Auf diese Art wird jedes irdische Geschehen nicht als eine endgültige, sich selbst genügende Wirklichkeit angesehen, auch nicht als Glied in einer Entwicklungskette, wo aus einem Ereignis oder aus einem Zusammenwirken mehrerer immer wieder neue Ereignisse entspringen, sondern es wird zunächst im unmittelbaren vertikalen Zusammenhang mit einer göttlichen Ordnung betrachtet, in der es enthalten ist und die selbst eines künftigen Tages geschehene Wirklichkeit sein wird; und somit ist das irdische Ereignis Realprophetie oder *figura* eines Teiles zukünftig geschehender, unmittelbar vollendet göttlicher Wirklichkeit. Diese aber ist nicht nur zukünftig, sondern in Gottes Auge und im Jenseits jederzeit gegenwärtig, so daß dort jederzeit, oder auch zeitlos, die enthüllte und wahre Wirklichkeit vorhanden ist” (p. 89).

659 “Figural prophecy implies the interpretation of one worldly event through another; the first signifies the second, the second fulfills the first. Both remain historical events; yet both, looked at in this way, have something provisional and incomplete about them; they point to one another and both point to something in the future, something still to come, which will be the actual, real, and definitive event. This is true not only of Old Testament prefiguration, which points forward to the incarnation and the proclamation of the gospel, but also of these latter events, for they too are not the ultimate fulfillment, but themselves a promise of the end of time and the true kingdom of God. Thus history, with all its concrete force, remains forever a figure, cloaked and needful of interpretation” (p. 58; “Die Figuralprophetie enthält die Deutung eines innerweltlichen Vorgangs durch einen anderen; der erste bedeutet den zweiten, der zweite erfüllt den ersten. Zwar bleiben beide innergeschichtlich geschehene Ereignisse; aber doch enthalten beide, die in dieser Betrachtungsweise, etwas Vorläufiges und Unvollständiges; sie weisen aufeinander, und beide weisen auf etwas Zukünftiges, welches erst noch bevorsteht und welches erst das Eigentliche, voll und wirklich endgültige Geschehene sein wird. Dies gilt nicht nur von der alttestamentlichen Praefiguration, die auf die Inkarnation und die Verkündung des Evangelium hindeutet, sondern auch von diesen, denn auch sie sind ja noch nicht endgültige Erfüllung, vielmehr auch ihrerseits Verheißung

In view of the historical understanding on which the play is based, it is possible to read the figure of Ginés as a prefiguration of Constantine. With regard to theater, on the one hand, the (pagan) tragedy is to be understood as a prefiguration of the Christian comedy, the story with a good ending. Furthermore, against this background, in the context of the *theatrum mundi* metaphor, the theater and the ‘theater within the theater,’ the ‘play within the play,’ are given more far-reaching significance.

Despite all the differences in language, plot, and rhetoric, the parallels between Calderón’s and Lope de Vega’s dramatization of the issue of skepticism are striking. This can be understood as a clear indication of how much the two dramas are anchored in the ideological-cultural context in which they arose. According to the basic tenor of the skeptical tradition, reality and deception (dream, fiction) are ultimately not entirely distinguishable. All immanent attempts to achieve reliability or certainty in the confusing panorama of what is perceptible through reason, are always susceptible and fragile. Only the Christian faith provides a firm ground for orientation, albeit one who’s truth cannot be proved. It is a truth, however, (and this is the punchline of Lope’s play) that can be read to a certain degree from historical reality by anyone who has ‘eyes to see.’ The fact that Ginés’ conversion is true and not a play is authenticated by the typological structure inscribed in the play, or by its extension, which has to be provided by the audience beyond the play’s framework of action. The actual conversion of the Diocletian Empire fallen into vice authenticates the conversion of the licentious actor Ginés as a kind of ‘preliminary stage’ (*umbra*) of *veritas*. It is interesting to note that Calderón’s drama also equates faith and truth by referring to history, although more covertly than in Lope de Vega. It is possible that Calderón chose to situate his play in Poland, the kingdom of Segismundo, because it was well-known at the time that Poland had turned away from the Protestant “heresy” (symbolized by Basilio) and back to the ‘only true’ Catholic faith. By using (world) history to supplement the proof of truth, the two Spanish baroque playwrights shift the answer to the questions: What is true? What is illusion? to the Last Day. No matter how many defeats truth (faith) suffers, this cannot invalidate the answer the plays give to

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der Endzeit und des wahren Gottesreiches. So bleibt das Geschehen in all seiner sinnlichen Kraft doch immer Gleichnis, verhüllt und deutungsbedürftig, wenn auch die allgemeine Richtung durch den Glauben gegeben ist” [p. 80]). For the aspect of figural interpretation, cf. in total pp. 49–76 (pp. 74–92), apart from the quoted passages, furthermore, esp. pp. 53 ff. (pp. 77 f.); for Adam as *figura Christi*, see pp. 28 ff. (p. 65), for the Church Fathers’ phenomenal prophetic interpretation of the Old Testament, see pp. 28–49, esp. pp. 42–49 (pp. 65–74, esp. pp. 70–74).

the question of truth and can only be seen – as in the gruesome death of the converted Genius – as prelude to future triumphs.

After Lope's *Lo fingido verdadero*, the Genesius legend appeared in another Spanish drama in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: *El mejor representante, San Ginés* [The Greatest Actor, Saint Genesius]. Written by Jerónimo de Cáncer, Pedro Rosete Niño, and Antonio Martínez de Meneses, likely before 1655, it appeared in 1668 in the *Parte veinte y nueve de comedias nuevas, escritas por los mejores ingenios de España*.<sup>660</sup> Although based on the plot sketched in Lope's drama – the first act, for example, also deals with Diocleciano's rise to power – it was considerably modified.<sup>661</sup> Despite all the presence of the *theatrum mundi* themes (using direct quotations from Lope and Calderón), the interplay of *fingido* and *verdadero* that was the heart of Lope's drama is rendered irrelevant. Rather, the play is characterized by a “dimensión plenamente hagiográfica,” as Cattaneo puts it.<sup>662</sup> This is underscored, for instance, by the numerous ‘interventions of heaven’ (a total of seven ‘miraculous apparitions’ are represented). The final scene even shows

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**660** Jerónimo Cáncer/Pedro Rosete/Antonio Martínez, *El mejor Representante San Gines*, in: *Parte veinte y nueve de comedias nuevas, escritas por los mejores ingenios de España*, Madrid 1668, pp. 188 [i.e. 189]–230.

**661** Only a few points shall be mentioned: At the beginning of the play, Diocleciano, his sister (!) Camila (she is in love with Ginés), Ginés, and his friend Julio (the *gracioso* of the *comedia*) are soldiers in the Roman army who return to Rome after an absence of six years, where Apro, after the death of Aurelio and Numeriano, has become emperor. The difference in the way of representation is striking, as past events are relayed by Ginés in long monologues. Diocleciano is appointed emperor by the soldiers, but also through ‘supernatural intervention.’ A relevant addition is the character of Policarpo: an old comedy poet (he is the author of the play ‘El cristiano bautizado’) and a Christian, who is at first an enemy of Ginés (who is explicitly identified as an enemy of Christians) then – after the latter's miraculous conversion – as his ‘mentor.’ Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Ginés is not initially an actor. After the current emperor ‘rids himself of’ his old friends and they leave the army, he and Julio take up this profession in order to earn money and, as far as Ginés is concerned, for reasons of love: He recognizes in the famous actress Marcela that unknown beauty whom he had once fallen for and begins a relationship with her. (Immediately after having rejected Camila in the first act, Ginés sees a beautiful woman in a garden near the Tiber, reading verses from a piece of paper and repeating them, but the appearance of an old man dressed in fur – Policarpo, as it turns out later – shouting to him: ‘You shall become a Christian,’ prevents an approach). Marcela converts as well and, like Policarpo, too, will die a martyr's death.

**662** Cattaneo, “La doctrina dramática en *Lo fingido verdadero* y su proyección europea” (cf. note 494), p. 191. See as well Maria Teresa Cattaneo, “Una nota per *El mejor representante*, di Géronimo Cáncer, Pedro Rosete e Antonio Martínez,” in: Lope de Vega, *Lo fingido verdadero* (cf. note 487), pp. 43–50, and Cattaneo, “Transformaciones de Ginés, actor y mártir” (cf. note 494), pp. 262–267.

a Genesius pierced by a lance on a cross in the middle of a theater,<sup>663</sup> to the sound of music an angel descends and adorns him with a laurel branch “[. . .] en prueba de que ganaste / con el Sumo Autor el nombre / del mejor Representante.”<sup>664</sup> The theater imagery continues: Ginés is given ‘eternal applause’ (“Y con eterno aplauso, / Gines, tu nombre canten / en diuinos acentos / los Coros celestiales.”<sup>665</sup>), and the martyr’s last words are: “Zelo, fe, y constancia en este / *teatro bañado en sangre* / he representado al pueblo.”<sup>666</sup>

*Lo fingido verdadero* is also regarded as the model for the even more prominent French adaptation of the Genesius story by Jean de Rotrou (1609–1650).<sup>667</sup> Taking my analysis of Lope’s text, and this study’s overarching questions, I will now go on to discuss this play.

## 4.2 Jean de Rotrou, *Le Véritable Saint Genest* (1645–46/1647)

The tragedy *Le Véritable Saint Genest* [The Real Saint Genesius] was written in 1645 or 1646, and first printed in 1647. This was not Rotrou’s first adaptation of a Spanish *comedia* for the French stage.<sup>668</sup> Rotrou had already used plays from Lope’s oeuvre as models and reworked them. For example: *La Bague de l’oubli* (premiered in 1629 and printed in 1635) is based on Lope’s *La sortija del olvido* (1619), the *tragi-comédie Les Occasions perdues* (1635) on Lope’s *La ocasión perdida* (1610), and *Laure persécutée* (premiered in 1637, published in 1639) on Lope’s *Laura perseguida* (1614).<sup>669</sup>

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**663** The stage direction reads: “Abrense unas puertas en el primer corredor y vease vna perspectiua redonda en forma de teatro y en medio, Gines en vna Cruz atrauessado de vna lanza” (Cáncer/Rosete/Martínez, *El mejor Representante San Gines* [cf. note 660], p. 230a).

**664** P. 230b.

**665** Ibid.

**666** Ibid. (my italics).

**667** This is already mentioned in Léonce Person, *Histoire du Véritable Saint-Genest de Rotrou*, Paris 1882, pp. 8 f.; see as well Menéndez Pelayo, “*Lo fingido verdadero*” (cf. note 489), pp. 270–282.

**668** The most famous case is Pierre Corneille’s (1606–1684) *Le Cid* (1637). The Spanish model for the subject was the *comedia Las mocedades del Cid* (1618) by Guillén de Castro (1569–1631).

**669** Cf. Catherine Dumas, “Rotrou adaptateur de Lope de Vega: Réajustements structurels et transferts culturels,” *Littératures Classiques* 63 (2007), pp. 45–58. According to her, seven of the 35 dramatic works written by Rotrou that we know of are “[. . .] des adaptations plus ou moins proches de *comedias* de Lope de Vega” (p. 45). Regarding this aspect, cf., furthermore, Gerda Schüller, *Die Rezeption der spanischen Comedia in Frankreich in der 1. Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts: Lope de Vega und Jean Rotrou*, Diss. Cologne 1966 (on *Lo fingido verdadero* and *Le Véritable Saint Genest*: pp. 106–130). For a discussion relating Lope’s play analyzed here

In terms of the subject matter of the play, the Genesius legend was known in France, as texts such as *Lystoyre et la vie du glorieux corps saint Genis à XLIII personnages*, a *Mystère* from the 15th century, attest.<sup>670</sup> In fact, shortly before Rotrou wrote his *tragédie*, Nicolas Mary, sieur Desfontaines (1610?–1652) wrote and performed his version in 1644/1645: *L'illustre Comédien ou le Martyre de Saint Genest*. Unlike Rotrou's drama, however, Desfontaines' version, which will be discussed later in the course of the analysis, does not make use of Lope's *Lo fingido verdadero*. Given the close timing of the works, scholars occasionally argue that Rotrou chose the title 'Véritable' *Saint Genest* in order to differentiate his play from that of Desfontaines, especially since the last verses of the *tragédie* may have referred to a French translation of the Spanish original in the original title ('*Le Feint véritable*'): "MAXIMIN: [. . .] [I] [Genest] a bien voulu, par son impiété, / D'une feinte, en mourant, faire une vérite."<sup>671</sup> In Rotrou there is only one, rather than two 'plays within the play.' Here called "Le martyre d'Adrian," it is believed to be an adaptation of the *Sanctus Adrianus Martyr* (1630) by French

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and Rotrou's adaptation, cf. the already mentioned studies by Egginton (*How the World Became a Stage* [cf. note 494]); Frese Witt ("From Saint Genesius to Kean: Actors, Martyrs, and Metatheater" [cf. note 494]); Laemmel ("Zur Adaptation einer 'comedia de santo' in Frankreich" [cf. note 494]); Simerka ("Metaheater and Skepticism" [cf. note 2]; her argument has already been addressed above); Valis ("Rotrou and Lope de Vega: Two Approaches to Saint-Genest" [cf. note 494]). On Rotrou's drama, cf., moreover: Peter Bürger, "Illusion und Wirklichkeit im *Saint Genest* von Jean Rotrou," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 45 (1964), pp. 241–267; John D. Lyons, "Saint Genest and the Uncertainty of Baroque Theatrical Experience," *Modern Language Notes* 109 (1994), pp. 601–616; Robert J. Nelson, "Immanence and Transcendence in *Le Véritable Saint Genest*," in: Robert J. Nelson, *Immanence and Transcendence: The Theater of Jean Rotrou (1609–1650)*, Columbus, OH 1969, pp. 19–38; Elida Maria Szarota, "Rotrou's *Le Véritable Saint-Genest*," in: Szarota, *Künstler, Grübler und Rebellen* (cf. note 494), pp. 43–57. Cf. as well Daniel Weidner, "Der Heilige Genesius. Der Schauspieler als Märtyrer, der Märtyrer als Schauspieler," in: Sigrid Weigel (ed.), *Märtyrer-Porträts: Von Opfertod, Blutzeugen und heiligen Kriegern*, Munich 2007, pp. 74–77.

**670** *L'ystoyre et la vie de Saint Genis*, ed. Wilhelm Mostert and Edmund Stengel, Marburg 1895; cf. as well the 'summary' in: Wilhelm Mostert, *Das Mystère de Saint Genis, seine Quelle und seine Interpolatoren*, Diss. Marburg 1894, pp. 31–38. Furthermore, cf. Egginton, *How the World Became a Stage* (cf. note 494), pp. 80–83.

**671** Jean de Rotrou, *Le Véritable Saint Genest*, ed. François Bonfils and Emmanuelle Héning, Paris 1999, 5.7, vv. 1749 f. (my italics). References to the play are taken from this edition and, in the following, will be given in the main body of the text in parentheses, indicating act, scene, and verse numbers (verses are counted continuously throughout). The mentioned aspect concerning the title is also referred to by the editors of the edition used here (see pp. 122 f).



Jesuit priest Louis Cellot.<sup>672</sup> Unlike in Lope, Rotrou's internal play thus also makes use of a dramatic model. This internal martyr-play is elaborated here to a much greater extent and covers twelve scenes of the entire tragedy, distributed over the second, third, and fourth of the five acts (2.7–8, 3.2–7, and 4.2–5). Rotrou also dispenses with the dramatic representation of Diocletian's ascent from soldier to emperor given by Lope in the first *jornada*. Instead, the plot of *Le Véritable Saint Genest* begins at the imperial court in Rome (preserving the unity of place). Another difference is Rotrou's introduction into the plot of two additional characters, Valérie, Dioclétian's daughter, and her servant and confidante Camille. He also replaces Lope's Maximiano, Diocletian's co-Augustus, with Maximin, who is modeled after Diocletian's junior emperor Galerius (C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus) who was also married to Diocletian's daughter Valeria (in Rotrou, the character of Valérie).<sup>673</sup>

I begin by reviewing the play's plot line.

[1.] At the beginning of the first act, Valérie tells her servant Camille that she has been having a recurring dream in which her father forces her to marry a shepherd, and fears that it might be prophetic. Camille takes the (opposite) position that dreams are meaningless and have no influence on reality. Valérie's worries about her future, but her talk of suicide to protect herself from her father's *inconstance* lasts only until Dioclétian arrives. Accompanied by Maximin, with whom Valérie is in love, Dioclétian has returned victorious from the Orient and promptly declares his decision to appoint Maximin emperor by his side and to give him his daughter Valérie as his wife. Like Dioclétian, Maximin began life as a lowly shepherd before embarking on a military career and rising to emperor. Thus, Valérie's dream (that her father was going to marry her to a shepherd) does come to pass, although in a positive way. This image of the shepherd is an allusion, on the one hand, to the founding myth of Rome, which tells that Romulus and Remus were found and cared for by a shepherd, after initially being raised by a she-wolf. On the other hand, it also has heavy Christian connotations as well, specifically the image of the Good Shepherd. In *Lo fingido verdadero*, Diocleciano's rise to emperor is linked to a prophecy that was initially not taken seriously by the characters but which

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<sup>672</sup> Louis Cellot, *Tragoedia Sanctus Adrianus Martyr*, in: Louis Cellot, *Opera poetica*, Paris 1630, pp. 1–100. Thomas Frederick Crane provides a list of parallel passages: *Jean Rotrou's Saint Genest and Vencelas*, ed., introd. and notes by T. F. Crane, Boston/New York 1907, pp. 365–369 (Appendix II). Cf. as well the translation of the *argumentum* in: Jean de Rotrou, *Le Véritable Saint Genest, Tragédie*, ed. José Sanchez, Mont-de-Marsan 1991, pp. 199–206, cf. as well pp. CI–CVIII.

<sup>673</sup> On the Diocletian Tetrarchy, see above note 519.



ultimately proves to be true, while in Rotrou it is represented in the form of a prophetic dream that becomes ‘reality.’

The character of the famous actor Genest appears before the imperial court in the fifth scene of the first act, when Dioclétian commissions him to perform a play in honor of his daughter Valérie’s wedding. He praises Genest’s acting, his impact on the good reputation the theater now enjoyed, his various characters, his convincing and moving performances in both tragic and the comic genre, and refers to the power of comedy as an effective means against sadness,<sup>674</sup> before asking Genest about playwrights and works popular at the moment. Genest speaks about the diversity of tastes, noting that his preference was not for contemporary authors (*‘les Modernes’*), but for Plautus, Terence and the Greek poets (*‘les Anciens’*). Dioclétian, on the other hand, prefers the former. Valérie notes that Genest’s acting is always convincing and fascinating, regardless of the material he presented. He was truly inimitable, however, in his role of a Christian martyr (“Mais on vante surtout, l’inimitable adresse, / Dont tu feins d’un chrétien le zèle et l’allégresse, / Quand le voyant marcher du baptême au trépas, / Il semble que les feux soient des fleurs sous tes pas” 1.5, vv. 293–296). Genest gladly complies with Valérie’s wish that he put on a parody of the madness of Christian martyrs, provided that Maximin agrees to appear in the play (“Si votre nom, Seigneur, nous est libre en la scène;” 1.5, v. 298), which was to be “[L]a mort d’Adrian” (v. 299). Adrian was one of those stubborn Christians who had recently been sentenced following Maximin’s decrees, and this event, Genest adds, would be presented with such great art and would reflect reality in such a way that he, Maximin, would grant them the freedom ‘to represent the emperor before the emperor’s eyes,’ that is, see himself so embodied on stage that he would even ask himself whether he was witnessing a real event or only watching a play:

Et la mort d’Adrian, l’un de ces obstinés,  
Par vos derniers arrêts naguère condamnés,  
Vous sera figurée avec un art extrême,

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**674** “DIOCLÉTIEN: Avec confusion j’ai vu cent fois tes feintes, / Me livrer malgré moi de sensibiles atteintes; / En cent sujets divers, suivant tes mouvements, / J’ai reçu de tes feux de vrais ressentiments; / Et l’Empire absolu que tu prends sur une âme, / M’a fait cent fois de glace, et cent autres de flamme: / Par ton art les héros plutôt ressuscités, / Qu’imités en effet, et que représentés, / Des cent et mille ans après leurs funérailles, / Font encor des progrès, et gagnent des batailles, / Et sous leurs noms fameux établissent des lois; / Tu me fais en toi seul maître de mille rois. / Le comique, en ton art également succède, / Est contre la tristesse un si présent remède, / Qu’un seul mot, quand tu veux, un pas, une action, / Ne laisse plus de prise à cette passion, / Et par une soudaine, et sensible merveille, / Jette la joie au cœur, par l’œil ou par l’oreille” (1.5, vv. 233–250).

Et si peu différent de la vérité même,  
 Que vous nous avouerez de cette liberté,  
 Où César à César sera représenté;  
 Et que vous douterez, si dans Nicomédie,  
 Vous verrez l'effet même, ou bien la comédie. (1.5, vv. 299–306)

Maximin agrees, saying: “Oui, crois qu’avec plaisir je serai spectateur / En la même action dont je serai l’acteur” (vv. 307 f.). Thus, at this point the play implies that fiction and reality, play and truth are closely related, and establishes the ‘mirror character’ of the inner play. The first and second levels of the play will be connected in the ‘play within the play’ not only by the fact that the actors are also actively involved in the framing play, but moreover by having an (inner) spectator appear as a character in the inner performance (‘je serai spectateur / En la même action dont je serai l’acteur’). Maximin, the ruler who brought about the martyrdom of Adrian, will see himself fictionally portrayed by the actor Octave.

The ‘play within the play’s’ plot portrays, as has already been mentioned, the life of Saint Adrian. According to the legend, Adrian was a senior official in the Roman army in Nicomedia under Emperor Galerius Maximianus<sup>675</sup> who witnessed the profound faith of 23 Christians who despite intense torture did not renounce their beliefs and was therefore inspired to convert to Christianity himself and was promptly arrested. His wife Nathalia, herself a hidden Christian, hurried happily, according to the legend, to the condemned prisoner and encouraged him to endure torture in the name of faith. He is said to have died a martyr’s death on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 310 CE (or earlier), with his wife Nathalia suffering the same fate a short while later.<sup>676</sup>

[2.] The second act begins with preparations for the performance of “*Le martyre d’Adrian*.” While Genest is dressing for the performance, script in hand, he looks out at the stage and gives the stage designer final instructions.

<sup>675</sup> He ruled during the years 293–311, between 293–305 as subordinate co-emperor of Diocletian, and between 305–311 as Augustus in the eastern part of the Empire.

<sup>676</sup> Cf. Stadler et al. (eds.), *Vollständiges Heiligen-Lexikon* (cf. note 495), vol. 1, p. 45 (“Adrianus, Natalia”); cf. moreover “Acta S. Adriani et Sociorum Mart. [Die Octava Septembris],” in: *Acta Sanctorum: Quotquot toto orbe coluntur* [. . .], ed. Jean Bolland et al., 69 vols., Antwerp/Brussels 1643–1940, *Acta Sanctorum: Septembris*, ed. Johannes Stilling et al., vol. 3, Rome/Paris 1868 (1st ed. Antwerp 1750), pp. 218–232. Regarding the persecution of Christians under Diocletian, Galerius and the other Tetrarchs, see above note 625. Note that there is a possible anachronism with regard to the reference saints of the framing plot and the inner play, inasmuch as, according to the legend, Genesis’ death presumably occurred before that of Adrian.

He then repeats a passage from his role as Adrian by reciting aloud from the script. In the meantime, Marcelle, the actress portraying the character of Natalie, Adrian's wife, enters. Marcelle rehearses one of her passages under Genest's guidance, and he praises her for her successful performance.<sup>677</sup> Genest then continues, alone again, with his own character preparation. He becomes so carried away by his performance (in the stage direction it says preparingly: "*ayant un peu rêvé et ne regardant plus son rôle, il dit:*") that he feels himself – Genest, not Adrian – to be a Christian. He also reflects on this obscuring of borders between fiction and reality, role and actor. He knew from experience that through constant practice the ability of actors to transform themselves becomes a habit. But what he was now experiencing seemed to him to go beyond this and to be an 'unvarnished truth' ("*des vérités sans fard*"):

Dieux, prenez contre moi ma défense et la vôtre;  
D'effet, comme de nom, je me trouve être un autre;  
Je feins moins Adrian que je ne le deviens,  
Et prends avec son nom, des sentiments chrétiens.  
Je sais, pour l'éprouver, que par un long étude  
L'art de nous transformer, nous passe en habitude,  
Mais il semble qu'ici, des vérités sans fard  
Passent et l'habitude, et la force de l'art,  
Et que Christ me propose une gloire éternelle,  
Contre qui ma défense est vaine et criminelle;<sup>678</sup>

(2.4, vv. 401–410)

When he finally calls himself to reason: "Il s'agit d'imiter, et non de devenir" (2.4, v. 420), 'Heaven opens above him' and he hears a voice (stage direction: "*Le ciel s'ouvre, avec des flammes, et une voix s'entend, [...].*") that promises him that he will not play his role in vain, that his salvation depended only on having courage, and God would help him ("UNE VOIX: Poursuis Genest ton

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**677** What is important for him here is highlighting the emotions. Cf.: "GENEST: Avez-vous repassé cet endroit pathétique, / Où Flavie en sortant vous donne la réplique? / Et vous souvenez-vous *qu'il s'y faut exciter?* / [...] / Outre que dans la Cour que vous avez charmée, / On sait que votre estime est assez confirmée; / Ce récit me surprend, et vous peut acquérir / Un renom au théâtre, à ne jamais mourir" (2.3, vv. 369–388; my italics).

**678** And he continues: "J'ai pour suspects, vos noms de dieux et d'immortels, / Je répugne aux respects qu'on rend à vos autels; / Mon esprit à vos lois secrètement rebelle, / En conçoit un mépris qui fait mourir son zèle; / Et comme de profane, enfin sanctifié, / Semble se déclarer, pour un crucifié; / Mais où va ma pensée, et par quel privilège / Presque insensiblement, passai-je au sacrilège? / Et du pouvoir des dieux, perds-je le souvenir? / Il s'agit d'imiter, et non de devenir" (2.4, vv. 411–420).

personnage, / Tu n'imiteras point en vain; / Ton salut ne dépend, que d'un peu de courage, / Et Dieu t'y prêtera la main" 2.4, vv. 421–424).

This 'divine voice' is highlighted by a shift from the French Alexandrine pattern to a four-verse stanza with three octosyllables and a dodecasyllable verse in second position in crossed rhyme. When compared to the corresponding rehearsal scene in Lope's play, it should also be pointed out whereas the spectators/readers of the Spanish play are granted an 'insight into heaven,' by having the 'inhabitants of the Christian heaven' visible above the stage, in Rotrou, this element is only indicated by the appearance of flames.

The astonished Genest reacts to what he has heard within the framework of Christian interpretation, thinking that heaven had taken care of him and asking God to show him the right way from now on.<sup>679</sup> But he also expresses doubts about the status of what he has heard ("Mais, ô vaine créance et frivole pensée, / Que du Ciel cette voix me doive être adressée!" 2.4, vv. 433 f.). Was it merely a deception "[une] feinte voix" (v. 436)? He answers himself that the deception had been intended, that someone was responsible for it: "Quelqu'un s'apercevant du caprice où j'étais, / S'est voulu divertir par cette feinte voix, / Qui d'un si prompt effet m'excite tant de flamme, / Et qui m'a pénétré jusqu'au profond de l'âme" (2.4, vv. 435–438). He then calls on the pagan gods to take action against Christ and rejects Christ, declaring that his heart was unmoved and would remain steadfast, but he also calls upon Christ to continue the battle with the other gods (over him).<sup>680</sup> The differences with the scene in Lope are important to note. For example, while in the latter play, especially in his dialogue with Fabio, Ginés' doubts intensify about whether he had heard an actual voice from heaven, or it had been an illusion, or perhaps the voice of another actor looking to give Ginés a cue. Genest's ambiguity, however, is fairly short lived and he quickly interprets what he had heard as a 'joke' made by one of his colleagues. Nevertheless, he still considers the possibility that he was actually inwardly touched by the Christian God and could become a Christian by opposing the power of the pagan gods to that of the Christian God. He is at first

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**679** "GENEST: Qu'entends-je, juste ciel, et par quelle merveille, / Pour me toucher le cœur, me frapes-tu l'oreille? / Souffle, doux et sacré, qui me viens enflammer, / Esprit saint et divin, qui me viens animer, / Et qui me souhaitant, m'inspires le courage, / Travaille à mon salut, achève ton ouvrage; / Guide mes pas douteux dans le chemin des Cieux, / Et pour me les ouvrir, dessille-moi les yeux" (2.4, vv. 425–432).

**680** "GENEST: Prenez, dieux, contre Christ, prenez votre parti, / Dont ce rebelle cœur s'est presque départi; / Et toi, contre les dieux, ô Christ, prends ta défense, / Puisqu'à tes lois, ce cœur fait encor résistance; / Et dans l'onde agitée où flottent mes esprits, / Terminez votre guerre, et m'en faites le prix; / Rendez-moi le repos dont ce trouble me prive" (2.5, vv. 439–445).

steadfast in his fidelity to the pagan gods and against Christ, but then interprets himself and his conviction of faith as the ‘battlefield’ of divine powers. This aspect of pitting the pagan gods against the new Christian faith does not appear at this point in Lope’s version.

Then the *décorateur* enters in order to light the candles and informs Genest of the arrival of the audience. Genest comments that this is a “rôle glorieux” that he had presented before none other than the “cour des cieux;” the role was of the utmost importance to him, the object, the goal was heaven itself.<sup>681</sup> The decorator then remarks: “Il repassait son rôle, et s’y veut surpasser” (2.5, v. 452).

While the audience – Dioclétian, Maximin, Valérie, and Camille, as well as the prefect Plancien – wait for the performance to begin, they praise the genre of tragedy and the quality of contemporary theater.<sup>682</sup> Maximin sums up the play they are about to see: the contempt Adrian, once a man he held in the highest favor and affection, had shown for him and the gods, and the consequence of his stubborn insistence in the Christian faith. He is going to watch the portrayal of the traitor’s death with equanimity, even if not “en sa personne,” but at least “en sa figure” (2.6, v. 474). For his part Dioclétian notes that thanks to Genest’s acting, they were all set for a good performance (cf. 2.6, v. 475).

The seventh scene of the second act then marks the beginning of the ‘play within the play.’ Genest, in the role of Adrian, is alone on stage (“*sur le théâtre élevé*”) and begins a monologue in which he recounts how he recently became a Christian, and encourages himself to endure the torture about to be inflicted. His greatest pain, however, was to lose his beloved wife Natalie. The next scene of the inner play consists of Adrian’s confrontation with the tribune Flavie, played by the actor Sergeste. Flavie’s attempts to persuade Adrian to renounce Christ fail. He accuses him of ingratitude towards the Emperor Maximin, mentions the latter’s anger and that of the gods, appeals to his love and his sense of responsibility towards his wife Natalie. Adrian reaffirms his new faith and his willingness to die for it, and Flavie has him put in chains and led off. With this, the first part of the inner play ends. The following two very short scenes show the internal audience’s enthusiasm over Genest’s acting and their desire to use the break to congratulate the actors, while Maximin remarks that he is looking forward to the upcoming representation of himself.

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**681** “GENEST: [. . .] tu m’as distraït d’un rôle glorieux, / Que je représentais devant la cour des cieux; / Et de qui l’action, m’est d’importance extrême, / Et n’a pas un objet moindre que le Ciel même” (2.5, vv. 447–451).

**682** Cf. 2.6, vv. 453–463 (e.g. “VALÉRIE: L’objet en [dans la tragédie] est plus haut, l’action plus hardie;” vv. 453 f.).

[3.] With Act 3, scene 2, the second part of the performance of *Le martyr d'Adrian* begins. The first scene describes the renewed refusal of revocation (typical for the structure of the martyrs' *vita*): a bound Adrian renews his Creed before Emperor Maximin (played by Octave). Maximin, furious with rage, has Adrian thrown into prison and orders him to be cruelly tortured. Flavie hands Adrian over to the jailer (3.4). In the next scene (3.5), Adrian is visited by his wife Natalie (played by Marcelle). Flavie arranged the meeting in the hope that Natalie would change Adrian's mind and persuade him to recant. Adrian, however, dissolves the marriage with Natalie and releases her. As a converted Christian he now regards her as his sister ("Ma sœur, c'est le seul nom dont je te puisse nommer, / Que sous de douces lois nous nous pourrions aimer!" 3.5, vv. 845 f.). Natalie reveals to him, however, that she herself is also a Christian. She had been raised as a Christian from birth, but out of fear and respect for him had always kept her true faith hidden. Their marital love grows anew: "Ô Ciel, Ô Natalie! Ah! [Douce et] sainte flamme, / Je rallume mes feux, et reconnais ma femme; / Puisqu'au chemin du Ciel, tu veux suivre mes pas, / Sois mienne, chère épouse, au-delà du trépas" (3.5, vv. 859–862), moreover:

NATALIE: Partageons donc la peine, aussi bien que les crimes,  
 Si ces fers te sont dus, ils me sont légitimes,  
 Tous deux dignes de mort, et tous deux résolus,  
 Puisque nous voici joints, ne nous séparons plus;  
 Qu'aucun temps, qu'aucun lieu, jamais ne nous divisent,  
 Un supplice, un cachot, un juge, nous suffisent. (3.5, vv. 923–928)

Adrian then asks Natalie to help him get through what lies ahead, by speaking of how he is following the divine order: everyone's time on earth is limited, and one dies for true faith when one is by God (cf. 3.5, vv. 929–939). Natalie then promises Adrian that she would support him in enduring martyrdom steadfastly until his death, his salvation, and accompany him to his execution, and she wishes to be able to follow him in this act.<sup>683</sup> Natalie then explains to Flavie (3.6) that she could not persuade her husband to abandon his conversion. She tells him a different story of what took place between her and Adrian

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683 "NATALIE: Bien donc, choisis le ciel, et me laisse la terre. / Pour aider ta constance, en ce pas périlleux, / Je te suivrai partout, et jusques dans les feux; / Heureuse, si la loi qui m'ordonne de vivre, / Jusques au ciel enfin me permet de te suivre; / Et si de ton tyran le funeste courroux / Passe jusqu'à l'épouse, ayant meurtri l'époux. / Tes gens me rendront bien ce favorable office, / De garder qu'à mes soins César ne te ravisse, / Sans en prendre l'heure, et m'en donner avis; / Et bientôt de mes pas, les tiens seront suivis; / Bientôt . . ." (3.5, vv. 940–951).

and pretends that she regrets not being able to convince him to recant (cf. 3.6, vv. 959–974, 979–992). When she is alone (3.7), she thanks God for the conversion of her husband, exhorts herself to make her faith public as well, and expresses her aspiration to die a martyr's death. After Natalie (Marcelle) has left the stage, the performance is interrupted by Genest, who complains about an annoying noise, and Dioclétian wishes to ensure peace and quiet. This short scene concludes the third act.

[4.] The fourth act begins with the return of Dioclétian and the court to their seats and the performance continues (4.2). Flavie informs Adrian that Emperor Maximin wants to give him one last opportunity to recant. Adrian refuses, saying that God was his only ruler, he did not fear the cruel death awaiting him, he had long been active in the service of hatred as a persecutor of Christians and had seen the persistence of the Christians while he commanded their torture; his only wish was to be allowed to see his wife again in solitude before the execution. Flavie grants him this wish. Adrian goes to Natalie (4.5) but when she sees him alone and without chains (4.6), she concludes that he had decided against martyrdom and renounced the Christian faith. She fends him off and insults him (several times “traître,” “perfide,” “ennemi de Dieu,” “lâche,” “infâme,” etc.), his punishment for this deception would await him in hell (“Contre toi dans le ciel, Christ arme sa justice; / Les ministres d'enfer préparent ton supplice;” 4.4, vv. 1131 f.).<sup>684</sup> Natalie's doubts about Adrian's sincerity and the truth of his conversion, caused by his appearance, her ‘pretense of false facts’ in her conversation with Flavie, and her concealment of her true faith, all highlight the problematic distinction between fake and real in the ‘play within the play’ of *Le Véritable Saint Genest*. Adrian quickly clears up the misunderstanding, saying: “Je te vais détromper [. . .]” (4.4, v. 1140) and explains to Natalie the authenticity of his conversion and his wish to die a martyr's death (cf. 4.4, vv. 1147–1166). The latter apologizes to her “cher et généreux frère” (4.4, v. 1167) for her anger about the ‘unjustified impression’ (“[l]’injuste impression”), the wrong interpretation of what she saw (cf. vv. 1167–1170). Both now address each other again as brother/sister for they are siblings in faith. Natalie now encourages Adrian to leave behind the vanities of the world in favor of heavenly glory, to die as in Christ with his head held high and receive “par un moment de mal l'éternité d'un bien” (v. 1194). She asks the priest Anthyme, an old Christian played by Lentule, to join her in encouraging Adrian (“Approche, cher Anthyme, et joins tes vœux aux

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**684** Cf. as well: “[*Elle sort furieuse, et dit en s'en allant:*] Que ferai-je, ô Seigneur! Puis-je souffrir sans peine / L'ennemi de ta gloire, et l'objet de ta haine! / Puis-je vivre, et me voir en ce confus état, / De la sœur d'un martyr, femme d'un apostat? / D'un ennemi de Dieu, d'un lâche, d'un infâme?” (4.4, vv. 1135–1139).

miens” 4.4, v. 1214). When Adrian asks Anthyme to baptize him,<sup>685</sup> he replies that water baptism was not a necessity for salvation for a future martyr, since he received the seal of God through his blood (‘blood baptism’).<sup>686</sup>

After these words, Adrian looks up to heaven lost in thoughts (stage direction: “*Adrian, regardant le ciel et rêvant un peu longtemps, dit enfin:*”). The speech that follows is spoken by Genest not in his stage role of the converted Christian Adrian, but as himself: play and reality merge into each other. He addresses Lentule by his real name and not as Anthyme, the name of the character he is portraying. Genest says that he feels compelled to ‘take off the mask’ and reveal his thoughts to him. The God, whom he once hated, now filled him with his love. He says explicitly that it was no longer Adrian who was speaking, but Genest. Not Adrian, but he, Genest, was asking for the grace of baptism and the honor of martyrdom:

Ah! Lentule! En l’ardeur dont mon âme est pressée,  
 Il faut lever le masque, et t’ouvrir ma pensée;  
 Le Dieu que j’ai haï, m’inspire son amour,  
*Adrian a parlé, Genest parle à son tour!*  
*Ce n’est plus Adrian, c’est Genest* qui respire,  
 La grâce du baptême, et l’honneur du martyre; (4.5, vv. 1243–1248; my italics)

Christ had not entrusted his (Lentule/Anthyme) profane hands with performing the baptism (“*Mais Christ n’a point commis à vos profanes mains, / Ce sceau mystérieux, dont il marque ses saints;*” 4.5, vv. 1249 f.). These words are accompanied by flames roaring from heaven (stage direction: “*Regardant au ciel d’où l’on jette quelques flammes.*”). According to Genest, he sees an angel ready to baptize him (“*Un ministre céleste, avec une eau sacrée, / Pour laver mes forfaits, fend la voûte azurée; / Sa clarté m’environne, et l’air de toutes parts, / Résonne de concerts, et brille à mes regards*” 4.5, vv. 1251–1255). Speaking to the angel he begs him to come down, calls him a “céleste acteur” who has been

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**685** “ADRIAN: Mes vœux arriveront à leur comble suprême, / Si lavant mes péchés de l’eau du saint baptême, / Tu m’enrôles au rang de tant d’heureux soldats, / Qui sous même étendard ont rendu des combats; / Confirme, cher Anthyme, avec cette eau sacrée, / Par qui presque en tous lieux la croix est arborée, / En ce fragile sein, le projet glorieux, / De combattre la terre, et conquérir les cieux” (4.5, vv. 1231–1238).

**686** “ANTHYME: Sans besoin, Adrian, de cette eau salutaire, / Ton sang t’imprimera ce sacré caractère; / Conserve seulement une invincible foi; / Et combattant pour Dieu, Dieu combattra pour toi” (4.5, vv. 1239–1242). On the aspect of ‘blood baptism,’ cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* III<sup>a</sup> q. 66 a. 12 (Aquinas, *Summa* [Latin] [cf. note 347], vol. 29 [1935], pp. 197 ff.; Aquinas, *Summa* [English] [cf. note 347], vol. 4, pp. 2385 f.).



calling him to come to him and was awaiting him, as he finally goes behind the scenery.<sup>687</sup> Both the actors on stage and the inner spectators comment on and interpret what has happened. Marcelle points out the deviation from the text and Lentule suspects that Genest had a lapse of memory/made a mistake that he wants to conceal by leaving the scene.<sup>688</sup> Dioclétian and Valérie, on the other hand, classify it as a successful trick by the brilliant actor Genest (“DIOCL.: Voyez avec quel art, Genest sait aujourd’hui, / Passer de la figure, aux sentiments d’autrui. / VAL.: Pour tromper l’auditeur, abuser l’acteur même, / De son métier, sans doute, est l’adresse suprême” 4.5, vv. 1261–1264). Then Flavie (Sergeste) enters the stage with guards (4.6) to bring Adrian back to prison (“FLAVIE: Ce moment dure trop, trouvons-le promptement; / César nous voudra mal de ce retardement; / Je sais sa violence, et redoute sa haine” 4.6, vv. 1265 ff.). Marcelle interrupts this ‘continuation of the script’ and explains to Sergeste what she thinks happened: “Cet homme si célèbre en sa profession, / Genest, que vous cherchez, a troublé l’action, / Et confus qu’il s’est vu, nous a quitté la place” (4.6, vv. 1269 ff.). Sergeste defends his colleague.<sup>689</sup> This short scene, showing the confusion that Genest’s exit caused among his fellow players, is again ascribed by the audience to Genest’s extraordinary art (“CAMILLE, *riant*, à Valérie: Comme son art, Madame, a su les abuser!” 4.6, vv. 1274).

It is worth recalling at this point the baptism scene in the Spanish original. There, an angel appears and calls Ginés to him. Ginés follows the call and is baptized above the stage. For both the inner audience and the spectators/readers, this is indicated by the actual appearance of angels with baptismal equipment above the stage. Rotrou’s Genest, however, only *tells* that he sees an angel calling him to be baptized. In the inner play in *Lo fingido verdadero*, the confusion on the stage, which also reaches the internal spectators, and the intensification of the question of what was play and what was (already) serious, result above all from the fact that the actor Fabio later appears in the role of the angel in order to perform the baptism (again) as it was intended in the play. Rotrou did not adopt this element of the embodiment of an angel on stage and the associated intensification of the blurring of the boundaries between theatrical fiction and reality.

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**687** “Descends, céleste acteur; tu m’attends! Tu m’appelles! / Attends, mon zèle ardent me fournira des ailes; / Du Dieu qui t’a commis, dépars-moi les bontés” (4.5, vv. 1255 ff.; the stage direction says: “*Il monte deux ou trois marches et passe derrière la tapisserie.*”).

**688** “MARCELLE, *qui représentait Natalie*: Ma réplique a manqué; ces vers sont ajoutés. / LENTULE, *qui faisait Anthyme*: Il les fait sur le champ; et sans suivre l’histoire, / Croit couvrir en rentrant son défaut de mémoire” (4.5, vv. 1258 ff.).

**689** “FLAVIE, *qui est Sergeste*: Le plus heureux, parfois, tombe en cette disgrâce; / L’ardeur de réussir, le doit faire excuser” (4.6, v. 1271 f.).

When Genest returns to the scene (4.7), he addresses heaven, praising the Christian God and baptism, as the covenant between him, the human being, and God, and the divine love that gives him “la force et l’ardeur d’un martyr,”<sup>690</sup> the spectators continue to display great enthusiasm for his perfect embodiment of a baptized Christian. They remark that the performance was so well done that *feinte* and *vérité* were indistinguishable (“MAX.: Il feint comme animé des grâces du baptême. / VAL.: Sa feinte passerait pour la vérité même. / PLANCIEN: Certes, ou ce spectacle est une vérité, / Ou jamais rien de faux ne fut mieux imité” 4.7, vv. 1283–1286). Genest then turns to Marcelle (Natalie) and Sergeste (Flavie), addressing them by their real names, saying: so many times they had together mocked the Christian faith and the rites of the Christians, but now, for the sake of their souls’ salvation, they, too, should refrain from mocking a God who died on the cross for them, adding that his own heart was now enlightened by heavenly grace.<sup>691</sup> The two actors once again point out Genest’s extensive deviation from the text, and one even calls for the prompter. Genest replies that this would not be necessary, since in this plot, which was in the interest of heaven, an angel was holding the script ready, acting as his prompter, and had fulfilled his longing, as the grace of baptism had been granted to him (“Il n’en est plus besoin. / Dedans cette action, où le ciel s’intéresse, / Un ange tient la pièce, un ange me redresse; / Un ange par son ordre, a comblé mes souhaits, / Et de l’eau du baptême, effacé mes forfaits;” 4.7, vv. 1298–1302). And he then continues, still employing imagery from the world of acting and the theater, particularly the concept of *theatrum mundi*, that the world was perishable and void, “une comédie où j’ignorais mon rôle” (4.7, v. 1304; my italics). He declares that he had been following the devil’s play so far, but now, since he was taught and guided by a heavenly spirit, he had corrected his role and repented of his sins, and heaven, having seen his tears, had taken pleasure in this action and granted him its grace, so that he had now become its actor:

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**690** “GENEST: Suprême Majesté, qui jettes dans les âmes / Avec deux gouttes d’eau, de si sensibles flammes, / Achève tes bontés, représente avec moi / Les saints progrès des cœurs convertis à ta foi! / Faisons voir dans l’amour, dont le feu nous consomme, / Toi le pouvoir d’un dieu, moi le devoir d’un homme; / Toi l’accueil d’un vainqueur, sensible au repentir, / Et moi, Seigneur, la force et l’ardeur d’un martyr” (4.7, vv. 1275–1282).

**691** “GENEST: Et vous, chers compagnons de la basse fortune / Qui m’a rendu la vie avecque vous commune, / Marcelle, et vous Sergeste, avec qui tant de fois, / J’ai du dieu des chrétiens scandalisé les lois, / Si je puis vous prescrire un avis salutaire, / Cruels, adorez-en jusqu’au moindre mystère, / Et cessez d’attacher avec de nouveaux clous / Un dieu, qui sur la croix daigne mourir pour vous, / Mon cœur illuminé d’une grâce céleste . . .” (4.7, vv. 1287–1295).

Ce monde périssable, et sa gloire frivole,  
 Est une comédie où j'ignorais mon rôle;  
 J'ignorais de quel feu mon coeur devait brûler  
 Le démon me dictait, quand Dieu voulait parler;  
 Mais depuis que le soin d'un esprit angélique  
 Me conduit, me redresse, et m'apprend ma réplique,  
 J'ai corrigé mon rôle, et le démon confus,  
 M'en voyant mieux instruit, ne me suggère plus;  
 J'ai pleuré mes péchés, le ciel a vu mes larmes,  
 Dedans cette action, il a trouvé des charmes,  
 M'a départi sa grâce, est mon approbateur,  
 Me propose des prix, et m'a fait son acteur.

(4.7, vv. 1303–1314)

In order to make sense of this bewildering scene, Lentule again refers to improvisation. But Genest makes it clear: he was speaking God's words, and it would be a misapprehension to think he was still acting ("Dieu m'apprend sur le champ, ce que je vous récite; / Et vous m'entendez mal, si dans cette action, / Mon rôle passe encor pour une fiction" 4.7, vv. 1316 ff.). At this point the boundary between the first and second play levels is also transgressed, as the internal spectators and the actors on stage interact. Dioclétian expresses his indignation at the incomprehensible confusion on stage and admonishes that they should show more respect for his imperial presence. Thereupon, Genest once again explicitly confesses himself to be a Christian ("enfin je suis chrétien" 4.7, v. 1358), stating that he was not speaking as Adrian but as Genest, and that the play was no longer a play but had become reality:

Ce n'est plus Adrian, c'est Genest qui s'exprime;  
 Ce jeu n'est plus un jeu, mais une vérité,  
 Où par mon action je suis représenté,  
 Où moi-même l'objet et l'acteur de moi-même,  
 Purgé de mes forfaits par l'eau du saint baptême,  
 Qu'une céleste main m'a daigné conférer,  
 Je professe une loi, que je dois déclarer.

(4.7, vv. 1324–1330)

Furthermore, and this is a striking difference to Lope's *Genesisius*, he gives a detailed account of his life to date as an enemy of Christians, saying that he had always hated Christians deeply and had left his parents' house and his homeland in order to use his acting skills primarily for their defamation, etc. Now however, his own conversion had been brought about by a divine miracle. He then goes on to describe the miracle of his conversion and the baptism

extensively.<sup>692</sup> At the end of his speech, he expresses the desire to die a martyr's death, because it was the soul not the body that is important and he does not fear torture and death, because they will lead to (real) life.<sup>693</sup> He opposes his previous acting services to Dioclétian with true action in the service and honor of God, that the time had come, “de passer du théâtre aux autels” (v. 1370), that he expects martyrdom and that his role (here) has come to an end:

J'ai souhaité longtemps d'agr  er    vos yeux,  
 Aujourd'hui je veux plaire    l'empereur des cieus;  
 Je vous ai divertis, j'ai chant   vos louanges;  
 Il est temps maintenant de r  jouir les anges,  
 Il est temps de pr  tendre    des prix immortels,  
 Il est temps de passer du th  atre aux autels;  
 Si je l'ai m  rit  , qu'on me m  ne au martyre;  
 Mon r  le est achev  , je n'ai plus rien    dire.

(4.7, vv. 1365–1372)

Diocl  tian calls his performance presumptuous causing Genest to reaffirm the truth of what he has said. After he mockingly and explicitly renounces the pagan gods once again, Diocl  tian angrily orders the death of the “tra  tre” (4.7, v. 1377) and “insolent” (v. 1385), also invoking theatrical metaphors, saying that Genest's action should be brought to an end with an “acte sanglant” (v. 1386), “[q]ui v  cut au th  atre, expire sur la sc  ne;” (v. 1388). The ‘play within the play’ is now over. Marcelle's request for mercy is immediately rejected by Diocl  tian. The

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**692** Cf. 4.7, vv. 1331–1358 (“  coutez donc, C  sars, et vous troupes romaines, / La gloire et la terreur des puissances humaines, / Mais faibles ennemis d'un pouvoir souverain / Qui foule aux pieds l'orgueil et le sceptre romain; / Aveugl   de l'erreur dont l'enfer vous infecte, / Comme vous, des chr  tiens j'ai d  test   la secte; / Et si peu que mon art pouvait ex  cuter, / Tout mon heur consistait    les pers  cuter; / Pour les fuir, et chez vous suivre l'idol  trie, / J'ai laiss   mes parents, j'ai quitt   ma patrie; / Et fait choix    dessein d'un art peu glorieux, / Pour mieux les diffamer, et les rendre odieux; / Mais par une bont   qui n'a point de pareille, / Et par une incroyable et soudaine merveille / Dont le pouvoir d'un dieu, peut seul   tre l'auteur, / Je deviens leur rival de leur pers  cuteur, / Et soumets    la loi que j'ai tant r  prouv  e / Une   me heureusement de tant d'  cueils sauv  e; / Au milieu de l'orage, o   m'exposait le sort, / Un ange par la main, m'a conduit dans le port, / M'a fait sur un papier voir mes fautes pass  es / Par l'eau qu'il me versait,    l'instant effac  es; / Et cette salutaire et c  leste liqueur, / Loin de me refroidir, m'a consomm   le c  ur. / Je renonce    la haine, et d  teste l'envie / Qui m'a fait des chr  tiens, pers  cuter la vie; / Leur cr  ance est ma foi, leur espoir est le mien, / C'est leur dieu que j'adore, enfin je suis chr  tien;”).

**693** “Quelque effort qui s'oppose, en l'ardeur qui m'enflamme, / Les int  r  ts du corps, c  dent    ceux de l'  me, / D  ployez vos rigueurs, br  lez, coupez, tranchez, / Mes maux seront encor moindres que mes p  ch  s; / Je sais de quel repos cette peine est suivie, / Et ne crains point la mort, qui conduit    la vie;” (4.7, vv. 1359–1364).

court leaves the theater. In response to Camille's comment that he was foolish to despise the Emperor's favor in such a way, Genest replies that in doing so he had received the divine *grâce*. Ultimately, he is led off by the guards and, full of joy, looks forward to his reward for his imminent martyrdom in the world to come.

In the next scene (4.9), Plancien interrogates the actors, because "Sa [Genest's] foi, comme son art, vous est-elle commune? / Et comme un mal, souvent, devient contagieux . . ." (4.9, vv. 1498 f.). They assert that they are not Christians. As in Lope's drama, the actors are asked about their acting repertoires.<sup>694</sup> Plancien considers them to be 'honest' (even naive: "Leur franchise ingénue, / En leur naïveté, se produit assez nue;" vv. 1419 f.), he feels sorry for them and, moreover, allows them to try to convince Genest to revoke his new faith, so that the acting company is not deprived of its director and can continue to exist.

[5.] The final act opens with Genest, sentenced to death, bound and imprisoned. Preparing himself for his impending torture and death, he contrasts it with the nothingness, deception, and "fausse volupté" (v. 1441) of earthly existence, he sings (in four stanzas of ten octosyllabic verses each) about the delights of heaven awaiting him and the glory of martyrdom. Marcelle comes to his cell (5.2) with the aim of persuading him to recant and using every conceivable argument: if not do it for his own sake, then at least for them, the other actors, who ultimately all depend on him (cf. 5.2, vv. 1473–1486); the Christian faith was absurd (cf. 5.2, vv. 1495–1512); his acting talent would certainly earn him imperial fame. She further says that perhaps his decision, which was incomprehensible to her and whose authenticity she did not believe, was connected to his regrets over his youth, and that perhaps he had not received sufficient acknowledgment of his work from the court and the emperor, but their profession, although much admired, was an art in which merit was less important (cf. 5.2, vv. 1513–1540). If he could not or really did not want to recant, then he could at least fake his renunciation. The emperor's wrath would be alleviated by this deception, this would be of help to them, that he would only have to worship the (pagan) gods for the sake of appearance (cf. 5.2, vv. 1579–1586). Genest replies that his faith would not permit such a weakness, that he was compelled and wanted to openly profess his faith and profess God, that he had already used his art too many times to mock God and the Christians, and that he could no longer perform before idolaters (cf. 5.2, vv. 1587–1598). With regret he realizes that he had tried in vain to

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<sup>694</sup> A repertoire that turns out to be extremely varied, including extremes. Thus, Marcelle says she plays women, but also men ("[. . .] les femmes;/ Si selon le sujet, quelque déguisement, / Ne m'obligeait parfois au travestissement" 4.9, vv. 1412 ff.), Octave plays both kings and slaves (4.9, v. 1415), and Sergeste "[l]es extravagants, les furieux, les braves" (4.9, v. 1416).

put an end to Marcelle's blindness, her 'false faith' (to convert her). Their art, acting, was not of such great importance that he had ever expected a great reward for it. He had had worldly glory on stage, but that glory had no relevance. God, to whom he owed his life, was the only one who could save him. Everyone could save their souls, but not everyone would accept the divine call, God's grace: "Ta grâce peut, Seigneur, détourner ce présage! / Mais hélas! Tous l'ayant, tous n'en ont pas l'usage; / De tant de conviés, bien peu suivent tes pas, / Et pour être appelés, tous ne répondent pas" (5.2, vv. 1575–1578). He had no fear of cruel death, the torments were of short duration, but his "gloire" was eternal (cf. 5.2, v. 1600) and speaks about the Christian concept of the immortality of the soul, of the true life after death, which is in contrast to the void, earthly life.<sup>695</sup> Marcelle finally leaves Genest who remains affirmed in his faith ("MARC.: Ainsi rien ne te touche, et tu nous abandonnes. / GENEST: Ainsi je quitterais un trône et des couronnes; / Toute perte est légère, à qui s'acquiert un dieu" 5.2, vv. 1615 ff.). Thus, there is also on the level of the *tragédie* (as in the inner play) a detailed refusal on behalf of the Christian martyr to renounce his faith.

Genest is then taken by the *geôlier* to be executed, who metaphorically sets this in the context of the theater: "Si bientôt à nos dieux vous ne rendezvous hommage, / Vous vous acquittez mal de votre personnage; / Et je crains en cet acte un tragique succès" (5.4, vv. 1619–1621). Responding to the jailer, Genest speaks his last words in the play, in which he refers to divine judgment, the Christian concept of punishment and reward after death: "Un favorable juge assiste à mon procès; / Sur ses soins éternels, mon esprit se repose; / Je m'assure sur lui du succès de ma cause; / De mes chaînes par lui je serai déchargé, / Et par lui-même un jour, César sera jugé" (5.4, vv. 1622–1626).

In the next scene (5.5), Emperor Dioclétien reaffirms Maximin's ascent to imperial rule, and then goes on to address the 'question of the Christians.' Declaring his hope that a royal lineage will emerge from the marriage with his daughter Valérie and that Maximin's descendants, will, as he had done, earn themselves a place among the gods as a result of their glorious deeds. The gods, however, were the origin of the destinies of all men, on whom even the greatest ruler depended. It was the rulers' duty to ensure with all power and force that the gods were worshipped, their laws obeyed, and imperial authority respected. He had tried to enforce this in his territories by means of bloody deterrence

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695 "GENEST: J'aurai bien peu vécu, si l'âge se mesure, / Au seul nombre des ans, prescrits par la nature; / Mais l'âme qu'au martyre un tyran nous ravit, / Au séjour de la gloire, à jamais se survit. / Se plaindre de mourir, c'est se plaindre d'être homme, / Chaque jour le détruit, chaque instant le consomme, / Au moment qu'il arrive, il part pour le retour, / Et commence de perdre, en recevant le jour" (5.2, vv. 1607–1614).

against the Christians, but in vain: “J’en vois du sang d’un seul naïtre des légions” (5.5, v. 1650). His actions harmed the gods rather than benefited them, as from one beaten enemy a thousand new ones emerged. Furthermore, the Christians were of such a nature that death even encouraged them in their arrogance. The actor Genest, who had hitherto mocked and hated this “secte aussi folle que vaine” (5.5, v. 1655), had now adopted its doctrine and had the audacity to confess this before everyone’s eyes. His contempt was for themselves, the rulers, and the gods. This had to be avenged by his death. Maximin confirms that they would make a public sacrifice out of it (v. 5, v. 1664), that the people would be given a “spectacle sanglant” (v. 1666) that very evening, “[s]i déjà sur le bois d’un théâtre funeste, / Il n’a représenté l’action qui lui reste” (vv. 1667 f.).

In the following scene (5.6), Valérie and the actors appear before Dioclétian to ask for his compassion and mercy for Genest. Valérie asks her father to pardon Genest, referring to her wedding day with Maximin, for the sake of the actors who all despised the faith to which Genest had turned, but could not continue without him. Marcelle, Octave, and Sergeste also beg the Emperor’s forgiveness. Dioclétian emphasizes the state’s obligation to bring Genest to his just punishment, but finally agrees to give the actor a last chance to turn back. It is, however, already too late. Plancien appears and reports that Genest has been executed, comparing the execution to the end of a tragedy:

Par votre ordre, Seigneur, ce glorieux acteur,  
Des plus fameux héros, fameux imitateur,  
Du théâtre romain, la splendeur et la gloire,  
Mais si mauvais acteur dedans sa propre histoire,  
Plus entier que jamais en son impiété,  
Et par tous mes efforts en vain sollicité,  
A du courroux des dieux, contre sa perfidie,  
Par un acte sanglant, fermé la tragédie. (5.7, vv. 1717–1726)

Genest had endured his torture (which Plancien describes) with a force that was “plus qu’humaine” (v. 1735). This had been so impressive that “Nous souffrions plus que lui, par l’horreur de sa peine; / Et nos cœurs détestant ses sentiments chrétiens, / Nos yeux ont malgré nous fait l’office des siens;” (vv. 1736 ff.). Finally, he had been beheaded. Thus the tragedy had ended: “J’ai mis la tragédie, à sa dernière scène, / Et fait, avec sa tête, ensemble séparer, / Le cher nom de son dieu, qu’il voulait proférer” (5.7, vv. 1740 ff.).<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>696</sup> Plancien’s report on Genest’s execution in its entirety: “J’ai joint à la douceur, aux offres, aux prières, / À si peu que les dieux m’ont donné de lumières, / Voyant que je tentais

After that, everyone withdraws: Dioclétian is satisfied with this ‘just and deterring punishment’ (“Ainsi reçoive un prompt et sévère supplice / Quiconque ose des dieux irriter la justice” 5.7, vv. 1743 f.), while the actors and Valérie are crying, and Valérie expresses to Marcelle once again her sympathy for Genest (“Vous voyez de quel soin je vous prêtais les mains; / Mais sa grâce n’est plus au pouvoir des humains” vv. 1745 f.). Maximin emphasizes Genest’s self-chosen fate, which Valérie should therefore not lament. The core of the Genesisus-storyline, the turning of fiction into reality, is formulated in his closing lines: “Ne plaignez point, Madame, un malheur volontaire, / Puisqu’il l’a pu franchir, et s’être salutaire; / Et qu’il a bien voulu, par son impiété, / D’une *feinte*, en mourant, faire une *vérité*” (5.7, vv. 1747–1750; my italics).

As in the legend and in Lope’s play, Rotrou’s Genesisus also dies a martyr’s death at the end of the drama; *feinte* has become *vérité*. In comparing the two plays (apart from the general differences of the genre: Spanish [*tragi*]comedia with three *jornadas* versus French *tragédie* of five acts) attention should be drawn first to the different representation of the death of Ginés/Genest. While in *Lo fingido verdadero* Ginés death takes place on stage, in Rotrou, it is relayed in the third-person, through Plancien’s account of the event. Placien relays the torture and superhuman endurance of the martyr, an important aspect of the typical story of a martyr that is missing in Lope’s *Lo fingido verdadero*. In keeping with this, Rotrou also presents the martyr’s repeated refusal to recant, which occurs in both the inner play and in the framing play. In addition, Genest is explicitly characterized as a former enemy of Christianity, another aspect elaborated on in Rotrou that becomes even more apparent by the mirroring in the play and the ‘play within the play.’ In this sense Rotrou’s drama appears to be more strongly anchored in the original material of the legend of the martyr.

As has already been mentioned, Rotrou did not adopt Lope’s focus on Diocletian’s ascent from soldier in the Roman army to Augustus and the related *agüero*, which turns into *burla verdadera*. While in Lope’s *comedia* the historical-political storyline covers an enormous range in terms of space, time, and *dramatis personae*, *Le Véritable Saint Genest* is characterized by reduction and

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d’inutiles efforts / Tout l’art, dont la rigueur peut tourmenter les corps; / Mais ni les chevalets, ni les lames flambantes, / Ni les ongles de fer, ni les torches ardentes, / N’ont, contre ce rocher, été qu’un doux zéphyr / Et n’ont pu de son sein arracher un soupir; / Sa force, en ce tourment, a paru plus qu’humaine, / Nous souffrions plus que lui, par l’horreur de sa peine; / Et nos coeurs détestant ses sentiments chrétiens, / Nos yeux ont malgré nous fait l’office des siens; / Voyant la force enfin, comme l’adresse vaine, / J’ai mis la tragédie, à sa dernière scène, / Et fait, avec sa tête, ensemble séparer, / Le cher nom de son dieu, qu’il voulait préférer” (5.7, vv. 1727–1742).



concentration. The action of the play takes place entirely in Rome<sup>697</sup>: in the imperial palace (1.; 5.5–7), the theater (2.–4.), and prison (5.1–4), Dioclétian is already emperor. The framing plot centers around the imperial wedding, with the alliance of imperial power sealed by marriage and the guarantee of the emergence of a ruling dynasty. It is this wedding that serves as the occasion for the performance of the play about the martyrdom of Adrian that is the impetus for Genest's revelation. Nonetheless, Rotrou does relate to the background history developed in Lope, when in the first scene Valérie shares her dream with Camille, as well as her concern about her father's capriciousness and irascibility in possibly marrying her to someone below her, she alludes to the prophecy, which in Lope's play is made by Camila, that Dioclétian's power as emperor, and his marriage, were 'a reward for some bread he had received as a soldier': "Sut-il considérer, pour son propre hyménée, / Sous quel joug il baissait sa tête couronnée, / Quand, empereur, il fit sa couche et son État / *Le prix de quelques pains, qu'il emprunta soldat,* / Et par une faiblesse, à nulle autre seconde, / S'associa ma mère à l'Empire du monde?" (1.1, vv. 25–30; my italics). She also criticizes Dioclétian's subsequent division of power, first with Maximian (Maximiano in Lope) ("[...] on vît sur l'univers deux têtes souveraines, / [...] Maximian en partageât les rênes" 1.5, vv. 33 f.), and then through the tetrarchic system.<sup>698</sup> Camille, defending Dioclétian, also refers to his rise to power and his low birth ("choisi par les siens" v. 58).<sup>699</sup> It is interesting to

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**697** Note that in the first prints of the drama there is no reference to the scene of the action (cf. [Jean de Rotrou], *Le véritable St Genest, tragedie de Mr de Rotrou*, Paris 1648, s. p. ["Acteurs"]). As Diocletian's seat of government was in Nicomedia, the editors of the edition used here also set Nicomedia as the scene of the action (cf. p. 37: "[La scène est à Nicomédie.]"), others, however, refer to Rome, e.g., Crane (cf. *Jean Rotrou's Saint Genest and Vencelas* [cf. note 672], p. 140). According to the legend, the martyrdom of Genesius took place in Rome, and the martyrdom of Adrianus, treated in the inner play, occurred in Nicomedia. When Genest indicates to Maximin the 'realistic' representation of the event, he says that he will not be able to distinguish whether he sees the actual event in Nicomedia or only its representation in a play: "[...] [L]a mort d'Adrian [...] / [...] / Vous sera figurée avec un art extrême, / Et si peu différent de la vérité meme / [...] / [...] que vous douterez si dans Nicomédie / Vous verrez l'effet même, ou bien la comédie' (1.5, vv. 299–306).

**698** "VALÉRIE: Depuis, Rome souffrit, et ne réprouva pas / Qu'il commit un Alcide, au fardeau d'un Atlas, / Qu'on vit sur l'univers deux têtes souveraines, / Et que Maximian en partageât les rênes. / Mais pourquoi pour un seul tant de maîtres divers, / Et pourquoi quatre chefs au corps de l'univers? / Le choix de Maximin, et celui de Constance / Étaient-ils à l'État de si grande importance, / Qu'il en dut recevoir beaucoup de fermeté, / Et ne put subsister sans leur autorité?" (1.1, vv. 31–40; cf. as well subsequently vv. 41–46).

**699** The fact that he had married Valérie's mother (the character of Camila in Lope's play; Diocletian's wife and Valeria's mother was called Prisca), a peasant woman, did not harm his own position nor the rank of emperor, that he had been able to harmonize honor and love;

note that in addressing the imperial characters' lower social origins (Maximin was an ordinary shepherd and Dioclétian a plain soldier) and emphasizing how their glorious and virtuous acts led to their achievement of a high rank,<sup>700</sup> could also be read, in view of the conventions of tragedy that were becoming firmly established at the time when the play was written, as a way of justifying the protagonist Genest, since as an actor he is certainly from a lower social class.

Rotrou adopts *Lope's* use of the play, featuring an inner-fictional theater performance and a famous actor as protagonist, for the purpose of integrating contemporary references to drama and theories of performance. The corresponding scenes shall be briefly reviewed. Genest discusses different types of plays with Dioclétian (1.5), explaining that there are different types of theater, differentiating between plays that glorify the deeds of rulers (“[. . .] des tableaux parlants de vos rares exploits” 1.5, v. 216), and those that simply provide pleasure, entertainment, and distraction (“[. . .] à vos plaisirs” v. 212; “Mais quelque effort au moins par qui nous puissions dire / Vous avoir délassés du grand faix de l'Empire / Et, par ce que notre art aura de plus charmant, / Avoir à vos grands soins ravi quelque moment” 1.5, vv. 221–224).<sup>701</sup> Dioclétian then

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and even if he had co-rulers, he still remained “le plus solid appui” and the ‘pilot’ of the ‘ship of state’; and that a deceptive dream image had made her misinterpret her father's actions (“*CAMILLE*: Vous prenez trop l'alarme, et ce raisonnement / N'est point à votre crainte, un juste fondement. / Quand Dioclétian éleva votre mère / Au degré le plus haut que l'univers révère, / Son rang qu'il partageait n'en devint pas plus bas, / Et lui faisant monter, il n'en descendit pas; / Il put concilier son honneur et sa flamme, / Et, choisi par les siens, se choisir une femme; / Quelques associés qui règnent avecque lui, / Il est de ses États le plus solide appui: / S'ils sont les matelots de cette grande flotte, / Il en tient le timon, il en est le pilote, / Et ne les associe à des emplois si hauts / Que pour voir des césars au rang de ses vassaux. / Voyez comme un fantôme, un songe, une chimère, / Vous fait mal expliquer les mouvements d'un père, / Et qu'un trouble importun vous naît mal à propos / D'où doit si justement naître votre repos” 1.1, vv. 51–68).

**700** Cf. for instance Dioclétian to Maximin “[. . .] pour faire vos prix égaux à vos mérites” (1.3, v. 121), “Puisse par cet hymen votre couche féconde / Jusques aux derniers temps donner des rois au monde, / Et par leurs actions ces surgeons glorieux / Mériter comme vous un rang entre les dieux! / En ce commun bonheur l'allégresse commune / Marque votre vertu plus que votre fortune [. . .]” (5.5, vv. 1627–1632).

**701** Genest's intention is the latter, the reason he gives being the lack of adequate poetic models: “Permet de partager l'allégresse commune, / Et de contribuer en ces communs désirs, / Sinon à votre gloire, au moins à vos plaisirs, / [. . .] / [. . .] que mes compagnons, vous offrent par ma voix, / Non des tableaux parlants de vos rares exploits, / Non cette si célèbre et si fameuse histoire, / Que vos heureux succès laissent à la mémoire / (Puisque le peuple grec, non plus que le romain / N'a point pour les [tracer] une assez docte main.) / Mais quelque effort au moins, par qui nous puissions dire / Vous avoir délassés du grand faix de l'Empire, / Et, par ce que notre art aura de plus charmant, / Avoir à vos grands soins ravi quelque moment” (1.5, vv.

confirms that the theater is capable of realizing its intention to entertain, when he states that comedy can effect spectators' emotions so that the passion of *tristesse* becomes *joie*: 'Le comique, en ton art également succède, / Est contre la tristesse un si présent remède, / Qu'un seul mot, quand tu veux, un pas, une action, / Ne laisse plus de prise à cette passion, / Et par une soudaine, et sensible merveille, / Jette la joie au cœur, par l'œil ou par l'oreille' (1.5, vv.245–250). The decisive factor is the 'perfect illusion,' the creation of a 'pseudo-reality,' which the actor achieves by perfecting his art of *feinte* (pretense, deception). Thus, he goes beyond imitation to resurrect the characters he portrays. Moreover, the spectator, whether he wants to or not, and often to his own amazement, is 'carried away' by the emotions generated by the actor, which is how Dioclétian describes the effect that Genest's acting has had on him so far:

Avec confusion j'ai vu cent fois tes feintes,  
 Me livrer malgré moi de sensibles atteintes;  
 En cent sujets divers, suivant tes mouvements,  
 J'ai reçu de tes feux de vrais ressentiments;  
 Et l'Empire absolu que tu prends sur une âme  
 M'a fait cent fois de glace, et cent autres de flamme.  
 Par ton art les héros, plutôt ressuscités  
 Qu'imités en effet, et que représentés,  
 Des cent et mille ans après leurs funérailles,  
 Font encor des progrès et gagnent des batailles,  
 Et sous leurs noms fameux établissent des lois:  
 Tu me fais en toi seul maître de mille rois.<sup>702</sup>

(1.5, vv. 233–244)

When the question of contemporary authors and plays is raised, Genest refers to the concept of taste. He prefers the Ancients, namely the works by Plautus and Terence<sup>703</sup> and the "doctes Grecs" (1.5, v. 267). A few lines later – a point repeatedly noted by scholars – Genest praises Corneille (1606–1684) as an author of great tragedies on historical subjects.<sup>704</sup> For Dioclétian, on the other

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210–224). But the fact that Maximin is both spectator and character of the performed play, also guarantees the first aspect, as his 'fame as a persecutor of Christians' is presented theatrically.

**702** On this 'conversation on theater,' cf. Bürger, "Illusion und Wirklichkeit" (cf. note 669), pp. 249 ff., here p. 250.

**703** Lope's Ginés, too, in the corresponding passage refers to the famous Roman comedy poets.

**704** There are allusions to Corneille's *Cinna* (1643) and *La Mort de Pompée* (1644): "GENEST: Nos plus nouveaux sujets, les plus dignes de Rome, / Et les plus grands efforts des veilles d'un grand homme / À qui les rares fruits que la muse produit / Ont acquis dans la scène un légitime bruit / Et de qui certes l'art, comme l'estime est juste, / Portent les noms fameux de

hand, favors the new and surprising, since in his view this best fulfills the audience's expectation of being entertained.<sup>705</sup> Before the performance begins (2.6), the inner audience praises the genre of tragedy. It suits Valérie's 'taste' ("Mon goût [. . .] est pour la tragédie;" 2.6, v. 453), and they particularly mention sublime subjects, brave actions, noble and influential ideas, the exemplary nature of kingly heroes, and representations of exemplary control and tempering of the passions. They also note that contemporary theater, in terms of equipment, art, and possibility, was ideally suited for this genre ("Le théâtre aujourd'hui, superbe en sa structure, / Admirable en son art, et riche en sa peinture, / Promet pour le sujet, de mêmes qualités" 2.6, vv. 461 ff.). Nevertheless, what was crucial for a great performance was good acting: "MAX.: Les effet en sont beaux, s'ils sont bien imités" (2.6, v. 464).

The beginning of the second act, the first scene of the play that takes place 'in the theater,' is quite remarkable for its explicit exposure of the artificial nature of theatrical illusion. This conveys a transparency that does not exist in *Lo fingido verdadero*. Genest gives the set designer last instructions for the scenery, emphasizing the need for splendor and appropriate illumination to achieve the effect of naturalness ("Il est beau; mais encor, avec peu de dépense, / Vous pouviez ajouter à sa magnificence, / N'y laisser rien d'aveugle, y mettre plus de jour, / [. . .] / Et surtout, en la toile où vous peignez vos cieux / Faire *un jour naturel, au jugement des yeux*;" 2.1, vv. 313–324; my italics). The designer refers to the effect of distance on perception, saying that from the audience's perspective, which is at a distance from the stage, the desired effect of the set stage scenery would come into its own.<sup>706</sup>

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Pompée et d'Auguste. / Ces poèmes sans prix, où son illustre main / D'un pinceau sans pareil a peint l'esprit romain, / Rendront de leurs beautés votre oreille idolâtre, / Et sont aujourd'hui l'âme et l'amour du théâtre" (1.5, vv. 277–286).

**705** "DIOCL.: Je sais qu'en leurs écrits, l'art et l'invention / Sans doute, ont mis la scène en sa perfection; / Mais ce que l'on a vu n'a plus la douce amorce / Ni le vif aiguillon, dont la nouveauté force; / Et ce qui surprendra nos esprit et nos yeux, / Quoique moins achevé, nous divertira mieux" (1.5, vv. 271–276). One could argue that in *Le Véritable Saint Genest*, Rotrou tries to bring these two poles together, so to speak; the aspect of the 'twist that surprises' the audience manifests itself most strikingly in Genest's 'sudden' conversion, while at the same time the 'norms in terms of form' are respected.

**706** "LE DÉCORATEUR: Joint qu'on voit mieux de loin ces raccourcissements, / Ces corps sortant du plan de ces refondrements; / L'approche à ces desseins ôte leurs perspectives, / En confond les faux jours, rend leurs couleurs moins vives, / Et comme à la nature, est nuisible à notre art / À qui l'éloignement semble apporter du fard. / La grâce une autre fois y sera plus entière" (2.1, vv. 327–332). Peter Bürger points to the usage of 'verbs of making/manufacturing' ("Verben des Herstellens") (*peindre, faire*, etc.), 'in the sense of the previously developed theory of perfect deception, the required naturalness is at the same time being denounced as fabrication.' 'The

In Lope's drama, the blurring of the boundary between seeming and being, theatrical internal fiction and internal reality, character and actor, is highly elaborated on. This is particularly clear in the second act, which provides thematic coherence. The love plot, the intertwining of inner-fictional and play-internal levels of reality, the development and end of the first play within the play, make the action and the central event of the third act, Ginés' actual conversion and martyrdom, plausible. The second act, which shows the fallacy of earthly-erotic love, pre-figures, so to speak, the third act dedicated to Christian love. Just as Rotrou did not adopt the first act's action from his Spanish model, he also did not adopt the events of the second act. In *Le Véritable Saint Genest* there is no comparable complicated network of love relationships (between Ginés/Rufino-Marcela/Fabia-Octavio/Octavio) permeating the boundaries of reality and illusion. The only play that is performed is about the Christian martyr Adrian; Genest, Marcelle, and Octave are not in the midst of a love-triangle; and love in general is not an issue for Rotrou's Genesius. Furthermore, Ginés not only acts in the plays he performs with his troupe, but he is also their author, who uses the events of his own life as fodder for the fiction, particularly in the *comedia de amor*. His 'acting theory' already manifests the instability of the border between play and reality, between impersonated figure and impersonator. In the second inner play, 'el cristiano bautizado,' Ginés essentially plays himself: an actor who plays a heathen who converts to Christianity. Whereas in Rotrou, the distinction between (intra-fictional) play and (intra-fictional) reality is marked by a significantly higher degree of transparency. The actor Genest plays a character called Adrian; but what is not made clear or even mentioned is who the author of the play *Le martyr d'Adrian* is. The fact that the distance between actor and role, and the separation between fiction and reality is stronger in Rotrou than in Lope, can also be seen on the level of the secondary text. According to the stage directions to the first scenes of the second act, Genest dresses for the role of Adrian and is holding his script for a final rehearsal.<sup>707</sup> Unlike Ginés, Genest does not improvise but refers

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theater, on which the martyr's play is subsequently performed, arises before the spectators' eyes as an illusory world, a product of skilled craftsmen. As such speaks the *décorateur* when he points to the distance as an illusion-creating factor' ("[...] im Sinne der vorher entwickelten Theorie der vollkommenen Täuschung [...] [wird die] geforderte Natürlichkeit [zugleich] als Fabrikation denunziert": "Das Theater, auf dem nachher das Märtyrerstück gespielt wird, entsteht vor den Augen des Zuschauers als eine Scheinwelt, Werk geschickter Handwerker. Als solcher spricht der Dekorateur, wenn er auf den Abstand als Illusion schaffendes Moment hinweist" [Bürger, "Illusion und Wirklichkeit" (cf. note 669), p. 252]).

**707** Cf. at the beginning of 2.1: "GENEST, *s'habillant, et tenant son rôle* [ . . . ]"; 2.2: "GENEST *seul, se promenant, et lisant son rôle, dit comme en repassant et achevant de s'habiller.*"; 2.4: "GENEST *seul, repassant son rôle, et se promenant.*" Note that these stage directions, as well as

to a specific, pre-set script that he reads from while preparing for the performance. When, during the rehearsal scene, the border between actor and character is disrupted for the first time, the border between fiction and reality blurs, and Genest has the impression that he himself accepts the '*sentiments chrétiens*' (2.4, v. 404): "Et puis, ayant un peu *rêvé et ne regardant plus son rôle*, il dit[:]" (my italics). Furthermore, the stage directions during the inner play provide clear information about who is speaking, the actor or the character.<sup>708</sup> That Genest, unlike Ginés who emphasized the need for an actor to draw upon his own experiences when acting, generally maintains a distance from the characters he portrays, becomes clear when, while rehearsing, he becomes confused that it was he Genest who was experiencing the sense of Christian grace and not he as Adrian ('[...] que Christ me propose une gloire éternelle / Contre qui ma défense est vaine et criminelle;' 2.4, vv. 409 f.), and he finally stresses: 'Il s'agit d'imiter, et non de devenir' (2.4, v. 420).

While in Lope the boundaries between appearance and being, illusion and reality are constantly destabilized, Rotrou's play does not imply any fundamental doubt about the ontological boundary between fiction (stage play) and reality. Although moments of uncertainty do exist, these misunderstandings, or the false attribution of phenomena to one pole or the other, are only temporary. The spectators are always able, through their reasoning, to recognize what is fiction and what (fictional) reality. This is much more problematized in *Lo fingido verdadero*, where it is difficult to rationally identify the difference between play and seriousness. The 'belief in the right thing' leading to 'right action,' the 'good performance of the right role' function here as guidelines that give security in a world that is perceived as inscrutable. Thus, while Lope, as has been noted, suggests a (Christian) dogmatic answer to skepticism's thesis of the unreliability of sensory perception (which is made explicit in the play itself) and of the ultimately impossible distinction between illusion and reality, Rotrou's drama offers a more rational approach. Rotrou's solution can be understood as part of a tradition of dealing with Pyrrhonian skepticism that seeks to overcome

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those mentioned in the following note, and generally all used in this analysis of the play, are not additions of modern editing, they have been present since the first printed editions of Rotrou's drama (cf. for the ones referred to here: *Le véritable St Genest, tragedie de Mr de Rotrou*, Paris 1648, p. 19, p. 20, p. 24).

**708** For example, when the play in the play starts in 2.7, the first direction reads: "GENEST, sous le nom d'ADRIAN," then the role name "Adrian" is always given until Genest returns to the stage after his 'real' baptism behind the stage: then his speeches are again indicated with "Genest"; the same applies to Marcelle/Natalie. Thus the directions allow the readers and producers of the play to clearly distinguish between fiction and reality in the play, but this does not necessarily carry over to the inner audience and the external viewers.

skeptical doubt by creating a system of philosophical certainty, namely, Cartesian rationalism.

Particularly striking in Rotrou's play is the long 'play within the play,' which takes place from the seventh scene of the second act to the seventh scene of the fourth act. It is a theatrical fictionalization of a reality linked to the play's framing plot. Maximin plays an important function here, because he is, as he himself says, both *spectateur* and *acteur* of the action (cf. 1.5, vv. 307 f.) – as the officer who ordered Adrian to be executed, he is both the initial actor (instigator) of events and then the spectator of the action being portrayed, an action that then becomes once again real with the execution of Genest. The mirroring nature of Rotrou's 'play within the play' is thus, in comparison to Lope's inner plays, extended by a doubling, of the spectator.<sup>709</sup> Maximin moreover represents the obligatory (enraged) ruler persecuting Christians, before whom Adrian affirms his commitment to Christianity and accepts his fate (cf. 3.2). Together with Dioclétian, Maximin also fills the role of imperial pagan antagonist, when the 'play has become serious,' after Genest professes his Christian beliefs, no longer in his stage role as Adrian, but as himself. The inner play's plot anticipates the remaining framing play. The doubling of the Christian martyrs Adrian and Genest in the inner play and the framing plot and the relevance of the character of Adrian for Genest's conversion will be discussed at a later point.

First, however, let us examine the aforementioned aspect of the temporary confusion between appearance and being. This is not only evident with regard to the distinction between the levels of theatrical internal fiction and internal reality, but is also present within the inner play itself. When Adrian receives Flavie's permission to visit his wife Natalie one last time, and comes to her alone, unguarded and without shackles, she immediately interprets her husband's appearance as a cowardly recantation. Her first words to him are: "[...] Comment, seul, et sans fers? / Est-ce là ce martyr, ce vainqueur des enfers? / Dont l'illustre courage et la force infinie, / De ses persécuteurs, bravaient la tyrannie?" 4.4, vv. 1101–1104). She then brusquely turns him away, and launches into a long angry speech in which she deplors his betrayal of her and God – she herself would be willing to take torture and death for her faith – and his weakness and cowardice (cf. 4.4, vv. 1105–1147). When Adrian after several attempts eventually gets a chance to speak, he successfully clears up the misunderstanding ('Je te vais détromper;' v. 1140) by explaining her that he only

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**709** Note that as a consequence, in the context of the *theatrum mundi*-concept, this implies for the external spectators that their own earthly existence is a fiction and a role in the God-governed world (cf. Forestier, *Le théâtre dans le théâtre sur la scène française du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* [cf. note 3], pp. 300 f.).



wanted to say goodbye to her, that God reigned in his heart and nothing could shake his faith, that he was going “armé d’un invincible zèle” (4.4, v. 1151) towards what was ahead of him (cf. 4.4, vv. 1147–1166). Natalie is immediately convinced. She does not have any further doubt about the sincerity of his words. Within the ‘play within the play’ the character of Natalie is often shown as being *feinte*, deceptive. She reveals to Adrian that she herself is a Christian and has been living a life of deception by hiding her faith and practicing in secret (cf. 3.5, vv. 868–906).<sup>710</sup> Later, after leaving her husband she encounters Flavie and deceives him by saying that she has tried hard but unsuccessfully to persuade her husband to recant (cf. 3.6, vv. 959–974).

Regarding the modification in the depiction of the conversion, it is interesting to compare the scenes of the rehearsal and that of baptism during the course of the ‘play within the play’ in the two dramas. When Ginés asks for baptism as he prepares for the role of the Christian, music sounds, the ‘heavens open’ and the spectators/readers are treated to an impressive spectacle of Mary, Jesus, and God the Father on the heavenly throne, surrounded by martyrs. In *Rotrou*, the metaphysical dimension is only alluded to by: ‘*Le ciel s’ouvre avec des flammes [ . . . ]*.’ Only the empyrean is visible. This can perhaps be seen as reflecting a more rationalistic attitude towards religion. As has already been shown, also the doubt about the status of the voice that Genest subsequently hears is developed in a far less complex way (for both the characters and the audience/readers) than in Lope’s play, and is confined to a (brief) argumentative engagement by Genest. When during the ‘play within the play’ Genest, as Adrian, asks Anthyme, played by Lentule, to baptize him,<sup>711</sup> and the latter reminds him that the upcoming ‘blood baptism’ is more than sufficient for his salvation, Genest breaks character and explicitly states: ‘Ce n’est plus Adrian, c’est Genest qui respire / La grâce du baptême et l’honneur du martyr;’ (4.5, vv. 1247 f.). By clearly differentiating the figure of Adrian from the actor Genest, the play explicitly turns from fiction to reality, play to seriousness, a transparent shift that did not take place at any point in Lope. When Genest/Adrian then looks up to heaven and sees the flames bursting forth, he speaks about an angel calling him to baptize him, and goes backstage. The actors explain the incident by interpreting it as an improvisation on Genest part because he possibly forgot his lines. The spectators, on the other hand, understand what happened as an impressive moment of theater/performance. The ‘miracle

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**710** Worshipping the pagan gods only ‘in pretense’ is an argument that Marcelle (who plays Natalie) makes when she tries to persuade Genest to recant in order to save his life and the actors’ jobs (cf. 5.2, 1581–1586).

**711** For this scene, see above p. 262.



of baptism' takes place behind the scenes. Genest then returns to the stage and in a speech replete with acting metaphors, he addresses God, praises the power of baptism and places himself at the service of his new faith.<sup>712</sup> Without being aware of the truth of their assessment, the inner spectators classify this as a '[...] feinte [qui] passerait pour la vérité même' (4.7, v. 1284). In Lope's play, however, an angel appears on stage, calling Ginés to him so that he can baptize him. Ginés goes to the angel and the baptism takes place on stage (more precisely, above the stage). The scene is accompanied by stirring music and angels holding baptismal utensils are visible. Although in Rotrou the miracle of the conversion and baptism is represented much less dramatically than in Lope, the abrupt nature of the change, the sudden turning from pagan actor playing a Christian to a real Christian, is much clearer. In Lope's drama, the authenticity of the baptism, the understanding of what is perceived as a miracle, is ultimately only possible in retrospect, when the actor playing the angel in the 'play within the play' appears on stage to perform his role of baptizing Ginés for what the inner spectators see as the second time; the border between illusion and reality remains unstable. A significant difference with regard to the emphasis on conversion and martyrdom is already indicated by the words Genest hears in the rehearsal scene: 'UNE VOIX: *Poursuis Genest ton personnage, / Tu n'imiteras point en vain; / Ton salut ne dépend, que d'un peu de courage, / Et Dieu t'y prêtera la main*' (2.4, vv. 421–424; my italics). The promise of the soul's salvation for a good performance, more precisely for following, and emulating the character he is portraying, is reinforced by the aspect of the necessary courage, the zeal. After his 'real' conversion Genest professes himself a Christian before the emperors, and metaphorically places this conversion in the context of the *theatrum mundi*, just as Ginés does, saying the 'play has become truth.'<sup>713</sup> In addition, in *Le Véritable Saint Genest*, the aspect of the

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712 'Suprême Majesté, qui jettes dans les âmes / Avec deux gouttes d'eau, de si sensibles flammes, / Achève tes bontés, *représente avec moi* / Les saints progrès des coeurs convertis à ta foi! / Faisons voir dans l'amour, dont le feu nous consume, / Toi le pouvoir d'un dieu, moi le devoir d'un homme; / Toi l'accueil d'un vainqueur, sensible au repentir, / Et moi, Seigneur, la force et l'ardeur d'un martyr' (4.7, vv. 1275–1282; my italics).

713 Cf. "Dedans cette action, où le Ciel s'intéresse / *Un ange tient la pièce, un ange me redresse*; / Un ange par son ordre, a comblé mes souhaits, / Et de l'eau du baptême, effacé mes forfaits; / *Ce monde périssable, et sa gloire frivole* / *Est une comédie où j'ignorais mon rôle*; / J'ignorais de quel feu mon cœur devait brûler / Le démon me dictait, quand Dieu voulait parler; / Mais depuis que le soin d'un esprit angélique / Me conduit, me redresse, et m'apprend ma réplique, / *J'ai corrigé mon rôle, et le démon confus*, / *M'en voyant mieux instruit*, ne me suggère plus; / J'ai pleuré mes péchés, le Ciel a vu mes larmes, / *Dedans cette action, il a trouvé des charmes*, / M'a départi sa grâce, est mon approbateur, / Me propose des prix,

exemplary nature of the heroic martyr is of importance.<sup>714</sup> Through the miracle of his conversion Genest is able to follow in the footsteps of Adrian, the revered Christian martyr. The first words that Genest speaks as Adrian are particularly notable: “Ne délibère plus, Adrian, il est temps / De suivre avec ardeur ces fameux combattants; / Si la gloire te plaît, l’occasion est belle; / La querelle du Ciel à ce combat t’appelle; / La torture, le fer, et la flamme t’attend; / Offre à leurs cruautés un cœur ferme et constant;” (2.2, vv. 335–340).<sup>715</sup> Adrian wants to follow the example of courageous Christians who bravely endured their martyrdom like warriors. Adrian’s conversion and willingness to die a martyr’s death have a different motivation from that of Genest, as we learn from ‘his’ reflection on his experience and divine grace that led to his conversion and his conviction of faith.<sup>716</sup> He also remarks, after Natalie has told him that she, too, is a Christian: “Enfin, je reconnais, ma chère Natalie, / Que je dois mon salut au

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et m’a fait son acteur” (4.7, vv. 1298–1314; my italics); ‘Ce n’est plus Adrian, c’est Genest qui s’exprime; / Ce jeu n’est plus un jeu, mais une vérité, / Où par mon action je suis représenté, / Où moi-même l’objet et l’acteur de moi-même, / Purgé de mes forfaits par l’eau du saint baptême, / Qu’une céleste main m’a daigné conférer, / Je professe une loi, que je dois déclarer’ (4.7, vv. 1324–1330); ‘J’ai souhaité longtemps d’agréer à vos yeux, / Aujourd’hui je veux plaire à l’Empereur des cieux; / Je vous ai divertis, j’ai chanté vos louanges; / Il est temps maintenant de réjouir les anges, / Il est temps de prétendre à des prix immortels, / Il est temps de passer du théâtre aux autels; / Si je l’ai mérité, qu’on me mène au martyre; / Mon rôle est achevé, je n’ai plus rien à dire’ (4.7, vv. 1365–1372).

**714** In addition to the constant emphasis on the aspects *courage*, *constance*, and *vertu*, this emphasis becomes apparent as well in the inner play, where Natalie, too, mentions numerous martyrs whose example she wants to follow one day (cf. 3.7, vv. 1017–1022). After his conversion, Genest qualifies martyrdom as the fulfillment of a human (‘heroic’) duty (‘le devoir d’un homme’; cf. 4.7, vv. 1279–1282).

**715** These are also the first line of the inner play (2.7, vv. 477–482).

**716** Cf. from the opening monologue: “GENEST sous le nom d’ADRIAN: *J’ai vu, ciel, tu le sais, par le nombre des âmes / Que j’osai t’envoyer, par des chemins de flammes, / Dessus les grils ardents, et dedans les taureaux, / Chanter les condamnés, et trembler les bourreaux; / J’ai vu tendre aux enfants une gorge assurée, / À la sanglante mort qu’ils voyaient préparée; / Et tomber sous le coup d’un trépas glorieux, / Ces fruits à peine éclos, déjà mûrs pour les cieux. / J’en ai vu, que le temps prescrit par la nature, / Était prêt de pousser dedans la sépulture, / Dessus les échafauds presser ce dernier pas, / Et d’un jeune courage, affronter le trépas; / J’ai vu mille beautés, en la fleur de leur âge, / À qui jusqu’aux tyrans, chacun rendait hommage, / Voir avecque plaisir, meurtris et déchirés, / Leurs membres précieux, de tant d’yeux adorés; / Vous l’avez vu, mes yeux, et vous craindriez sans honte, / Ce que tout sexe brave, et que tout âge affronte! / Cette vigueur, peut-être, est un effort humain? / Non, non, cette vertu, Seigneur, vient de ta main, / L’âme la puise au lieu de sa propre origine, / Et comme les effets, la source en est divine. / C’est du ciel que me vient cette noble vigueur, / Qui me fait des tourments mépriser la rigueur, / Qui me fait défier les puissances humaines;” (2.7, vv. 495–519; my italics).*

saint nœud qui nous lie;” (3.5, vv. 907 f.). Furthermore, in the course of vindicating his faith before Flavie—and this is all the more contrary to the nature of Genest’s conversion—he declares: “La grâce dont le ciel a touché mes esprits, / M’a bien persuadé, mais ne m’a point surpris;” (2.9, vv. 645 f.).

In contrast to Lope’s *comedia*, Rotrou’s drama is much more discursive (*raisonnement*), with the characters reflecting on and explicitly (and extensively) defending Christianity, in both the inner play and the framing plot (cf. the prison scenes in the Act 5). There is also a great deal of proselytizing, an aspect that is entirely absent in Lope. Even though Genest has no followers and there is no further conversion to Christianity in *Le Véritable Genest*<sup>717</sup> the issue is nevertheless present. Genest attempts, for example, to persuade his fellow actors ‘to save their souls,’ (during the ‘play within the play,’ immediately after his baptism [cf. 4.7, vv. 1287–1295]), and again in the long discussion with Marcelle and his refusal to recant (cf. 5.2, vv. 1541–1546). It is also expressed by Dioclétien, who describes the persecution of Christians as counter-productive and ultimately damaging due to the contagious character and increasing numbers of conversions and martyrdoms in his empire: “J’en vois du sang d’un seul naître des légions. / [...] / Un ennemi défait leur en reproduit mille; / Et le caprice est tel de ces extravagants / Que la mort les anime et les rend arrogants” (5.5, vv. 1650–1654).

In Lope’s *comedia*, Ginés uses theatrical imagery in his final speech, in which he once again explicitly discusses his conversion and approaching martyrdom, as well as the emptiness of this world and the reward awaiting him in the hereafter. Genest also uses theatrical imagery, speaking of how the world was a stage on which he played a ‘false role’ until his conversion (cf. ‘Ce monde périssable et sa gloire frivole / Es tune comédie où j’ignorais mon rôle;’ 4.7, vv. 1303 f.).<sup>718</sup> Remarkably it is the other (pagan) characters who metaphorically place his ‘real’ martyr’s death that follows upon his confession, within the context of a play (thus also situating it within the realm of fiction, implying a continuation of the aborted ‘play within the play’). When the jailer takes him away after the discussion with Marcelle, he remarks: ‘Si bientôt à

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<sup>717</sup> In contrast to Desfontaines’ drama, as we will see below.

<sup>718</sup> Cf. as well in a distinctive form: ‘J’ai souhaité longtemps d’agréer à vos yeux, / Aujourd’hui je veux plaire à l’Empereur des cieus; / [...] / Il est temps de passer du théâtre aux autels;’ (4.7, vv. 1365–1370). Moreover: ‘Mais depuis que le soin d’un esprit angélique / Me conduit, me redresse, et m’apprend ma réplique, / J’ai corrigé mon rôle, et le démon confus, / M’en voyant mieux instruit, ne me suggère plus; / J’ai pleuré mes péchés, le ciel a vu mes larmes, / Dedans cette action, il a trouvé des charmes, / M’a départi sa grâce, est mon approbateur, / Me propose des prix, et m’a fait son acteur’ (4.7, vv. 1307–1314).

nos dieux vous ne rendez hommage, / Vous vous acquittez mal de votre personnage; / Et je crains en cet acte un tragique succès' (5.4, vv. 1619–1621), to which Genest himself, and these are his last lines in the play, replies using metaphors from the field of law, evoking the image of Divine Judgment: 'Un favorable juge assiste à mon procès; / Sur ses soins éternels, mon esprit se repose; / Je m'assure sur lui du succès de ma cause; / De mes chaînes par lui je serai déchargé, / Et par lui-même un jour, César sera jugé' (5.4, vv. 1622–1626). Maximin describes the execution of Genest as a 'bloody spectacle' (*spectacle sanglant*) enacted before the people, because: 'Si déjà sur le bois d'un théâtre funeste / Il n'a représenté l'action qui lui reste' (5.5, vv. 1666 ff.). Plancien expresses the notion of Genest's execution as the 'last act of a tragedy' and compares (from a non-Christian perspective and consequently reaching contrary conclusions to those that Genest reached earlier in the play) Genest's life with a stage play; as an actor on the Roman stage Genest had glamorously and gloriously imitated famous heroes, while in the play of his own story (his real life) did the opposite.<sup>719</sup> Nevertheless, Genest's performance in this 'acte sanglant' has a profoundly moving impact on the spectators.<sup>720</sup> It is interesting that this sense of Genest as a hero and his fate as a tragedy, is undermined by Maximin, who in his speech that concludes the play, refers to Genest's fate as self-inflicted and therefore not to be lamented, saying further that Genest had had the power to avert his own death, but because of his 'impiety' deliberately chose to turn the play into reality ('Ne plaignez point, Madame, *un malheur volontaire*, / Puisqu'il l'a pu franchir, et s'être salutaire; / Et qu'il a bien voulu, par son impiété, / D'une *feinte*, en mourant, faire une *vérité*' 5.7, vv.1747–1750; my italics). From Genest's Christian perspective, physical death, however cruel, is only a passage to the glory of eternal life and thus is met with happiness. What is decisive is divine grace – an aspect that dominates both the inner play and the framing plot – particularly the acceptance of divine grace. This concept of acceptance is closely tied to what, in Maximin's words, becomes a negative, the aspect of choice. Thus, in the course of his dialogue with

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719 Cf.: 'Par votre ordre, Seigneur, ce glorieux acteur, / Des plus fameux héros, fameux imitateur, / Du théâtre romain, la splendeur et la gloire, / Mais si mauvais acteur dedans sa propre histoire, / Plus entier que jamais en son impiété, / Et par tous mes efforts en vain sollicité, / A du courroux des dieux, contre sa perfidie, / Par un acte sanglant, fermé la tragédie' (5.7, vv. 1717–1726).

720 Cf. as well here once again: 'Nous souffrions plus que lui, par l'horreur de sa peine; / Et nos cœurs détestant ses sentiments chrétiens, / Nos yeux ont malgré nous fait l'office des siens; / Voyant la force enfin comme l'adresse vaine, / J'ai mis la tragédie à sa dernière scène' (5.7, vv. 1736–1740).

Marcelle, for instance, Genest notes: ‘Ta grâce peut, Seigneur, détourner ce présage! / Mais hélas! Tous l’ayant, tous n’en ont pas l’usage; / De tant de conviés, bien peu suivent tes pas, / Et pour être appelés, tous ne répondent pas’ (5.2, vv. 1575–1578).<sup>721</sup> Genest’s reflection on his conversion and imminent death, focusing on divine grace, can be found developed *in extenso* in his stanza-monologue at the beginning of the fifth act, quoted here below. These verses can be understood as a Christian answer to Maximin’s remark:

Pour lui la mort est salutaire;  
 Et par cet acte de valeur  
 On fait un bonheur volontaire,  
 D’un inévitable malheur;  
 [...]
 Mourrons donc, la cause y convie;  
 Il doit être doux de mourir  
 Quand se dépouiller de la vie  
 Est travailler, pour l’acquérir;  
 Puisque la célèbre lumière  
 Ne se trouve qu’en la quittant  
 Et qu’on ne vainc qu’en combattant;  
 D’une vigueur mâle et guerrière  
 Courons au bout de la carrière  
 Où la couronne nous attend.<sup>722</sup>

(5.1, vv. 1451–1470)

<sup>721</sup> Cf., furthermore, the following words by Genest addressed to Marcelle: “Si d’un heureux avis, vos esprits sont capables, / Partagez ce forfait, rendez-vous en coupables, / Et vous reconnaîtrez, s’il est un heur plus doux / Que la mort, qu’en effet je vous souhaite à tous. / Vous mourriez pour un Dieu, dont la bonté suprême, / Vous faisant en mourant détruire la mort même, / Ferait l’éternité, le prix de ce moment, / Que j’appelle une grâce, et vous un châtement” (5.2, vv. 1487–1494).

<sup>722</sup> “Par quelle divine aventure, / Sensible et sainte volupté, / Essai de la gloire future, / Incroyable félicité, / Par quelles bontés souveraines, / Pour confirmer nos saints propos, / Et nous conserver le repos / Sous le lourd fardeau de nos chaînes, / Descends-tu des célestes plaines, / Dedans l’horreur de nos cachots? // Ô fausse volupté du monde, / Vaine promesse d’un trompeur! / Ta bonace la plus profonde / N’est jamais sans quelque vapeur; / Et mon Dieu, dans la peine même / Qu’il veut que l’on souffre pour lui, / Quand il daigne être notre appui, / Et qu’il reconnaît que l’on l’aime, / Influe une douceur extrême / Sans mélange d’aucun ennui. // Pour lui la mort est salutaire, / Et par cet acte de valeur / On fait un bonheur volontaire / D’un inévitable malheur. / Nos jours n’ont pas une heure sûre, / Chaque instant use leur flambeau, / Chaque pas nous mène au tombeau. / Et l’art imitant la nature, / Bâtit d’une même figure / Notre bière, et notre berceau. // Mourrons donc, la cause y convie; / Il doit être doux de mourir / Quand se dépouiller de la vie / Est travailler, pour l’acquérir; / Puisque la célèbre lumière / Ne se trouve qu’en la quittant / Et qu’on ne vainc qu’en

Rotrou refers to the tragic motif of man's subjection to fate on numerous occasions throughout the play. For instance, when Dioclétian says: "Les dieux, premiers auteurs des fortunes des hommes, / Qui dedans nos États, nous font ce que nous sommes; / Et dont le plus grand roi, n'est qu'un simple sujet [...]" (5.5, vv. 1635 ff.).<sup>723</sup> This is also expressed by Valérie in the opening scene of the drama, in the context of her telling of her dream: "Mais me répondras-tu des caprices du sort? / Ce monarque insolent, à qui toute la terre / Et tous ses souverains, sont des jouets de verre" (1.1, vv. 72 ff.).<sup>724</sup> Thus, Rotrou's drama begins with the problematization of seeming and being, illusion and reality, and the potential effectiveness of the supposedly illusionary on reality. This liminal confusion is not the purpose of the play, however. In fact, throughout the play the real persona (Genest) is clearly distinguished from his role (Adrian) so that the text always maintains a clear distinction between what is play and what is reality, and the point where the two are joined is precisely defined.<sup>725</sup>

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combattant; / D'une vigueur mâle et guerrière / Courons au bout de la carrière / Où la couronne nous attend" (5.1, vv. 1431–1470).

**723** In the inner play, Flavie notes similarly: "Les dieux, dont comme nous, les monarques dépendent" (2.8, v. 587), subsequently Adrian: "C'est le Dieu que je sers qui fait régner les rois, / Et qui fait que la terre en révère les lois" (2.8, vv. 589 f.). Furthermore, Genest's reasoning during the rehearsal scene about seeing his soul as a battleground of divine powers, would allow for such an interpretation (cf. 'Prenez, dieux, contre Christ, prenez votre parti, / Dont ce rebelle cœur s'est presque départi; / Et toi, contre les dieux, ô Christ, prends ta défense, / Puisqu'à tes lois, ce cœur fait encor résistance; / Et dans l'onde agitée où flottent mes esprits, / Terminez votre guerre, et m'en faites le prix; / Rendez-moi le repos dont ce trouble me prive' 2.4, vv. 439–445).

**724** This element does not exist in Lope's drama, where there is only a brief mention of a dream by Diocleciano, in which Numeriano's shadow had told him to avenge him and kill Apro. A comparable aspect, however, is Camila's prophecy, this is where *burlas* eventually become *veras*. In tragedies, dreams and their interpretation are common topics. This is the dream Valérie has: "Déjà cinq ou six nuits, à ma triste pensée / Ont de ce vil hymen la vision tracée, / M'ont fait voir un berger, avoir assez d'orgueil / Pour prétendre à mon lit, qui serait mon cercueil, / Et l'Empereur mon père, avec violence, / De ce présomptueux appuyer l'insolence" (1.1, vv. 13–18). See above pp. 254 f.

**725** Rotrou's use of the story of the Genesis legend and his drawing on Lope's Spanish *comedia* to write a French *tragédie* in the 1640s must be understood in the context of dramatic production that had to grapple with the conventions of the *doctrine classique*. Following the 'Querelle du *Cid*' (1637), the tendency towards 'neo-classicistic' principles was consolidated. However, the relevant theoretical texts, such as *La pratique du théâtre* by the Abbé d'Aubignac in 1657 and Boileau's *L'Art poétique* only in 1674, appeared only years after Rotrou's drama. Nevertheless, as Peter Bürger states, 'since the beginning of the 1640s, in France, the rule of the dramatic norms was firmly established' ("[s]eit Beginn der vierziger Jahre des 17. Jahrhunderts [war] in Frankreich die Herrschaft der dramatischen Regeln fest etabliert")

### 4.3 Desfontaines, *L'illustre Comédien ou le Martyre de Saint Genest* (1645)

The tragedy *L'illustre Comédien ou le Martyre de Saint Genest* [The Illustrious Actor or the Martyr of Saint Genesis] by Nicolas-Marc Desfontaines, first printed in 1645 and composed only a short time before Rotrou's *Le Véritable Saint Genest*, is a dramatization of the Genesis story that is little known outside of scholarly research.<sup>726</sup> Given the subject matter of the drama, it is interesting to compare it to the two texts by Lope and Rotrou.<sup>727</sup>

Desfontaines' play has striking differences in terms of his characters. Apart from Diocletian, there are no other figures from Roman history. He dramatizes neither the complex issues surrounding Diocletian's rise to Roman Emperor (Lope), nor the political storyline that Rotrou develops (in so far as Diocletian's

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["Illusion und Wirklichkeit" (cf. note 669), p. 243]). Note that Rotrou's drama is, of course, not intended to be presented here as a typical stage work of French classicism – in (older) scholarly research, Rotrou is always seen as a playwright of the 'Baroque' (in contrast to 'Classicism') –, but rather as a tendency in this direction that is clearly different from the Spanish theater of that period. Another aspect pertinent to the dramatization of a 'sacred subject matter' is the Church's more pronounced disavowal of theater in France than in Spain at that time. (As early as 1548 an edict of the Parisian parliament had forbidden the *Confrérie de la Passion* to perform religious plays.) A groundbreaking work in this context was Corneille's martyr-play *Polyeucte martyr*, first published in 1642 and performed with great success (in 'public' theater). In publications from 1682 onward the play was subtitled "tragédie chrétienne." (In his drama-theoretical treatise *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique* [1660], Corneille explained his concept of *tragédie chrétienne*.) Even if no closer comparison between Corneille's *Polyeucte* and Rotrou's *Saint Genest* is made here, it is important to note that Rotrou presumably adopted many of Corneille's dramatic structures. Corneille's 'Christian tragedy' also begins thematically with a dream, while the prison scenes in the fifth act of Rotrou's play are very reminiscent of the first and second scenes of the fourth act in Corneille: There, the converted Polyeucte, waiting in prison for his execution, has a (prominent) stanza-monologue; in the following scene his wife Pauline comes to try and convince him to recant his new faith, but without success; Pauline also becomes a Christian, as does her father Félix, the Roman governor of Armenia, who had ordered Polyeucte's execution. (Used edition: Pierre Corneille, *Polyeucte martyr: Tragédie chrétienne*, in: Pierre Corneille, *Théâtre complet*, ed. Liliane Picciola, 2 vols., Paris 1993–1996, vol. 2 [1996], pp. 1–89). It is possible that Desfontaines' martyr's drama was also influenced by the success of Corneille's *Polyeucte*.

**726** See, e.g., Christopher Semk, *Playing the Martyr: Theatre and Theology in Early Modern France*, Lewisburg 2017, who discusses Rotrou's and Desfontaines' Genesis plays in chapter 3 of his study, pp. 62–89 ("Ex histrionis martyr factus': Genesis, Acting, and Martyrdom").

**727** References to the play are to the edition: Nicolas Mary Desfontaines, *L'illustre Comédien, ou Le Martyre de Saint Genest: Tragédie*, Paris 1645, and will be given parenthetically in the body of the text indicating act and scene numbers.



elevation of Galerius [Maximin] to Caesar and his marriage to Valeria are the theme of the framing plot).<sup>728</sup> In Desfontaines, Dioclétian is joined, on the one hand, by his confidant Aquillin (“Favory de l’Empereur”) and, on the other hand, by the state councilor Rutile (“Conseiller d’Estat de l’Empereur”). In addition to Genest, Aristide, Anthenor, Pamphilie, and Luciane form part of the famous actor’s acting troupe. The play’s action takes place, as in *Rotrou*, solely in Rome.

In the first scene, set in the imperial palace, Aquillin praises Dioclétian’s absolute power, saying that only the gods were his rivals. While Jupiter was the ruler of heaven, he was the sole ruler on earth, the Persians were defeated, his opponent Carinus subjected. He had defeated all his enemies, except for some Christians, who, however, were attacking the gods but not his empire (“Horsmis quelques Chrestiens tu n’as plus d’ennemis, / Et cette secte impie alors qu’elle conspire, / Ne s’attaque qu’aux Dieux & non à ton Empire” 1.1). Dioclétian contradicts Aquillin, saying that the Christians were indeed a threat to his empire and represented a great evil that must be fought.<sup>729</sup> Rutile, while affirming that he despises Christians to the same extent as his lord does, seeks, however, to persuade Dioclétian to moderate the severe measures, i.e. torture and executions, he was using against Christians, for it was not through the body, but through the soul, through reason, that the problem needed to be addressed.<sup>730</sup> He proposes that the Christians be persuaded to return to the worship of the Roman gods, through the persuasive power of the theater: the scaffolds should be turned into magnificent theater stages on which the faults and abuses of Christians could be mocked. The famous actor Genest, known for his ability to effect and convince people by means of his art, should be commissioned to put on such a performance in the palace in order to try out this option:

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728 Which may also be an indication that *Lo fingido verdadero* was not one of Desfontaines’ sources.

729 “DIOCLETIAN: Non, non, ce mal est grand dez qu’il commence à naistre / Il le faut estouffer pour l’empescher de croistre, / Et venger par l’effect de nos justes arrests / De la Terre & des Cieux les communs interests” (1.1).

730 “RUTILE: Mais comme les erreurs de cette troupe infame / Sont enfin des deffaux qui s’attachent à l’ame, / Je treuve que l’on fait d’inutiles efforts / Pour guerir les esprits d’en affliger les corps, / Cette superieure & plus noble partie / Par des effets si bas n’est point assujettie / Elle brave ses fers, & rit de sa prison, / Pour suivre seulement les loix de la raison: / Elle seule la dompte, elle seule est sa Reine, / Et sur elle, elle seule agit en souveraine; / Pour ranger les Chrestiens aux termes du devoir / Une fois, ô Cesar, sers toy de son pouvoir: / Faits agir la raison, laisse agir les exemples, / Tasche par la douceur de les mener aux Temples, / Et sans plus les forcer, donne leur le loisir, / D’examiner un peu ce qu’ils doivent choisir” (1.1).



*Changer les eschaffauts en superbes Theatres,*  
 Et là, leur faire voir dans la derision  
 L'erreur & les abus de leur Religion,  
 Tu sçais combien, Genest, cet Illustre Comique  
 A de grace & d'adresse en tout ce qu'il pratique,  
 Et qu'au gré de sa voix, & de ses actions,  
*Il peut comme il luy plaist changer nos passions,*  
 Esgayer nos esprits, les rendre solitaires,  
 Amoureux, mesprisans, pitoyables, coleres,  
*Et par un souverain & merveilleux pouvoir*  
*Imprimer en nos coeurs tout ce qu'il nous fait voir,*  
 Commande luy, Seigneur, d'exposer sur la scene  
 Les superstitions d'une troupe peu saine  
 Qui se nourrit d'espoir, & pour de faux appas,  
 Quitte l'heur qui la suit & qui luy tend les bras,  
 Si tu doutes encor des traits de ta science  
 Tu peux dans ton Palais en faire experience,  
 Et par un coup d'essay de cét art merveilleux  
 En toy-mesme esprouver ce qu'il pourra sur eux.

(1.1; my italics)

Dioclétian agrees to this suggestion. Genest's acting troupe, already waiting in the palace, is ordered to appear before him.

Thus, in Desfontaines, the framework for the 'play within the play' is a completely different one than in Lope or Rotrou. The occasion is not a festive event and the performance is not intended to contribute to the entertainment of the court. The drama's starting point is a consideration of how to address the 'Christian problem,' as the increasing number of Christians appears as a great threat to imperial power, the kingdom's peace, and the gods' contentment. Theater is explicitly identified as an instrument of propaganda: rather than the bloody exercise of state power to counter the dangers posed by Christians, the (gentle) 'power of persuasion' of the theatrical performance is going to effect change by ridiculing Christianity on stage. Genest's acting, too, is explicitly put in this context. The imperial audience is to decide on the effectiveness of this approach. Thus, in Desfontaines' play, as S. Laemmel puts it, the audience of the 'play within the play' is 'not a celebration audience, but a test audience' ("kein Fest-, sondern ein Testpublikum").<sup>731</sup>

When the actors come before the emperor (1.2), Genest at first suggests presenting Dioclétian's great deeds (his victories over the Persians and barbarians, etc.) on stage. Rutile, however, explains what kind of play Dioclétian wants to see, namely, ridiculing of the Christian faith and rites and ending in praise of

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<sup>731</sup> Laemmel, "Zur Adaptation einer 'comedia de santo' in Frankreich" (cf. note 494), p. 472.

the Roman gods.<sup>732</sup> Genest's answer reflects the play's adherence to the legend: Genest says that he is a declared enemy of Christians, who had fled the 'Christian environment' in his youth,<sup>733</sup> an element that is also mentioned in Rotrou; he suggests enacting a mock (and mocking) baptism on stage. He states that there is hardly anything more amusing than the extreme fallaciousness of the 'miracle' the Christians call baptism and their belief that three drops of water were enough to elevate them to heaven. Genest further declares that he was ready to put on the entertainment the emperor wanted and the play would be so effective, and Christians portrayed in such a bad light, that they would be insane not to recant their new beliefs and concluding that shame often had more effect than pain.<sup>734</sup>

When the actors are alone (1.4), they discuss which play to perform that would best suit the emperor's wishes and win his favor. Apparently, the suggested subject matter was new to them. The actor Anthenor remarks: "Mais quelle Histoire enfin peut servir de sujet / Et propre & convenable à *ce rare projet?*" (1.4; my italics). Unlike in Lope, and to a lesser extent in Rotrou, it is never suggested that Ginés/Genest is famous for his portrayal of Christians. Aristide, another actor in the group, proposes that they present the story of Ardalion or Porphyrius, popular men deceived into following Christians and ending up

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**732** "RUTILE: Faites voir leurs abus, découvrez leur erreur, / Rendez les des humains & la honte, & l'horreur, / Mocquez-vous de leur foy, riez de leurs mysteres, / Des superstitions de leurs regles austeres, / Et des appas trompeurs de tant d'illusions / Qui seduisent leurs sens & leurs opinions. / Rendez-les en un mot de tout point ridicules: / Mais d'ailleurs exaltez Jupiter, nos Hercules, / Nos Mars, nos Apollons, & tous les autres Dieux / Qu'ont icy de tout temps adoré nos ayeux. / Je ne vous puis donner de conseil plus utile" (1.3).

**733** "GENEST: Ny prescrire d'employ qui nous soit plus facile, / Ces Rebelles, des Dieux & des hommes hays, / M'ont fait abandonner mon Pere, & mon Pays, / Où ne pouvant souffrir leurs coupables maximes / Je me suis par ma fuitte affranchy de leurs crimes / De sorte que contre eux justement animé, / Je feray voir l'abus dont ce peuple est charmé: / Et que le vain espoir qui le flatte & le lie / N'est rien qu'une chimere, un songe, une folie, / Qui s'estans emparez de ces foibles esprits / Les rend de l'univers la fable & le mespris" (1.3).

**734** "GENEST: Est-il rien de plaisant comme l'erreur extreme / D'un mystere nouveau qu'ils appellent Baptême, / Où de trois gouttes d'eau legerement lavez, / Ils se pensent desja dans les cieus eslevez? / Certes on ne peut trop admirer leurs manies / De croire que deux mots, & des ceremonies / Puissent en un moment les rendre glorieux, / Au point que d'aspirer au partage des Cieux. / C'est par cette action si digne de risée, / Et des meilleurs esprits de tout temps mesprisée / Que je veux commencer les divertissemens, / Que l'Empereur attend de nos raisonnemens, / Nous ne scaurions choisir de plus belle matiere. / C'est là que me donnant une libre carriere, / Je mettray les Chrestiens en un si mauvais point / Qu'ils seront insensz s'ils ne se changent point. / Ces moyens, quoy que doux, peuvent plus que les gesnes, / Et la honte souvent fait bien plus que les peines" (1.3).

disgraced. Luciane adds that both had been actors, and Pamphile continues that baptism led them to lose all their worldly possessions and their lives.<sup>735</sup> Ardalion and Porphyrius are clearly two additional Genesius figures, actor-martyrs, who mock Christian rites on stage and then become Christians themselves and die a martyr's death.<sup>736</sup> Genest, however, rejects his colleagues' suggestion, saying that one would not need to go that far to find the right material, and instead could easily find something appropriate in one's own life ("Mais sans chercher si loing le secours d'une Histoire / [...] / Nous pouvons rencontrer dans nostre propre sort, / De quoy plaire à Cesar qui nous prisera fort" 1.4). The emperor knew, after all, that they had left behind their homeland, relatives, and possessions in order to be able to stay far away from his enemies, the Christians, and to pay homage to the traditional gods.<sup>737</sup> He therefore decides to dramatize an episode from his own life, determining on the spot the play's plot, characters, and distribution of roles ("l'ordre de ce mystere"):

Il faudra qu'Anthenor represente mon Pere:  
 Et que par un flatteur, quoy que faux entretien,  
 Il feigne qu'il me veut aussi rendre Chrestien.  
 Ma soeur qui me portoit à cette loy profane  
 Avoit, vous le sçavez, de l'air de Luciane,  
 Qui sçaura je m'asseure en cette occasion,  
 Imiter son humeur & son affection.  
 Aristide d'ailleurs pour vaincre sa folie,  
 Se dira parmy nous frere de Pamphilie,  
 Et me conjurera par l'esclat de ses yeux,  
 De ne la point trahir, aussi bien que nos Dieux.  
 Voila sur ce sujet tout ce qui vous regarde,  
 Le reste.

(1.4)

He selects Anthenor to play his father and Luciane his sister, both of whom want to convince him, Genest, to join them in becoming a Christian. Pamphile

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**735** "ARISTIDE: Celle d'Ardaleon, ou celle de Porphyre, / Qui tous deux bien aymez des maistres de l'Empire, / Furent par les Chrestiens tellement abusez / Qu'ils suivirent des voeux qu'ils avoient mesprisez, / Et par une folie à nulle autre seconde / Se rendirent l'opprobre & la fable du monde. / LUCIANE: Tous deux ont exercé nostre profession. / PAMPHILIE: Et le baptesme fut la premiere action / Qui flattant de ces fous la ridicule envie / Leur fit perdre à tous deux & les biens & la vie" (1.4).

**736** At least the reference to Porphyrius is anachronistic, as according to legend he died in 362, many years after Genesius.

**737** "GENEST: Il sçait que nous aurons quitté nostre Patrie, / Nos parens & nos biens pour venir en ces lieux, / Loing de ses ennemis rendre hommage à ses dieux" (1.4).

will act the part of his lover, Aristide that of her brother and their role will be to try and dissuade him from converting.

Thus, in Desfontaines there is also a blurring of the boundaries between actor and role, between real life and the stage. Similar to Ginés in Lope's first 'play within the play,' Genest wants to use his own life as fodder for the stage, and seeks to 'play' himself at a young age. Note that the characters in the 'play within the play' here are not given names, rather the actors have the same names as the characters they play. With respect to the fictitious relationships between the characters and the 'real' relationships between the actors, it should be noted that, despite not yet being apparent from the text, Genest and Pamphilie are also a couple in 'real life.'

The first act closes with Aquillin coming to give the actors gifts in the name of Dioclétian, and their subsequent praise for the Emperor and their stated desire to show reverence to him through art. The *divertissement* is ready to begin.

The second act is centered entirely on the 'play within the play.' In the first scene, the spectators – Dioclétian, Aquillin, Rutile, and the rest of the Imperial Court – take their seats. Dioclétian is curious to see whether the performance will have the desired effect on him, as Rutile had promised it would.

The play begins (2.2). Luciane does her utmost to persuade her brother Genest to convert to Christianity, imploring him tearfully. But Genest responds that there was nothing that could make him follow this "loy prophane," and even her tears were not enough to lead him to follow an unknown man who was put in chains and abandoned by his people. Luciane answers him by talking about the religious convictions of Christianity, and summarizing the birth, life, death, and significance of Jesus Christ. Genest, however, rejects everything as "un trompeur espoir [dont] vostre ame est possédée" and "vaine idée," and calls the divine power of the Caesars the 'true gods,' who they were meant to follow, as fate had made them their subjects ("Et puis que le destin nous a faits leurs sujets, / N'ayons pas en nos voeux de differents objets" 2.2). They see their father Anthenor coming towards them, and Genest asks Luciane to change the subject, since their father would not be very happy about this conversation, would certainly take Luciane's side and pressure him as well. When Anthenor joins them (2.3), he seeks to know whether his son was at last showing some discernment (i.e. whether he was ready to become a Christian and receive baptism). Genest declares that indeed he owed his father his existence and obedience, but that this concerned only his body. His mind, however, he had thanks to the gods and, accordingly, owed it to them to be devoted to them alone. The debate between them, in which Anthenor tries to convince Genest of the 'true faith,' culminates in that Anthenor angrily spurns his son and says that he will cast him out:

Hé bien, puis que ma voix ne te peut esmouvoir,  
 Cessant de m'escouter, cesse aussi de me voir:  
 Va, Monstre, je suivray la loy que tu me donnes,  
 Et t'abandonneray comme tu m'abandonnes.

[. . .]

[Anthenor addressing Luciane:] Laissez-là cet objet odieux

Implorer à loisir le secours de ses dieux:

Ils vont en un haut point eslever sa fortune,

Et vostre affection le choque, & l'importune.

(2.3)

In the next scene (2.4), a distraught Genest is speaking to his lover Pamphilie and his friend Aristide, Pamphilie's brother, and lamenting the situation: his father wants him to be baptized and become a Christian, and if not, he will be expelled and deprived of his inheritance, and, as a consequence, would have to leave Pamphilie as well; however, he could not act against his will and betray the gods. Pamphilie declares her love and loyalty to him ("Mais de quelques rigueurs dont le sort vous accable, / Fussiez vous en un point encor plus déplorable, / Je vous puis assurer que ma fidélité / Sera jusqu'au tombeau sans inégalité" 2.4). Genest emphasizes his affection to her, but does not want to take her down with his misfortune.<sup>738</sup> Aristide tries to calm his friend. He advises Genest to comply with his father's wish and be baptized but only for the sake of appearances! By pretending to be a Christian he will maintain the right to his inheritance and resolve the family dispute. This would not have any consequences for him, since, according to the Christians' "bizarre loy," their "mysteres" were powerless if one did not believe in them, with the result that, as his heart ultimately rejects their lunacy, the ceremony of baptism would be nothing but "un ridicule effet" for him (2.4). Aristide, who represents here what the Christians perceived as the corruption and hedonism of paganism, then goes on to say that pretending to a 'false devotion' will enable him to receive the 'true goods' (i.e., the material ones), and by means of some water (that is, by pretending to receive the Christian baptism) he could soothe the (domestic) storm:

Escoute les conseils que je te veux donner:

Tu nous dis qu'Anthenor te veut abandonner,

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**738** "GENEST: Mais encor qu'à ce point vous soyez genereuse, / Pouray-je consentir à vous voir malheureuse, / Et que tacitement il vous soit imputé: / Que sans moy vous seriez dans la prospérité? / Ha! Madame? souffrez qu'en ce desordre extrême, / Ma raison une fois parle contre moy-mesme, / Et qu'agissant pour vous, elle monstre en ce jour, / Par un estrange effect un veritable amour" (2.4).

Et te priver à tort des droits de ton partage,  
 Si tu ne suis l'erreur où son ame s'engage,  
 Dy luy pour parvenir au but où tu *pretens*:  
 Que tu rendras ses vœux, & ses desirs contens;  
 Et *feints* pour cét effect par un beau stratagème,  
 Que tu veux comme luy recevoir le baptême.  
 Suivant l'opinion de leur bizare loy,  
 Leurs mysteres sont vains quand on manque de foy;  
 De sorte qu'en ton coeur mesprisant leurs manies,  
 Tu n'auras observé que des ceremonies,  
 Qui n'ayans pas rendu le baptême parfait:  
 N'auront produit en toy qu'un ridicule effect.  
 Acquires toy de vrais biens avec de *faux hommages*:  
 Un peu d'eau, Cher Amy, calme de grands orages;  
 Fay que celle qui nuit à tous ses partizans,  
 Pour toy seule aujourd'hui produise des presens,  
 Et se rende pareille apres ton entreprise,  
 A la pluye envoyée à la fille d'Acrise.<sup>739</sup>

(2.4; my italics)

Genest argues that such a procedure would enrage the (true, pagan) gods. But Aristide contradicts him: on the contrary, it would honor them, since he was inwardly firm, despising and abhorring in his heart “cette loy nouvelle,” and therefore soul would remain pure to worship at their sacred altars.<sup>740</sup> When Genest asks Pamphile for her opinion, she expresses the fear that he might regret it and that it could lead to a bad outcome for both of them. But Aristide scoffs at this, asking if she really believed that two drops of water would be able to extinguish the flame of his love (“[. . .] que deux gouttes d'eau / De son ardente amour esteignent le flambeau?” 2.4). Here, figuratively, the earthly ‘false’ love, the fiery passion, is opposed to ‘true’ Christian love, symbolized by the water (of baptism). It is precisely this erroneous assessment of the Christian sacrament’s effectiveness, expressed by the pagan Aristide in the inner play, that will later be exposed as false when Genest openly professes his conversion to Christianity ‘in earnest.’ Genest is finally convinced by Aristide’s arguments and Pamphile as well also withdraws her objections, and the three decide to

<sup>739</sup> The comparison with the Danaë-myth – Zeus comes in the form of golden rain to the daughter of Acrisius – places Genest in the context of the sin of *avaritia*; gold, material goods possess corrupting power.

<sup>740</sup> “ARISTIDE: L'effect de ce conseil leur sera glorieux, / Puis qu'à l'aversion de cette loy nouvelle, / Tu joindras les mespris que ton coeur a pour elle, / Reservant à l'honneur de nos sacrez autels:/ Une ame toute pure, & des vœux immortels” (2.4).

put Aristide's plan in motion. They make up to meet again at the temple of Christians.<sup>741</sup> This concludes the second act.

In the first scene of the third act, the spectators praise the excellent and highly convincing performance of all the actors.<sup>742</sup>

In the next scene (3.2), the 'play within the play' continues. A visibly disoriented and confused Genest appears: "Où suis-je? Qu'ay-je veu? Quelle divine flame, / Vient d'esblouir mes yeux, & d'esclairer mon ame? / Quel rayon de lumiere espurant mes esprits, / A dissipé l'erreur qui les avoit surpris? / Je croy, je suis Chrestien; & cette grace extrême, / Dont je sens les effects est celle du Baptême" (3.2). Genest believes that he is a Christian and has just received the grace of baptism. His fellow actors, both the Christians on the level of the inner play (Anthenor and Luciane) and the pagans (Pamphilie and Aristide), do not know what to make of his utterances. Pamphilie asks who made him a Christian, to which Genest does not react and simply replies that he was one (a Christian). Aristide suspects that Genest is dreaming, to which he replies that an angel has made him a Christian before the sight of all but, as Luciane observes, nobody witnessed this "*aventure*." The inner spectators, however, still

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**741** "PAMPH.: Je crains. / ARIST.: Que craignez vous? / PAMPH.: Tout. ARIST.: Dieux! quelle folie? / Vous craignez, dites vous, Quoy? que deux gouttes d'eau / De son ardente amour esteignent le flambeau? / PAMPH.: Non, mais que cette erreur à la fin ne luy plaise, / Et qu'elle n'ayt pour nous une suite mauvaise. / GENEST: Ha! ne me croyez pas d'un esprit si peu sain. / PAMPH.: Vous pouvez donc agir, & suivre ce dessein. / GENEST: Il faut adroitement conduire ceste affaire. / ARISTIDE: Laissez m'en le soucy, je verray vostre Pere, / Et je sçauray si bien mesnager ses esprits, / Qu'aveuglé de l'appas du dessein entrepris, / Il ne pourra jamais à travers mon adresse, / Se douter seulement du piege qu'on luy dresse; / Cependant finissant de si longs entretiens / Allez tous deux m'attendre au Temple des Chrestiens" (2.4).

**742** For instance, according to Dioclétian, Luciane had played her role of the Christian so well, defended the aberration with such high art, and, in general, had pretended so well that at times he had thought it was not feigned ("N'as tu point remarqué ce qu'a dit Luciane / En faveur des Chrestiens & de leur loy prophane? / Elle en a soustenu l'erreur avec tant d'art, / Que j'ay creû quelque temps qu'elle parloit sans fard, / Et que le trait dont lors elle sembloit atteinte, / Estoit un pur effect, & non pas une feinte" 3.1). Also, Genest's excellent realization in the mockery of the Christian faith is highlighted ("RUTILE: Avec combien d'esprit, d'adresse, & de courage, / Il a de nos autels conservé l'avantage? / Et par quel art enfin, & quelle invention, / Il se porte au mespris de leur religion? [...] sa subtilité n'eût jamais de pareilles" 3.1). Furthermore, in particular, the good representation of the passions is emphasized: "DIOCL.: Que l'accord de leurs voix, & de leurs actions, / Exprime adroitement toutes leurs passions! / Qu'ils se sçavent bien plaindre, ou feindre une colere! / Que l'amour en leur bouche est capable de plaire! / Et que leur industrie a de grace & d'appas / À dépeindre un tourment qu'ils ne ressentent pas!" (3.1).

believe that they are watching a scene from the play and praise his deceptively real performance:

PAMPHILIE: Chrestien? Qui vous l'a fait?  
 GENEST: Je le suis.  
 ARISTIDE: Resvez vous?  
 GENEST: Un Ange m'a fait tel.  
 ANTHENOR: Devant qui?  
 GENEST: Devant tous.  
 LUCIANE: Personne toutesfois n'a veu cette adventure.  
 RUTILE, à l'Empereur:  
 Il leur va debiter quelque estrange imposture.  
 AQUILLIN: Qu'il feint bien!  
 DIOCLETIAN: Il est vray qu'on ne peut feindre mieux,  
 Et qu'il charme l'oreille aussi bien que les yeux. (3.2)

Aristide accuses Genest of lying (“Tu nous contes des fables”) when he speaks of a heavenly light that the others should have seen as well, and to the miracle bestowed upon him (“Quoy, vous n’avez pas veu cette clarté brillante, / Dont l’effect merveilleux surpassant mon attente, / Avecque tant d’eclat a paru dans ce lieu / Alors qu’il a reçu le ministre d’un Dieu” 3.2). Genest insists on the truth of his words (“Non, Amys, je vous dis des choses veritables”) and describes in detail the miraculous baptism that has just taken place backstage, and the miracle of his conversion to Christianity (“[. . .] ô merveille à peine concevable!”). He relates that when he was kneeling he turned his eyes to heaven and an angel had appeared before him:

[. . .] mille fois plus beau que le Soleil,  
 [. . .] qui me promettant un bonheur sans pareil,  
 M’a dit qu’il ne venoit, si je le voulois croire,  
 Que pour me revestir des rayons de sa gloire.  
 Lors tous mes sens ravis d’un espoir si charmant:  
 Ont porté mon esprit à ce consentement,  
 Qui remplissant mon coeur d’une joye infinie  
 A fait voir à mes yeux cette ceremonie,  
 L’Ange, dont la presence estonnoit mon esprit,  
 En l’une de ses mains tenoit un livre escrit,  
 Où la bonté du Ciel secondant mon envie,  
 Je lisois aisément les crimes de ma vie,  
 Mais avec un peu d’eau que l’autre main versoit,  
 Je voyoit aussi-tost que l’escrit s’effaçoit,



Et que par un effect qui passe la nature,  
 Mon coeur estoit plus calme, & mon ame plus pure.  
 Voila ce que j'ay veu, voila ce que je sens[.]<sup>743</sup> (3.2)

He then begins to mock the pagan gods, saying he no longer feared them, and even hated them, that his heart was “embrazé d’une flame celeste,” and he now adored only the one, omnipotent (Christian) God.<sup>744</sup> Dioclétian demands that they stop the play – the performance, the *feinte*, was starting to displease him. But Genest continues, now addressing the emperor directly (“Il n’est pas temps, ô Cesar! de me taire” 3.2). The boundary between the first and second play levels is suspended and the stage of the inner play interactions with the inner audience. The Almighty God,<sup>745</sup> Genest says, wishes him to go on (“le plus grand des miracles”): by the power of God he has been transformed from a hater and persecutor of Christians into a Christian himself (“[. . .] ce Dieu souverain / De qui j’ay resseny la puissance, & la main, / Lors que je me pensois rire de ses oracles, / Vient d’operer en moy le plus grand des miracles, / Changeant un idolatre en son adoreteur, / Et faisant un sujet de son persecuteur” 3.2). Without knowing it, he had (through the play) actually delighted the angels and the ruler of heaven (“Ne pensant divertir, ô prodiges estranges! / Que de simples mortels, j’ay resjouy des Anges, / Et dedans le dessein de complaire à tes yeux, / J’ay pleû sans y penser à l’Empereur des Cieux” 3.2). He now understands that his previous behavior was wrong and sinful and was the work of the devil, who had deceived his senses and seduced his mind.<sup>746</sup> God had ‘purified’ his soul, and now his commitment to God and the proclamation of his omnipotence was his only goal. Dioclétian first claims that Genest has taken leave of his senses, but Genest immediately objects, declaring that when he

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**743** In describing the baptism, Desfontaines follows the legend model quite closely.

**744** “GENEST: Et qui produit en moy des transports si puissans. / Loing de moy desormais estres imaginaires, / Fleaux des foibles esprits, & des Ames vulgaires, / Faux Dieux, ce n’est plus vous aujourd’huy que je crains, / Ny ce foudre impuissant que l’on peint en vos mains: / Je ne vous connois plus, allez, je vous deteste, / Et mon coeur embrazé d’une flame celeste, / Adore un Dieu vivant dont l’extrême pouvoir, / Se fait craindre par tout, & par tout se fait voir” (3.2).

**745** “GENEST: Ce Seigneur des Seigneurs, & ce grand Roy des Roys, / De qui tout l’univers doit reuerer les loix, / Soubz qui l’Enfer fremit, & que le Ciel adore [. . .]” (3.2).

**746** “GENEST: Il est vray que privé de ses graces extrêmes, / J’ay tantost contre luy vomy mille blasphêmes, / Mais dans ces faux discours que ma langue estaloit, / Ce n’estoit que l’Enfer, & non moy qui parloit, / Ce commun Enemy de tout ce qui respire, / Qui par le crime seul establit son Empire: / Ayant trompé mes sens, & seduit ma raison, / M’avoit mis dans le coeur ce dangereux poison: / Mais enfin de mon Dieu les bontez infinies, / Ont toutes ces horreurs de mon Ame bannies” (3.2).

revered his (the emperor's) gods he was not in his right mind but that now he is completely sane, stressing: "Je me connois, Cesar, je sçais ce que je suis" (3.2). The clash between Genest and an increasingly furious Dioclétian continues, the emperor threatens Genest that he will be punished if he continues in this vein. Genest explains to the emperor that although he had power over his body, he had none over his soul ("Tu peux tout sur mon corps, & rien sur mon esprit" 3.2). He encourages him to torture him, renounces all worldly things, and looks forward to the glory of heaven. Dioclétian orders his arrest and torture, but at the same time instructs Rutile to ensure that they would continue to attempt to change Genest's mind with promises and material things.<sup>747</sup> In this respect Desfontaines' version differs substantially from both the legend and the Genesis plays already discussed. This is given coherence by the fact that the action of the inner play had already placed the 'fictitious' Genest in the context of *avaritia*.<sup>748</sup> This motif is now taken up again on the level of the framing plot: the 'real' Genest, converted to Christianity, will not commit this sin, he will resist the material temptations and steadfastly die a martyr's death. Genest is taken away, and both the scene and the 'play within the play' or the play that has become serious, come to an end.

At this point, it is worth noting some differences between this and the other two Genesis plays. First of all, the initial situation of the 'play within the play,' is different. In the current play Genest stages an episode from his own life, describing how he had left his homeland and was abandoned by his family because he did not want to become Christian like them. Thus, Genest plays himself as a young man. His friend Aristide tries to convince him to deceive his father and become a Christian in name only, receiving baptism in order to retain his inheritance and remain close to his beloved Pamphilie, believing that the rites would only work if one believed in them. In contrast to the actual legend (where Genesis acts in a mocking farcical portrayal of baptism), and in contrast to Lope (where Ginés plays a Christian martyr) and Rotrou (where Genest also plays a Christian martyr, but, and this is the relevant distinction

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**747** "DIOCL.: Va les suivre, Rutile, & voy s'il est possible, / De reprimer l'orgueil de ce coeur invincible: / Menace, flatte, prie, importune, promets, / Offre luy des tresors, ouy, je te le permets, / Des charges, des honneurs, & tout ce qui dans Rome, / Peut le mieux assouvir l'esperance d'un homme. / S'il se veut reconnoistre, & quitter son erreur, / Son remords peut encor desarmer ma fureur; / Mais s'il s'obstine plus à faire le rebelle: / Qu'on l'expose aux ardeurs d'une flame cruelle, / Qui sur son corps perfide agissant peu à peu, / Avec mille douleurs le brule à petit feu" (3.2).

**748** The decision for the fake baptism had been made, among other things, also on the basis of the argument of financial security, for as a 'Christian' Genest could be certain of his inheritance.

from Lope, in this instance he portrays a ‘real’ character in a large-scale and elaborate drama), Desfontaines’ Genest in the ‘play within the play’ is not persecuted by the pagan rulers, but must rather assert himself against Christians. To avoid this, he will – according to the script – fake being a Christian and only pretend to be baptized. Thus, the ‘play within the play’ is itself about pretense. Desfontaines’ Genest plays himself: a pagan who plays being a Christian. The ‘play within the play’ is therefore being duplicated once more. However, this ‘playing in the play within the play’ skips over the actual baptism and conversion. In the third act, the actor Genest returns ‘transformed’ to the stage at the beginning of the scene; the miracle of his conversion and baptism, of which he reports, has taken place ‘outside’ the play, behind the scenes, between the acts, and without any witnesses. The selective nature of the miracle, the change from fiction to seriousness, from seeming to being, is thus represented much more radically in Desfontaines than in both Lope and Rotrou. We are not prepared for Genest’s transformation, there are no rehearsal scenes as in Lope and Rotrou; Desfontaines’ Genest’s repertoire did not include the portrayal of Christians. Although the baptism in Rotrou (unlike in Lope) also takes place off stage, the miracle is still apparent to the audience: flames come from heaven, the request for baptism is part of the inner play, Genest/Adrian leaves the scene stating that he is following the call of an angel who appeared to him and wants to baptize him. In Desfontaines, the miracle is completely removed from the action on stage and is presented exclusively in the form of the report of the now converted Genest. If previously, on the level of the inner play, the effectiveness of the sacrament of baptism is called into question, here it is a miraculuous instance of God bringing about the sudden conversion of a declared enemy of the faith (who – at least in the ‘play within the play’ – is a creature of earthly vice, material greed, and sensual love) that appears all the more impressive. The whole problematizing of the distinguishability between appearance and being, play and seriousness – a focus of Lope’s drama – is almost entirely lacking here, and only a very temporary state of ‘confusion’ can be observed. This initial disorientation on the part of the players and the inner spectators is quickly resolved, and the authenticity of Genest’s confession is soon accepted. Furthermore, it should be noted that acting metaphors, prevalent in Lope’s drama and in that of Rotrou (albeit to a lesser extent), are not to be found in Desfontaines. In Desfontaines, Genest does not refer to the ‘world as stage’ and life as the role we play in it. In addition, the different settings of the inner play are also of importance: whereas the ‘play within the play’ in Lope and Rotrou are framed as entertainment put on as part of the celebrations of the imperial court, in Desfontaines, the purpose of the performance is to test its potential as propaganda. This intention – to solve the ‘Christian problem’ by means of the

theater – is caricatured as a failure, and has the opposite effect by causing the conversion of Genest. It does not seem possible to just ‘play’ a ‘confessing Christian.’<sup>749</sup>

After the ‘play within the play’ is aborted and Genest arrested, Dioclétian turns, enraged, to the remaining actors (3.3). He, and this is another difference from the other two Genesis dramas, does not order any investigation to clarify whether or not they are also Christians, but instead accuses them of being Christians and of having seduced Genest (not vice versa) (“Vous l’avez suborné, vos propos l’ont séduit” 3.3). He therefore threatens them with punishment. The actors defend themselves vehemently and affirm their innocence. Pamphile declares that they were innocent and had always been loyal to the emperor and the gods.<sup>750</sup> Anthenor emphasizes that the play was fiction and that he was not in fact Genest’s father, and that they had only ‘imitated’ Christians (*imiter*) and, furthermore, had in fact only done so at the instigation of the ‘traitor’ Genest.<sup>751</sup> Luciane adds that Genest had acted contrary to their knowledge and had shown himself criminal by confessing to Christianity, and they condemn and detest his actions. She had used the Christians’ words in the play with the sole intention of mocking them. Thereupon, Dioclétian, appeased, orders her to prove her art of persuasion by using all the means at her disposal to get Genest to recant.<sup>752</sup> Luciane suggests that, in order to guarantee success,

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749 Cf. as well Laemmel’s comment on this: ‘The moral-didactic thesis of the two French Genesis versions coincides insofar as in both the attempt to simulate a professing Christian fails: In view of the *mystères terribles* [Boileau, *L’art poétique*, Chant III, vv. 199 f.] of faith, all stage art proves to be null and void.’ (“Die moralisch-didaktische These der beiden französischen Genesis-Versionen deckt sich insoweit, als in beiden der Versuch, einen bekennenden Christen zu simulieren, scheitert: Angesichts der ‘mystères terribles’ [Boileau, *L’art poétique*, Chant III, vv. 199 f.] des Glaubens erweist sich sämtliche Bühnenkunst als nichtig”) (“Zur Adaptation einer ‘comedia de santo’ in Frankreich” [cf. note 494], p. 470).

750 “PAMPH.: Quel est donc le forfait qui nous rend si coupables? / De quelles trahisons nous penses-tu capables? / Nous n’avons point choqué ny les Dieux ny l’Estat, / [. . .] / Prononce si tu veux l’arrest de mon trespas, / *Tu me verras mourir & constante & contente*; / Mais espargne, ô Cesar, une troupe innocente, / Qui dans tous ses desseins a tousjours prudemment / Regardé son devoir, & ton contentement” (3.3; my italics). Pamphile’s later conversion is already indicated here, she too will be ready to die for the new faith.

751 “ANTHENOR: Luciane, Seigneur, ne fut jamais ma fille, / Je n’eüs jamais d’enfans, je n’ay point de famille, / Et bien que nous ayons imité les Chrestiens, / Nous n’avons point pourtant d’autres Dieux que les tiens. / Tous ces noms supposez & de fils, & de pere, / Ses desirs simulez, & sa feinte colere, / N’estoient que des effets que nous avoit prescrits, / Ce traistre dont le change estonne nos esprits” (3.3).

752 “DIOCL.: Si tu repugnes tant aux abus des Chrestiens, / Fay nous voir des effets du discours que tu tiens, / Va t’en trouver Genest, & t’efforce d’abattre, / Par de vives raisons ce

Pamphilie should also make an attempt (“l’heureux effort de ce coup glorieux, / Appartient à sa langue aussi bien qu’à ses yeux” 3.3). The latter refuses, however, saying that Genest’s betrayal of her was too great. Obviously, the relationship between Genest and Pamphilie depicted in the inner play corresponds to reality; in real life, too, they were a love couple. She continues, wild with rage, that if Genest, “cet ingrate,” (3.3) did not change his ways, Dioclétian should leave him to her instead of the executioners, because there was nothing comparable to the anger of a woman betrayed. The emperor acknowledges her request and decides that, if Genest does not change his mind, he will leave him to her anger. This concludes the third act.

The fourth act of Desfontaines’ *Genesius* tragedy features a motif found neither in Lope nor in Rotrou, but rather in Corneille’s influential martyr tragedy *Polyeucte*<sup>753</sup>: a (miraculous) imitation of the heroic martyr. At the end of the act, Pamphilie converts to Christianity, confesses her new faith to the Emperor, and awaits martyrdom. Although in the inner play of *Le Véritable Saint-Genest*, Natalie, Adrian’s wife, is a secret Christian, as far as the framing play is concerned, only Genest or Ginés profess the new faith and ultimately die a martyr’s death.<sup>754</sup> In *Polyeucte*, after the protagonist has died a martyr (his own conversion was moreover preceded by that of his friend Néarque), his wife Pauline, who had tried to persuade him to repent, and Félix, Polyeucte’s father-in-law and the Roman governor of Armenia, who had arranged for his execution, are also ‘struck by the miracle of divine grace’ and convert to Christianity. In Rotrou’s drama, the actress Marcelle also attempts to persuade Genest, in prison awaiting execution, to change his mind, but Genest and Marcelle are not in love, as is the case with Desfontaines’ Genest and Pamphilie, and Marcelle does not end up converting. The turning away from the false, earthly-erotic love to the true love of Christ, so prominent a theme in Lope’s drama, can also be found in Desfontaines’ work. In order to persuade Genest to renounce his faith Diocletian orders Pamphilie to go see him. She expresses to herself her feelings towards him – she still loves him, but at the same time feels rage at his betrayal (and says that the latter emotion should be restrained, the former not

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coeur opiniatre. / L’adresse de l’esprit jointe aux graces du corps, / Faict ordinairement d’admirables efforts: / Employe un peu tes yeux au secours de ta bouche, / Il n’est point de mutins qu’un bel objet ne touche; / Desja mon courroux cesse, & cede à tes attraits, / Fay que Genest encor en ressent les traits, / Et que son coeur vaincu par de si belles armes, / Nous rende redevable au pouvoir de tes charmes” (3.3).

**753** See above note 725.

**754** It should also be pointed out here again on the ‘presence’ of Christians in the inner play of *L’Illustre Comédien* (Anthenor, Genest’s father, and Luciane, his sister).

be openly shown).<sup>755</sup> In the third scene of the fourth act, the two lovers meet. In response to Pamphilie's accusations that his actions had betrayed her and the gods,<sup>756</sup> Genest explains that on the contrary he had betrayed her earlier by his false, sensual loving: "[. . .] je vous trahissois, quand mon ame aveuglée, / Ne concevoit pour vous qu'une ardeur deregulée, / Et subornant mon coeur par d'injustes desirs, / Vous aymoît beaucoup moins que ses propres plaisirs" (4.3), but now his love for her was 'pure' and 'true': "Mais, Madame, aujourd'huy que *ma flame est plus pure*, / Que le feu n'est là haut au lieu de sa nature, / Qu'un *veritable amour* me porte à vous cherir, / Jusqu'à vouloir pour vous tout quitter & mourir;" (4.3; my italics). When Pamphilie reproaches him for having abandoned and betrayed her, Genest replies that betrayal was good and innocent, while loyalty was reprehensible and criminal when it referred to a tyrant, to terrible and harmful gods; how sweet, in contrast, it was to free oneself from a hateful yoke and submit oneself to the laws of an admirable monarch whose castle and court were in heaven, who was exclusively clemency, justice, and

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**755** At the beginning of the fourth act, Aristide tells Pamphilie that Genest could not be persuaded to recant and that he was to be brought to her at the behest of Rutile. When asked what she should do, he replies that, after all, she knew 'this traitor' best. Pamphilie replies that he had deceived her as much as he had deceived all the others. But Aristide notes that she was the only person left whose anger he still feared, this was shown by the fact, he continues, that the mention of her name and her beauty still affected him, that he could not hold back sighs and tears. Pamphilie, however, in view of his betrayal, also doubts the genuineness of his feelings for her, that his tears were by no means certain indications: "Après ses trahisons & des mespris si grands, / Ses pleurs & ses souspirs sont de foibles garands: / Il a changé l'ingrat, & quoy que l'on presume, / Ce qu'il fit par amour il le fait par coustume" (4.1). Aristide reminds her that it is an order. Pamphilie is willing to gather all her love and hatred to defeat Genest's zeal. In a monologue, Pamphilie prepares for a meeting with Genest (4.2). Her speech revolves around the 'tyrants of her soul,' her *furor*, hatred, contempt, revenge, and love and the question of which direction her passions will take and which emotion will prevail in the end. She concludes her reasoning with the insight that she still loves Genest, that despite his crime and error she has to restrain her anger, but at the same time she has to hide her weakness from him.

**756** Pamphilie accuses him of the injustice he has done to her through his actions, calls him 'disloyal' and a traitor ("ame traisteresse"), and wishes a severe punishment for him. She would even be punished much worse than him because of his offenses, although she had not rebelled against the gods and the Empire. As Genest answers that he comes to her in humility and asks her for the reason of her anger, Pamphilie responds sharply: "Quel forfait, desloyal? ô Dieux quelle impudence! / Il est la vertu mesme; & la mesme innocence, / Il n'a jamais manqué ny d'amour ny de foy, / Il n'a jamais trahy ny l'Empereur ny moy, / Il ne parla jamais en faveur du Baptesme, / Sa bouche n'a jamais proferé de blasphême, / Des crimes, justes Dieux! il n'en a point commis, / Et vous avez grand tort d'estre ses ennemis: / Insolent, est-ce ainsi que tu veux qu'on te flatte?" (4.3).

love; if only, like him, she could receive the enlightening beam of divine grace and appreciate the happiness of being a Christian, she would care less about vain earthly concerns.<sup>757</sup> Then he addresses his words to God and asks him to give ‘true love’ to Pamphilie as well (also for his own sake):

GENEST: C'est par ce beau moyen que je veux en ce jour,  
Vous témoigner, Madame, un veritable amour,  
Et vous faire advouer que je ne fus volage,  
Qu'affin de vous cherir à present davantage,  
Seigneur, si ta bonté daigne escouter mes voeux,  
Accorde à Pamphilie.

PAMPHILIE: Arreste malheureux,  
Que veux tu demander?

GENEST: Que sa bonté suprême,  
Sauve l'autre moitié qui reste de moy-mesme,  
Et souffre pour le moins qu'aparavant ma mort,  
Je luy tende la main pour la mener au port.  
Si j'obtiens dessus vous cette illustre victoire,  
Que son heureux effect augmentera ma gloire!  
Que mon sort sera doux, que je mouray content,  
Si je puis achever ce dessein important,  
Ne le differons point, escoutez moy Madame.

(4.3)

Pamphilie points out that he is trying in vain to seduce her soul. But Genest continues in his attempt to convince Pamphilie of the ‘true faith.’ The (pagan) gods were powerless demons that had never demonstrated their alleged power on earth. Worshipping them was pointless, as they were merely the invention of mortals and had not created a single particle of the world. Creator and ruler of the earth, of men and of the whole universe was the only God whom he was worshipping, of whom he knew nothing before, but who had showed him his power. And he wished for Pamphilie’s soul to see this as well, to receive the same blessing. She should no longer refuse to it, because through this divine grace her soul would be forever connected to his, their hearts would be merged, and in this she can see how strong his love for her was: “Et pourveu que vostre

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757 “GENEST: Ha! si vous connoissiez, ma chere Pamphilie, / La nuit où vostre erreur vous tient ensevelie, / Et si par le secours de cét astre charmant, / Dont l’esclat m’a tiré de mon aveuglement, / Vous pouviez recevoir un rayon de la grace, / Qui met dedans mon coeur une si noble audace / Qu’au prix de vostre sort vous beniriez le mien, / Que vous estimeriez le bonheur d’un Chrestien? / Et que pour en porter les glorieuses marques, / Vous feriez peu d’estat de celles des Monarques” (4.3).

ame ayt desir de le voir, / Cette mesme faveur est en vostre pouvoir, / Ne la refusez point, ma chere Pamphilie, / Que par elle vostre ame à la mienne s'allie, / Et souffrez qu'aujourd'huy par un si beau lien, / J'unisse pour jamais vostre coeur & le mien, / Voyez combien pour vous mon amour est extrême" (4.3). By speaking of the Christian idea of being united forever in eternal life, Genest affirms that he loved her more than himself, that in order to save her and win her he would endure torture and suffering, that he would be filled with joy if he achieved her happiness with his blood.<sup>758</sup> "Hélas!" Pamphilie calls out. Genest interprets this as an expression of her fear of death.<sup>759</sup> But Pamphilie explains that the sigh was an expression of her repentance, not her weakness. She was following him, that his God was now reigning in her heart as well. She was already completely overwhelmed by this joy, and now full of envy she looked at his chains, seeing them now as hers as well.<sup>760</sup> Thus, Pamphilie becomes a Christian and is joyfully looking forward to a martyr's death. Genest's request has been granted. The miracle of Pamphilie's conversion, like that of Genest's conversion, is not shown openly on stage, but remains in its depiction limited to the realm of inwardness.

In the following scene (4.4), Pamphilie – now a Christian, as, however, only the audience/readers know – appears before the Emperor, with the captive Genest and the other actors also present. Here too – this time on the first playing level – there is a brief moment of confusion, a misunderstanding of what is being perceived. Rutilie notes a joy shining from Pamphilie's eyes, the origin of which he associates, however, with the plan to make Genest recant, and thus interprets it as an expression of Pamphilie's success in dissuading Genest from his 'misbelief' ("[...] elle a sans doute emporté la victoire, / Une visible joye esclatte dans ses yeux" 4.4). When Dioclétian asks her what she did "en faveur

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**758** "PAMPH.: Tu m'aimes. / GENEST: Ouy, Madame, & bien plus que moy-mesme, / Puisque pour vous sauver & pour vous acquerir, / Quelques rudes tourmens qu'il me faille souffrir, / Quelque suplice affreux que la rage desploye, / On m'y verra courir avec beaucoup de joye, / Pourveu que par mon sang je vous puisse achepter, / Un bonheur qu'avec moy vous devez souhaiter" (4.3).

**759** "GENEST: Vous souspirez, ha! sans doute la crainte, / Combat vostre desir, & le tient en contrainte, / Vous redoutez la mort, un Tyran vous faict peur" (4.3).

**760** "PAMPH.: Non, non, ne pense pas que je manque de coeur, / Ce souspirs qu'a produit une sainte tendresse / Montre mon repentir, & non pas ma foiblesse, / Je te suy, cher Amant, je te cede, & je croy; / Ton Dieu regne en mon coeur, & triomphe de moy. / Desja de ce bonheur je suis toute ravie, / Et regardant tes fers avec un oeil d'envie, / Je brule qu'un Tyran n'ordonne à ses boureaux, / De passer en mes mains ces illustres fardeaux. / Ne pouvant les ravir qu'au moins je les soustienne, / Ouy ces fers sont mes fers, cette chaine est la mienne, / Puisque par les effects d'une douce rigueur, / Elle passe à present de tes mains à mon coeur" (4.3).



de nos Dieux,” Pamphilie answers: “Plus que je ne devois” (4.4). Dioclétian does not want to deprive them, the actors, of a generous reward for their efforts to convince Genest, even if they were not successful, but it was now necessary to fight Genest with more severity. The actor Aristide reaffirms their humility and praises the emperor and his generosity. Thereupon, Pamphilie accuses him of flattering subservience and openly reveals herself to be a Christian. She refers to the nothingness and deception of the world and material goods in contrast to the eternal and true happiness in the hereafter and now for her part tries to convince Aristide of the ‘true’ faith. Then she speaks to Dioclétian: the reward he could give her (i.e. the order of her execution) was a far greater gift than what he had given the other actors, because, as she says explicitly at the end of her speech, “Je suis Chretienne” (4.4). Pamphilie’s fellow actors react with horror to her confession and suspect (correctly) that Genest is responsible (“ANTHENOR: Le traistre l’a charmée” 4.4).<sup>761</sup> Full of anger, Dioclétian commands Rutile: “Frappe ces insolens, & les reduits en poudre” (4.4). At first, however, only Genest is transported away.

What follows in the next scene, the last of the fourth act (4.5), is an element typical of depictions the lives of martyrs, namely the martyr’s steadfastness and unwillingness to recant before the ruler of the persecutor of Christians, here between Pamphilie and Dioclétian. In contrast to Lope but similar to Rotrou, Desfontaines amplifies the aspect of the discursive representation of the new faith, the concrete, literal confrontation between ‘converted Christian’ and ‘enemy of Christians,’ the persuasion (Genest-Pamphilie) and the *constance*. Pamphilie laments the ‘false benevolence’ in not being thrown into prison with Genest, saying that she wished to die with him and that what love had brought together could not be separated. Dioclétian in turn states that he wanted to give her the opportunity to recant, she would have done better to appeal to his clemency, but would now receive the same punishment as Genest.<sup>762</sup> Pamphilie refers to the heavenly glory that torture and death would bring and affirms their “noble courage” (4.5) to be able to endure everything steadfastly. Dioclétian points out that she was mistaken if she trusted in a God who could not even save himself from death, and reminds her of his own power. This is followed by Pamphilie delivering what amounts to a sermon in

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<sup>761</sup> And not suspecting that she was already a Christian before, had deceived them, and it was she who had converted Genest. This possible interpretation was, after all, the one Dioclétian first considered after Genest was taken away and the play abruptly ended.

<sup>762</sup> “DIOCL.: Mais apres ce refus n’espere plus de grace, / Un mesme sort suivra vostre commune audace, / Et puis qu’un mesme crime a bien pû vous unir, / Un mesme chastiment vous peut aussi punir” (4.5).

defense of the Christian faith, in which she contrasts the omnipotence of the one true God with the vain power of the mortal emperor Dioclétian. With Dioclétian's warning that his wrath would show her that he was her true ruler, and the order to execute her before her lover's eyes, the fourth act ends.

The beginning of the fifth act focuses on the further fate of the remaining actors Anthenor, Luciane, and Aristide. Unlike in Lope and Rotrou, they are not negatively affected by Genest's conversion. On the contrary, they enjoy a good position at court, and are in Dioclétian's favor. Anthenor emphasizes this state of affairs when he inquires confusedly about the reason for Aristide's displeasure and sadness; especially since, as Anthenor further stresses, he can be sure of Luciane's love and affection for him. From this we understand of course that Aristide and Luciane are lovers as well. Aristide replies that he was, of course, mourning the impending death of Genest and Pamphilie. However, Luciane is jealous and thinks that the real reason for Aristide's despair is because he is in love with Pamphilie. This exchange highlights the aspects of deception and perception here negotiated in the context of love. Luciane interprets Aristide's tears as proof of his true love for Pamphilie, declaring that that his compassion was only *feinte* and his sobbing an indication of his soul's pain and his love's sorrow; language enabled one to pretend (*dissimuler*) but the body reveals what is real; thus, she was only now able to recognize that his feelings for her had been nothing but deception,<sup>763</sup> and full of rage, she storms out. Aristide wants to follow her immediately in order to convince her that she was mistaken and her accusations false, that he loved her and that his pity for Pamphilie (and Genest) was genuine and did not mask an erotic passion. Anthenor, however, holds him back, her anger would calm down by itself after a while. Aristide

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763 "LUCIANE: Certes ces sentimens ont beaucoup de tendresse, / Et si je ne me trompe encore plus d'adresse, / Puis qu'ils sçavent si bien desguiser en ce jour / D'un masque de pitié ta feinte, & ton amour. / Mais c'est en vain ingrat que ton ame insensée / Presume me cacher le traict qui l'a blessée, / Ton alteration ne me fait que trop voir / La cause de ta flame & de ton desespoir, / Quand par des coups si grands un coeur se sent atteindre / Il est bien malaisé de souffrir & de feindre, / La langue quelquefois peut bien dissimuler, / Mais quand elle se tait, les yeux sçavent parler, / Et le coeur trop pressé des ardeurs de sa flame / Montre par ses sous-pirs les blessures de l'ame. / [ . . . ] / [ . . . ] autrefois tes feintes passions / Trompoient mon innocence, & mes affections: / C'est ainsi qu'autrefois Luciane abusée, / N'estoit à ton esprit qu'un objet de risée, / Cependant que ton coeur autre-part arrêté, / Brusloit secretement pour une autre beauté: / Mais enfin aujourd'huy ma raison mieux réglée / Dechire le bandeau qui m'avoit aveuglée, / Et s'il me reste encor quelque feu dans le sein, / J'en conserve l'ardeur pour un autre dessein. / Ayme, ayme desloyal, ayme ta Pamphilie, / Suy mesme apres sa mort la chaine qui te lie, / Et si ta lascheté n'empesche un coup si beau, / Va, malheureux amant la rejoindre au tombeau: / Va, que differes-tu? ne croy plus me surprendre" (5.1).

contradicts this vehemently (her negative remarks about him in this state could also leave him in a bad light before the emperor) and they eventually follow Luciane (5.2).

In the next scene (5.3), Dioclétian asks Rutile about the progress and result of Genest's torture. The tortures had not had any effect until now, Genest was enduring all of them steadfastly, even with pleasure ("On diroit que son coeur y trouve des delices, / Et qu'alors que son sang coule de tous costez / Il nage dans un bain parmy des voluptez" 5.3). There was no method of torture that had not been used, he had endured them all and his courage only increased. Even the executioners were more touched by his pain than he was and "[...] tandis que chacun plaint ou pleure son sort, / Luy seul void sans trembler l'appareil de sa mort" (5.3). Dioclétian concludes that Genest must be endowed with magic power ("Sans doute il s'est muni de la force des charmes") and asks about Pamphilie. Then Rutile gives an extensive and detailed description of the torture scenario ("un spectacle où j'ay peine à bien croire mes yeux. / Pourtant puis qu'il te plaist, escoute une advanture / Inouye & nouvelle à toute la nature" 5.3), which is more detailed than in Rotrou. Pamphilie, too, was showing no fear and was enduring every imaginable torture of herself and her lover as steadfastly as Genest, both emphasizing repeatedly the happiness of dying together, the suffering of the body perceived as "joyaux precieux" and the prospect of the subsequent "saint [h]ymen."<sup>764</sup> Even the cruelest torture was not affecting Genest<sup>765</sup> the people were impressed by his *constance* and if he did not die soon he, Rutile, was afraid that riots might break out: "Il dit que de ses maux le plus grand est de vivre, / Et je crois, ô Cesar, qu'il n'en faut pas douter: / Mais d'ailleurs s'il ne meurt il est à redouter; / Et je crains que le

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**764** "RUTILE: Voids, a dit Pamphilie, ô merveilleux vainqueur, / Voids, ô mon cher Amant, si je manque de coeur, / Si proche du trespas regarde si je tremble. / Non, non, je ne crains rien, mourons, mourons ensemble, / Et puis qu'un saint Hymen nous doit joindre là haut, / Que nostre sang versé sur ce cher eschaffaut / En signe les accords, & soit le premier gage / Que nous aurons donné de nostre mariage. / Ces fers nous tiendront lieu de joyaux precieux, / Ce funebre appareil de lit delicieux, / Les boureaux d'Officiers, & toute l'assistance / De pompe, d'ornement, & de magnificence. / [...] / Enfin estans tous deux en estat de souffrir / On les void à l'envy l'un & l'autre s'offrir, / Et comme en un combat plein d'honneur & de gloire / Se disputer tous deux cette triste victoire / Dont le sanglant effet estonne les esprits, / Et de qui le trespas est la fin & le prix" (5.3).

**765** E.g.: "RUTILE: D'abord pour effrayer cette jeune arrogante, / L'executeur en main prend une torche ardente, / Et sur Genest enfin commençant ses efforts / Fait agir sans pitié la flame sur son corps, / Le feu court, & produit un effet pitoyable; / Il touche tout le monde horsmis ce miserable, / Qui d'une vive ardeur à demy consumé / Semble au lieu d'en mourir en paroistre animé. / Nous restons tous confus, le boureau perd courage" (5.3).

peuple esmeu de sa constance / Ne se porte à la fin à quelque violence” (5.3). Dioclétian then orders their immediate execution.

Dioclétian asks himself (5.4) what it is that drives Christians. They would rather be executed together in public than worship the gods, ask him for mercy, and be able to live with joy, honor, and fortune. They would shed their blood, waste their lives, enchanted by a false hope; there was no punishment, no torture that could dissuade these godless people from their blindness. One would have to tame their boldness or extinguish them altogether. The play thus contrasts the ‘false’ hedonistic life of the heathen with the ‘true’ life and triumphant faith of the Christians.

After that, Aquillin appears (5.5) and Dioclétian inquires whether there have been any riots. Aquillin answers that on the contrary the entire people love him and fear his power, and that the fear of death or the respect for the gods hold back even the most daring. However, a ‘sad incident’ (“triste accident”) had occurred, which had moved him deeply (“me touche au dernier point”): on his way back to the palace after Pamphilie’s execution “[u]n spectacle d’horreur, de tendresse & d’effroy” had taken place before his eyes (5.5). He had seen Luciane “[d]e quelque déplaisir [...] blesse,” plunge from the highest bridge into the Tiber (5.5). Aristide arrived just in time to see his beloved disappear into the river and immediately began to throw himself in after her. Anthenor tried to physically hold him back and in the ensuing scuffle both fell to their deaths. The Emperor should judge for himself, but, as far as he was concerned one could not witness such “coups prodigieux” without feeling pity.<sup>766</sup> Dioclétian agrees with him that this event must indeed touch even the hardest soul,<sup>767</sup> but Aquillin should still focus his compassion and sympathy on him, the Emperor, for despite his greatness and the splendour of Rome, he was, in the end, a lonely, hated man, a horror to men and gods.<sup>768</sup> Aquillin immediately seeks to comfort him, that he alone was ruler, that all the world

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**766** “AQUILLIN: Voila ce que j’ay veu, juge s’il est possible / De voir un tel malheur & paroistre insensible, / Non, Cesar, & quiconque a du coeur & des yeux, / Ne void point sans pitié ces coups prodigieux” (5.5).

**767** “DIOCL.: Je l’advoue avec toy, cette estrange adventure / Auroit esté sensible à l’ame la plus dure, / Et le coeur d’un barbare en cette occasion, / Eust eu tes sentimens, & ta compassion” (5.5).

**768** “DIOCL.: [...] reserve ta voix, tes souspirs, & tes pleurs, / À plaindre desormais l’excez de mes malheurs, / Ouy, ouy garde à mon sort ta pitié toute entiere, / Elle ne peut avoir de plus ample matiere. / Puis que ceux que le ciel void d’un oeil rigoureux / Peuvent au prix de moy se reputer heureux. / Ouy, malgré mes grandeurs & les pompes de Rome, / Je connois, Aquillin, enfin que je suis homme, / Mais homme abandonné, mais un homme odieux, / Mais un homme l’horreur des hommes & des Dieux” (5.5).

feared him and respected his laws, that the throne was a place that fear could not reach, that the eyes of all men were on him, that he would not die until the whole universe was destroyed.<sup>769</sup> Dioclétian, however, dismisses this as useless flattery (“[. . .] pour me guerir du mal qui me possede / Un langage flatteur est un foible remede” 5.5).

The pangs of conscience, torment, and fear experienced by Dioclétian, the enemy of Christianity, are the themes of the closing monologue of Desfontaines’ *Genesius*-tragedy. The shaken emperor falls into a lamentation full of remorse and despair, recognizes the void of his life and power; his heart and soul are battlefields, full of horror, despair, guilt, and terror; the world appears to him to be in decline; anger, despair, and pain would kill him.<sup>770</sup> Suddenly, however, he feels relief from his pain and torment (“Ha! ma douleur s’appaise & ma frayeur s’oublie” 5.5) brought about by a divine appearance. He describes how the heaven suddenly shines bright (“Mais quel astre nouveau brille dans cette nue? / Quelle divinité plus belle que le jour / Daigne encore esclaire ce funeste sejour?” 5.5) and he sees Genest and Pamphilie, both wearing a crown and holding palm fronds in their hands (“Au ciel je vois Genest avecque Pamphilie, / De mille beaux objets tous deux environnez, / Tous deux la palme en main, & tous deux couronnez” 5.5). He asks the two ‘shadows’ (“Cheres ombres”) for forgiveness and for their celestial power to calm the terrible storms that oppressed his mind; he had been cruel and full of anger.<sup>771</sup> He promises to honor them adequately, wants to set them side by side with his gods and build impressive mausoleums for them that even after centuries

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769 “AQUILLIN: Que dites vous, Seigneur, quelle douleur si forte / Peut si soudainement vous troubler de la sorte? / Tout vous craint, tout flechit, tout revere vos loix, / Et seul vous commandez à la Royne des roys, / Chassez donc la frayeur dont vostre ame est atteinte, / Le trosne est un azile où ne va pas la crainte, / Tout le monde sur vous ayant les yeux ouvers / Vous ne scauriez perir qu’avec tout l’univers” (5.5).

770 “DIOCL.: En vain je porte un sceptre, en vain une couronne, / En vain un monde entier me suit & m’environne, / En vain je suis Monarque, & Monarque vainqueur, / Si tous mes ennemis sont desja dans mon coeur, / Si je sens en mon ame une guerre cruelle, / Si je me suis moy-mesme à moy-mesme rebelle, / Et si par tout en fin je traîne avecque moy / L’horreur, le desespoir, le remords & l’effroy, / Tout me paroît fatal, tout me semble funeste, / Le jour troublé d’esclairs, l’air infecté de peste, / Le ciel rouge de feux, & la terre de sang, / Le Soleil sans lumiere & sorty de son rang. / Ô Dieux! ne vois-tu pas ces fantosmes terribles / Qui font autour de moy des hurlemens horribles? / Entends-tu comme moy ces longs gemissemens / Dont les tristes accens troublent mes sentimens? / Ô rage, ô desespoir, ô douleur qui me tue!” (5.5).

771 “DIOCL.: Cheres ombres, pardon, & du ciel où vous estes / Calmez de mon esprit les horribles tempestes, / Je fus en vostre endroit cruel, & furieux” (5.5).

would still shine as an expression of their innocence and his remorse.<sup>772</sup> But then everything darkens again, despair and fear return. Now, he angrily invokes ‘his’ gods (calling them “injustes,” “inhumains,” “ingrats” 5.5), asking them to ease his pain and torment. He declares that he had honored and defended them and if they did not want to be seen as powerless, they should alleviate his pain, and he concludes with the words: “Mais s’il faut, Dieux ingrats, enfin que je perisse, / Achevez vos rigueurs, & hastez mon supplice” (5.5).

While Lope’s drama closes with Ginés bound to the stake, using the metaphor of *theatrum mundi* to speak of his sense of fulfillment and satisfaction, and anticipation for the rewards of eternal life, and Rotrou’s play ends with a report of Genest’s glorious death, called the end of a tragedy, and the reaction of his former spectators and co-actors; in Desfontaines it is the anguished persecutor of the Christian faith who ends the play and expresses its final argument. The martyrs Genest and Pamphile appear to Dioclétian as saints in heaven, but this divine intervention, is not (yet) an expression of his conversion, although he does deny the validity of earthly existence, admits his crimes, and asks the martyrs for forgiveness, but does so within a polytheistic context; he turns again to his pagan gods, but doubts their power. The ending thus proclaims the victory of Christianity, the right faith, and the omnipotence of divine grace over cruel, sinful, and materialistic paganism.

In the other two Genesius dramas, only the protagonist dies. In Desfontaines’ *tragédie*, however, all five actors in the troupe die. Genest and Pamphile die for the ‘true faith;’ Luciane, Aristide, and Anthenor, clinging to false faith, die in a *triste accident*, a pitiful *spectacle d’horreur, de tendresse & d’effroy*. The destructive power of passion and false love is contrasted with the true love of Christ. Genest and Pamphile’s passion is transformed by their conversion into ‘true love’ and both die united in faith, ‘[. . .] nostre sang versé sur ce cher eschaffaut / En signe les chords, & soit le premier gage / Que nous aurons donné de nostre mariage.’ Neither the scaffold nor the theater are able to contain the spread of Christianity, but instead promote it, so that at the end of the play the all powerful Emperor and persecutor of Christians is left behind alone and in desperation.

I will now summarize the comparison between *Lo fingido verdadero* and *Le Véritable Saint-Genest* focusing on the use of skepticism, the element of the ‘play within the play,’ and the context in which the plays originated.

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772 “DIOCL.: Mais je vous vay ranger au nombre de nos dieux. / Je vay vous eslever d’illustres mausolées / Qui toucheront du faiste aux voutes estoilées, / Et serviront de marque aux siecles à venir, / Et de vostre innocence, & de mon repentir” (5.5).

It is clear that Rotrou used Lope's dramatization of the Genesius legend as a model for his own play, particularly when considering how different it is from the other French Genesius drama by Desfontaines. Yet what is striking is how far he strays from this model. Rotrou opts not to adopt the most predominant feature of Lope's *comedia*, namely the ongoing destabilization (present at all levels of the plot) of the border between seeming and being, illusion and reality. The transformation of the material from Spanish *comedia* to French *tragedy* is further expressed by the excising of all comic elements, and an emphasis on unity and order, a reduction and concentration of dramatic personae, place, time, and action. At the same time, the tragedy creates a space of reflection and rational debate. While Lope's play focuses mainly on the plot, Rotrou gets his point across through rhetoric, the *raisonnement*. While Lope weaves together several different plot strands, Rotrou tends towards focusing on a central conflict and emphasizing the *peripeteia*. The Genesius-*tragédie*, as the comparison clearly shows, tends towards formal and aesthetic clarification and towards clarification with regards to the skeptic discourse on perception as well as the subject of religion. In the French version, the 'play within the play' is positioned much more centrally (occupying almost two acts of the entire drama), is more elaborate, and, with regards to the liminality between inner fiction and inner reality, is more distinct. The sense of improvisation, so characteristic of the two inner plays in Lope's drama, is not present here. In Lope's *comedia* the skeptical unreliability of perception, the indissoluble interplay of  *fingido* and *verdadero*, is explicitly rendered. Rather than formulate epistemological answers, however, the play uses Catholic dogmatism to 'calming effect,' positing that it only seems to be a problem and that what matters is the belief in the right, and the good play of the right role, the right action. Rotrou's play, on the other hand, in keeping with the spirit of the times in France, seems to convey a tendency towards confronting the skeptical issue and providing an answer to it. Although *Le Véritable Saint Genest* also displays moments of uncertainty about what is fiction and what is reality, there is much less uncertainty than in Lope. The separation of the inner play from the inner reality, Adrian the character from Genest the actor, and the shifts from fiction to reality are identified and presented transparently to the audience. Rationality is what potentially enables one to distinguish between play and reality, deception and truth. In Lope's drama, Ginés' conversion is well-prepared (first through the theme of sensual-erotic love, which in a sense pre-figures true Christian love; then through the presence of the theater of the world metaphor and the concept of human beings as actors playing a role in a world structured by an all-governing God; and finally through the suggested concept of habitualization, etc.). Although the miracle of Ginés' conversion is presented more pompously and concretely in

comparison to Rotrou's drama, it is arguably also much more complex in terms of interpretation and perception, as expressed through the metaphor of acting and the theater. This is further explored through the extensive use of the *theatrum mundi* imagery. In the end, in Lope what is ultimately relevant is faith and faith alone. In Rotrou, the miracle of conversion is more abrupt (in Desfontaines the sudden power of divine grace is given even more extreme expression). The supernatural aspects of the Lope drama are played down and reflect a more rationalistic view of religion in keeping with the French setting. Nevertheless, in view of the subject matter, God is still inevitably present and, albeit in a more reduced form than in the Spanish *comedia*, visible. Rotrou's Christian 'tragedy' is not characterized by the 'hidden God' of Racine's French *tragédies*, for example.<sup>773</sup> What manifests itself in the distinctive final image, which in Lope reflects the work's position as part of a '*comedia*' in the sense of a Christian 'comedy,' undergoes a clear modification in Rotrou's drama and given a different focus. Rotrou explores more deeply what takes place between the protagonist's conversion and his martyr's death, it is even first mirrored in the 'play within the play' before being realized in the play itself. The believer's convictions, such as heroism in the name of faith and a steadfast belief in eternal life, are given expression.

This comparison of the Spanish and French dramatizations of the Genesis legend highlights two different ways of dealing with the skeptical challenge of the unreliability of sensory perception. In Lope's drama the question is answered not epistemologically but with faith; and its 'message' aligns with that of Calderón (discussed elsewhere in this study), albeit with significant differences in the strategy of representation (including, on the one hand, rhetorical persuasion and, on the other, figural typological structures) and in the degree of vehemence. In Rotrou, however, the decisive frame of reference is not Counter-Reformation dogma, but the primacy of reason that emerged with Cartesianism. One can, in the French drama, speak of a tendency towards rational inwardness but this is not the internal torment of Hamlet, for example, which is marked by a seemingly unending cycle of irresolution and doubt that does not lead to Montaigne's sense of calmness, but rather ends in despair.

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773 Cf. Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensées of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* [*Le dieu caché*; Paris 1955], trans. Philip Thody, New York 2013.



## 5 Cervantes, *Entremés del Retablo de las maravillas*

In Madrid in 1615 (the same year in which the second part of the *Quijote* appeared), two years after the publication of his *Novelas ejemplares* and one year after the publication of the satirical epic poem *Viaje al Parnaso*) Cervantes published a collection of dramatic works entitled *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos, nunca representados* [Eight Plays and Eight New Interludes, Never Performed]. The reason for the addition of ‘never performed,’ is elucidated in the ‘Prologue to the Reader,’ where Cervantes differentiates between the current plays and some twenty to thirty earlier *comedias*, all of which, he claims, had been performed on stage. Regarding the earlier plays he further remarks that he had reduced the number of their acts from the usual five to three and that, to general and pleasurable applause from the audience, he had brought the imaginings and secret thoughts of the soul to the stage by making ‘moral characters’ appear.<sup>774</sup> (Cervantes is referring here to his first period of dramatic creation in the 1580s, from which only the plays *El cerco de Numancia*, *Los tratos de Argel*, and *La conquista de Jerusalén* have survived.) Cervantes then goes on to say that he, having other things to do that occupied him, abandoned the writing of plays,<sup>775</sup> noting that Spanish theater went on to be completely dominated by the *comedia nueva* of Lope de Vega, whom he calls the ‘great Lope,’ and the ‘monster of nature’ (‘a tremendous natural talent’), and his fellow playwrights:

[...] entró luego el monstruo de naturaleza, el gran Lope de Vega, y alzóse con la monarquía cómica; avasalló y puso debajo de su jurisdicción a todos los farsantes; llenó el mundo de comedias propias, felices y bien razonadas, y tantas, que pasan de diez mil pliegos los que tiene escritos [...]. [...] todos éstos [Mira de Amescua, Guillén de Castro, Luis Vélez de Guevara etc.] y otros algunos han ayudado a llevar esta gran máquina al gran Lope.<sup>776</sup>

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774 “[...] me atreví a reducir las comedias a tres jornadas, de cinco que tenían; mostré, o, por mejor decir, fui el primero que representase las imaginaciones y los pensamientos escondidos del alma, sacando figuras morales al teatro, con general y gustoso aplauso de los oyentes; compuse en este tiempo hasta veinte comedias o treinta, que todas ellas se recitaron sin que se les ofreciese ofrenda de pepinos ni de otra cosa arrojadiza; corrieron su carrera sin silbos, gritas ni barahúndas” (Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, “Prólogo al lector,” in: Miguel de Cervantes, *Entremeses*, ed. Nicholas Spadaccini, 19th ed., Madrid 2009, pp. 91–94, here pp. 92 f.).

775 “Tuve otras cosas en que ocuparme; dejé la pluma y las comedias [...]” (p. 93).

776 *Ibid.*

After once again taken up the writing of plays, after a break of many years, he (Cervantes) could not find a single *autor* willing to produce them.<sup>777</sup> Not disposed to condemn his *comedias* and *entremeses* to ‘eternal silence,’ which was clearly the intention of the theater directors, who, in their focus on Lope de Vega’s *comedia*, had rejected his plays, Cervantes decided to have them printed, because:

Querría que fuesen las mejores del mundo, o a lo menos razonables; tú lo verás lector, y si hallares que tienen alguna cosa buena, topando a aquel mi maldiciente autor, dile [...] que advierta que no tienen necedades patentes y descubiertas, y que el verso es el mismo que piden las comedias, que ha de ser, de los tres estilos, el ínfimo, y que el lenguaje de los entremeses es propio de las figuras que en ellos se introducen; y que, para enmienda de todo esto, le ofrezco una comedia que estoy componiendo, y la intitulo *El engaño a los ojos*, que, si no me engaño, le ha de dar contento.<sup>778</sup>

The title of the new play he mentions, *El engaño a los ojos* [The Deception of the Eyes], is a reference to skepticism, particularly to its main argument regarding the unreliability of sensory perception. This refers to a topic that Cervantes returns to repeatedly throughout his works, namely, the playing with and problematization of the complex relationship between issues such as ‘deception and truth,’ ‘fiction and reality,’ and ‘illusion and reality.’ One of the most well-known examples is of course the *Quijote*. Another fascinating example of Cervantes’ masterly multi-layered approach to this theme is the *Entremés del Retablo de las maravillas* [Interlude of The Retable of Marvels or The (Puppet) Show of Wonders], the sixth of the eight interludes, written in prose and containing a ‘play within a play.’

Unlike the other plays reviewed in this study, the play written by Cervantes that will be discussed here, although accessible to the reading public from 1615 on, was never performed onstage, at least not during his lifetime. Another differentiating factor concerns the genre. It is brief dramatic form, the main genre of the *teatro menor*, and, furthermore, a genuinely comic genre. *Entremeses* (interludes) are farcical, burlesque, and satirical one act plays, often including dance and music, performed between the first and second acts of a *comedia*, isolated in content from the main plot. They also served as entertaining intermissions during

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<sup>777</sup> “Algunos años ha que volví yo a mi antigua ociosidad, y, pensando que aún duraban los siglos donde corrían mis alabanzas, volví a componer algunas comedias, pero no hallé pájaros en los nidos de antaño; quiero decir que no hallé autor que me las pidiese, puesto que sabían que las tenía; [...] me dijo un librero que él me las comprara si un autor de título no le hubiera dicho que de mi prosa se podía esperar mucho, pero que del verso, nada” (pp. 93 f.).

<sup>778</sup> P. 94.

the performance of the *autos sacramentales*.<sup>779</sup> Cervantes, however, conceived and used this generic mode in particular ways, creating short theater pieces that are hybrid in nature and complex in both form and content.<sup>780</sup> While it might be seen as problematic to include a ‘comedy’ in this current study of skepticism in drama (by ‘comedy’ I mean a play with a purely comic and light-hearted content, in line with the traditions of the ‘comical genre’),<sup>781</sup> it is exactly this combination of the comic (as appropriate for an *entremés*) with a dimension of seriousness that was one of the hallmarks of Cervantes’ approach to the genre, especially evident in *El retablo de las maravillas*, which warrants its inclusion.

Cervantes’ source for *El retablo de las maravillas* is believed to be Juan Manuel’s (1282–1348) *Conde Lucanor* (“Exemplo XXXII. De lo que contesció a un rey con unos burladores que fizieron el paño”), the popular collection of

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**779** To illustrate, see *Tesoro* of Covarrubias, the first Spanish dictionary, which defines *entremés* as theatrical works of brevity, and of a subordinate status to the *comedia*, intended to be essentially funny, with the sole purpose of pure, amusing entertainment: “ENTREMES, està corrompido del Italiano, intremeso, q[ue] vale tanto como entremetido, o enxerido, y es propiame[n]te vna representacio[n] de risa y graciosa, que se entremete entre vn acto y otro de la comedia, para alegrar, y espaciar el auditorio” (Sebastián de Covarrubias y Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Madrid 1611, Primera Parte, fol. 356v; my italics). On the genesis of the genre in Spain, cf. Eugenio Asensio, *Itinerario del entremés: Desde Lope de Rueda a Quiñones de Benavente, con cinco entremeses de D. Francisco de Quevedo*, 2nd ed., Madrid 1971 (1st ed. 1965); cf., furthermore, the concise and enlightening presentation in one of the fundamental recent comprehensive studies of Cervantes’ theatrical texts: Jesús G. Maestro, *La escena imaginaria: Poética del teatro de Miguel de Cervantes*, Madrid/Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 201–212 (“De la *commedia dell’arte* al *entremés*” [pp. 201–204]; “El entremés como género literario y como forma de espectáculo” [pp. 205–212]) (after Jean Canavaggio, *Cervantès dramaturge: Un théâtre à naître*, Paris 1977 and later Stanislav Zimic, *El teatro de Cervantes*, Madrid 1992). Regarding global studies on Cervantes’ *Entremeses* may be mentioned: Patricia Ann Kenworthy, *The Entremeses of Cervantes: The Dramaturgy of Illusion*, Diss. Tucson, AZ 1976; Cory A. Reed, *The Novelist as Playwright: Cervantes and the ‘Entremés nuevo’*, New York/Berlin/Frankfurt am Main 1993; Vicente Pérez de León, *Tablas destempladas: Los entremeses de Cervantes a examen*, Alcalá de Henares 2005.

**780** Cf., e.g., Reed (*The Novelist As Playwright* [cf. note 779]), who interprets the Cervantine *entremés* – based on Bakhtin’s study of the novel – as a ‘novelized drama’ (on *Retablo de las maravillas*, cf. pp. 150–172).

**781** Not ‘comedy’ in the sense of the medieval Christian connotation of the term *comoedia* respectively *commedia* as ‘poem-’ (evident in Dante’s *Divina Commedia* [1307]) or ‘play with happy outcome’ (as opposed to the bloody ending and tragic outcome of the ‘tragedy’). The ‘good ending’ (restoration of order) to the exploration of more serious themes in Early Modern Spanish drama, the ‘*comedia nueva*,’ may refer to this context (and thus also to its function within the ideology of the Counter-Reformation).

brief Spanish narratives printed in Seville in 1575.<sup>782</sup> It is more prominently known as the source for Hans Christian Andersen's tale *The Emperor's New Clothes* (1837). In the story, Patronio tells the Conde Lucanor about three charlatans who pretended to be excellent weavers and tell the king that they have the power to weave a cloth that only those of legitimate birth are able to see. The king immediately commissions them to make this fabric: "[...] pues por aquel medio sabría quiénes eran hijos verdaderos de sus padres y quiénes no, para, de esta manera, quedarse él con sus bienes, porque los moros no heredan a sus padres si no son verdaderamente sus hijos."<sup>783</sup> He installs them in one of the palace workshops and showers them with gold, silver, and silk. The 'weavers,' who of course are only pretending to be working on the cloth, describe it, however, in great detail to anyone who comes to 'take a look' at their 'work.' No one dares to say that they cannot see any fabric, for fear of being dishonored. The king is eventually dressed in the 'garments' made out of the magic cloth and appears before his entire people. Assuming that only he is unable to see the clothes, but that they are perfectly visible to those around him, he does not dare to trust, or to express, what his senses are telling him. It is only when a lowly groom, who in his own opinion "[...] no tenía honra que perder,"<sup>784</sup> breaks the silence and declares out loud that the king is naked that this is gradually accepted as truth and the fraud revealed. In the meantime, the perpetrators have already fled with their ill-gotten gains.

Whether Cervantes was in fact inspired by this specific story is a question that has yet to be answered conclusively. If so, it must be noted that he not

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**782** Cf. (in a modernized version) Juan Manuel, *El Conde Lucanor*, ed. Juan Vicedo, 2nd ed., Alicante 1997, pp. 129–131 ("Cuento XXXII. Lo que sucedió a un rey con los burladores que hicieron el paño"). In the Sevillian print it is in the seventh chapter ("Cap. 7. De lo que aconteció a vn rey con tres hombres burladores," in: Juan Manuel, *El Conde Lucanor*, Sevilla 1575, fols. 20r–22r). Other possible sources – the fraud unfolds here on the basis of an 'invisible painting' – include among others *Till Eulenspiegel* (27th Story, 'How Eulenspiegel became a painter for the Landgrave of Hesse and told him that bastards could not see the painting') and Juan de Timoneda's collection of narratives and anecdotes *Buen aviso y portacuentos* (1564; 'Cuento XLIX'). (Cf. Asensio, *Itinerario del entremés* [cf. note 779], pp. 108 f.; Marcel Bataillon, "Ulenspiegel y el *Retablo de las maravillas* de Cervantes" [1957], in: Marcel Bataillon, *Varia lección de clásicos españoles*, Madrid 1974, pp. 260–267; Kenworthy, *The Entremeses of Cervantes* [cf. note 779], pp. 88 f.; Isaías Lerner, "Notas para el *Entremés del Retablo de las maravillas*: fuente y recreación," in: Hugo W. Cowes [ed.], *Estudios de literatura española ofrecidos a Marcos A. Morínigo*, Madrid 1971, pp. 37–55, here pp. 37–44; Mauricio Molho, *Cervantes: Raíces folklóricas*, Madrid 1976, pp. 49–90. For an *entremés*, sometimes erroneously considered a possible source, entitled *Los tejedores*, see below notes 846 f.).

**783** Juan Manuel, *El Conde Lucanor* (cf. note 782), p. 129.

**784** P. 131.

only transforms the narration, with its interplay between deception and reality, into performance, but also transforms the characters and content of the ‘legend’ into the specifically Spanish context of his time.

In *El retablo de las maravillas* two trickster-puppeteers and their musician-accomplice arrive at a Spanish village and perform their ‘retablo of marvels,’ as they call it, in front of the town dignitaries; in reality, however, there is no show, no scenery, no script, no performing figures, there is nothing to be seen. The townspeople are told that only those of impeccable ancestry can see the show of wonders, i.e. those born in wedlock and those, and here is precisely the relevant difference compared to *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, who are of ‘pure blood’ (*limpieza de sangre*, i.e. ‘Old Christians’ as opposed to the so-called ‘New Christians’ who are descended from Jews or Muslims). They therefore adamantly ‘see’ everything they are told is being enacted before them. When a quartermaster appears announcing the imminent arrival of a troop of soldiers looking for accommodation in the village, the villagers interpret this as also part of the play. The quartermaster declares that they are insane saying that there is nothing there. He is then attacked by the villagers, who accuse him of being a Jew because he cannot see the show. The play ends in a chaotic excess of violence, with the two swindlers triumphantly sneaking off to work their scam in the next town.

The hybrid nature of the play is already apparent in the preconditions for ‘seeing’ the show: on the one hand, the subject of illegitimate birth, with its sexual connotations, is typical of the comic genre; *limpieza de sangre*, on the other hand, was an ideological, political, and religious issue that was not usually the subject of comedy, and the way in which the play explores this theme, both ironically and critically, adds to it a serious dimension.

Before proceeding to a detailed examination of the plot and an analysis of Cervantes’ drama, particularly with regard to the interplay of illusion and reality and to skepticism, it is important to elucidate on the historical context in which the play is situated.<sup>785</sup>

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**785** The basis of this sketch are the following studies and presentations: Albert A. Sicroff/Yom Tov Assis, art. “Limpieza de Sangre,” in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 22 vols., 2nd ed., Detroit, MI 2007, vol. 13, pp. 25–26; Cecil Roth/Yom Tov Assis, art. “Inquisition,” in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 9, pp. 790–804; Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain*, 2nd ed., New York 2001; Max Sebastián Hering Torres, *Rassismus in der Vormoderne: Die “Reinheit des Blutes” im Spanien der Frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2006; David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, New York 2013, pp. 217–245; Yovel, *The Other Within* (cf. note 1), pp. 139–186.

The *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* ('purity of blood statutes') were established in 1483 by the Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada. This Early Modern religiously justified racist legislation of exclusion was based on the idea that faith is 'transmitted biologically,' meaning that conversion could never result in the sincere acceptance of the Christian faith. Thus, despite the forced conversion of tens of thousands of Jews and Muslims in Spain, Torquemada was able to preserve a distinction between the 'Old Christians of pure blood,' allegedly descendants of the Goths, and the descendants of the recently converted 'New Christians.' The statutes denied New Christians access to higher education and secular and religious offices. An individual could only enroll in a university if he could provide evidence of 'pure ancestry.' The 15th century saw numerous outbreaks of violence against converts in the Iberian Peninsula and several attempts made on a local level to introduce laws intended to deprive the *crístianos nuevos* of their rights. King Henry IV's approval in 1468 of a statute excluding *conversos* from all public offices in the cities of Ciudad Real and Toledo enabled this, initially local, legislation to spread throughout the Iberian Peninsula. The genealogical argument was of course an instrument of power politics, as the New Christians were once again deprived of the equal status they had gained with their conversion to Christianity.

The situation continued for hundreds of years. Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries was a society fixated on blood and lineage. Social advancement or even participation in society were only possible with genealogical proof of one's 'purity of blood.'<sup>786</sup> Even the mere utterance of suspicion that someone was of Jewish descent had far-reaching, and often devastating, consequences. The fear of social exclusion and persecution by the Inquisition, directed primarily against *judaizantes* ('Judaizing New Christians'), was ubiquitous. It was a society characterized by constant observation and mutual surveillance. A dislike of pork (pig is a food that Jews and Muslims consider unclean and therefore do not eat), a suspected avoidance of work on Saturdays (the Jewish Sabbath, as opposed to Sunday, the Christian Sabbath) or bathing on a Friday (the Jewish Sabbath began Friday evening so bathing on Friday was considered a sign of preparing for the Sabbath) all constituted suspicious behavior that cast doubt on the purity of one's Christian blood and left one open to denunciation. This in turn meant torture, financial ruin, and potential, if not certain, death at the hands of the Inquisition.

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<sup>786</sup> The concept of *limpieza de sangre* lasted well into the 19th century, as attested to by the fact that as late as 1860 proof of 'blood purity' was still a requirement for admission to the Military Academy, when it was then legally abolished. The Office of the Inquisition in Spain was established in 1478 and only disbanded in 1834.

*El entremés del Retablo de las maravillas* opens with the appearance of Chirinos and Chanfalla, a pair of swindlers, who discuss the scam that they are planning. Chanfalla (a man) exhorts Chirinos (a woman) to pay close attention to his instructions, especially those regarding their new hoax, so that it could be as successful as their previous scam (“CHANFALLA: No se te pasen de la memoria, Chirinos, mis advertimientos, principalmente los que te he dado para este nuevo embuste, que ha de salir tan a luz como el pasado del llovista”).<sup>787</sup> Chirinos assures him of her reliability, saying: “[...] lo que en mí fuere tenlo como de molde; que tanta memoria tengo como entendimiento, a quien se junta una voluntad de acertar a satisfacerte, que excede a las demás potencias” (p. 216). She uses the term *memoria* mentioned by Chanfalla and puts it into the context of the three faculties of the soul (*potencias*) of the *anima rationalis*: intellect (*entendimiento*), will (*voluntad*), and memory (*memoria*). Thus, in order to show that she is perfectly equipped to take part in the upcoming deception, she makes use of a terminology that is taken from the realm of theology and ethical philosophy.<sup>788</sup> She ends by declaring that her ‘will’ to satisfy Chanfalla is the ‘power of the soul’ that is most effective of all (‘una voluntad de acertar a satisfacerte, que excede a las demás potencias’). It should be noted that such a statement is one of the many instances in which Cervantes expresses his dissonant position towards the strict Counter-Reformation orthodoxy. According to the Tridentine doctrine, reason dominates will, whereas Protestant thought held the inverse to be true. The latter, via the presence of Augustinian and Erasmian thinking, remained even in Counter-Reformation Spain hiddenly an issue of discussion.<sup>789</sup>

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**787** The text is quoted from: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Entremés del Retablo de las maravillas*, in: Miguel de Cervantes, *Entremeses*, ed. Nicholas Spadaccini, 19th ed., Madrid 2009 (1st ed. 1982), pp. 215–236, here p. 215; Page references are given in the following in the running text. The nature of Chanfalla’s ‘fraud with the rainmaker’ (“embuste [...] del llovista”) is not clear from the text. In research, reference is made to an anecdote known at the time, dealing with the *burla* of a poor student who elicited money from peasants by making them believe that he had the ability to produce rain (first: Maxime Chevalier, “El embuste de llovista” [Cervantes, *El retablo de las maravillas*],” *Bulletin Hispanique* 78 [1976], pp. 97 f.).

**788** In Augustine, for example, the mental faculties *memoria*, *intelligentia*, and *voluntas* are the human image of the Trinity (cf. Augustinus, *De trinitate* X, 11, 17–18 [used edition: Aurelius Augustinus, *De trinitate: (Books VIII–XI, XIV–XV, appendix: book V)* (Latin-German), ed. and trans. Johann Kreuzer, Hamburg 2001, pp. 120–127]).

**789** Regarding the Tridentine conception (reason is above the will) cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* I<sup>a</sup> q. 82 a. 3; on the powers of the soul in general, cf. I<sup>a</sup> q. 77–83 (Aquinas, *Summa* [Latin] [cf. note 347], vol. 6 [1937], pp. 86–249, esp. pp. 222–225; Aquinas, *Summa* [English] [cf. note 347], vol. 1, pp. 382–421, esp. pp. 414 f.). The allegorical and dramatic form of the counter-reformatory position in Calderón’s *auto sacramental La vida es sueño* (see chap. 3.2) should also be noted in this context. For the Protestant view of the weakness of human reason, see Luther’s



Chirinos then asks Chanfalla why they had taken the young Rabelín with them, and whether it would not be better to carry out their project alone. Chanfalla explains that they need Rabelín to play music during the breaks between the appearances of the characters of the ‘Show of Wonders’: “Habíamosle [Rabelín] menester como el pan de la boca, para tocar en los espacios que tardaren en salir las figuras del Retablo de las Maravillas” (p. 216). This is the first reference to the “Retablo de las maravillas” of the title, but it does not explain to the readers/spectators exactly what this “nuevo embuste” is going to be. Again taking up and playing on the last word in Chanfalla’s dialogue, Chirinos remarks that it would be a miracle (*maravilla*) if the villagers do not stone them because of Rabelín, for never before had she met such an ‘unfortunate little creature’ (“Maravilla será si no nos apedrean por solo el Rabelín; porque tan desventurada criaturilla no la he visto en todos los días de mi vida” p. 216).<sup>790</sup> Rabelín arrives immediately after this statement and asks Chanfalla what there is to do in this place, because he is dying to show him that he will not regret bringing him along, and the two (Chirinos and Chanfalla) proceed to ridicule Rabelín’s size (and his musical abilities):

RABELÍN: ¿Hase de hacer algo en este pueblo, señor Autor? Que ya me muero porque vuesa merced vea que no me tomó a carga cerrada.

CHIRINOS: Cuatro cuerpos de los vuestros no harán un tercio, cuanto más una carga. Si no sois más gran músico que grande, medrados estamos.

RABELÍN: Ello dirá; que en verdad que me han escrito para entrar en una compañía de partes, por chico que soy.

CHANFALLA: Si os han de dar la parte a medida del cuerpo, casi será invisible. (p. 217 f.)

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repeated comparison as the ‘whore of the devil’ (cf. “[...] des Teuffels Braut Ratio, die schöne Metzze [...] [Ratio] ist die höchste Hure, die der Teuffel hat [...]” [*D. Martin Luthers Werke* (cf. note 592), sect. 1: *Schriften*, 73 vols., vol. 51 (1914), p. 126, 29–32 and *passim* (“Predigt am 2. Sonntag nach Epiphaniä [17. Januar 1546]” [pp. 123–134]))). For the Erasmism in Spain, cf. the basic study of Marcel Bataillon, *Érasme et l’Espagne*, ed. Daniel Devoto and Charles Amiel, 3 vols., Geneva 1991 (1st ed. Paris 1937: *Érasme et l’Espagne: Recherches sur l’histoire spirituelle du XVIe siècle*).

**790** Rabelín’s name is part of the comedy, as it is a diminutive derived from the word *rabel*, which is the name of a bow-stringed instrument, a precursor to the violin, but also crude slang for ‘buttocks’ (cf. the entry in *Diccionario de Autoridades*: “RABEL. s. m. Instrumento músico pastoril. Es pequeño, de hechura como la del laúd. Cómponese de tres cuerdas solas, que se tocan con arco, y forman un sonido mui alto y agudo. [...] RABEL. Festiva y familiarmente se suele llamar al trasero, con especialidad hablando con los muchachos” [RAE, *Diccionario de Autoridades* (cf. note 604), vol. 5 (1737), p. 478a]).



Riffing off of Rabelín's use of the expression "*a carga cerrada*"<sup>791</sup> Chirinos embarks on an extended play on words, using the word *carga*, meaning a mercantile unit of measurement, which in English is roughly translated as: cargo, load, bundle, or bale. He was so small that even four of him would not be enough to fill up even 'un tercio' – i.e. one half of a *carga*<sup>792</sup> – let alone a whole one. *Cuerpo*, *tercio*, and *carga* are also, however, terms used in the military.<sup>793</sup> Using the double meaning of *cuerpo* as both human body and military unit, they joke that even four 'units' would not be enough to form an infantry regiment (*tercio*) together, let alone be sufficient to carry out an attack (*carga*). If he was not a bigger musician than he was tall, that is, if Rabelín's musical skills had been as limited as his body was small, Chirinos continues, they would be finished. When Rabelín replies that small as he is, he was still accepted into an acting company (*compañía de partes*), Chanfalla also begins to mock him, saying that if the share of revenue were measured in relation to the height of the actors, Rabelín's would be almost invisible. As opposed to the *compañía de autor*, where the actors were paid a fixed salary, in a *compañía de partes* the actors were partners who shared profits and risks, and any money left after the deduction of expenses was distributed proportionately among them. But Chanfalla's statement also refers to *parte* in the sense of part or role: if one were to give Rabelín a role made to measure, it would have to be almost invisible.

The cleverness and eloquence of the two *burladores* Chanfalla and Chirinos, are immediately apparent from these first two opening scenes. Obviously reaching their destination, Chanfalla recognizes the oncoming group of men as "el Gobernador y los Alcaldes," the governor and the councilors of the small town, and declares that Chirinos should sharpen her tongue on the sharpening stone of flattery, but not become too sharp: "CHANFALLA: Chirinos, poco a poco estamos ya en el pueblo, y éstos que aquí vienen deben de ser, como lo son sin duda, el Gobernador y los Alcaldes. Salgámosles al encuentro, y date un filo a la lengua en la piedra de la adulación; pero no despuntes de aguda" (p. 218).

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791 In English, for example, this would roughly correspond to the phrase 'lock, stock, and barrel.' In Covarrubias it says: "Carga cerrada, lo que se compra, o toma sin saber si es bueno, o malo" (Covarrubias, *Tesoro* [cf. note 779], Primera Parte, fol. 202r).

792 Cf. "Tercio, vale la mitad de vna carga que se lleua a lomo" (Covarrubias, *Tesoro* [cf. note 779], Segunda Parte, fol. 186r).

793 In the 16th and 17th centuries, *tercio* was the name given to an infantry regiment of the Spanish army, *carga* means in the military context not only (ammunition) charge, but likewise 'attack' (*¡a la carga!* – 'Attack!'), *cuerpo*, in English 'corps,' denotes a certain unit of soldiers.

The *gobernador* (governor), the *alcalde* (mayor) Benito Repollo, the *regidor* (councilor) Juan Castrado, and the *escribano* (scribe) Pedro Capacho now enter the scene. Chanfalla behaves submissively and asks which of the gentlemen before him is the governor. When the Gobernador identifies himself and asks Chanfalla what he wants, the latter answers, ironically: “A tener yo dos onzas de entendimiento, hubiera echado de ver que esa peripatética y anchurosa presencia no podía ser de otro que del dignísimo Gobernador deste honrado pueblo, que, con venirlo a ser de las Algarrobillas, lo deseche vuesa merced” (p. 218). In view of such a ‘peripatetic and space-filling presence’ (‘esa peripatética y anchurosa presencia’), Chanfalla explains, he should have recognized immediately that this was none other than the venerable governor of this ‘honorable village.’ *Peripatein* means ‘to walk about’ and Chanfalla is clearly referring to the fact that the Gobernador, accompanied by the other local authorities, is apparently on a ‘walk’ through the village. *Peripatético* is also a word used to describe an Aristotelian, a name that originated from the Peripatos, a covered walkway in the Lykeion-Gymnasion. It is very unlikely, however, that Chanfalla’s intention is to actually classify the governor as an Aristotelian, especially since the term was also a colloquialism for a (sometimes ridiculous) ‘odd person,’ and further, the nominalized adjective in its feminine form was often used as a euphemism for prostitute. This wordplay, with its double and even triple entendres, highlights clearly how the play as a whole not only orchestrates, in a playful and comic manner, the idea of *isosthenia* on the level of the plot itself but in fact also transfers it to the semiotic level of linguistic signs as well. Many of the characters’ statements can be interpreted in multiple ways, and there is no reliable agency in the play that enables the reader/viewer to determine which of these meanings is in fact the one intended. For example, consider the second adjective used to describe the Gobernador’s appearance, *anchurosa*. This can be understood at first blush in the sense of a ‘proud, impressive appearance’ that characterizes his personality, but of course also refers to his physical appearance, i.e. that he is quite fat.<sup>794</sup> When

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794 With regards to the second part of Chanfalla’s sentence (“que, con venirlo [Gobernador] a ser de las Algarrobillas, lo deseche vuestra merced” [If Your Grace is made Governor of Algarrobillas, reject it (the office)], research has always pointed out that Las Algarrobillas (or Garrovillas) was located in Extremadura, famous at that time for its ham (*jamón ibérico*). One possible reading would be that Chanfalla insinuates ironically that the Gobernador and his village were so ‘honorable’ that even should he be offered the post of governor in the (so-called ‘old Christian’) town of Algarrobillas this would be beneath him and he should turn it down. According to another possible reading, what he should be rejecting is his current office. The fact that ‘las Algarrobillas’ itself is the place of the *entremés*’ action does not seem to me to

Chanfalla calls the place *honrado*, he is voicing what will be the central theme of play, namely an understanding of honor linked exclusively to ‘bloodline’ and descent (which in turn is defined by the ‘right’ religious affiliation). This is subsequently established ironically by Chirinos. When the Gobernador asks again what Chanfalla is looking for and addresses him as “hombre honrado” (p. 219), Chirinos remarks: “Honrados días viva vuesa merced, que así nos honra. En fin, la encina da bellotas; el pero, peras; la parra, uvas, y el honrado, honra, sin poder hacer otra cosa” (p. 219; ‘May Your Grace spend honorable days, thus we too are honored. It is like this: the oak gives acorns, the pear tree pears, the vine grapes, and the honorable man honor, without anything else being possible for them to do’).<sup>795</sup> Apparently impressed by Chirinos’ – supposed – rhetorical skill, the mayor Benito Repollo, classifies it as “[s]entencia ciceronianca [sic], sin quitar ni poner un punto” (p. 219). His mispronunciation of the adjective derived from Cicero, the name of a Roman rhetorician and philosopher, is immediately corrected by the scribe Pedro Capacho: “*Ciceronian* quiso decir el señor alcalde Benito Repollo” (p. 219; italics in the original), whereupon the former states that he simply always wanted to say only the best, with little success (“BENITO: Siempre quiero decir lo que es mejor, sino que las más veces no acierto” p. 219). This is followed by the Gobernador asking, for the third time, what Chanfalla and Chirinos were looking for. Chanfalla introduces himself: “Yo, señores míos, soy Montiel, el que trae el Retablo de las Maravillas. Hanme enviado a llamar de la corte los señores cofrades de los hospitales, porque no hay autor de comedias en ella, y perecen los hospitales, y con mi ida se remediará todo” (p. 219). Chanfalla introduces himself as Montiel, an ‘*autor de comedias*,’ director of the ‘Retable Theater of Marvels,’ and so renown that he had been called to Madrid to come to the financial rescue of hospitals run by lay brothers, as there was no ‘producer of plays’ to be found (these brotherhoods derived a significant portion of their income from the *corrales de comedia* they maintained).<sup>796</sup> It should be noted that the name

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emerge from the sentence. The ‘pueblo honrado’ where Cervantes situates his satire on the obsession with *limpieza de sangre* has no explicit name.

**795** Immediately before: “CHIRINOS: En vida de la señora y de los señoritos, si es que el señor Gobernador los tiene. CAPACHO: No es casado el señor Gobernador. CHIRINOS: Para cuando lo sea; que no se perderá nada. GOBERNADOR: Y bien, ¿qué es lo que queréis, hombre honrado?” (pp. 218 f.).

**796** An editorial comment of the publisher of the edition used here (as well as in most other modern editions) notes a possible historical reference: On the one hand there was a lack of *autores de comedias* in Madrid’s *corral* stages due to several deaths in 1610, and on the other hand the lay brotherhoods had also initiated puppet theater performances in the *corrales* due to financial constraints. The former, however (as already noted by Adolfo Bonilla) seems

of the ‘role’ that Chanfalla now takes in the context of the *retablo* performance references *El coloquio de los perros* [The Colloquy of the Dogs], the famous final novel in Cervantes’ *Exemplary Novels*. This text (especially in combination with the *Novela del Casamiento engañoso* [Novel of the Deceitful Marriage] that frames it) has several aspects that seem to parallel the drama being discussed here, especially with regard to issues of seeming and being, fiction/imagination and reality. In the *novela*’s central episode the witch Cañizares calls the *pícaro*-dog Berganza<sup>797</sup> “Montiel” because she believes he is one of the two children of her former companion Montiel who at birth were transformed into dogs by ‘la Camacha de Montilla,’ another sorceress. By calling himself Montiel, ‘el que trae el Retablo de las Maravillas,’ Chanfalla is thus being associated with the realm of magic,<sup>798</sup> or, to put it into the skeptical setting: the status of being of the figure: human, dog, or creature of witchcraft, is playful-ironically ambiguous.

When asked by the Gobernador what he means by *Retablo de las Maravillas* Chanfalla explains: because of the wondrous things performed and shown, their traveling theater was called the ‘Retable of Marvels,’ that the *retablo*<sup>799</sup> itself was manufactured and created by the sage Tontonelo under such latitudes, orbits, celestial bodies, and stars, and with such references, features, and observations that no one can see the things shown on it if they belonged in any way to the ‘race of baptized Jews’ or were not born and conceived by his parents in legitimate marriage. Whoever was ‘infected by these two so common diseases’ would have to abandon the hope of being able to see the things never seen or heard before that were there presented:

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unlikely, since there were quite a number of *autores* and only Nicolás de los Ríos is known to have died during this period (cf. Miguel de Cervantes, *Entremeses*, ed. Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, Madrid 1916, p. 226 f. [note 186]). This is precisely the actor/director into whom Cervantes, in his *comedia Pedro de Urdemalas*, has his protagonist transformed.

**797** Cf. Miguel de Cervantes, *El coloquio de los perros*, in: Miguel de Cervantes, *Novelas ejemplares*, ed. Harry Sieber, 2 vols., Madrid 1980, vol. 2 (17th ed. 1997), pp. 297–359, here pp. 334 f.

**798** It should be mentioned that this already includes a satirical-critical dimension with regard to the intertextual reference. See, e.g., the commentary by Cipión on Berganza’s story, after conceding that the ‘spell’ mentioned by Cañizares, with which they could allegedly be turned into human beings, is not effective either in allegorical interpretation nor in the literal sense: “[...] la Camacha fue burladora falsa, y la Cañizares embustera, y la Montiel tonta, maliciosa y bellaca, con perdón sea dicho, si acaso es nuestra madre, de entrambos o tuya, que yo no la quiero tener por madre” (p. 347).

**799** The term *retablo* will be discussed in detail below (see pp. 351 ff.). It should be clarified at this point that the Spanish word *retablo* means puppet show or stage (and an altarpiece, *retablo*, *reredos*).

CHANFALLA: Por las maravillosas cosas que en él se enseñan y muestran, viene a ser llamado Retablo de las Maravillas; el cual fabricó y compuso el sabio Tontonelo debajo de tales paralelos, rumbos, astros y estrellas, con tales puntos, caracteres y observaciones, que ninguno puede ver las cosas que en él se muestran, que tenga alguna raza de confeso, o no sea habido y procreado de sus padres de legítimo matrimonio; y el que fuere contagiado destas dos tan usadas enfermedades, despídase de ver las cosas, jamás vistas ni oídas, de mi retablo. (p. 220)

Legitimate birth and *limpieza de sangre* are set as prerequisites to seeing the *retablo*. At the same time, this racist discourse of exclusion is also undermined and ridiculed in the very name of its ‘inventor,’ a scholar named Tontonelo, because the word *tonto* means stupid, silly, and dumb. Benito, the mayor (who the audience knows by now is an ignorant person), notes that he now finds that there are new things to see in the world every day, and asks again who created the ‘marvelous retable.’ Chirinos answers that his name was Tontonelo of Tontonela who was a man whose beard was said to have reached to his belt. To this Benito replies – entirely missing the comic oxymoron – that men with long beards were usually profoundly learned.<sup>800</sup>

It is immediately decided that the performance will take place that very evening. The Gobernador further instructs the *regidor* Juan Castrado that, if he agrees, he should marry off his daughter Juana Castrada (whose godfather the Gobernador was) so that the show could be staged at his house for the entertainment of the wedding guests. Juan Castrado agrees, replying (exposing his submissiveness) that he was at the Gobernador’s service and would always endorse his opinion, even if there was something standing against it (“aunque haya cosa en contrario”).<sup>801</sup> Chirinos again takes a phrase said by a different character and twists it for her own purposes, saying that what ‘stands against it’ is that they would not get to see the show at all if they (Chanfalla and Chirinos) were not paid in advance for their work (“CHIRINOS: La cosa que hay en contrario es que, si no se nos paga primero nuestro trabajo, así verán las

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**800** “BENITO: Ahora echo de ver que cada día se ven en el mundo cosas nuevas. ¡Y qué! ¿Se llamaba Tontonelo el sabio que el Retablo compuso? CHIRINOS: Tontonelo se llamaba, nacido en la ciudad de Tontonela; hombre de quien hay fama que le llegaba la barba a la cintura. BENITO: Por la mayor parte, los hombres de grandes barbas son sabihondos” (p. 220). However, Benito’s brief comment and seemingly satisfyingly answered question are the only commentary on the ‘miracle-retable’ description.

**801** “GOBERNADOR: Señor regidor Juan Castrado, yo determino, debajo de su buen parecer, que esta noche se despose la señora Teresa [sic.] Castrada, su hija, de quien yo soy padrino, y, en regocijo de la fiesta, quiero que el señor Montiel muestre en vuestra casa su Retablo. JUAN: Eso tengo yo por servir al señor Gobernador, con cuyo parecer me convengo, entablo y arrimo, aunque haya otra cosa en contrario” (pp. 220 f.).

figuras como por el cerro de Úbeda” p. 221). For, she says, if the whole village came to Juan Castrado’s house that evening to see the show, no one would bother coming the following day. Therefore, it was only fair to pay them upfront: “No, señores; no, señores; *ante omnia* nos han de pagar lo que fuere justo” (p. 221). Benito Repollo’s reply brings into focus the gap between the eloquent *pícaro-autores* and the primarily uneducated and unintelligent councilors, when he misunderstands the Latin expression used by Chirinos and, thinking it is a name, says that there was neither an “Antona” nor an “Antoño” to pay them, but that the gentleman Juan Castrado would give them a decent fee, and if not, then the village council would pay.<sup>802</sup> The scribe Pedro Capacho, who knows Latin, again corrects him: “CAPACHO: ¡Pecador de mí, señor Benito Repollo, y qué lejos da del blanco! No dice la señora Autora que pague ninguna Antona, sino que le paguen adelantado y ante todas cosas, que eso quiere decir *ante omnia*” (p. 221). Benito replies that if one spoke to him in the proper way (“a derechos,” i.e. ‘in Spanish’), he would also understand things correctly and that although Capacho, who was “leído y escrito” (‘literate in reading and writing’), could probably understand “esas algarabías de Allende,” he Benito could not (“BENITO: Mirad, escribano Pedro Capacho, haced vos que me hablen a derechas, que yo entenderé a pie llano. Vos, que sois leído y escrito, podéis entender esas algarabías de allende, que yo no” pp. 221 f.). Benito reacts to Capacho’s correction offensively, using his ignorance as an expression of contempt for the ‘non-Christians’ and proof of his own ‘Old Christian’ identity. In line with this *cristiano viejo* ideology he also casts doubt on the ‘purity’ of Capacho’s heritage by accusing him of being educated and describing him as someone who – in contrast to himself – was able to understand ‘esas algarabías de allende,’ ‘this distant, *Arabic*-sounding stuttering.’<sup>803</sup> Juan Castrado is willing to pay Chanfalla half a dozen ducados in advance and make sure that no other people from the village enter his house in the evening.

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**802** “BENITO: Señora Autora, aquí no os ha de pagar ninguna Antona, ni ningún Antoño; el señor regidor Juan Castrado os pagará más que honradamente, y si no, el Concejo. ¡Bien conocéis el lugar, por cierto! Aquí, hermana, no aguardamos a que ninguna Antona pague por nosotros” (p. 221).

**803** In the proverb collection published by Gonzalo Correas in 1627, one reads: “Algarabía de allende, que el que la habla no la entiende. ‘Algarabía de allende’ se dice por lo que no se entiende y razón disparatada” (Gonzalo Correas, *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales* [1627], ed. Miguel Mir, 2nd ed., Madrid 1924 [1st ed. 1906], p. 30). Benito’s statement reflects a common stereotype regarding the ‘erudition’ of the so-called ‘New Christians.’ His statement highlights the ridiculousness of this stereotype and ironically disputes the ideological concept on which the argument is based.

Chanfalla agrees to the offer. Castrado then asks Chanfalla to accompany him to his house so that he can give him the money and show him where to set up. As they leave, Chanfalla again admonishes those present not to forget the qualifications that those who are brave enough to come see the ‘marvelous retablo’ must have (“CHANFALLA: [. . .] y no se les pase de las mientes las calidades que han de tener los que se atrevieren a mirar el maravilloso Retablo” p. 222). It is not by chance that Chanfalla mentions bravery, because during this period in Spain the dangers of being accused of having Jewish ancestry were quite severe. The serious import of the statement is comical-ironically broken (as befits the *entremés* genre) by the fact that, as has already been noted, those who are ‘honorless’ in the less harmful sense of being illegitimate are also not able to see the show. Since (as far we know today) it is possible that a large part of the rural peasant population of the time were illegitimate, it is clear how the spectators will later react to the void staged by the troupe. Benito has no trouble declaring that he himself could undergo this test with equanimity, since his father had been mayor. Furthermore, he says: “[. . .] cuatro dedos de enjundia de cristiano viejo rancioso tengo sobre los cuatro costados de mi linaje: ¡miren si veré el tal Retablo!” (p. 222; ‘I have four finger breadths of fat from ancient Old Christian on all four sides of my lineage: I will certainly be able to see that *retablo!*’). By playing on the semantic fields of ‘lineage’ and ‘meat,’ Benito’s declaration of his undoubtedly ‘pure’ origin is interwoven with a reference to a common assumption of the time that was used to identify so-called ‘*judai-zantes*’ based solely on their refusal to eat pork. Hence the term *enjundia* means both ‘animal fat’ and ‘strength, substance, and significance,’ and *rancioso* means ‘ancient’ in the sense of ‘old ancestry,’ but also ‘rancid and greasy,’ while *costado* (‘side’) is both a term used in the context of genealogy, in the sense of ‘line of kinship’ (and *los cuatro costados* i.e. maternal and paternal grandparents),<sup>804</sup> as well as, in its etymological sense, ‘ribbed’ (< Lat. *COSTATUS*), i.e., a ‘piece of meat.’ Pork is known to be quite fatty, so Christians of ‘impure blood,’ according to this terminology, would not touch this ‘fatty meat.’ Once again the word play points to the ironic perspective that runs through the *entremés*, down to the level of semantics, as well as alluding to the racist conceptions of the period. The function of these allusions will be discussed further on.

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**804** Cf. “HIDALGO DE QUATRO COSTADOS. Es aquel que sus quatro avuelos fueron hidalgos de casa y solar conocido” (RAE, *Diccionario de Autoridades* [cf. note 604], vol. 4 [1734], p. 150b).



The others present are immediately at great pains to emphasize that they too have no concerns about passing the test. Capacho replies to Benito that they will all be able to see the *retablo*. Juan Castrado points out that none of them are of base origin.<sup>805</sup> The Gobernador notes (without explicit reference to an ‘Old Christian origin’ of his own) that as far as he is concerned all his fellow citizens fulfill the preconditions set by the actors (“Todo será menester, según voy viendo, señores Alcalde, Regidor y Escribano” p. 223). As Juan Castrado leaves with Chanfalla, he too is determined to tell the *autor* about his origins: “Vamos, Autor, y manos a la obra, que Juan Castrado me llamo, hijo de Antón Castrado y de Juana Macha; y no digo más en abono y seguro que podré ponerme cara a cara y a pie quedo delante del referido retablo” (p. 223). But this testimony of an ‘impeccable origin’ is also open to ridicule, with sexual innuendo again coming into play. Juan gives his parents’ names as proof, but the name of his father, which he also bears, actually means ‘castrated’ or ‘emasculated,’ while his mother’s name means ‘male.’ This type of irony is not limited to Juan Castrado but also appears in the names of other (speaking) characters, such as Repollo, Capacho, and later licenciado Gomecillos, Juana Castrada, and Teresa Repolla, which in the context of the theme of the play serves to underscore the ridiculousness of these characters. Chirinos responds to Castrado with the remark “¡Dios lo haga!” (p. 223), and the two depart.

Following this, the Gobernador asks the *autora* Chirinos which poets currently were the most famous in Madrid and had the best reputations, particularly among the so-called comedy writers. For he, too, says the Gobernador, was something of a poet and a supporter of acting. He knew his way around the comedy world and had written 22 new *comedias* one after the other without interruption. He only waited for a suitable time to travel to court to make half a dozen *autores* rich with them.<sup>806</sup> Chirinos’ reply can be read as a sharp allusion to the contemporary theater scene, particularly the overwhelming success of the plays written by Lope de Vega and his school. In this sense, she says, she hardly knew how to answer his question about the *poetas* because there were so many that they could obscure the sun, and all of them thought themselves famous, so that there was no use in enumerating them (“A lo que vuesa

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**805** “CAPACHO: Todos le pensamos ver, señor Benito Repollo. JUAN: No nacimos acá en las malvas, señor Pedro Capacho” (p. 222).

**806** “GOBERNADOR: Señora Autora, ¿qué poetas se usan ahora en la corte, de fama y rumbo, especialmente de los llamados cómicos? Porque yo tengo mis puntas y collar de poeta, y pícome de la farándula y carátula. Veinte y dos comedias tengo, todas nuevas, que se veen las unas a las otras; y estoy aguardando coyuntura para ir a la corte y enriquecer con ellas media docena de autores” (p. 223).



merced, señor Gobernador, me pregunta de los poetas, no le sabré responder; porque hay tantos que quitan el sol, y todos piensan que son famosos. [...] así no hay para qué nombrarlos” pp. 223 f.). When Chirinos asks the Gobernador for his name and he replies that his name was “el Licenciado Gomecillos” (p. 224), she immediately pretends to recognize him as the author of the ‘famous *coplas*’ “Lucifer estaba malo” and “Tómale mal de fuera.” This the Gobernador firmly rejects, saying that evil tongues had pinned these poems on him, but he was by no means their author. He did, however, and he did not want to deny this, indeed write those *coplas* that dealt with the flooding in Seville. And he continues that if the poets were stealing from each other, he could boast that he had never stolen anything; may God help him with his verses and may steal whoever wanted (“[...] puesto que los poetas son ladrones unos de otros, nunca me precié de hurtar nada a nadie: con mis versos me ayude Dios, y hurte el que quisiere” p. 224).<sup>807</sup> The conversation between Chirinos and the Gobernador, marked by satirical allusions to the literary scene of the day (a not uncommon feature in Cervantes’ work)<sup>808</sup> is interrupted by Chanfalla’s return. Announcing that everything was now ready for the performance, he asked everyone to accompany him so that they could start the play. Chirinos asks her accomplice, again using a Latin phrasing, whether the money was already ‘in their bag’ (“¿Está ya el dinero *in corbona*?” p. 225).<sup>809</sup> Chanfalla confirms this with the words: “Y aun entre las telas del corazón” (p. 225). When

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**807** “CHIRINOS: [...] Pero dígame vuesa merced, por su vida: ¿cómo es su buena gracia? ¿Cómo se llama? GOBERNADOR: A mí, señora Autora, me llaman el Licenciado Gomecillos. CHIRINOS: ¡Válame Dios! ¡Y que vuesa merced es el señor Licenciado Gomecillos, el que compuso aquellas coplas tan famosas de *Lucifer estaba malo* y *Tómale mal de fuera*! GOBERNADOR: Malas lenguas hubo que me quisieron ahijar esas coplas, y así fueron mías como del Gran Turco. Las que yo compuse, y no lo quiero negar, fueron aquellas que trataron del diluvio de Sevilla; que, puesto que los poetas son ladrones unos de otros, nunca me precié de hurtar nada a nadie: con mis versos me ayude Dios, y hurte el que quisiere” (p. 224).

**808** It should be noted that the thematic complex of ‘origin’ and ‘ascription’ is also applied here to the realm of poetry (‘Malas lenguas hubo que me quisieron ahijar esas coplas’, notes the Gobernador, further: ‘los poetas son ladrones unos de otros’).

**809** The Latin term *corbona* used by Chirinos is used here in the sense of ‘(the money is) in the bag.’ The term *corbona* appears in the biblical context. It goes back to the Hebrew קרבן (*qorbân*, ‘offering’) and refers to the temple treasury (but outside of the religious sphere, it simply meant jewelry or money chest). In the New Testament, the phrase ‘*in corbona*’ appears in *Mt 27,6*: “Principes autem sacerdotum, acceptis argenteis, dixerunt: Non licet eos mittere *in corbonam*: quia pretium sanguinis est”/‘And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them *into the treasury*, because it is the price of blood’ [my italics]). Judas had returned the ‘thirty pieces of silver’ he had received for the betrayal of Jesus, to the High Council and hanged himself.

Chirinos warningly tells him that the Gobernador is a poet (“Pues doite por aviso, Chanfalla, que el Gobernador es poeta” p. 225), he replies that if so, she could already regard him as “engañado,” i.e., successfully deceived, since all people of this kind were unwary, gullible, and unsuspecting (“¿Poeta? ¡Cuerpo del mundo! Pues dale por engañado, porque todos los de humor semejante son [...] gente descuidada, crédula y no nada maliciosa” p. 225). Everyone leaves, excited to finally see the wonders (“BENITO: Vamos, Autor; que me saltan los pies por ver esas maravillas” p. 225).

The next scene takes place in the Castrado house, with the two (as the stage instruction states) *labradoras* Juana Castrada (Juan Castrado’s daughter) in her wedding dress and Teresa Repolla (daughter of Benito Repollo) talking together. They make sure that they get a good seat and Juana reminds Teresa of the conditions that they have to fulfill in order to see the show of wonders, saying that she should be wary, otherwise it would be a great misfortune. Teresa responds that as the two were cousins, there was nothing more to say. She wished that she could be as certain of going to heaven as she was certain of seeing the show before her. By the life of her mother, she would tear out her eyes, if such a misfortune were to befall her. Juana admonishes her to be quiet, because the others were coming.<sup>810</sup> Enter the other ‘spectators,’ that is, the Gobernador, Benito Repollo, the host Juan Castrado, Pedro Capacho, and “otra gente del pueblo” as well as the ‘directors’ Chanfalla, Chirinos, and the musician Rabelín.<sup>811</sup> Chanfalla gives instructions for the performance. He asks everyone to take a seat, saying that the *retablo* (that is, the ‘stage’) should be put behind the “*repostero*” – in the literal sense a kind of wall hanging, which in the reality of the play is only a simple blanket (*manta*) that Chanfalla calls a curtain<sup>812</sup> – where the “[a]utora,” i.e. Chirinos, will sit, and he then tells Rabelín where to stand in the room (“Siéntense todos; el Retablo ha de estar

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**810** “CASTRADA: Aquí te puedes sentar, Teresa Repolla amiga, que tendremos el Retablo enfrente; y pues sabes las condiciones que han de tener los miradores del Retablo, no te descuides, que sería una gran desgracia. TERESA: Ya sabes, Juan Castrada, que soy tu prima, y no digo más. ¡Tan cierto tuviera yo el cielo como tengo cierto ver todo aquello que el Retablo mostrare! ¡Por el siglo de mi madre, que me sacase los mismos ojos de mi cara, si alguna desgracia me aconteciese! ¡Bonita soy yo para eso! CASTRADA: Sosiégate, prima; que toda la gente viene” (p. 225).

**811** Stage direction: “(Entran el GOBERNADOR, BENITO REPOLLO, JUAN CASTRADO, PEDRO CAPACHO, EL AUTOR [i.e. Chanfalla] y LA AUTORA [i.e. Chirinos], y EL MÚSICO [i.e. Rabelín], y otra gente del pueblo, y UN SOBRINO de Benito, que ha de ser aquel gentil hombre que baila.)” (p. 226).

**812** Cf. the entry in DRAE: “[*repostero*] 3. Paño cuadrado o rectangular, con emblemas heráldicos” (used edition: Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 22nd ed. Madrid 2001 [1st ed. 1780]); in the last stage direction it says: “y la CHIRINOS descuelga la *manta*” (p. 236), also: “BENITO: [to Rabelín] [...] ¡Métete tras la manta [...]!” (p. 230); cf. the

detrás deste repostero, y la Autora también, y aquí el músico” p. 226). In this context it is interesting to look briefly at Covarrubias’ entry on puppets, where he sets down the characteristics of a typical puppet theater performance:

TITERES, Ciertas figurillas que suelen traer los estrangeros en vnos retablos, que mostrando tan solamente el cuerpo dellos, los gouiernan como si ellos mesmos se mouiesen; y los maestros que estan dentro, detras de vn repostero y del castillo que tienen de madera, estan si-luando con vnos pitos, que parece hablar las mesmas figuras, y el interprete que està aca fuera declara lo q[ue] quiere[n] dezir. Y porque el pito suena, ti, ti, se llamaron titeres [...].<sup>813</sup>

Thus, in our play Chirinos takes on the role of the ‘maestro[s] [...] detras de[] [...] repostero,’ a ‘puppeteer without puppets’ while Chanfalla is the *intérprete* standing outside the stage and describing the events to the audience.<sup>814</sup>

As Chanfalla introduces Rabelín reference is again made to his small physical appearance and precarious musical ability, when Benito remarks: “¿Músico es éste? Métanle también detrás del repostero, que, a truco de no velle, daré por bien empleado el no oílle” (p. 226). Hereupon, Chanfalla rebukes him, saying that he had no reason to be displeased because of the musician, after all, he was a good Christian and ‘an Hidalgo of well-known ancestry’ (“CHANFALLA: No tiene vuesa merced razón, señor alcalde Repollo, de descontentarse del músico, que en verdad que es muy buen cristiano y hidalgo de solar conocido” p. 226). The fact that, of all people, it is Rabelín, the small, not particularly handsome, destitute, untalented musician employed by scam artists who is called ‘hidalgo de solar conocido’ provides additional comic satire to the theme of honor in the play and is also a jab at the excessive preoccupation with honor that was so prevalent in Spain during this period. The Gobernador also interferes and notes that in order to be a good musician, one must certainly be equipped with ‘qualities’ (*calidades*) (“GOBERNADOR: ¡Calidades son bien necesarias para ser buen músico!” p. 226). Here again is a double meaning, because *calidad* means ‘characteristic’ or ‘virtue’ but refers not only to a person’s abilities but also to their lineage, as another meaning for *calidad* is *nobleza de linaje*. Benito then interjects that Rabelín might well be from a good family (“[d]e solar”), but it’s doubtful whether he was also a good musician (“mas de sonar, abrenuncio”). Rabelín defends himself: “¡Eso se merece el bellaco que se viene a sonar delante de ... !”, and the mayor again: “¡Pues, por Dios, que hemos visto aquí sonar a otros músicos tan ... !” (p. 226). The Gobernador declares that the

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above cited entry from Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* on puppetry: the puppeteers are behind a ‘repostero.’

**813** Covarrubias, *Tesoro* (cf. note 779), Segunda Parte, fol. 45v.

**814** Cf. this reference already in Kenworthy, *The Entremeses of Cervantes* (cf. note 779), p. 91.

dispute between Rabelín and the *alcalde* is over, indicating its potential endlessness and insists that the performance should begin.<sup>815</sup> Benito notes how few props had been brought along considering the announced dimensions of the play, whereupon Castrado suspects, relying on what Chanfalla had promised them, that everything was related to miracles (“BENITO: ¡Poca balumba trae este autor para tan gran Retablo. JUAN: Todo debe de ser de maravillas.” p. 227).

The ‘play within the play’ commences, with Chanfalla declaring: “¡Atención, señores, que comienzo!” (p. 227). The performance begins with a formulaic incantation similar to magic:

CHANFALLA: ¡Oh tú, quien quiera que fuiste, que fabricaste este Retablo con tan maravilloso artificio, que alcanzó renombre *de las Maravillas*: por la virtud que en él se encierra, te conjuro, apremio y mando que luego incontinenti muestres a estos señores algunas de las tus maravillosas maravillas, para que se regocijen y tomen placer sin escándalo alguno! (p. 227)

Chanfalla calls upon the creator of the *Retablo de las Maravillas* to show some of its wonders to those present for their entertainment and pleasure, without causing the slightest scandal. Immediately ‘his request is answered,’ as Chanfalla notes. Chanfalla begins to evoke the first scene by describing what he himself now ‘sees’ (and what the audience should also be able to see, provided that they were *cristianos viejos* and *hijos legítimos*). Taken a scene from the biblical story of Samson (Judges 16) Chanfalla describes the appearance of the brave Samson, who embraces the pillars of the pagan temple to tear it down and take revenge on his enemies.<sup>816</sup> Chanfalla turns pleadingly to the

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**815** “GOBERNADOR: Quédese esta razón en el *de* del señor Rabel y en el *tan* del Alcalde, que será proceder en infinito; y el señor Montiel comience su obra” (p. 227).

**816** Samson, blinded and imprisoned by the Philistines, is taken out of the dungeon during festivities in honor of their god Dagon for the amusement of the people. Samson calls upon God to give his strength back to him and destroys the pillars of the temple, bringing the whole edifice down on him and the thousands of Philistines inside (cf. *Jdg* 16,22–30). Samson was betrayed by Delilah, his lover, who sold the secret of his strength (his long hair) to the Philistines. Delilah having cut his hair while he was sleeping, Samson was captured and blinded. Samson had lied to Delilah three times when she asked him to tell her the secret to his strength (saying first that he needed to be tied with seven fresh bowstrings, secondly tied with new, unused ropes, and thirdly if his seven curls were braided with a loom and his hair fastened to the floor with a stake). Only after she accuses him of not really loving and trusting her does he reveal his secret (Cf. *Jdg* 16,4–21). In the interpretation of Bruce W. Wardropper (“The Butt of the Satire in *El retablo de las maravillas*,” *Revista Cervantes* 4:1 [1984], pp. 25–33) the Samson element is an implicit reference to the theme of betrayal. He interprets the *entremés* as a statement that the statutes of *limpieza sangre* by distinguishing between ‘old’

figure ‘appearing’ on the *retablo* stage, begging Samson to refrain from such a disaster, and not to crush and bury the many noble people gathered here:

CHANFALLA: Ea, que ya veo que has otorgado mi petición, pues por aquella parte asoma la figura del valentísimo Sansón, abrazado con las columnas del templo para derriballe por el suelo y tomar venganza de sus enemigos. ¡Tente, valeroso caballero; tente, por la gracia de Dios Padre! ¡No hagas tal desaguisado, porque no cojas debajo y hagas tortilla tanta y tan noble gente como aquí se ha juntado! (p. 227)

The permeability of the ‘play within the play,’ which transcends the boundaries of stage and audience, was first established by the tricksters’ postulation that only certain people can see it. It is further expressed in the individual scenes ‘enacted.’ Chanfalla the ‘director’ mediates the action. What he marks as ‘to be seen’ is not an isolated stage show, but is, as he emphasizes here, linked to the ‘real well-being’ of the audience. In the scene of Samson the spectators are analogous to Samson’s enemies, the Philistines, killed along with Samson in the temple when he brought it down around their heads. The action, or supposed action on stage, i.e., the images of the performance evoked by Chanfalla, are linked to those watching – the boundary is fluid, or rather is designated as such. The stage ‘action’ is given ‘real’ efficacy for the audience (in the sense that the ‘rules’ of the wonder show already presuppose a dependency between the space of the stage and the space of the audience). Chanfalla (ironically) refers to the ‘noble attendees’ and insinuates that the Samson appearing on stage is not tearing down a fictitious building, but can also bury them under the wreckage (‘no cojas debajo y hagas tortilla tanta y tan noble gente como aquí se ha juntado!’). This is, of course, much influenced by comic exaggeration, as is clear, for example, from Chanfalla’s use of the colloquial ‘*no hagas tortilla*’ (‘do not crush and flatten [them] into omelets’). On a more serious note, the whole scene is ideologically charged by the story supposedly being enacted. The story of Samson is the idea of the heroic struggle of a servant of the one and true God against the idolaters. Those spectators who do not ‘see’ this run the risk of arousing a suspicion of not *wanting* to see it, that is, of themselves being idolaters. The irony of the use of the theme of Samson is of course that this *Old Testament* story is a reminder of how problematic the rigid separation of Christian and Jewish faith is, as crystallized in the concept of ‘blood purity.’<sup>817</sup>

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and ‘new’ Christians, was a betrayal of the Christian religion (‘*limpieza de sangre*’ vs. ‘*limpieza de corazón*’).

**817** Ruth Fine has pointed out how the Cervantine oeuvre specifically tries to break apart the preoccupation with the symbolic-semantic fields of ‘Jewish’ (*lo judío*), ‘Hebrew’ (*lo hebreo*) and ‘New Christian’ (*lo converso*) evident in the literature and extra-literary discourse of the

The inner spectators immediately begin to refer to the ‘events on the stage,’ as narrated to them by Chanfalla. Benito addresses Samson directly and asks him to stop and spare him, not without commenting on the situation, however, that they were there for entertainment’s sake, thus ‘such an ending’ would be against this (“BENITO: ¡Téngase, cuerpo de tal, conmigo! ¡Bueno sería que, en lugar de habernos venido a holgar, quedásemos aquí hechos plasta! ¡Téngase, señor Sansón, pesia a mis males, que se lo ruegan buenos!” p. 227). While Benito is referring directly to the stage action, the reaction of the other audience members relates to their perception of the stage events as such (and thus also implicitly to the prerequisites necessary to see them). Capacho asks Castrado whether he could see him, that is, Samson, who instantly and vehemently responds that he can (“CAPACHO: ¿Veisle vos, Castrado? JUAN: ¿Pues no le había de ver? ¿Tengo yo los ojos en el colodrillo?” p. 227). The Gobernador, on the other hand, in an aside (*aparte*) notes with astonishment that he cannot see anything at all, and reflects on the clash between this fact and what he knows to be true about his ‘impeccable origin,’ which should have guaranteed that he could see the show: “GOBERNADOR: [*Aparte.*] ¡Milagroso caso es éste! Así veo yo a Sansón ahora, como el Gran Turco. Pues en verdad que me tengo por legítimo y cristiano viejo” (p. 228).<sup>818</sup> Suddenly Chirinos, who is standing

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time (cf., e.g., Ruth Fine, “El entrecruzamiento de lo hebreo y lo converso en la obra de Cervantes: un encuentro singular,” in: Ruth Fine/Santiago López Navia [eds.], *Cervantes y las religiones: Actas del coloquio internacional de la Asociación de Cervantistas* [Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalén, Israel, 19–21 de diciembre de 2005], Madrid 2008, pp. 435–451 [on *El retablo de las maravillas*, cf. pp. 444 f.] as well as Ruth Fine, *Reescrituras bíblicas cervantinas*, Madrid/Frankfurt am Main 2014 [on *El retablo de las maravillas*, cf. pp. 177–186]).

**818** With regard to the *apartes* (‘asides,’ i.e. the text of a character spoken aside for viewers/readers to hear rather than the others on stage), it should be noted that the explicit labeling of the corresponding (three) text passages as such (“*Aparte.*”) constitutes an editorial supplement by the publisher of the edition used here, which is also used in most other modern editions. This first speaking aside (that is, the expression about not perceiving anything of what is suggested ‘to be happening on stage’), however, is sometimes attributed not to the Gobernador, but to the scribe Pedro Capacho: For example, in the edition of the *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses* of 1749 (Miguel de Cervantes, *Comedias, y Entremeses . . . , Con una Dissertacion, o Prologo sobre las Comedias de España [por Blas Nasarre]*, 2 vols., Madrid 1749, vol. 1, p. 300), in Adolfo Bonilla (Miguel de Cervantes, *Entremeses*, ed. A. Bonilla, Madrid 1916, p. 112), and in the *Castalia* edition by Eugenio Asensio (Miguel de Cervantes, *Entremeses*, ed. E. Asensio, Madrid 1971, p. 177). I agree, however, with the variant given in Spadaccini’s edition. In my opinion, all three *apartes* are said by the Gobernador. In the *editio princeps*, the speaker’s name for the above cited first *aparte* is “Co.” (Cervantes, *Ocho comedias, y ocho entremeses nuevos, nunca representados*, Madrid 1615, fol. 246r; consulted copy: Biblioteca Nacional de España, Sig. CERV.SEDÓ/8698). This is probably a misprint, ‘C’ instead of ‘G’ (‘Go.’ for ‘Gobernador’); the Gobernador’s speeches are always marked with the abbreviation

behind the curtain, interrupts, shouting that a bull was running towards them: “¡Guárdate, hombre, que sale el mismo toro que mató al ganapán en Salamanca! ¡Échate, hombre; échate, hombre; Dios te libre, Dios te libre!” (p. 228) and Chanfalla instructs everyone to throw themselves on the ground (“¡Échense todos, échense todos! ¡Húcho ho!, ¡húcho ho!, ¡húcho ho!”). This engenders much confusion, with the stage direction reading “(*Échense todos y alborótanse.*)” (p. 228). With this assertion that a wild bull was about to charge them, namely the bull who had killed ‘the day laborer in Salamanca,’<sup>819</sup> the Samson plot is abruptly interrupted and the next ‘danger’ immediately evoked. As happened previously, the audience’s reactions follow instantly. Benito’s remarks try to leave no doubt that he is actually seeing what the “theater directors” are narrating. He even describes the bull as being so ferocious as ‘if it was possessed by the devil,’ describing its coloring, and exclaiming that if he had not thrown himself to the ground, the bull would have taken him by the horns (“¡El diablo lleva en el cuerpo el torillo! Sus partes tiene de hosco y de bragado. Si no me tiendo, me lleva de vuelo” p. 228). Castrado then asks Chanfalla to make sure, as far as possible, that no more frightening characters appear, saying that this was not for his own sake, but for the girls present who had been terrified by the bull and had not a drop of blood left in their bodies. Castrada confirms her father’s statement, adding that it would take her more than three days to recuperate, and that she had already seen herself impaled on the horns of the bull, which were as pointed as a shoemaker’s awl. The subtext here is of course an obscene one, linked to the subject of marriage. This was a common element in the *entremés*s. Castrado then notes that after all Castrada would not be his daughter if she could not see it; a statement that, taking into account the names of the speaker and the person addressed, ultimately caricatures itself.

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“Go.” with one exception: “Gouer.” (fol. 246r). For the identification of the speaker Pedro Capacho there are the variants of full naming (“Capacho.” appears three times) and the abbreviations “Capo.” (four times), “Capa.” (twice), and “Ca.” (three times); that the passage is also attributed to Capacho, would then be due to an interpretation of the typo as “Co.” instead of ‘Ca’ (for ‘Capacho’). It should be noted that the two following *aparte* passages are then clearly identified as speeches of the Gobernador (with the abbreviations “Gouer.” [fol. 246r] and “Go.” [fol. 246v]).

**819** According to Mauricio Molho, this is an allusion to a historical event (“[. . .] [el] torino salmantino de ocho años que mató al ganapán de Monleón [a place in the province of Salamanca] [. . .]” [*Cervantes: Raíces folklóricas* (cf. note 782), p. 206]); the commentaries and the secondary literature refer mostly to Molho’s interpretation. In any case, the mention of the particular city of Salamanca is intended to refer to a real and well-known event.



JUAN: Señor Autor, haga, si puede, que no salgan figuras que nos alboroten; y no lo digo por mí, sino por estas mochachas, que no les ha quedado gota de sangre en el cuerpo, de la ferocidad del toro.

CASTRADA: ¡Y cómo, padre! No pienso volver en mí en tres días; ya me vi en sus cuernos, que los tiene agudos como una lesna.

JUAN: No fueras tú mi hija, y no lo vieras. (pp. 228 f.)

Subsequently, the Gobernador again reflects in an aside – thus repeating the previous structure – on the difference between his own perception and that of the other audience members. As he admits to himself (and to the viewers/readers), he can see nothing of what the rest of the audience claims to see, but for the sake of appearances he would have to say that he too could see the events on the stage: “GOBERNADOR: [*Aparte.*] Basta; que todos ven lo que yo no veo; pero al fin habré de decir que lo veo, por la negra honrilla” (p. 229). The Gobernador’s confession that he will pretend to see something that he actually does not see for the sake of *negra honrilla*, is an ironic allusion, as is the play as a whole, to the concept of honor prevalent in the Spanish society of the period, with its obsessive focus on the importance of appearances that must be preserved at all cost.<sup>820</sup>

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**820** A prominent text of satirical-ironic reference to the concepts *limpieza de sangre* and *honor* that dominated Spanish society is the *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which appeared for the first time over sixty years before Cervantes’ *entremés* (“[...] *Lazarillo de Tormes* deals not only with the religiously based apparatus of exclusion [...] but also with its secular equivalent, and in an indissoluble connection. The third *tratado*, in which Lazarillo serves an impoverished nobleman, deals explicitly with the sense of honor” [Zepp, *An Early Self* (cf. note 1), p. 80, cf. altogether: pp. 73–92]). In the *escudero* episode in the *tractado tercero* the first-person narrator says: “¡Oh, Señor, y cuántos de aquestos debéis Vós tener por el mundo derramados, que padescen *por la negra que llaman honra* lo que por Vós no sufrirán!” (*La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades*, ed. Francisco Rico, 15th ed., Madrid 2000 [1st ed. 1987], p. 84; my italics); to the discrepancy observed by Lázaro between appearance and reality in the life of this (third) master, the impoverished nobleman – he has neither an appropriate place to sleep nor sufficient food – who always endeavors to be seen as a believing Christian and an honorable nobleman, cf. for example, what is immediately preceding the previous quote: “¿Quién encontrará a aquel mi señor que no piense, según el contenido de sí lleva, haber anoche bien cenado y dormido en buena cama, y, aun agora es de mañana, no le cuenten por muy bien almorzado? [...] ¿A quién no engañará aquella buena disposición y razonable capa y sayo? ¿Y quién pensará que aquel gentil hombre se pasó aqer todo el día sin comer, con aquel mendrugo d pan ques u criado Lázaro trujo un día y una noche en arca de su seno, do no se le podía pegar mucha limpieza, y hoy, lavándose las manos y cara, a falta de paño de manos se hacía servir de la halda del sayo? Nadie, por cierto, lo sospechará” (pp. 83 f.) as well as: “Y súbese por la calle arriba con tan gentil semblante y continente, que quien no le conociera pensara ser muy cercano pariente al Conde de Arcos, o a lo menos camarero que le daba de vestir” (p. 82). The



The play shifts directly to the ‘next scene.’ Taking up the *negra honrilla* referred to by the Gobernador, the play parodies this over-focus on the ‘right’ heritage when Chirinos assures the audience that all the mice: white, spotted, speckled, and even blue, but after all they were all mice, now seen on stage were direct descendants of the mice from Noah’s Ark: “CHIRINOS: Esa manada de ratones que allá va, deciende por línea recta de aquellos que se criaron en el arca de Noé; dellos son blancos, dellos albarazados, dellos jaspeados y dellos azules; y, finalmente, todos son ratones” (p. 229). Juana Castrada and Teresa Repolla ‘panic’ at the ‘sight’ of the many rodents. Teresa exclaims that if she was not being held, she would have jumped out of the window in fear and instructs her cousin to keep her skirts together to prevent getting bitten. She also embellishes on the narration saying that contrary to what Chirinos had said, it was more like thousands of mice rather than just a few. She even claims to feel a mouse climbing her leg. In response Benito says that lucky for him he is wearing *gregüescos* (Spanish breeches), so no mouse, no matter how small, would be able ‘to enter’ him.

CASTRADA: ¡Jesús!, ¡Ay de mí! ¡Ténganme, que me arrojaré por aquella ventana! ¿Ratones? ¡Desdichada! Amiga, apriétate las faldas, y mira no te muerdan; ¡Y monta que son pocos! ¡Por el siglo de mi abuela, que pasan de milenta!

REPOLLA: Yo sí soy la desdichada, porque se me entran sin reparo ninguno. Un ratón morénico me tiene asida de una rodilla. ¡Socorro venga del cielo, pues en la tierra me falta!

BENITO: Aun bien que tengo gregüescos: que no hay ratón que se me entre, por pequeño que sea. (p. 229)

Here too, besides the serious main concern: the denunciation of a literally understood ‘blindness’ by means of an ideological grid of perception, the obscene subtext is evident.

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expression ‘*negra honra*’ roughly means ‘the misfortune of honor,’ the misfortune associated with the concept of honor as a social category (referring to the tremendous power of others’ opinions about the individual). The phrase ‘*por la negra honrilla*’ (in English, for the sake ‘of the damned appearance,’ *honrilla* means ‘false sense of honor’) is proverbial (cf. the entry on “Honrilla” in *Diccionario de Autoridades*: “[. . .] Dimin. de Honra. Tomase freqüentemente esta voz por el puntillo o vergüenza con que se dexa de hacer alguna cosa porque no parezca mal: y las más veces se suele decir, Por la negra honrilla. Latín. *Proprius honor, vel privata dignitas*. LOP. Peregr. f. 130. Esta negra honrilla, este que dirán, suele muchas veces detener más que las christianas consideraciones” [(cf. note 604), vol. 4 (1734), p. 174b]; cf. as well: “HONRILLA, la vana presuncion de algunos necios q[ue] ponen la honra en impertine[n]cias, y ellos son los que andan inquiriendo, si el otro le toco en la honra, o no, por no nada” [Covarrubias, *Tesoro* (cf. note 779), Primera Parte, fol. 477r]).

The following ‘living image’ that the *intérpretes* describe is neither about animals nor humans, but about water. Chanfalla now declares it to be raining, and that the water pouring in streams from the sky came directly from the Jordan River. (From a Christian perspective, water from the Jordan River, which was regarded as the site where the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist took place, is, so to speak, the ‘prototype’ of baptismal water.) Chanfalla then, furthermore, relates magical properties to this already special water, saying that according to legend, a bath in the Jordan River had rejuvenating power<sup>821</sup> and that if touched by this water a woman’s face would look like polished silver, and a man’s beard would appear golden.

CHANFALLA: Esta agua, que con tanta priesa se deja descolgar de las nubes, es de la fuente que da origen y principio al río Jordán. Toda mujer a quien tocara en el rostro, se le volverá como de plata bruñida, y a los hombres se les volverán las barbas como de oro.<sup>822</sup>  
(pp. 229 f.)

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**821** Cf. “JORDAN. s. m. Qualquier cosa que remoza, o rejuvenece. Es tomada la metáphora de que se decía que los que se bañaban en el río Jordán rejuvenecían” (RAE, *Diccionario de Autoridades* [cf. note 604], vol. 4 [1734], p. 320b).

**822** This continues the biblical allusions that Chanfalla integrates into the ironic play: first Samson, then the mice descendants of those from Noah’s Ark, and now the Jordan River. This allusion also illustrates the problem with the strict separation between the Jewish and Christian faiths. The Jordan River is central to both the Jewish tradition (cf. *Jos* 3 ff. [crossing the Jordan and ‘entering the Promised Land’]) and the Christian one, namely where Jesus is said to have been baptized by John the Baptist; an event of relevance in the history of salvation (cf. *Mt* 3,13–17, here 3,16 f.: “Baptizatus autem Jesus, confestim ascendit de aqua, et ecce aperti sunt ei caeli: et vidit Spiritum Dei descendentem sicut columbam, et venientem super se. Et ecce vox de caelis dicens: Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui”/‘And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’). (It should be noted that John the Baptist is a constitutive part of the last scene evoked in the show, the ‘Dance of Herodias’ or Salome; this is already indicated by the mention of the Jordan River, where he was active. Thus, water from the Jordan River represents the baptismal water *par excellence*. The ritual of baptism marks purification (of sins) and is above all the sacrament by which one ‘becomes Christian.’ In the context of the discourses to which the *entremés* refers, it is therefore of crucial importance. According to the *limpieza de sangre* laws, baptism is not sufficient. One cannot be ‘purified’ from ‘impure’ descent, one cannot become a ‘true’ Christian through baptism; thus, the *cristianos nuevos* are under the constant suspicion that they are only Christians ‘in appearance’ (baptized). The comedy of the scene then unfolds around the further attribute of the water that Chanfalla tells them, namely the change in appearance, with the women striving to get wet with the (fake) water in order to ‘beautify’ and ‘rejuvenate’ themselves, while the men insist on avoiding it. We can only speculate on the underlying meaning of the gender-specific desire for (‘plata bruñida en el rostro’) or avoidance of

Again the spectators react immediately, taking up the fiction, expanding on it, and turning it into ‘their’ (also concretely sensually perceived) own truth. To a certain extent, they themselves become improvising figures of the play. Castrada instructs her cousin to uncover her face in view of the beautifying potential of the water, while asking her father to protect himself in order not to get wet. She herself opens her mouth wide and turns her face ‘to the sky’ or ‘to the ceiling’, respectively, and ‘drinks,’ pronouncing the water to be delicious. While Castrado is assuring his daughter that the men would all cover up, Benito makes the fairly vulgar, but funny, comment that the water had already run down his back to the “canal maestro.” Capacho, on the other hand, emphasizes his ‘integrity,’ stating that he was as dry as esparto grass.

CASTRADA: ¿Oyes, amiga? Descubre el rostro, pues ves lo que te importa. ¡Oh, qué licor tan sabroso! Cúbrase, padre, no se moje.

JUAN: Todos nos cubrimos, hija.

BENITO: Por las espaldas me ha calado el agua hasta la canal maestra.

CAPACHO: Yo estoy más seco que un esparto.

(p. 230)

The Gobernador again speaks in an aside, and is once again the only one who perplexedly questions the spectacle, or more precisely, who has doubts about his own perception, which does not match what the others claim to see and feel. In view of the rules of the *retablo*, this is causing him to question his own lineage. The Gobernador’s uncertainty has grown with each *aparte*. While in the first instance he realizes that, unlike the others, he did not ‘see’ anything, he still considered himself legitimately born and a proper Christian. After the ‘second appearance’ he alluded to the *negra honrilla* and decided that he would, for the sake of appearances, also say that he was seeing something. At this point however, he begins to be concerned, ‘recognizing’ that he might be illegitimate, and asking: ‘But what if I was to be the bastard among all those lawful?’ (“GOBERNADOR: [*Aparte*.] ¿Qué diablos puede ser esto, que aún no me ha tocado una gota donde todos se ahogan? ¿Mas si viniera yo a ser bastardo entre tantos legítimos?” p. 230). It is however only the readers/spectators who know of the Gobernador’s confusion; his peers – presumably because they themselves are preoccupied with ‘proving’ that they ‘see everything’

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(‘barba de oro’) contact with the water; perhaps it references a (possibly sexual or vulgar) subtext the meaning of which is now, 400 years later, lost to us.

Chanfalla describes – do not notice that he sees nothing, even if he has not yet openly remarked on the show as they have done. When the Gobernador observes the discrepancy between his own perception and the behavior of the rest, he in effect becomes a spectator of his fellow spectators or rather of their ‘acting.’

Benito Repollo then begins to thunder against Rabelín and his musical accompaniment, as he had before the performance: “BENITO: Quítenme de allí aquel músico; si no, voto a Dios que me vaya sin ver más figura. ¡Válgate el diablo por músico aduendado, y qué hace de menudear sin cítola y sin son!” (p. 230; if one did not take the musician out of his sight, he would leave the place of performance without even looking at another image. This goblin of a musician should be taken by the devil) and complains about the unbearably dissonant music that Rabelín is making, repeating himself over and over again without any sense of rhythm or sound (‘y qué hace de menudear sin cítola y ni son’). It should be noted that – at least based on the stage direction – it is not clear whether Rabelín is actually ‘playing music’ at all. Benito is the only one from the audience who refers to the ‘musician’ and his ‘playing.’ The description ‘menudear sin cítola ni son’ is ambiguous and could also mean only that he repeated the supposed movement of playing, without actually having an instrument, a *cithara*, or making any sound at all. Given that Chanfalla and Chirinos make no mention of the ‘action’ of the musician Rabelín (or rather the description of his music), the spectator-actor Benito can freely improvise in this respect, once again evading any potential suspicion that he was among those not able to see the show. Rabelín responds angrily that the *alcalde* should stop complaining about his music because he was playing the way he was taught to please God. Benito reacts with even more anger, insulting him and threatening him with violence and demanding that he disappear behind the curtain, or he would throw a bench at him. Rabelín responds that it must have been the devil who brought him to this village.<sup>823</sup> Capacho draws attention back to the ‘stage’ or rather to the image narrated by Chanfalla that transgressed the boundary between stage and audience. He declares that the water from the Jordan River was fresh, because although he had covered himself as well as he could, some water had nevertheless dripped onto his moustache, which now, he wagers, was as yellow as a piece of gold.

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**823** “RABELÍN: Señor alcalde, no tome conmigo la hincha, que yo toco como Dios ha sido servido de enseñarme. BENITO: ¿Dios te había de enseñar, sabandija? ¡Métete tras la manta; si no, por Dios que te arroje este banco! RABELÍN: El diablo creo que me ha traído a este pueblo” (p. 230).

Benito immediately joins in, uttering that it was fifty times worse. The transformation of fiction into reality is intensified yet again, as the rest of the audience takes up the evoked image and expands upon it independently. (“CAPACHO: ¡Fresca es el agua del santo río Jordán! Y aunque me cubrí lo que pude, todavía me alcanzó un poco en los bigotes, y apostaré que los tengo rubios como un oro. BENITO: Y aun peor cincuenta veces” pp. 230 f.).

Chirinos quickly begins to explain the next ‘performance’ saying that at least two dozen rampant lions (“leones ra[m]pantes”) and honey-eating bears (“osos colmeneros”) would now be arriving, while at the same time, she, remarkably, qualifies the animals as fantastic or imagined, saying that all living things should beware of them, for even though they are “fantásticos” they are still able to cause harm, with drawn swords (“espadas desenvainadas”) that rival the strength of Hercules. (“CHIRINOS: Allá van hasta dos docenas de leones ra[m]pantes<sup>824</sup> y de osos colmeneros. Todo viviente se guarde, que, aunque fantásticos, no dejarán de dar alguna pesadumbre, y aun de hacer las fuerzas de Hércules, con espadas desenvainadas” p. 231). It should be noted that all these images: the ‘rearing, rampant lions’ (*leones rampantes*), bears (*osos [colmeneros]*), swords (*espadas*), and Hercules are references to heraldry and the Spanish Royal coat of arms (which features the Pillars of Hercules and the lion).<sup>825</sup> In view of this horde of dangerous animals about to bear down on them, Castrado and Benito turn to Chanfalla in outrage. Was he now intending to fill their house, i.e. his, with lions and bears, says the former (“JUAN: Ea, señor Autor, ¡cuerpo de nosla! ¿Y agora nos quiere llenar la casa de osos y de leones?” p. 231). The mayor becomes even more indignant, demanding that ‘more peaceful figures’ appear or he would put a stop to the show immediately, and referring to Tontonelo, the retablo’s presumed inventor, says: “BENITO: ¡Mirad qué ruseñores y calandrias nos envía Tontonelo, sino leones y dragones! Señor Autor, [o] salgan figuras más apacibles, o aquí nos contentamos con las vistas, y Dios le guíe, y no pare más en el pueblo un momento” (p. 231; Tontonelo would not send any nightingales and woodlarks, only lions and dragons. Either more peaceful characters must appear or they will be content with those already seen, and may God guide the actors, but they should not stay in their village a single moment longer). Juana Castrada, however, asks

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**824** Cf. the passage in the first edition, fol. 246v (“Che. Allà va[n] hasta dos docenas de leones ra[m]pantes, y de ossos colmeneros, todo viuie[n]te se guarde, que aunque fantasticos, no dexaran de dar alguna pesadu[m]bre, y aun de hazer las fuerças de Hercules con espadas desembaynadas.”).

**825** A rampant bear eating from a strawberry tree features in the coat of arms of Madrid.

Benito to allow the bears and lions to appear, even if it was only for them (Castrada and Teresa), because they would enjoy it. Castrado interjects in amazement that his daughter had been so scared of the mice before, and now she wished to see bears and lions? To which his daughter replies that everything that is new is pleasing. (“CASTRADA: Señor Benito Repollo, deje salir ese oso y leones, siquiera por nosotras, y recibiremos mucho contento. JUAN: Pues, hija, ¿de antes te espantabas de los ratones, y ahora pides osos y leones? CASTRADA: Todo lo nuevo aplice, señor padre” p. 231). In other words, the spectators are once again discussing the ‘content’ of the show and what they consider to be appropriate or inappropriate within its framework. Although they do not question ‘the fact’ that something is being seen (with the exception of the Gobernador, however, in the form of asides), the images described by Chanfalla and Chirinos are not at all easily accepted, but criticized as too dangerous and too exciting, and they ultimately even make requests regarding the upcoming parts of the ‘performance.’ Furthermore, the punch line of this scene, which is simultaneously comic and serious, is that the ideology-driven delusion of the audience of the show has reached such a level that the explicitly-mentioned fantastic/imaginary aspect of the beasts described by Chanfalla and Chirinos are not even taken into account and it is assumed, as in the ‘mice scene,’ that they are real animals that would soon be seen on the stage.

Chirinos now ‘conjures up’ the last image of the show: “Esa doncella, que agora se muestra tan galana y tan compuesta, es la llamada Herodías, cuyo baile alcanzó en premio la cabeza del Precursor de la vida. Si hay quien la ayude a bailar, verán maravillas” (pp. 231 f.; ‘This girl, who appears so elegantly dressed before you, is Herodias, whose dance received as a prize the head of the harbinger of life. If somebody helps her dance, there will be seen some wonders’). There is now an explicit demand for interaction between stage and audience, for the spectators to be transformed into characters in the fictitious stage show.

As was the case with the first ‘scene’ with the blind Samson, this is also an event mentioned in the Bible, this time from the New Testament, albeit in a slightly distorted form. According to the Gospels, the daughter of Herodias (traditionally known as Salome, although this name is not specified in the biblical narrative) danced for her stepfather Herod Antipas in honor of his birthday. As a reward for her performance, he promised to fulfill her every wish. At her mother Herodias’ instigation (“for Herodias’ sake,” as it says in Mark’s Gospel), she asked that the head of John the Baptist, already imprisoned by Herod, be brought to her immediately on a platter. According to Christian teaching, John the Baptist is considered the precursor of Jesus Christ, who in turn is considered ‘the life’ (hence the phrase here: ‘Precursor

de la vida’). Herodias was furious with John the Baptist for his criticism of her marriage to Herod after she had previously been married to Herod’s brother, Philip.<sup>826</sup>

The ‘dancing scene’ that ensues is quite licentious; Benito in particular appears to be totally carried away, enthusiastically praising, in a vulgar tone, the ‘beautiful girl’s’ sensual dance and inviting his nephew,<sup>827</sup> who was skilled in the use of castanets, to dance with her, to which the latter immediately agrees:

BENITO: ¡Ésta sí, cuerpo del mundo!, que es figura hermosa, apacible y reluciente. ¡Hideputa, y cómo que se vuelve la mochac[h]a! – Sobrino Repollo, tú que sabes de achaque de castañetas, ayúdala, y será la fiesta de cuatro capas.

SOBRINO: Que me place, tío Benito Repollo. (p. 232)

Then a saraband is played, that is, there is ‘actually’ the sound of dance music, audible also to the external audience of *El retablo de las maravillas*, as the stage direction says: “(Tocan la zarabanda.)” (p. 232). The inner spectator Capacho immediately specifies the kind of dance taking place with the imaginary Herodías and the ‘real’ Sobrino, saying: “¡Toma mi abuelo, si es antiguo el baile de la zarabanda y de la chacona!” (p. 232). *Zarabanda* (‘saraband’) and *Chacona* (‘chaconne’) were folk dances with fast tempos and ‘lascivious moves’ that were considered immoral during this period. Benito eggs on his dancing nephew, yelling: “Ea, sobrino, ténselas tiesas a esa bellaca jodía.” But he then asks, in bewilderment, that if she (the figure of the dancing Herodías/Salome, whom he had just despicingly called *bellaca jodía*) was Jewish, how was it then possible that she could also see all the marvels: “Pero, si ésta es jodía, ¿cómo vee estas maravillas?” (p. 232). Chanfalla’s ironic answer to this is simply: “Todas las reglas tienen excepción, señor Alcalde” (p. 233; ‘There are no rules without exceptions’). The boundaries between the play/imagination/reality levels now seem to have been completely dissolved and the play reaches a new

**826** Cf. *Mt* 14,3–12 and *Mk* 6,17–29, quote: *Mk* 6,17. It is Flavius Josephus (37/38–100 CE) who gives Herodias’ daughter the name Salome (cf. *Antiquitates Iudaicae* XVIII, 5,4); Josephus also lists a different motivation for the death of John the Baptist, writing that Herod Antipas captures him out of fear of rebellion, and then killed (on the death of John the Baptist, cf. *Antiquitates Iudaicae* XVIII, 5,2) (used edition: Flavius Josephus, *Ioudaikē Archaologia/Jewish Antiquities* [Greek-English], ed. and trans. Henry St. John Thackeray, Ralph Marcus, Louis H. Feldman, and Allen Wikgren, in: *Josephus*, 9 vols., Cambridge, MA/London 1926–1965, vols. 4–9 [1930–1965]; cf. vol. 9 [1965]; *Jewish Antiquities, Books XVII–XX*, pp. 92 f. and pp. 80 f.).

**827** The figure of Benito Repollo’s nephew was introduced in the stage direction describing the entry of the characters before the ‘play within the play’ as “UN SOBRINO de Benito, que ha de ser aquel gentilhomme que baila.” (p. 226).

height of absurdity. Benito, spectator of the *Retablo de las Maravillas*, not only ‘sees’ the ‘living image’ (the figure of the dancing Herodías) evoked by the *autores*, but positions this image as itself a spectator subject to the rules of spectatorship set down by Chanfalla.

At this point the ‘outside’ (the play *not* within the play) interferes with the ‘inner play frame.’ A trumpet sounds and a ‘real person’ enters the room. This (‘real life’) character is *un furrier de compañías*, a quartermaster (*furrier*) of the royal military seeking food and shelter for his troops. The stage direction says: “(Suena una trompeta, o corneta dentro del teatro, y entra UN FURRIER de compañías.)” (p. 233). The quartermaster asks for the Gobernador, and requests that accommodation be organized for thirty cavalry soldiers who were arriving within half an hour, if not sooner, as the trumpet announcing them had already sounded. As fast as the quartermaster appeared, he as quickly disappears: “FURRIER: ¿Quién es aquí el señor Gobernador? GOBERNADOR: Yo soy. ¿Qué manda vuesa merced? FURRIER: Que luego al punto mande hacer alojamiento para treinta hombres de armas que llegarán aquí dentro de media hora, y aun antes, que ya suena la trompeta; y adiós. [Vase.]” (p. 233).

Benito then instantly declares that he bets that it was “el sabio Tontonelo,” that is, the ‘creator’ of the *Retablo de las Maravillas*, who was sending them the soldiers (“BENITO: Yo apostaré que los envía el sabio Tontonelo” p. 233). Benito does not perceive the ‘real’ appearance of the quartermaster and instead integrates him and his words into the ‘play’ (the soldiers announced by the *furrier* had been ‘sent’ by Tontonelo and were thus part of the *retablo*). But Chanfalla denies Benito’s assumption, saying that there was indeed a cavalry company that had been quartered two miles away (“CHANFALLA: No hay tal; que ésta es una compañía de caballos que estaba alojada dos leguas de aquí” p. 233). The mayor is outraged:

BENITO: Ahora yo conozco bien a Tontonelo, y sé que vos y él sois unos grandísimos bellacos, no perdonando al músico; y mirá que os mando que mandéis a Tontonelo no tenga atrevimiento de enviar estos hombres de armas, que le haré dar docientos azotes en las espaldas, que se vean unos a otros. (pp. 233 f.)

He insists that the soldiers, to whom the villagers would have to provide quarters, were in fact sent by Tontonelo. When he states that he now knows that they all – Tontonelo, Chanfalla, Chirinos, Rabelín – are the greatest scoundrels, this supposed ‘knowing’ does not refer to the actual deception being perpetrated on him by Chanfalla and Chirinos, but rather refers to the play having ‘brought’ the soldiers to the village, and the inconvenience this will now cause. The integration of reality into fiction (which Benito does not perceive), the dissolution of the boundary between play and seriousness, is so distorted that



Benito threatens Chanfalla and commands him to tell Tontonelo not to dare send them these men in arms, otherwise he will hit him 200 times on the back. Even when Chanfalla again objects that the soldiers were not sent by Tontonelo, Benito continues to insist that they were, as were all the other ‘nastinesses’ and ‘pests’ (“sabandijas”) that had been sent to them and that he had seen himself: “CHANFALLA: ¡Digo, señor alcalde, que no los envía Tontonelo! BENITO: Digo que los envía Tontonelo, como ha enviado las otras sabandijas que yo he visto” (p. 234).<sup>828</sup> Upon this ‘cue’ (‘que yo he visto’), which refers to the rules of the show, Capacho immediately jumps in and stresses that they all had seen it (“CAPACHO: Todos las habemos visto, señor Benito Repollo” p. 234). Benito is then at pains to reassure him that he had not claimed the opposite, and again, full of impatience and anger, rudely addresses Rabelín, telling him to stop playing, or he would smash in his skull (“BENITO: No digo yo que no, señor Pedro Capacho. – ¡No toques más, músico de entre sueños, que te romperé la cabeza!” p. 234). Directly thereafter the quartermaster returns and inquires whether the quarters were ready, as the horses were already in the village. Benito becomes infuriated, since he had strongly requested that Chanfalla make sure (i.e. instruct Tontonelo) that the soldiers were not to come. He is convinced that Tontonelo is responsible for the soldiers’ arrival and angrily threatens to beat Chanfalla. In the face of this danger, Chanfalla turns to everyone, saying that they were witnesses of the mayor threatening him. Chirinos also tries to draw the attention of those present, especially the quartermaster, to the danger posed by Benito, saying that she would summon them as witnesses of the mayor’s claim that what His Majesty had ordered (i.e. the obligation of the population to support his army, to provide quarters for the royal soldiers) was a command of the sage Tontonelo. Thereupon the angry Benito threatens her again.<sup>829</sup>

It should be pointed out that the aspect of the soldiers’ reality status brings into play a (quite seriously intended) critical reference to the undecidability of

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**828** This also means that Benito classifies the king’s soldiers as ‘*sabandija*’ (‘vermin,’ ‘worms,’ ‘bugs’).

**829** “FURRIER: Ea, ¿está ya hecho el alojamiento? Que ya están los caballos en el pueblo. BENITO: ¿Qué, todavía ha salido con la suya Tontonelo? ¡Pues yo os voto a tal, Autor de humos y de embelecocos, que me lo habéis de pagar! CHANFALLA: Séanme testigos que me amenaza el Alcalde. CHIRINOS: Séanme testigos que dice el Alcalde que, lo que manda S[u] M[ajestad], lo manda el sabio Tontonelo. BENITO: ¡Atontoneleada te vean mis ojos, plega a Dios Todopoderoso!” (p. 234).

truth and illusion as postulated by skepticism. The serene skeptical assumption of *isosthenia* is far from being compatible with all (real-life) situations, because according to the prevailing legal *usus* of the time, a village that refused to fulfill the obligation of supplying troops could be plundered and burned. Thus, an answer to the question of whether the soldiers are ‘real’ or (only) part of the stage spectacle ultimately cannot be avoided; and depending on the compatibility or incompatibility of the subjective perception of ‘true realities,’ the incorrect decision, or non-decisive ‘suspension of judgment,’ could cost one one’s life.

The Gobernador now interjects that in his opinion the soldiers were real and not part of a play or a joke (“GOBERNADOR: Yo para mí tengo que verdaderamente estos hombres de armas no deben de ser de burlas” p. 234). The Gobernador was the only member of the audience who doubted the ‘authenticity’ of the performance, but this was only, and this is relevant, related to his own perception, which differed from what the other spectators claimed to have seen. He had admitted, though only to himself, that he was not seeing anything at all, and this caused him to doubt, not the show, but his own origins, which he had hitherto considered impeccable, and led him to choose instead to pretend to see rather than admit that he could not. Despite his own experience, and his close observation of his fellow audience members and their reactions during the play, it never occurred to him to suspect that they too might only be pretending to see the show. His astonishment always related to the discrepancy he noticed between his own perception and that of everyone else. Now, although he appears to be siding with Chanfalla and Chirinos, he does not do so by referring objectively to his own assessment of the situation, that the soldiers’ arrival was precisely not part of a *burla*, i.e. that it and they were real. The quartermaster is stunned by the Gobernador’s remark and doubts his sanity for considering the possibility that the soldiers could have been a joke, and wonders whether he was sound of mind (“FURRIER: ¿De burlas habían de ser, señor Gobernador? ¿Está en su seso?” p. 234). Castrado, however, in turn, continues the argument that they could well also have come from Tontonelo, i.e. be part of the play. The ontological status of the scenes that ‘appeared’ in the show are described here by means of an adjectivization of the name of its (supposed) inventor Tontonelo (and their real existence, in view of the meaning of that name is taken *ad absurdum*): they could have been *atontoneleados* – ‘caused by Tontonelo’ – like all the other things that they had been watching. He then asks Chanfalla to let the young Herodías perform again, so that the quartermaster could see something he had never seen before. Perhaps this would also make him leave quickly: “JUAN: Bien pudieran ser atontoneleados; como esas cosas habemos visto aquí. Por vida del Autor, que haga salir otra vez a la doncella Herodías, porque vea este señor lo que nunca ha visto; quizá con esto le

cohecharemos para que se vaya presto del lugar” (p. 234). Chanfalla immediately re-invokes the image of the dancing Herodías and the ‘play within the play’ continues. So be it, says Chanfalla, and then describes how Herodías was already giving her former dancing partner a sign that he should again help her in her dancing (“CHANFALLA: Eso en buen hora, y veisla aquí a do vuelve, y hace de señas a su bailador a que de nuevo la ayude” p. 235). Instantly, Benito’s *sobrino* is willing to resume his ‘part,’ assuring the spectators that it would certainly not be because of him that the dance would not continue. Benito is immediately on fire again, cheering on his nephew (it can be assumed that el Sobrino actually does dance): “SOBRINO: Por mí no quedará, por cierto. BENITO: ¡Eso sí, sobrino, cánsala, cánsala; vueltas y más vueltas; ¡vive Dios, que es un azogue la muchacha! ¡Al hoyo, al hoyo! ¡A ello, a ello!” (p. 235). The quartermaster, witnessing the spectacle of the wildly dancing young man and his uncle’s boisterous encouragement, and in light of the previous discussion, gives vent to his deep astonishment, expresses his incredulity as to what is taking place before his eyes and ears and assumes that those present were crazy. He asks amazedly which *doncella* and which dance they were talking about, and who this Tontonelo was. At this, Capacho asks if he was not seeing “la doncella herodiana,” whereupon the confused quartermaster reacts angrily, demanding again exactly what *doncella* was he supposed to be able to see. (“FURRIER: ¿Está loca esta gente? ¿Qué diablos de doncella es ésta, y qué baile, y qué Tontonelo? CAPACHO: ¿Luego no ve la doncella herodiana el señor furrier? FURRIER: ¿Qué diablos de doncella tengo de ver? p. 235) After saying that even with the best will in the world he was not seeing any such figure, the villagers immediately draw the only conclusion relevant to them: the quartermaster was unable to see anything because he lacked the ‘pure ancestry’ that was the precondition for seeing the show. They therefore now belittle him<sup>830</sup> as ‘belonging to the others,’ crying that he was ‘one of them’ (i.e. not *cristiano viejo*),<sup>831</sup> and call out:

CAPACHO: Basta: de *ex il[l]is* es.

GOBERNADOR: De *ex il[l]is* es; de *ex il[l]is* es

JUAN: Dellos es, dellos el señor Furrier; dellos es.

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**830** That is what it must be called here, in the context of a community based on racist principles, which mercilessly excludes ‘others’ who are, according to these principles, supposedly ‘inferior.’

**831** The other (anchored in the comic) sign of ‘dishonor’ or the reason for not being able to see anything, i.e. the aspect of ‘illegitimate birth,’ is now no longer relevant.

FURRIER: ¡Soy de la mala puta que los parió; y, por Dios vivo, que, si echo mano a la espada, que los haga salir por las ventanas, que no por la puerta!

CAPACHO: Basta: de *ex illis* es.

BENITO: Basta: dellos es, pues no ve nada.

FURRIER: ¡Canalla barretina!: si otra vez me dicen que soy dellos, no les dejaré hueso sano.

BENITO: Nunca los confesos ni bastardos fueron valientes; y por eso no podemos dejar de decir: dellos es, dellos es. (p. 235)

The *escribano* Capacho is the first to shout out that the *furrier* was ‘one of them (the others),’ using the Latin expression *ex illis*, which refers to a passage in the New Testament referred to as “the Denial of Peter.” During the Last Supper Jesus foretold that he would be arrested that night and that Peter would deny knowing him three times before morning (before the cock crows). After Jesus was arrested, Peter followed behind and stopped by a fire outside the house where Jesus was imprisoned. A servant girl recognized him as ‘one of them’ (“*ex illis*”), i.e. one of the disciples of Jesus, which Peter then denies.<sup>832</sup> The Latin words used to accuse Peter of being a disciple of Jesus (i.e. a Christian) are now used by the villagers to identify the quartermaster as a non-Christian. The Gobernador, too, immediately joins in the accusation and repeats the charge (*de ex illis es*) twice, despite the fact that he himself could not see anything of what everyone claimed to see. It could have been possible, now that his own perception coincides with that of another person, for him to at least question the reliability of the show; there would be at least the possibility of problematization. But the Gobernador proceeds according to the strategy he has devised, namely when in doubt continue to assert that he, too, could see something, because of the all-important *negra honrilla* and, especially because of the now apparent danger of becoming, like the quartermaster, the target of

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**832** Cf. *Mt* 26,73 (“Et post pusillum accesserunt qui stabant, et dixerunt Petro: *Vere et tu ex illis es*: nam et loquela tua manifestum te facit”/‘And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee’ [‘Peter Denies Jesus’ altogether: *Mt* 26,69–75]); cf. *Mk* 14,69 f. (“Rursus autem cum vidisset illum ancilla, coepit dicere circumstantibus: Quia hic *ex illis est*. At ille iterum negavit. Et post pusillum rursus qui astabant, dicebant Petro: *Vere ex illis es*: nam et Galilæus es”/‘And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto’ [the passage as a whole: *Mk* 14,66–72]); cf. as well *Lk* 22,54–62, here *Lk* 22,58.

the others' rage. The quartermaster functions as a scapegoat, enabling the unleashing of rage against the 'intruder,' the 'outsider.' He was *ex illis*, a member of the despised and hated 'New Christians.' It is now that Castrado and Benito, seeing the *retablo's* rules and the order of their community confirmed, also join in the accusations that he was *dellos* because he could not see anything. The *furrier*, however, becomes angry and threatens them with violence. If they claimed even one more time that he was 'one of them' he would draw his sword and not leave a healthy bone in them. Benito then argues that neither *confesos* nor *bastardos* had ever been brave and they would therefore not cease to say that 'He is one of them.' The threat of real harm is ignored in favor of established convictions about 'these others.'

The 'play within the play' and the play as a whole end in bloody chaos. The quartermaster defends himself against the villagers, finally drawing his sword and stabbing several of them. Benito beats up the musician Rabelín (as he had repeatedly threatened to do). For their part, Chirinos and Chanfalla are pleased with the result of their scam. Chirinos takes down the blanket, saying that 'the devil had probably blown the trumpet and had made the soldiers come at the right time' (that is, before their fraud could be discovered). Thereupon Chanfalla says, and these are the last words of this Cervantine interlude, that the events had been extraordinary, the virtue of the *retablo* was intact with nothing to prevent them from presenting it to people the next day, and that they themselves should celebrate their triumph in this battle with the cry of viva Chirinos and Chanfalla!

FURRIER: ¡Cuerpo de Dios con los villanos! ¡Esperad!

[stage directions:] (*Mete mano a la espada, y acuchillase con todos; y el ALCALDE aporrea al RABELLEJO; y la CHIRINOS descuelga la manta y dice.*)

CHIRINOS: El diablo ha sido la trompeta y la venida de los hombres de armas; parece que los llamaron con campanilla.

CHANFALLA: El suceso ha sido extraordinario; la virtud del Retablo se queda en su punto, y mañana lo podemos mostrar el pueblo; y nosotros mismos podemos cantar el triunfo desta batalla, diciendo: ¡Vivan Chirinos y Chanfalla!

(pp. 235 f.)

The ending of *El retablo de las maravillas* is unique among Cervantes' interludes for its chaos and excessive violence. It is the only *entremés* in the collection *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos, nunca representados* that does not end with singing and (usually also) dance. At the time of Cervantes' writing the 'harmonious finale' had become an increasingly dominant feature of the genre as a whole, largely replacing the chaotic 'brawl ending'

(*final a palos*) customary in the early interludes, such as Lope de Rueda's (1510–1565) *pasos*. Yet it is not that the dance and music, typical of *entremés* per se, are missing here. They are actually an integral part of what one could call a decisive characteristic of the interlude, namely, the intricate play of reality versus fiction/imagination/pretend and its related theme of perception. In the 'Dance of Herodías,' the last of the scenes evoked by the *engañadores-autores* Chirinos and Chanfalla, the audience members not only applaud the 'performance' but also become (actual) participants in the (imagined) stage play. Interrupted by the appearance of the *furrier*, when the dance is resumed again before him, a spectator who is not privy to the premise of the *Retablo de las Maravillas*, his statement that he does not see any dancing woman constitutes the beginning of the (violent) end of both the 'play within the play' and the play itself. The villagers, who have been 'watching' the *retablo of marvels* under the terms of the rules given to them (and helping shape it, up to point of delusion), attack the quartermaster, who then stabs them with his sword. The partly imagined, partly real dance ends with the general excess of violence that concludes the play. Benito's nephew dances somewhat obscenely with the 'invisible' Herodías – he too, at least presumably, will be stabbed by the quartermaster. Also the musician Rabelín, who has been ridiculed from the very beginning of the play and whose 'playing' and appearance had been contemptuously remarked upon repeatedly during the 'play within the play' by Benito, is now – as he has been threatened several times by his tormentor – beaten up. Thus, it is not music and dance, but their 'destruction' that brings an end to the *entremés*.

*El retablo de las maravillas* is a polyvalent dramatic text characterized by a complex layering of illusion and reality in which the problematization of distinguishing between seeming and being, fake and real, unfolds by means of the 'play within the play.' This 'inner play' is not a conventional theater within the theater. Designated a puppet theater, it is, in fact, a puppet theater without puppets, in a sense, an 'invisible' play within the play. The figures and events 'taking place' on stage are generated solely by the words of the play's 'directors' Chirinos and Chanfalla and by those of the spectators who take up the idea of these images and continue to expand on the narration. The 'play within the play' that is depicted has different levels of authorship. As Montiel, Chanfalla narrates the actions that take place within the *Retablo de las Maravillas*, which he pretends was created by 'el sabio Tontonelo' (as the spectators increasingly involve themselves with the fiction, they constantly refer to Tontonelo as the authority, or the one responsible for the 'content' of the play). In addition, on the one hand the play is also influenced by being part of the deception perpetrated by Chanfalla and Chirinos (only the readers/

spectators know of this dimension), and, on the other hand, it is also marked by the idea of the miraculous and wondrous (and is presented as such to the inner audience). The performance is here linked to the seeing of its perceivers, limited to those of *limpieza de sangre* and legitimate birth. The suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience, generated mainly by their fear of being regarded as ‘impure’ (in the sense of the religiously-based racist discourse) and consequently exposed to social exclusion, leads them to do everything to avoid the slightest doubt of their seeing the events being performed in the *retablo*. Cervantes has addressed the obsession of *limpieza de sangre* (and the all-pervasive *honra*, the external appearance that determines social life) by means of a bogus theater performance. The delineation between stage and reality (internal action and framework plot) are fluid from the very beginning, with a constant crossing of the boundaries between play and seriousness, including the ironic and comic subtexts. The spectators themselves become ‘actors,’ embracing (all the absurd) images and expanding upon them, turning fiction into reality. The ‘events on the stage,’ as well as the audience and their reactions become objects of observation. The discrepancy between one’s own perception and that of others, and the related question of how one obtains a reliable understanding of the world based on this perception – is made evident by the Gobernador’s *apartes* and culminates with the appearance of the quartermaster. It is not only about the individual’s perception of the external world, but about a reciprocal interplay; not only about the problems of perception as such, but also about the risks and behavioral strategies resulting from a situation of mutual observation. The audience accepts the rules of the performance because these rules also determine social life in general. The play draws attention to the manipulative force of ideology on subjective perception. We have already discussed how this was manifest in the Gobernador and shall now look more closely at how this played out with another character, the scribe Capacho. After ‘viewing’ the first part of the play (Samson), Capacho’s reaction is not (yet) clearly affirmative like that of Benito, but consists in a question. He tentatively asks Castrado: ‘¿Veisle vos, Castrado?’ [Can you see him?], to which the latter immediately affirms ‘¿Pues no le había de ver? ¿Tengo yo los ojos en el colodrillo?’ [Why should I not see him?]. Capacho here can either be trying to ascertain whether or not Castrado’s perception corresponds to his, i.e., that Castrado cannot see anything either, or it can also be read as trying to insinuate that perhaps Castrado cannot see it (referencing the constraints that determine who can see and who cannot), it is to this supposed doubt regarding his purity that Castrado responds to so vehemently. One may also call this a structure of *isosthenia*. In the second and third *retablo*-scene evoked by Chanfalla and Chirinos (the bull and the mice)

Capacho's reactions are not mentioned. It is only in the fourth scene, with the water from the Jordan River, that we hear from him again. When Benito says that the wondrous rainwater has dripped down on to his *canal maestra* Capacho notes that he is completely dry: 'Yo estoy más seco que un esparto.' On the one hand, this could be understood as meaning that he is going along with the rules of the *retablo* and has protected his face, and particularly his beard, so well, for example with a hat, jacket or hands, that the water has not reached him. On the other hand, it could also indicate his actual 'not-seeing': he is dry because he does not perceive anything of the supposed rain water at all. Shortly afterwards, however, following the dispute between Benito and Rabelín, he too becomes an 'active player,' describing the water that has now also dripped on him as being fresh, saying that although he was covering himself as well as he could, a little bit had dripped on his moustache. He then takes things even further by saying that he bets that his beard is now as yellow as a gold coin. This in turn eggs on his fellow spectator/player Benito, who says that it was even fifty times worse. It is Capacho who, when the *sobrino* begins to dance with (the imaginary) Herodías, with music coming from offstage ('*Tocan la zarabanda*'), refers to the dance in concrete terms. Later, after the first appearance of the quartermaster, Benito says angrily to Chanfalla that the soldiers were part of the play like all the 'pests' he himself had seen, Capacho is at pains to stress that they all had seen them. It is Capacho who pushes the quartermaster as to whether or not he could see the *doncella herodiana*, and it is Capacho who is the first to denounce the quartermaster with the words '*¡de ex illis es!*', and expose him to the rage of the crowd. The Gobernador, who, apart from his asides stating that he actually does not see anything, has not made any comment throughout the entire 'performance,' but is now the very next character to join Capacho in crying '*de ex illis es!*'

Against the background of what has already been discussed, it is worth taking a closer look at the play's title. *Retablo* means puppet theater, or, more precisely, the stage of the puppet show on which the puppets appear. This was a popular form of entertainment in Spain of the 16th and 17th centuries. The *retablos* (or *teatro de títeres*) were often performed in the rural areas by wandering performers, who tended to be of Italian origin.<sup>833</sup> Apart from the play currently being discussed, Cervantes also used this form of theatrical performance in connection with the issues of perception, 'representation and interpretation,'

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<sup>833</sup> Cf. Kenworthy, *The Entremeses of Cervantes* (cf. note 779), p. 91; cf. to this altogether: John Earl Varey, *Historia de los títeres en España (desde sus orígenes hasta mediados del siglo XVIII)*, Madrid 1957.



and the instability of the boundaries between fiction and reality in the second part of the *Quijote*, where the motif of the puppet theater appears in the famous episode of the *titerero* Maese Pedro.<sup>834</sup> The term *retablo* originally referred to

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**834** Cf. Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. John Jay Allen, 2 vols., 1st ed., Madrid 1977, vol. 2 (22nd ed. 2001): *Segunda Parte del Ingenioso Caballero Don Quijote de la Mancha*, chaps. 25–27, pp. 215–240, here pp. 218–235. The passage in brief: One evening Don Quijote and Sancho Panza meet the puppeteer Maese Pedro in an inn, who, as the innkeeper tells them, travels through the country with a ‘fortune-telling’ monkey and a *retablo*. The performance of the puppet show is preceded by a (likewise to be paid) ‘questioning’ of the monkey; however, as its owner explains, the monkey could not make any statements about the future, but only give information about the past and the present. When Sancho then asks the monkey how his wife was doing, Maese Pedro slaps himself on the shoulder, the monkey jumps up and moves his mouth for a while, as if whispering something in his ear. To the amazement of all those present, Pedro then identifies Quijote and Sancho as “[el] alabado caballero Don Quijote de la Mancha” (p. 221) and his squire; Teresa Panza, he continues, she is well, she is at work and sweetening it with some wine. They also ask the monkey whether what Don Quijote ‘experienced’ in the Cave of Montesinos (cf. chap. 23, pp. 197–207) was a dream or reality and content themselves with the ‘answer’ (articulated by Pedro according to the same procedure as before) that it is partly wrong and partly probable and that the monkey cannot say more at the moment. (In view of what has been discussed in this study, attention should be drawn here to the reference to the skeptical dream trope.) The puppet theater play that Maese Pedro then performs before all the guests and staff of the tavern (he himself operates the characters while his young servant acts as the *intérprete* commenting on what is happening on stage) is about Don Gaiferos’ liberation of his wife Lady Melisendra (introduced as the daughter of Charlemagne), who the Moors have held captive in Zaragoza. At first, Don Quijote knows how to distinguish between reality and fiction. For example, when the bells ring out and it is said that this sound was coming from the towers of the city’s mosques, he indignantly interjects that the ringing of the bells is a great mistake, for Moors do not use bells. However, when the plot reaches the point where Melisendra and Gaiferos are on the run and persecuted by the Moorish King Marsilio and his soldiers, Don Quijote, with the intention of protecting the fleeing couple, draws his sword and begins to beat the puppets and the puppet theater, in order to present himself afterwards as the savior of the lovers and a true representative of chivalry. Later, he wants to compensate Maese Pedro for his destroyed puppet theater and shattered puppets, which he claims was consequence of a spell: the wizards chasing him were constantly transforming everything before his eyes, the figures and the events were real in his perception, this was the reason why he got angry and, according to his profession as a traveling knight, wanted to help the fleeing couple and acted with good intentions. When determining payment, however, Don Quijote again seems to believe in the fiction and when Maese Pedro identifies a torn puppet as Melisendra, he says that it could not be her, since the horse on which she had fled with Gaiferos had been so fast that the true Melisendra and her lover would certainly already be in France. Pedro thereupon simply says that the puppet was a servant of Melisendra and Quijote agrees to pay him for it and all the other shattered puppets and they have dinner together. At the beginning of the following (27th) chapter, the narrator discovers the true identity of Maese Pedro (with reference to the report of the Arab

a group of wood paintings or carved wood panels (*tablas*) showing Christian scenes. The meaning of the word then became broader, and the term denoted the box of puppets used to depict scenes of Christian-religious content, before finally being used to denote a puppet theater in general.<sup>835</sup> The genesis of the word, particularly with regards to the meaning of the term *retablo* as an altar-piece (or, also in English, ‘retable,’ or ‘reredos,’ respectively), adds depth to the play, specifically its underlying religious theme. The combination of theater and religion is related to the religious theater of the time. This aspect is further emphasized, albeit not explicitly, with the use of the word *maravillas* (wonders/miracles). The status of miracles and the miraculous was one of the central points of dispute between Protestantism and Catholicism. Whereas Protestant theology negates the existence of miracles (beyond the historical ones in the Bible), Counter-Reformation Catholicism takes the position that miracles can happen again at any time (as determined by the ecclesiastical authorities).<sup>836</sup> This debate over miracles, however, was also being taking place within the

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historian Cide Hamete Benengeli): actually, he is Ginés de Pasamonte, a trickster known to the readers of the first part of the *Quijote* (cf. chap. 22 of the First Part, which deals with Don Quijote’s ‘Liberation of the Galley Prisoners’: Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. John Jay Allen, vol. 1 [20th ed. 2000]: *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, chap. 22, pp. 270–281). After his escape from prison he had come to Aragón and was earning money as a puppeteer, an art that he mastered most besides playing the legerdemain. Sancho and Quijote do not recognize him because his face was half covered. He, on the other hand, recognized them immediately. He had bought the monkey from liberated Christians and taught him to act as if he were whispering in his ear and before coming to a place he made sure to inquire in the town nearby about all the goings on. The complexity of the Maese Pedro episode and its significance in terms of the illusion play and narrative structure of the novel can only be touched upon here. Cf. in this respect, for instance, already George Haley, “The Narrator in *Don Quixote*: Maese Pedro’s Puppet Show,” *Modern Language Notes* 80 (1965), pp. 145–165 (cf. p. 163: “Maese Pedro’s puppet show is [...] an analogue to the novel as a whole, not merely because the burlesque legend that Maese Pedro recreates with puppets is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the same chivalric material that Cervantes burlesques through his characters, but also because it reproduces on a miniature scale the same basic relationships among storyteller, story and audience that are discernible in the novel’s overall scheme. Yet analogy does not imply absolute identity, and the discrepancies in this case are as meaningful as the correspondence.”).

**835** Cf. the entry in Covarrubias: “RETABLO, comunmente se toma porla tabla en que està pintada alguna historia de deuocion, y por estar en la tabla y madera, se dixo retablo. Algunos estrangeros suele[n] traer una caja de titeres, que representa alguna historia sagrada, y de alli les dieron el nombre de retablos” (Covarrubias, *Tesoro* [cf. note 779], Segunda Parte, fol. 10v).

**836** Regarding the Counter-Reformation position valid in Spain in the period of origin of the drama, cf. Concilium Tridentinum, Sessio XXV, 3–4 dec. 1563 “De invocatione, veneratione et reliquiis sanctorum, et de sacris imaginibus”/Session 25, 3–4 December 1563 ‘On invocation,

Catholic Church. Erasmus, in particular, fiercely polemicized against the belief in miracles and the worshipping of relics. The Erasmian-skeptical ridicule of the belief in miracles,<sup>837</sup> without being made explicit here, is conveyed in the play's title and its content, which express the idea that miracles are nothing but deception and illusion, perceived only as a result of ideological pressure.

The central miracle of Catholicism, i.e. the miracle of the Eucharist, was the subject of the *auto sacramentales*. This fact, together with the ambiguity of the title and use of the ideologeme of *limpieza de sangre* in the manipulation of perception (with its role as part of the 'attempt to (re-)constitute an Old Christian Spanish society'); as well as the Counter-Reformation dimension in the Spanish theater of the time, seem to indicate that in *El retablo de las maravillas* Cervantes was, at least with regard to the play's metatheatrical dimension, also casting an ironic and critical eye at the *auto sacramental* genre and its practice during this period.<sup>838</sup>

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eneration and relics of saints, and on sacred images' (*Canones et Decreta/Canons and Decrees* [cf. note 374], pp. 774–776).

**837** Cf., e.g., Erasmus of Rotterdam, Μωρίας Εγκώμιον *sive Laus Stultitiae* (1511) 39–42 (Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Praise of Folly/Moriae encomium*, trans. and ed. Betty Radice, in: *Collected Works of Erasmus* [cf. note 67], vol. 27: *Literary and Educational Writings, 5: Panegyricus; Moria; Julius exclusus; Institutio principis christiani*, ed. Anthony H.T. Levi, Toronto/Buffalo/London 1986, pp. 77–154, pp. 112–116; *Laus Stultitiae/Das Lob der Torheit*, in: Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Ausgewählte Schriften* [Latin-German], ed. Werner Welzig, 8 vols., Darmstadt 1968–1980, vol. 2 [1975]: Μωρίας Εγκώμιον *sive Laus Stultitiae. Carmina Selecta*, trans. and ed. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, pp. 1–211, here pp. 88–101); Erasmus, *Enchiridion militis christiani* (1503) 12–13 (Erasmus, *The Handbook of the Christian Soldier/Enchiridion militis christiani*, trans. and ed. Charles Fantazzi, in: *Collected Works of Erasmus* [cf. note 67], vol. 66: *Spiritualia*, ed. John W. O'Malley, Toronto/Buffalo/London 1986, pp. 1–127, here pp. 61–84; Erasmus, *Enchiridion militis christiani/Handbüchlein eines christlichen Streiters*, in: Erasmus, *Ausgewählte Schriften* [Latin-German], vol. 1 [1968]: *Epistola ad Paulum Volzium. Enchiridion militis christiani*, trans. and ed. Werner Welzig, pp. 55–375, here pp. 168–241, esp. pp. 176–181).

**838** In her analysis of Cervantes' *Retablo*, Bárbara Mujica focused on its connection to philosophical discourse, and emphasized the ancient dispute between dogmatists and skeptics, with dogmatism represented by the villagers, which is skeptically challenged by the retable-play of the fraudster couple, and displays the influence of Erasmian skepticism (Bárbara Mujica, "Cervantes' Use of Skepticism in *El retablo de las maravillas*," in: Bárbara Mujica/Sharon D. Voros/Matthew D. Stroud (eds.), *Looking at the 'Comedia' in the Year of the Quincentennial: Proceedings of the 1992 Symposium on Golden Age Drama at the University of Texas*, El Paso, March 18–21, Lanham, MD 1993, pp. 149–157). Cf. "[...] [T]he influence of Erasmus's humanistic skepticism on Cervantes has not been adequately explored. Cervantes's *El retablo de las maravillas* takes on a new clarity when examined within the context of the ancient debate between skeptics and dogmatists. Like Don Quijote, the councilmen of *El*

Furthermore, the theme of honor, so central to Spanish culture of the time, is given satirical and ironic treatment that references not only the social discourse beyond the play, but can also be read with regard to the specific modeling of this theme in the *comedia nueva*.<sup>839</sup> It has been noted that in his work, Cervantes seems to be in dialogue with the various literary genres of his time. In his prologue to his volume of plays, Cervantes referred to the omnipresence of Spanish drama as shaped by Lope de Vega and his school. In addition to the explicit allusions, often intended ironically, to the theater of the time<sup>840</sup> in *El*

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*retablo de las maravillas* are dogmatists who espouse a world view based on unquestioned assumptions. [...] The goal of the tricksters is not to force the councilmen out of their dogmatic stance, but to play on the insecurity that dogmatism breeds” (p. 151); “Erasmus twists the skeptical argument regarding the unreliability of human perceptions into a satirical apology for man’s need to dogmatize. Similarly, Cervantes creates characters whose very sense of self depends on their ability to twist reality to conform with their own system. Significantly, Cervantes does not judge his characters harshly for their tendency to dogmatize, even though he pokes fun at them” (p. 152). With regard to the classification of the *burladores* as ‘skeptics’ she writes: “I would not argue that Chanfalla and Chirinos are full-blown skeptics, but they are certainly pragmatists. Experience has taught them that appearances are deceiving; in fact, they are in the business of manipulating appearances. [...] Chanfalla and Chirinos are crooks, not philosophers; they achieve financial gain, not *ataraxia*. Nevertheless, within the context of the play, they are the winners” (p. 155); with regard to the conclusion, which tends in the result to that presented here, however, differs in the accentuation, see: “Although Cervantes was influenced by skepticism, through the *gobernador* he illustrates just how difficult it is to maintain a skeptical stance. Although Cervantes showed time and time again that human understanding is flawed, that the senses cannot be trusted, that the will transforms reality in accordance with preconceived notions and that social and personal circumstances influence an individual’s judgement, he also knew that it was impossible for men and women living in society to suspend judgement about issues of vital importance to them. As a matter of fact, even Sextus taught that convention was a valuable guide to conduct. If dogmatism makes people intolerant, fanatical, and vulnerable to the machinations of manipulators such as Chanfalla and Chirinos, skepticism in its purest form does not offer a viable alternative” (p. 156 f.). Mujica’s article is almost the only publication on *El retablo de las maravillas* that explicitly discusses Cervantes’ dramatic text in the context of skepticism. A global study on the aspect of skepticism in Cervantes – with a focus on his main narrative work, *Don Quijote* – has been written by M. Ihrle (*Skepticism in Cervantes* [cf. note 2]).

**839** In Lope de Vega’s *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* it says: “Los casos de la honra son mejores / porque mueven con fuerza a toda gente, / con ellos las acciones virtuosas, / que la virtud es dondequiera amada” (vv. 327–330; Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* [cf. note 503]).

**840** Chanfalla/Montiel claims that he was asked by the lay brothers running the *corrales* in Madrid to come remedy the financial distress caused by the lack of *autores de comedias* with his ‘miracle *retable*’; the *Gobernador* presents himself as the author of 22 *comedias*, written one after the other, with which he wants to make the *autores* of the capital rich; Chirinos notes that there are so many writers of comedy, all of whom considered themselves famous, and so

*retablo de las maravillas*, including the possible ironic reference to the *auto sacramental* genre mentioned above, the text also references the pattern of Lopean *comedia*. A sub-genre of the popular *comedia de honor* is the so-called ‘peasant play/honor play’ (*comedia de la honra villana*, *comedia de labradores* or *comedia villanesca*), exemplified by Lope de Vega’s *Fuenteovejuna* (before 1614, publ. 1619) and *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña* (publ. 1614). In this context it is interesting to examine in more detail how Cervantes looks ironically at the connection between the code of honor and *limpieza de sangre* expressed in the *comedia* of the time.<sup>841</sup> For example, the villager-protagonists of the honor plays all tend to be proud Old Christians<sup>842</sup> and Cervantes seems to subvert the heroes of the *comedia de honor* by transforming them, in his work, into doltishly simple characters. The concept of honor so seriously reaffirmed in the *comedia* is, in Cervantes, renegotiated and ridiculed. While in *comedias* weddings tend to serve as a starting point for the conflict and are certainly a serious issue,<sup>843</sup> in *El retablo de las maravillas* the wedding (hastily arranged in the Castrado house) is nothing but a sham, a fake occasion to serve as the excuse for the *retablo* performance. The *comedias* ideologically and politically reinforce the centralization of power, showing the honorable peasants submitting gladly to the absolute power of the kings and being recognized by their

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many mediocre plays, which were always staged, so that mentioning them would not be worthwhile.

**841** In this context, see Michael E. Gerli, “*El retablo de las maravillas*: Cervantes’ ‘Arte nuevo de deshacer comedias’,” *Hispanic Review* 57 (1989), pp. 477–492.

**842** “Yo soy un hombre, / aunque de villana casta, / limpio de sangre, y jamás / de hebrea o mora manchada” (vv. 3030–3033), emphasizes Peribáñez, who is sentenced to death when describing the events from his point of view in front of the royal couple (the murder of the Comendador to protect the honor of his wife Casilda, “también limpia, aunque villana, / virtuosa [...]” [vv. 3043 f.], from his sexual assault); after all, Peribáñez is not only acquitted and praised for his courage and his honor, but is appointed *capitán*, given the right to bear arms and financially rewarded. (Quoted after the edition: Lope de Vega, *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*, ed. Juan María Marín Martínez, Madrid 1979).

**843** In *Fuenteovejuna*, the village defends itself against a despotic Grand Commander after he kidnaps Laurencia during her wedding with Frondoso, rapes her and throws the groom into the dungeon; *Peribáñez* begins with the celebrations of the wedding between the protagonist and Casilda, which is interrupted by the arrival of the Comendador injured (by a bull!) who, from that moment on, desires Casilda, who takes care of his injury, and then does everything to ‘possess her’ which ultimately leads to his death at the hands of Peribáñez. Weddings are generally the way in which honor is restored in the Spanish *comedia*, often as part of the (re)establishing of order by the ruler(s). In *La vida es sueño*, Segismundo restores Rosaura’s honor by marrying her to Astolfo and marrying Estrella himself; in Tirso de Molina’s *El burlador de Sevilla o convidado de piedra* (publ. 1630), the king marries all of Don Juan’s ‘aggrieved’ ladies off to suitable partners.

monarchs for their righteousness and loyalty. In *El retablo de las maravillas*, royal power is represented by the quartermaster and the soldiers, who, rather than serving as symbols of power, are attacked and the truth of their reality questioned. Thus, the villagers, for their part, are not protected, but on the contrary, albeit out of self-defense, experience brutal violence.

Luis Quiñones de Benavente (1581–1651) wrote a version of *El retablo de las maravillas* that was first published in 1645.<sup>844</sup> This *entremés*, however, not only adheres more closely to standard forms, such as ending with a song, it also defuses the content of the Cervantine version. Quiñones does away with the theme of *limpieza de sangre*, and instead only cuckolded husbands are unable to ‘see’ the *retablo* performance. This raises the comic aspect of the play, which then concludes harmoniously.<sup>845</sup> In *Los tejedores*

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**844** Luis Quiñones de Benavente, *Entremes famoso, el retablo de las maravillas*, in: Luis Quiñones de Benavente, *Joco seria. Burlas veras, o reprehension moral, y festiua de los desordenes públicos: En doze entremeses representados y veinte y quatro cantados*, Madrid 1645, fols. 178r–185r. (It was performed by a prominent actor and *autor de comedias*: “Representole Christoual de Auendaño.” [fol. 178r]).

**845** In Benavente’s burlesque farce, composed in verse, the number of characters is, in contrast to Cervantes’ *Retablo*, greatly reduced (from eleven to six: Pilonga, Alcalde, El Sacristán Chichota, Regidor, Teresa, Escribano). The appearance of the scam artist/puppeteer Pilonga in the middle of the play, wearing a mask with a long nose who tickles the Alcalde from behind and generally acts clownishly, makes it clear that the character is farcical (stage direction: “Sale Pilonga con vna mascara, con vnas narizes largas, y por detras del Alcalde le haze cosquillas con ellas en los carrillos, y el se dà de bofetadas, pensando que son moscas” [fol. 181v]). When the Alcalde finally turns around, he falls to the ground in shock, and the other villagers are also frightened by the mask (“[stage direction: ‘Buelue, y ve a Pilonga, y cae entierra, y los demas se espantan.’] ALC[ALDE]: Jesus, que mala vision. / REG[IDOR]: Tirte a fuera. / ESC[RIBANO]: Va de retro. / etc.” [fol. 181v]). Pilonga then takes off the mask and announces that she is carrying a ‘*retable* of wonders,’ to be performed as a substitute for the plays on Corpus Christi that the place could not afford (“PIL[ONGA]: Que vengo a esta aldea / [. . .] / Con vn retablo que llaman, / de las marauillas ciento, / y pues el dia del Corpus, / por faltalles el dinero, / no tienen vustedes fiestas, / aqueste retablo haremos” [fol. 182r]). The Alcalde is prepared to pay her appropriately if she gives them a taste of the play right away. The reception of what is to be shown is, however, subject to a condition (“vn conque”), as Pilonga immediately explains, namely that the *retable* show can only be seen by the one whose wife is faithful. Unlike in the Cervantes’ play, neither *limpieza de sangre* nor ‘illegitimate birth’ are mentioned; and although the play centers around the theme of honor this is treated lightly and only serves as background for comedy: “PIL.: Ay vn conque / ALC.: Venga el conque, / es de comer? / PIL.: Majadero, / es el conque que ninguno, / que tuiere en el cabello, / alguna desigualdad, / en que tropieze el sombrero, / verà nada del retablo. / REG.: No lo atino. / ESC.: No lo entiendo. / [. . .] / PIL.: Digo pues, que el que tuiere / la muger de ojos trauiessos, / de visitas, y recaudos, no podra ver mas que vn ciego, / cosa de lo que enseñare” (fols. 182r–182v). All those present immediately declare that they will be able to see ‘the

[The Weavers],<sup>846</sup> an *entremés* probably written in 1660 by Ambrosio de Cuenca (biographical data unknown), the *burla* does not unfold by means of a puppet play, but refers back, as the title already indicates, to the legend of

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performance' without any problems. The first image that Pilonga evokes is a wild bull and the viewers run around confused or throw themselves to the ground, as if it were a 'real danger' ("PIL.: Pues ojo a letra, señores, / que el retablo va saliendo. / Todos se aparran, que sale / vn torazo Xarameño, / mas valiente, que el que tiene / a san Lucas el tintero. [stage direction: 'Corren todos, como que ay toro en el tablado, y el Alcalde se eche.'] ESC.: Iesus, y que bravo toro. / TER[ESA]: Echate hombre. / ALC.: Ya me echo" [fol. 183r]). In the second (and last) *retablo* scene evoked by Pilonga (in Cervantes, there are six), she 'lets' the flood waters of the Nile pour over the spectators and instructs them to get rid of their coats and cloaks and swim, which they then immediately put into action ("PIL.: Ya el toro se ha entrado dentro, / y aora se suelta el Nilo. / ALC.: Que niño es que se ha suelto? / PIL.: Que harà quien nadar no sabe, / fuera capas Caualleros. / ALC.: Iesus, y que golpe de agua. [stage direction: 'Quitanse las capas, y caperuzas, y hacen como nadan echados'] [fol. 183v]). Unlike in Cervantes, here the discrepancy between the spectators' 'participation in the action' and the 'not being able to see anything' is clearly shown to the external audience: all the spectators say in asides that they cannot see anything and therefore assume that they are cuckolded husbands and contemplate the punishment of their wives (e.g. "SAC[RISTÁN]: Moxaisos Alcalde? / ALC.: Bueno, / el agua hasta la cintura, / [A parte.] viue Christo que estò seco / mas que arenal por Agosto. / ESC.: A mi a la boca, y ya bebo. / REG.: [A parte.] Que sea yo el mas desdichado [fol. 184r] / de todos mis compañeros? / SAC.: [A parte] que quando todos se mojan, / ni aun húmedo no me siento, / oy perece mi muger. / REG.: [A parte] Oy a mi muger entierro. / ALC.: [A parte] Muger mia destas sos? / oy aurà degollamiento" [fols. 183v–184r]). With the words that the water floods would now retreat again, Pilonga disappears with all their coats. The villagers eventually notice the fraud, i.e. the theft, and decide to go after Pilonga ("PIL.: Ya se recogen las aguas. [stage direction: 'Vase, y lleuase las capas.'] / SAC.: Vamos a enjugarnos presto. / ALC.: Adonde està lo mojado? / que yo los veo muy secos. / REG.: Echos estamos vna agua. / ALC.: De congoja, yo lo creo. / SAC.: Cubramonos nuestras capas, / no nos haga mal el fresco. / ALC.: Valgate el Diablo la moça, / que nos trae al retortero. / REG.: Y la muger? / ALC.: Afufon. / SAC.: Y las capas? / ALC.: Volauerunt. / TER.: Alcalde, la del retablo / es ladrona, y por el viento / va bolando con las capas. / [...] / TOD[OS]: Vamos tras ella al momento" [fols. 184r–184v]). Pilonga re-appears singing, gives back the stolen coats and explains that their wives have not cheated on them. The play concludes with a song sung by Pilonga and the Alcalde. ("PIL.: Las capas, que las lleuè / sahumadas se las bueluo. / ALC.: Como las capas mos traiga, / yo perdono el sahumero. / PIL.: Sus mugeres son honradas, / a pagar de mi dinero. / ALC.: Y lo que vuested se lleua, / es a pagar de los nuestros. / PIL.: Como siendo tan Poeta, / no me dize algunos versos? / ALC.: Escuche aquesta cancion / que compuse a sus ojuelos. / Essos ojos criminales, / si me miran con enfado, / son trompetas, y atabales, / que dizen a los mortales, / suban, suban al terrado. [Repitan, y vanse.]" [fols. 184v–185r]).

**846** Ambrosio de Cuenca y Argüello, *Entremes delos Texedores*, Manuscript Biblioteca Nacional de España (signature MSS/15813), n.d., fols. 46r–53v; edited by Henri Recoules, "Entremés de los Tejedores de Don Ambrosio de Cuenca," *Anales Cervantinos* 15 (1976), pp. 283–293, here pp. 285–293. The piece appears to have been written no earlier than 1660 in



*The Emperor's New Clothes* that appears in the *Conde Lucanor*. In this play, the restriction of perception claimed by the swindlers consists solely in that only those of *limpieza de sangre* can see the cloth. However, this is embedded in the purely comic framework typical of the genre. Like Quiñones' *Retablo*, this play is also uncritical and lacks the clever and complex play between reality and fiction so evident in Cervantes. Here too the play is resolved harmoniously. The prank and the prankster are revealed, and the playful and merely entertaining character of the interlude itself is emphasized, particularly by the closing scene of singing and dancing by both deceivers and deceived.<sup>847</sup> Despite the focus of this chapter specifically on *El*

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light of references to current events in the text. For example, the Alcalde wants to have a decent feast in honor of the marriage of the Infanta Mary Theresa, the youngest daughter of Philip IV, with Louis XIV, which led to peace between Habsburg Spain and France ("ALCALDE: La Infanta se ha casado de Castilla / y las paces con Francia se publican, / las campanas repican / y España en fiestas se recrea toda. / La villa ha de fundirse en fiesta y boda" [vv. 26–30, p. 286]). This is also proof that the text *could* not have served as a source for Cervantes (as, e.g., stated in Armando Cotarelo y Valledor, *El teatro de Cervantes: Estudio crítico*, Madrid 1915, pp. 571–591 ["*El retablo de las maravillas*"], here pp. 573 f., and following this Reed, *The Novelist as Playwright* [cf. note 779], p. 151).

**847** In *Los tejedores*, the Sacristán has a love affair with Casilda, the mayor's wife, and asks his friend Carrizo to support him in a joke he intends to play on the Alcalde in revenge for his jealousy; he had promised to avenge Casilda, after she had been beaten by her husband in a violent quarrel and had come to him crying. The accomplice agrees. The next scene shows the Alcalde and the Regidor. The mayor decides that they will organize a splendid feast in the village in celebration of the wedding of the Infanta and the peace with France, (megalomaniacally he expresses: "Si Madrid hace fiestas, yo las quiero. / ¿Semos menos nosotros, majadero, / no soy justicia yo como el rey mimso?" [vv. 21 ff., p. 285]). The problem is that they do not have adequate clothing or fabric in the village. The Escribano is assigned to collect all the clothes in the village. On his return, he brings along two 'strangers' who could produce the most beautiful fabrics in no time at all and for little money ("ESCRIBANO: Aquí traigo unos hombres extranjeros / que por pocos dineros / en breve tiempo harán tela mas buena / que Milán, que Venecia, y que Lucena" [vv. 55–58, p. 287]). That this is the disguised Sacristán and his accomplice Carrizo (stage direction: "Entran el sacristán, y Carrizo, vestidos de extranjeros, ridículamente" [p. 287]), the spectators already know from an *aparte* by Casilda ("El sacristán con un disfraz gracioso / castigará a este tonto malicioso [el alcalde]" [vv. 51 f., p. 286]). The disguised Sacristán then claims that they had traveled from Caramania – that is, from Turkish lands – via Rome to Spain, and the two were duly praised; now, he announces, he wants to produce wonderful fabrics ("unas telas prodigiosas") in a very short time, as they have not even been seen in Madrid; they are not expensive, because it is not about craftsmanship, but about science. ("SACRISTÁN: Nosotros, señor, venimos desde Caramania a Roma, / de allí pasamos a España / donde hemos hecho mil obras, / con el aplauso debido / a nuestras nobles personas. / [...] / [...] Quiero ahora / hacer en muy poco tiempo / unas telas prodigiosas / que no se han visto en Madrid / en la vida. [...] / [...] / [...] éste no es arte, / ésta es ciencia, que



*retablo de las maravillas*, it should be noted that the other interludes in Cervantes' collection also use the 'play within the play' (or similar dramatic devices) to explore issues of reality versus fiction, although not with the

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sin costa / haremos lo que quisiéreis. / [...] / [...] En media hora / estará tejida, y hecho / della el vestido o la ropa" [vv. 65–82, pp. 287]); only one condition is attached to it: the most magnificent, cheapest and fastest-producing substance can only be seen by *cristianos viejos* ("SACRISTÁN: Mas con una condición / que la tela más vistosa, / la más barata y más breve, / no la verá la persona / que algo tenga de judío / o morisco, aunque la pongan / en su presencia" [vv. 85–91, p. 288]). Enthusiastically, the Alcalde commissions the Sacristán, not caring if it is witchcraft or hellish work. ("REGIDOR: [...] No, amigos / son de los infiernos sombras / esas telas. ESCRIBANO: Y aun son brujos / los que tal prometen. / [...] / ALCALDE: [...] ¡Qué importa / que sea de los infiernos! / Yo las quiero. Quien blasona / de christiano viejo excusa / ver aquí su ejecutoria" [vv. 93–100, p. 288]). The two cheaters 'set to work'; the fact that they merely pretend to weave and that their company is a merry prank that is to be played out of revenge on the Alcalde is disclosed to the readers/spectators from the beginning ("SACRISTÁN: Ven, Carrizo, que hoy verás / la venganza más graciosa / que el mundo celebra. / [...] / Al alcalde no sólo doy papilla / pero pienso engañar a toda la villa. / [...] / Así vengo a Casilda soberana. / [...] Arrímate al telar, haz que tejemos" [vv. 105–122, pp. 288 f.]; stage direction: "Salen el sacristán y Carrizo como que tienen un telar y que tienen" [p. 290]). When the Alcalde enters and is frightened, he had thought he was an Old Christian, he realizes that he is unaware of the weaving pattern the two refer to, he, too, pretends to see something ("ALCALDE: ¡Lleve el diablo mi alma si veo cosa! [aparte] / [...] / ¿Hay mayor desventura? / ¡Y pretendía ayer familiarura! / Disimular es fuerza. [aparte]" [vv. 130–137, p. 289]). The same thing then happens to the Regidor, who also – obviously confused – decides to adhere to the maxim of 'unconditional dissimulation' ("REGIDOR: [...] O soy judío, / o estoy ciego. ¡Por Dios, esto ignoraba! / ¡Y un hijo colegial pensaba! [aparte] / [...] Que el vestido ha de ver la villa toda / y yo no; que el alcalde lo haya visto / mal mi pesar resisto, / disimular me es fuerza, aunque lo sienta, / que no es bien que publique yo mi afrenta. [aparte]" [vv. 156–168, p. 290]). Neither one admits that in truth they have not seen anything, and both are afraid to confirm that they are not Old Christians and affirm for themselves the need to hide this. Finally, the Alcalde puts on the finished 'clothes' ("SACRISTÁN: Aquí está ya el vestido, ropa fuera. / [...] / Veamos la ropilla, si está buena. [stage direction: 'Van lo vistiendo']" [vv. 185 ff., p. 291]). All comment on the invisible robe on the mayor now dressed only in his shirt ("ALCALDE: [aparte:] ¿Hay más notable pena? / ¿Hay desdicha que venga con más prisa? / ¡Que esté vestido yo estando en camisa!" [vv. 208 ff., p. 291]), at the same time the *apartes* make clear again that they feign everything in order not to be decoded as *cristianos nuevos* (now also the ESCRIBANO: "[aparte:] [...] Todos ven lo que yo ignor[o.] / Sin duda soy judío, hereje, o moro. / [...] / [...] ¡Famoso tale! / [aparte:] Fuerza es disimular. [...]]" [vv. 193–198, p. 291]). But when the three councilors are then among themselves, they finally, after they have mutually assured each other of their 'impeccable origin,' finally tell each other that none of them can see the dress and that the Alcalde is really just wearing his underwear and the fraud is revealed. ("ALC.: Escribano, ¿vos véis algún vestido? / ESCR.: Decídmelo, ¿soy hidalgo? ALC.: No lo dudo. / Pues, alcalde, advertí que estás desnudo. / REG.: ¿Cristiano viejo soy? ALC.: Yo sólo testigo. / ¿Qué decís, regidor? / [...] / REG.: Sólo en camisa os veo. ALC.: Estas traiciones / sin castigos no queden pues

same complexity or satirical-critical vigor (e.g., *El vizcaíno fingido*, *El viejo celoso* and especially *La cueva de Salamanca*). This aspect is also evident in the Cervantine comedias (cf., e.g., *La entretenida* and, in particular, *Pedro de Urdemalas*). It is also crucial to draw attention once again to the obvious parallel here to Cervantes' most important narrative text, *Don Quijote*, whose major theme is the skeptical thesis of the unreliability of sensory perception. In both *El retablo de las maravillas* and the novel, the Aristotelian model is shown to be problematic, but in neither case does the author offer an alternative means for understanding and getting along in the world, a lack to which the endings, the violence of the interlude, and the premature death of the protagonist of the novel, seem to point.

In conclusion, in distilling the above analysis, we can point to a concise denominator: reference to contemporary discussions of skepticism. While this element appears in all the plays discussed in this work, Cervantes is the only one

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podemos" [vv. 220–228, p. 292]). The next scene shows the Sacristán, Carrizo and Casilda, who are happy about their successful *burla* ("SACR.: Ellos quedan bien burlados. / CASILDA: Pague su malicia necia / el tontón de mi marido" [vv. 229 f., p. 292]). As the deceived approach and Casilda advises the Sacristán to hide better, he replies in a metatheatrical commentary that refers to the simple structure, playful, jocular character, and entertaining function of the genre *entremés*: "[...] Yo no quiero / Que esconderse es de comedia, / y éste no es más que entremés / donde los cuentos se juegan" (vv. 237–240, p. 292). The Sacristán reveals himself to the Alcalde and tells him that he has pulled this joke on him because of his jealousy and because he treated his wife Casilda so badly ("SACR.: [...] Yo soy, / alcalde, y por tus quimeras / y porque a Casilda tratas / tan mal, de aquesta manera / te he burlado" [vv. 243–247, p. 293]). There is no contradiction on the part of the doubly deceived Alcalde – after all, as the spectators know, there is cause for jealousy – no argument takes place, but everything dissolves into peaceful pleasure and mutual joking. When the Regidor agrees with the Sacristán and proposes to celebrate the *burla* together with dance and music, the Alcalde agrees. They sing and dance (stage direction: "Cantan y bailan" [p. 293]), a chorus of women comments on events and conflict with the words: "MUJERES: Si el alcalde es celoso / sufra la burla, / y si burlas no quiere / cállese y sufra" (vv. 253–256, p. 293), to which the Alcalde replies: "Bien se ve que no sufro / cosa ninguna, / que a quien sufre le visten / y a mí desnudan" (vv. 257–260) and – concluding this piece – turns to his wife Casilda after she expresses doubts about his sincerity: "Como guarde mi honra / nada se arriesga, / que aunque quede en camisa / no habré vergüenza" (vv. 265–268, p. 293). The framework for the fusion of the narrative of *The Emperor's New Clothes* with the *limpieza de sangre* aspect of Cervantes' *entremés* that is found in *Los tejedores* is common for the comic genre per se: in the combination of adultery and *burla*, the wife (Casilda) and lover (the Sacristán – besides the characters of 'dumb' village dignitaries also the 'lecherous' and 'witty' church servants are standard characters of the 17th century *entremés*) triumph over the betrayed husband (the Alcalde). In addition to the racist *limpieza de sangre* discourse, the piece also makes use of contemporary xenophobic stereotyping of the Turks, solely for the sake of comic effect.

to write a comic parody. The content of his play makes clear how dominant ideologies can influence what the senses perceive. In this way, the skeptical repertoire of arguments against Aristotelian epistemology is to some extent supplemented by a new perspective. The imperative felt by the audience of the 'play within the play' to be perceived and to perceive themselves as legitimately-born Old Christians compels them to 'subjectively' see something that 'objectively' does not exist. The Cervantine text (in a similar way to the other dramas addressed) goes beyond the 'staging' of the basic thesis of skepticism. The atypical violence of Cervantes' ending, which lends it a particularly high semiotic value, makes it clear that there are situations in which doubt about perception and 'status of being' can only go so far. In the end, the stab of a sword is irrefutable and has real and dire consequences. One can understand the insistence, as arises from Cervantes' play, that one *must* ultimately distinguish between what is real and what is not as a particularly emphatic commentary on this question. The sudden shift from harmless ridicule of a crowd of ignorant villagers into bloody chaos points to the fact that serene indifference to the question of the reality, while perhaps intellectually appealing, is, pragmatically speaking, a potentially ruinous position.

## Conclusions

The re-discovery of skepticism in the mid-16th century and the subsequent ubiquitous engagement with this philosophy in the ensuing period played a decisive role in the development of the cultural, scientific, and intellectual discourses of the time and ultimately determined the path to modernity. The present study's examination of 17th century dramatic texts from the three great theater cultures of Europe – England, Spain, and France – illustrates how pervasive skepticism was, as well as how variously it was expressed in the theater of Early Modern Europe. The texts studied represent a negotiation, repeated over and over again, with skepticism – Early Modern Europe's central epistemological challenge – played out on stages throughout the continent.

All the texts analyzed in this study express or make use of skepticism's deep mistrust of sensory perception and the indistinguishability of reality and illusion and transform basic arguments and strategies of the skeptics into dramatic form. The epistemological problem raised by skepticism, *isosthenia* (the equivalent conflict of opinions), historically responded to by *epoché* (suspension of judgment) is here followed by questions of praxis and norms of behavior. The plays all explore possible responses, touching upon the fields of moral philosophy and theology, in the face of the debilitating uncertainty generated by the skeptic position, in strikingly different ways.

*Hamlet*, the earliest of the texts analyzed here, revolves around questions of doubt and perception, real versus imaginary, and shows how Hamlet's inability to clearly evaluate what he perceives determines the action (of the play) and his own (in)action. Hamlet struggles repeatedly to attain certainty. An essential element of this (unsuccessful) search for certainty is the 'play within the play,' an element that appears in one form or another in all the plays discussed here. Skepticism in *Hamlet* is destructive, and its skeptic hero, rather than achieving the promise of happiness, serene *epoché*, or even the *ataraxia* of ancient skepticism, dies a gloomy tormented death. The play posits no solution to the epistemological challenge posed by skepticism.

Calderón's drama is truly a child of its time and place, and the impact of the Spanish Counter-Reformation is clear. In *La vida es sueño*, as in *Hamlet*, the protagonist struggles with the skeptical questions of the indistinguishability of illusion and reality, appearance and existence, dream and reality. And again, as in *Hamlet*, no solution is provided to resolve these questions. Instead, Segismundo (and the audience) cling to the practical teachings of the Church and submission to the Catholic dogma of *obrar bien* (to do good; to act well) as leading to the 'true life' to come. Certainty is repositioned. The question of the

reliability of sensory perception is rendered irrelevant. *Obrar bien*, based on the Catholic Church's ethics and moral-theological teaching, guarantees happiness in the beyond and success and satisfaction on earth. In Calderón, as in Descartes, rhetoric takes the place of logical reasoning, the staging of 'hyperbolic' doubt. The further discussion of Calderón's *auto sacramental* of the same name clarified that from a Counter-Reformation perspective an epistemological response to skeptic doubt about the reliability of sensory perception is virtually impossible; thus, attempts to overcome skepticism, which ultimately substantiate modernity, are implicitly rejected.

In Lope de Vega's drama *Lo fingido verdadero* the boundaries between being and seeming are constantly shifting, thus providing the play with a deeply skeptical shape. The 'real' martyrdom of Ginés at the end of the *comedia* and his joyful anticipation of the 'second act' in heaven, where he will be rewarded for his performance, carries the same message as that in Calderón's text. Namely, what is important is not the discernment between being and appearance, play and seriousness, life and dream, but faith, the belief in what is 'right' and right action. With Lope, however, this idea is reinforced not through rhetorical design and staged argumentation, as with Calderón, but through recourse to typological patterns of interpretation and the inclusion of 'real' history in the plot.

Rotrou's version of the Genesius drama offers a different treatment of skepticism and the problem of the indistinguishability of being and appearance, play and seriousness, in which the focus of the play is on the 'play within the play' and the character of Genest. This was an approach common in France of the period, especially with Descartes. Here one can certainly speak of a rationalistic approach; by means of reason, the audience is ultimately able to distinguish between play and seriousness. The moment of transition from acted to real conversion is distinctly marked. Theology, justification of conversion, and steadfastness of the martyr are here brought to the fore. The play appears to be offering an epistemological rather than dogmatic answer to the problem of skepticism. Reason and discernment, reflecting Descartes' principle of continuity and coherence, are prominent; that is, the idea that while a singular act of perception may be inconclusive, the assessment of the entire scenario leaves no reasonable doubt as to what is real and what fake. The dramatization of fundamental uncertainty, still possible in Lope's *comedia*, cannot be reconciled with the clarity demanded in French Classicist drama, which was consolidated during this period. Rotrou's text is, however, still a transitional one. Here the possibility of dramatic representation of skeptical *isosthenia* reaches its limits: the Spanish *comedia*, which explored the theme in a playful way, is transformed into a tragedy of French Classicism. In Rotrou's version of the Genesius

legend, reason, rather than faith, is used to distinguish between illusion and reality.

Cervantes is remarkable, particularly in the context of the work of Lope and Calderón, because rather than conforming to the didacticism of the Spanish Counter-Reformation, his work expresses a modern counter-voice to the dominant discourse. The only play discussed here not to have been performed during the author's lifetime, it too provides a 'play within a play' structure by which skeptic ideas are dramatized, suggesting that this structural element applies to all dramatic texts. It is also the only play modeled on a comic genre to be examined in this context, whose inclusion is justified by the hybrid nature of Cervantes' interlude. In *El retablo de las maravillas* the unreliability of sensory perception and the structure of *isosthenia*, reflected throughout the piece, is dramatized in parodic and ironic form. It makes use of the same 'play within a play' structure common to the other plays studied, but does so in an exceptional way – an invisible puppet show. The piece draws attention to the role of ideologemes in manipulating perception and one's ability to distinguish between illusion and reality. Cervantes takes a critical, satirical look at the way the dominant ideology of *limpieza de sangre*, so prevalent in Spain at the time, can be pushed to the point of absurd madness. In this way, his work seems to provide a modern complement to the skeptical argument against Aristotelian epistemology, as well as a profound anti-dogmatism. Dogmatism is the constant antithesis of skepticism. Despite its comic elements, the play also persuasively highlights the danger of dogmatic positions and their manipulative effect as leading to a quite literal ideological blindness. Cervantes is clearly presenting a skeptic and anti-Aristotelian view. However, as the bloody and violent ending to the piece shows, he was also critical of skepticism. Funny as it may be, the text shows that the play of illusion and reality and indecision over what is real or fictitious, can ultimately lead to harsh real-world consequences. *Epoché* may be intellectually attractive, but in practice it can be ruinous.

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