Staging and Stage Décor

Early Modern Spanish Theater

Edited by Bárbara Mujica
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# Table of contents

List of Figures vii

**Introduction** ix

Bárbara Mujica

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Part 1: Props and Space 1

**Chapter 1** Supplementary Aesthetics, Affordances, and Dynamic Props: Added Objects in Isabel Ramos’s *El perro del hortelano* (2004) 3

Christopher D. Gascón

*State University of New York College at Cortland*

**Chapter 2** Sketching *Portugalidade: Reinar después de morir* for the Twenty-First Century Stage 19

Esther Fernández

*Rice University*

**Chapter 3** Staging the *Comedia de magia* in the Reign of Felipe V 37

Susan Paun de García

*Denison University*

**Chapter 4** Incarcerated Performance: The Space and Context of Prison as Stage 57

Megan M. Echevarría and Iñaki Pérez-Ibáñez

*University of Rhode Island*

Part 2: Costume 75

**Chapter 5** “¡Dios me guarde, que estoy bella!”: *Los empeños de una casa* and Castaño’s Performance of Pretty 77

Mindy Badía

*Indiana University Southeast*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Dressing the Comedia</strong>: Textual, Archival, and Practical Considerations</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emily C. Tobey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Miami University</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>The Guardainfante Exposes More than Legs</strong>: Adapting Tirso's Marta the Divine for the Stage</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Cruz Petersen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Florida Atlantic University</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>(Re)Performing Isabel I of Castile</strong>: Pious Cruelty, Saintly Hypocrisy, and Lope de Vega's El niño inocente de La Guardia</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan L. Fischer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Bucknell University</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>A Bicephalic Melancholiac</strong>: Acting a Royal Pathology in Spanish Golden Age Drama</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eduardo Paredes Ocampo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>University of Oxford, UK</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Staging Female Melancholia</strong>: Calderón's No hay burlas con el amor</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bárbbara Mujica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Georgetown University</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>“Streleros” buenos y malos</strong>: Staging Astrology in Early Modern Spanish Theater</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valerie Hegstrom and Dale J. Pratt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Brigham Young University</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Reading Music in Cervantes's Entremeses</strong></td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoel Castillo Botello</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Deerfield Academy</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 13  Finding the Beat in ¡Risas aquí y después, ganancia! by The Grupo La Hormiga  221
Sharon D. Voros
United States Naval Academy

Chapter 14  Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's Mudarse por mejorararse and Changes over Time  237
Edward H. Friedman
Vanderbilt University

Our Contributors  253

Index  259
List of Figures

**Figure 1.1:** Teodoro (Dario Tangelson) rests an elbow on Diana’s throne. Photo by Awymarie Riollano, courtesy of Isabel Ramos and Repertorio Español.

**Figure 1.2:** Diana’s servants (Belange Rodríguez, Yaremis Félix, and Mariana Buoninconti) cower behind their sheets. Photo by Awymarie Riollano, courtesy of Isabel Ramos and Repertorio Español.

**Figure 1.3:** Ricardo (Ricardo Hinoa) kisses the coffee-canned feet of Countess Diana (Karina Casiano) as Fabio (Dan Domingues) looks on. Photo by Awymarie Riollano, courtesy of Isabel Ramos and Repertorio Español.

**Figure 2.1:** Overall view of the stage. Concave structure covered in gigantic Portuguese tiles. From right to left: Blanca de Navarra (Manuela Velasco), Alvar Gonzálvez (Ricardo Reguera), King Don Alonso (Chema de Miguel), Don Pedro (David Boceta), Brito (Julián Ortega), and Inés de Castro (Lara Grube). *Reinar después de morir* (2019). Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC)/Teatro Nacional de Almada. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid). Photo by Sergio Parra. Courtesy of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC).

**Figure 2.2:** Inés de Castro and wet nurse in Inés’s estate. From right to left: Lara Grube (Inés) and María José Alfonso (nurse). *Reinar después de morir* (2019). Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico/Teatro Nacional de Almada. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid). Photo by Sergio Parra. Courtesy of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico.

**Figure 2.3:** Inés de Castro (Lara Grube) after a vision of her own death on the banks of the Mondego River. From right to left: Alvar Gonzálvez (Ricardo Reguera), King don Alonso (Chema de Miguel), Blanca de Navarra (Manuela Velasco), and wet nurse (María José Alfonso). *Reinar después de morir* (2019). Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico/Teatro Nacional de Almada. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid). Photo by Sergio Parra. Courtesy of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico.
**Figure 2.4:** Inés de Castro (Lara Grube) in her final act of resurrection. *Reinar después de morir* (2019). Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico/Teatro Nacional de Almada. Teatro de la Comedia (Madrid). Photo by Sergio Parra. Courtesy of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico.

**Figure 4.1:** Photograph of the Royal Prison, taken from calle Nueva and dated in 1909 shortly before its demolition. Municipal Archive of Pamplona. Photographer: Aquilino García Deán. Reference: AMP001806.

**Figure 4.2:** Photograph depicting the entrance to the building of the Royal Council and the adjacent building of the Royal Prison. Photo taken from the Guendulain Palace in the Plaza del Consejo. Municipal Archive of Pamplona. Photographer: Aquilino García Deán. Reference AMP001777.

**Figure 7.1:** An 18th-century illustration of the crinoline skirts. James Francis Driscoll collection of historical American sheet music/The Internet Archive, CC BY-SA.

**Figure 7.2:** Early modern Spanish actress wearing a *guardainfante*. Colección de trajes de Juan de la Cruz y Olmedilla, 1777. http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?lang=en&id=0000051081.

**Figure 7.3:** Lucía (Samuel Bosworth) dancing. (Jon Crispin/ joncrispin.photoshelter.com).

**Figure 7.4:** Marta (Monica Giordano) and Lucía in the garden scene. (Jon Crispin/ joncrispin.photoshelter.com).

**Figure 7.5:** Marta and Lucía in the opening scene. (Jon Crispin/ joncrispin.photoshelter.com).

**Figure 9.1:** Arcangelo Migliarini, *Atamante preso dalle Furie*, 1801, oil on canvas, Academy of San Lucas.

**Figure 9.2:** El Bosco, *San Juan Bautista en meditación*, c. 1489, oil on canvas, 48.5 × 40 cm, Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid, Spain.

**Figure 9.3:** José de Ribera, *Media figura de mujer*, 1636, oil on canvas, 67 x 59 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain.
Introduction

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The “plays” traditionally studied in literature courses are really not plays. They are merely words on a page, texts that come alive only when they are staged. Staging requires actors, a performance space, and often (but not always) some sort of set, which may or may not include painted flats, props, or special lighting. A play also requires spectators, for, without an audience, there is no performance.

The first early Spanish theatrical works used few props or none at all. They were performed in town squares, patios, and private residences. In churches, unscripted reenactments of Bible stories were often performed at Easter or Christmas. Entertainments in Latin also took place in universities, where students and their instructors performed juegos de escarnio [games of jokes and jibes] on profane (non-religious) subjects such as unrequited love, usually following Latin models. Juegos escolares, composed by students and priests, dealt with religious themes. In 1574, the humanist Lorenzo Palmyreno composed a play in Castilian, the language spoken by the masses, thereby taking a significant step toward the creation of a theater targeted at a general audience.

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, strong cultural and political ties existed between Spain and Italy, due to the conquest of Naples in 1442 by Alfonso V of Aragon, uncle of the future King Ferdinand. In time, Spain came to govern Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and Milan. Ferdinand and his wife, Isabella I of Castile, were strong supporters of the arts and often sponsored theatrical entertainments. Many Spanish writers went to Italy, where the Renaissance was blossoming. One of these was Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (1480?-1530?), who lived in Rome and was influenced by the Italian humanists. While most playwrights of his time developed religious or pastoral themes inherited from the Middle Ages, Torres Naharro wrote lively, amusing plays with novelistic plots that were performed mainly for aristocratic audiences.

At the same time, another kind of theater was developing in Spain, one intended for a mass audience. Lope de Rueda, called Spain's first true man of
the theater because he wrote, directed, acted, and produced plays, headed a
traveling troupe of actors that performed in public streets or plazas. Their
repertoire consisted largely of short, humorous, fast-moving plays called pasos,
in which most characters came from the lower strata of society. Many featured
archetypes that would later become stock characters in early modern Spanish
theater. The pasos could be performed independently or as part of a comedia (a
term that at the time referred to any full-length play). Furthermore, traveling
troupes from Italy performed plays in the style of the commedia dell’arte, a kind
of improvised theater based on a fixed corpus of themes.

In 1558, Lope de Rueda requested money of the city council of Valladolid to
build several permanent locales, a sign that interest in professional theater
was growing. These theaters, called corrales, were open-air patios with a
platform at one end on which plays were performed. The early corrales were
very simple. Scenery might be painted on the wall of the building that housed
the theater or on curtains that could be changed easily. The balconies and
windows of the main and adjacent structures formed aposentos, boxes
occupied by aristocrats of either sex. Lower-class men, called mosqueteros,
stood in the uncovered area in front of the stage or sat in the gradas
[bleachers] on the sides of the stage or at the back of the patio. Lower-class
women sat in the cazuela [cooking pot], an area of the corral reserved for
them. Props for these productions were generally kept to a minimum.

By the early sixteenth century, playwrights had begun to compose plays that
were similar to the early modern comedia. The term comedia, which is used
throughout this book, originally referred to a full-length play—sometimes
with four or five acts—of any genre. Lope de Vega, who is credited with
creating Spain’s national theater, redefined the comedia in his Arte nuevo de
hacer comedias en este tiempo [New Way of Writing Plays in These Times]
(1609). The Arte nuevo is not a set of hard-and-fast rules, but rather a practical
guide to composing successful plays. Lope wrote for a wide range of viewers,
and his Arte nuevo is a compendium of recommendations based on his
experience of what worked for a corral audience. It influenced playwrights
during his own time and for generations to come.

Lope limited the number of acts—called jornadas—in a comedia to three,
after which the term comedia referred to any three-act play. He recommended
using a variety of verse forms and specified the function of each one. He
mentions that love and honor are themes that appeal to audiences. He
thought theater should mirror reality, and so he included characters from all
walks of life in his plays, mixed comedy and tragedy, and rejected a strict
adherence to the three unities of time, place, and action that prevailed in
classical theater.
Lope's earliest plays are quite simple in terms of staging and stage décor, but over the years, *comedia* productions became more intricate. Stage devices called *tramoyas* were incorporated into different types of plays. The *tramoya* was a type of fly system consisting of ropes, pulleys and counterweights that enabled the crew to hoist objects or people into the air for scene changes. Eventually, thanks to *tramoyas*, actors could appear to soar through the air, while trapdoors allowed them to suddenly disappear.

The second half of the seventeenth century saw a decline in the *corrales*, and playwrights turned increasingly to the court for patronage. Philip IV (1605-1665), who ascended to the throne in 1621, loved spectacles. He had many plays performed at the Palace of the Buen Retiro [Good Retreat], which he had constructed in the 1630s. He also sponsored tournaments, masques, bullfights, and other entertainments. At first, the court plays were performed by courtiers, but as the theater became increasingly professionalized, impresarios and acting troupes were contracted to produce ever more elaborate spectacles. Especially popular were the *comedias de tramoyas*, that is, plays that made extensive use of stage devices, which were more sophisticated and extravagant than those used in the *corrales*.

The famous Italian stage designer Cosimo Lotti came to Spain in 1626, and after the Buen Retiro was constructed, began to mount productions in the many dramatic spaces of the palace. In addition to ever more intricate stage devices that made possible multiple set changes, he introduced Italianate perspective scenery and extensive props. While the *corral* performances were usually in the afternoon, the use of artificial light made night performances possible at court. Outdoor performances were sometimes held in the Buen Retiro park, where full-scale naval battles could be reproduced on the artificial lake. In 1638, a thoroughly equipped theater called the Coliseo [Coliseum] was constructed.

Toward the end of Lope's life, a new generation of playwrights, headed by Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), began producing complex and spectacular plays for the court. The extraordinarily talented son of a noble family, Calderón was introduced to elite circles at an early age and began writing plays for King Philip IV in 1623. Unlike Lope, who wrote for the masses, Calderón wrote for aristocrats. Although he preserved the structure of the *comedia nueva* [new type of play] described by Lope, he imbued his characters with greater psychological depth than his predecessors. At first, he wrote for the *corral* theater, but later in life became a Franciscan friar and wrote principally *autos sacramentales* [one-act religious plays] and mythological plays for the court. These were complex productions that made use of sophisticated stage machinery. Angels or mythological characters soared through the heavens to the delight of the spectators below. Scenery
was painted on backcloths that could be easily changed. The public could attend these performances for a fee, and court theaters maintained the general layout and popular atmosphere of the corral. Sometimes spectators engaged in catcalls and whistles. Sometimes fights broke out, to the general amusement of the King and Queen.

The corral theater enjoyed support in Spain until the first decades of the eighteenth century, when Philip V, grandson of Louis XIV of France, ascended to the throne. Neither he nor his wife, Maria Luisa Gabriela de Saboya, spoke Spanish well, and they were quick to introduce French and Italian cultural norms to Spain. Nevertheless, the corral continued drawing popular audiences—in particular the comedia de magia [magic play], which made use of stage devices to create the illusion of magic.

Audiences had always been drawn to the spectacularity of theater, even before the age of sophisticated stage machinery. Romantic intrigue, fast-moving swordplay, and, for the mostly male audience, the sight of pretty actresses in revealing breeches in plays in which women dressed as men, were only a few of the attractions of the comedia. Yet, for decades, this aspect of theater was nearly overlooked by scholars. Students of early modern Spanish theater read plays as though they were stories, analyzing characters, plot, and underlying philosophical messages, but without paying much attention to staging.

However, in the 1970s, scholars’ attention shifted from the written text to the practice of theater. Research into early modern theater spaces, stage devices, costumes, actor training, acting techniques, and audience composition has enhanced our knowledge of how plays were actually presented and experienced. In 1984, the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, Inc. (AHCT) was formed to promote greater appreciation for Spain’s classical drama in production. The AHCT meets once a year for a conference in El Paso, Texas, in which staging issues are explored. In cooperation with the National Park Service, every evening the participants attend a modern production of an early modern Spanish play, then meet to discuss it.

The advent of postmodernism also influenced the ways in which historical plays are studied. For one thing, by blurring the boundaries between “high” and “low” culture, postmodernism directed attention to previously neglected genres such as the entremeses, jácara, mojigangas, and pasos. (The entremés [interlude] is a jocular one-act play performed between the acts of a longer play. The jácara is a short, humorous play in verse, with music and dancing, that usually deals with the antics of crooks and criminals. The mojiganga is a short farce, and a paso is a short humorous play in prose in which most characters come from the lower strata of society; it may occur in a longer play or be performed independently.) By challenging the dichotomy between “center”
Introduction

(nucleus of power) and “margins,” postmodernism made possible a new focus on previously neglected groups such as women, gays, and ethnic minorities.

The fourteen essays in this collection continue these trends and carry them further. The focus of all the articles included here is staging and stage décor, and how these have evolved over the years. The playtext has never been static. Early modern playwrights, impresarios, and actors constantly tweaked their scripts, adding, changing, or omitting words, reworking stage choreography, or making other alterations—sometimes right in the middle of rehearsals or even performances. Today’s directors continue this practice, imbuing the comedia with a new vibrancy and meaning to appeal to the twenty-first-century audience.

The authors of these essays explore both early modern and contemporary stagings of the comedia. They ask themselves: How might these plays have been performed in the seventeenth century? What stage properties and devices were used? How have modern directors adapted the text for a new generation of theatergoers? How has technology enhanced the staging of these plays? How do modern directors use scenography, props, and costuming to make statements relevant to contemporary audiences? How might theatrical archetypes that were familiar to early modern audiences be staged in such a way that contemporary audiences can relate to them?

The essays are divided into four categories: Props and Space; Costume; Theatrical Archetypes; Music, Movement, and Adaptation, although there is necessarily some overlap. For example, although the essays in Part 1 deal specifically with props and space, several authors mention these topics in their discussions of stage movement and costume, and although the essays in Part 2 deal specifically with costume, this topic is also relevant to props and archetypes.

Of the four essays in Part 1, Christopher Gascón’s is perhaps the most theoretical. In “Supplementary Aesthetics, Affordances, and Dynamic Props: Added Objects in Isabel Ramos’s El perro del hortelano (2004),” Gascón discusses how Ramos uses objects not mentioned in Lope’s original play to enhance the performance or indicate absences in the work. In “Sketching Portugalidade: Reinar después de morir for the Twenty-First Century Stage,” Esther Fernández discusses the innovative staging of Vélez de Guevara’s play by Ignacio García and Pepa Pedroche, noting how the directors of this hispanolusa co-production capture the Portugalidade [Portuguese-ness] at the core of the play. In “Staging the Comedia de magia in the Reign of Felipe V,” Susan Paun de García discusses the influence of Italian scenographers in the staging of the comedia de magia, which continued to be popular in Spain long after the death of Calderón. In “Incarcerated Performance: The Space and Context of Prison as Stage,” Megan M. Echevarría and Iñaki Pérez-Ibáñez
broaden our understanding of performance space in early modern Spain. Plays were not mounted only in theaters and palaces, but also in other venues, such as private residences, convents, and even prisons. In their article, Echevarría and Pérez-Ibáñez share their research on legal proceedings resulting from two prison performances.

Part 2 of this volume is devoted to costume. In “¡Dios me guarde, que estoy bella!” [Heaven help me, but I really am pretty!]: Los empeños de una casa and Castaño’s Performance of Pretty,” Mindy Badía examines four productions of Los empeños de una casa [The Pawns of a House], by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. She argues that critical discussions of the subversive nature of gender in this comedia cannot be based solely on text, but must consider the effects of the crossed-dressed character Castaño in performance. In “The Guardainfante Exposes More than Legs: Adapting Tirso’s Marta the Divine for the Stage,” Elizabeth Cruz Petersen examines how director Gina Kaufmann uses the guardainfante [farthingale], a wide hoop skirt that impedes a woman’s movement, and unconventional casting, to subvert gender norms in a modern production of Tirso de Molina’s Marta la piadosa [Marta the Divine].

Part 3, Staging Archetypes, deals with some less commonly explored comedia character types. Although much has been written about the Monarch on the Spanish stage, and staged versions of Isabella I of Castile have also been the subject of numerous studies, Susan L. Fischer casts a new light on Spain’s much glorified late-medieval queen. In “(Re)Performing Isabel I of Castile: Pious Cruelty, Saintsly Hypocrisy, and Lope de Vega’s El niño inocente de La Guardia [The Innocent Child of La Guardia],” Fischer examines the legend of Isabella I of Castile, focusing on how she herself constructed an image of piety and religious zeal for public consumption—an image her biographers perpetuated. However, Fischer argues that in reconstructing Isabella for the stage, Lope de Vega suggests that the queen manipulated Catholic piety for reasons of political expediency. Eduardo Paredes Ocampo explores a relatively overlooked archetype in early modern Spanish theater, the melancholiac, in “A Bicephalic Melancholiac: Acting a Royal Pathology in Spanish Golden Age Drama.” Paredes Ocampo shows that by carefully examining the paralinguistic signs in Lope’s text and representations of melancholia in early modern paintings and medical manuals, it is possible to glean clues about how Lope’s El Príncipe melancólico [The Melancholic Prince] was actually performed. “Staging Female Melancholia: Calderón’s No hay burlas con el amor,” by Bárbara Mujica, also deals with melancholia, but this time, in women. Mujica argues that while male melancholia was associated with genius and creativity, female melancholia—often diagnosed as hysteria—was associated with inarticulateness and antisocial behavior. The female melancholiac was often represented on the Spanish stage as a mujer
esquiva [standoffish woman]. One example is Doña Beatriz, protagonist of Calderón’s *No hay burlas con el amor* [Love Is No Laughing Matter]. Although fewer examples of female melancholiacs exist in art than of male melancholiacs, medical manuals, letters, and diaries provide descriptions of the “babbling,” gestures, and rebellious attitudes of female melancholiacs that can help guide directors. In “*Streleros* buenos y malos [Good and Evil Star-Gazers]: Staging Astrology in Early Modern Spanish Theater,” Valerie Hegstrom and Dale J. Pratt examine a popular type in early modern Spanish theater: the astrologer. Hegstrom and Pratt show that serious astrologers used complex instruments and had their own professional jargon, which made them easy to spoof onstage. Furthermore, many superstitions grew up around the power of astrologers, sparking the public’s curiosity. While astrology and astrologers could be represented onstage with a few stereotypical props and actions, some playwrights and directors engaged in extravagant staging.

Part 4 of this collection explores three fundamental components of early modern staging: Music, Movement, and Adaptation. Early modern theater made ample use of music. Performances typically ended with a *fin de fiesta* [end of the festivities], a short, cheerful piece with music and dance. The *entremés* between the acts of a *comedia* also included music. In “Reading Music in Cervantes’s *Entremeses*,” Yoel Castillo Botello explains that Cervantes used music and dance not only to entertain, but also to provide social commentary. However, since the *entremeses* were never performed during Cervantes’s lifetime, it is difficult to assess how music might have been integrated into the stage action. “Finding the Beat in ¡Risas aquí y después, ganancia! [Laughter First, and Afterward, Profits!]” by The Grupo La Hormiga,” by Sharon Voros, analyzes four short burlesque plays and shows how dividing them into “beats” can assist in developing a production concept. An understanding of “beats” can point to moments of intensification within the play and help track the movements of actors. In “Juan Ruiz de Alarcón’s *Mudarse por mejorarse* [To Change in Order to Improve One’s Lot] and Changes over Time,” Edward H. Friedman discusses the staging, social, and cultural issues involved in translating / adapting this play.

*Staging and Stage Décor: The Theater of Early Modern Spain* covers a wide range of topics. Some essays deal with early modern productions, attempting to decipher how plays were mounted and costumed, and how they spoke to seventeenth-century audiences. Other essays deal with modern stagings and show that not only the *comedia*, but also minor genres such as the *entremés* and *mojiganga*, are evolving for modern theatergoers. Directors have adapted early modern Spanish theater forms for twenty-first-century spectators with innovative, technologically sophisticated staging and costuming, sometimes imbuing their productions with political or social messages. To remain vibrant
and relevant, any theater creation must change and adapt. The abundance of new productions of the *comedia* and other early modern plays shows that these theater forms continue to thrive.
Part 3:
Staging Archetypes
Chapter 9

A Bicephalic Melancholiac: Acting a Royal Pathology in Spanish Golden Age Drama

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Abstract: This study presents a reconstruction of the performance of the melancholic character in Golden Age theater. It argues that critics have overlooked the way this character type was acted on the original stage. Using Lope's *El Príncipe melancólico* [The Melancholic Prince] as a case-study to speculate on the actor's paralinguistic gestures and movements, information that is extracted from the text, the character's symptoms can be divided into two categories: fiery melancholia and saddened melancholia. These are compared with two pseudo-medical treaties and Carducho's *Diálogos*, as well as three illustrative paintings. The conclusion correlates the dramatic features of the two types of melancholia with two widely-known cases of this pathology in the political panorama of Lope's time.

Keywords: Melancholy, madness, Lope de Vega, *El Príncipe melancólico*, early modern Spanish theater, Felipe II

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To anyone familiar with both Lope de Vega's life and Spanish history, the years 1588-1595 possess an ominous resonance. Regarding the first, they coincide with the poet's exile from Madrid, his kidnapping of Isabel de Urbina, and her and their daughter's deaths. Regarding the second, they encompass the period of the defeat of the Invincible Armada and the first years of this event's political and psychological aftermath. This was also the period during which Lope—himself a crew member on one of the Armada's *galeotes* [galleys]—wrote *El principe melancólico* [The Melancholic Prince].
Chapter 9

As with the play’s protagonist, *melancólico* would have been an accurate depiction of the Lope of those bitter years. This is because melancholia was an “enfermedad […] donde hay poco contento y gusto” and “decían estar uno melancólico cuando est[aba] triste y pensativo de alguna cosa que da pesadumbre” (“sickness (…) where there is little happiness and pleasure”; “it was said that one was melancholic when he was sad and pensive due to a sorrowful event”) (Covarrubias 1264). Although there is no certainty about the negative emotional effects of all the “pesadumbre[s]” suffered by Lope, it is noticeable that melancholy is constantly thematized—and goes hand in hand with contemporary political references— in the author’s plays of the time. This obsession with the topic has inspired yet another epithet for this ‘monster of nature’: “Lope, cronista de la melancolía” (“Lope, the chronicler of melancholy”) (Atienza 157).

In the political panorama, the date of the defeat of the Armada has been considered the start of Spain’s melancholic era—a fact tied to its decadence (Flor 57). At the same time (and partly due to this event), Felipe II, the head of the Spanish body politic from 1556 to 1598, retired to the palace/monastery of El Escorial. Among historians, the consensus is more or less that “la tendencia al aislamiento de Felipe II tenía su razón de ser en su melancolía” (“Philip II’s tendency for self-isolation was caused by his melancholy”). The pathology of the Head was replicated by the Body: in Spain as a whole, “a social vogue of melancholy … developed” (Soufas 9).

Therefore, during these years, a plethora of actors—both dramatic and political—portray cases of melancholia. In addition, cross-references abound between on- and offstage melancholiacs. One of the most evident examples is Tirso’s *El melancólico* [The Melancholiac] (1603-5), as the playwright probably took Felipe II and his royal malady as models for his protagonist and his behavior (Bartra 120). Due to the cultural relevance of melancholy, this voguish pathology has been the center of studies relating to literature (Soufas) and history (Klibansky).

Concerning theater, critics have studied the melancholic as a textual character—overlooking the fact that the “elemento esencial en el teatro del siglo XVII [y finales del XVI] era el actor, quizá más que decorado, adornos e incluso texto” (“the essential element of theater of the seventeenth century and end of the sixteenth was the actor, maybe even more than the décor, the stage props and, indeed, the text”) (Díez 120). In order to address this shortcoming, this study focuses on the dramatic actors (and, tangentially, on the social ones). It aims to answer the following two questions: (1) How were the most recognizable types of melancholia and their symptoms performed on the Golden Age stage by the *comediante* [actor]? (2) What is the connection between on- and offstage melancholia?
I use Lope's *El príncipe melancólico* as a case-study since, along with Tirso's *El melancólico*, this play's central theme is “the main character's affectation of the symptoms he displays” and its “focus on a comic reworking of the self-conscious” melancholic (Soufas 70). Both protagonists' affectation and self-consciousness underscore the theatricality and codified nature of the melancholic type. This codification was based on the fact that “the average citizen” –such as the spectators of the *corrales*– “could be expected to appreciate depictions and allusions to melancholy” (Soufas 9). Therefore, in order to achieve a histrionic personification of a melancholic, the actor playing Lope's Prince had to stress the most recognizable signs of such a malady.

Comedy reinforces such emphatic performance: parody entails an exaggeration of the cultural and dramatic symbols being ridiculed. Hence, a play, whose effectiveness depends on the overstatement of melancholia, might provide the most direct means of understanding the general performance of this pathology. This implies that the conclusions extracted here can be applied to other, more famous, melancholiacs (e.g., Segismundo and Hamlet).

My starting point is a close reading of Lope's play-text, since “la lectura atenta de las obras … nos permite adentrarnos en los límites de las indicaciones a los cómicos” [“the attentive reading of the works allows us to concentrate on the limits of the directions to the players”] (Oliva 205). Using the Artelope edition, I take into account the different cues in the dialogues and stage directions in order to reconstruct the possible performance of the *comediante* playing the Prince. Specifically, I consider that “el ideal de perfección en el actor consistía en conciliar naturaleza y arte en el gesto, en la palabra y en el movimiento” [“the ideal of perfection in the actor consisted of reconciling nature and art in the gesture, the word, and the movement”] (Díez 120). Therefore, the speculative re-establishment of the performance centers on the *comediante*'s paralinguistic or vocal features, his gestures, and his body movement.

My corpus is comprised of: (1) the pseudo-medical accounts of melancholia –in particular, Juan Huarte de San Juan's *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* [*The Examination of Men's Wits*] (1575) and Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and (2) the description of models available to the Golden Age painter by Vicente Carducho in his *Diálogos de la Pintura* [*Dialogue on Painting*] (1633). The reason for choice (1) is that these treaties represent a conscious catalogue of a symptomatology that would have unconsciously inspired the actor in his characterization of a melancholic. The reason for choice (2) is that the *Diálogos* represents also a catalogue of artistic and cultural commonplaces of the Siglo de Oro –embodying a “possible influencia en la caracterización exterior de los personajes ideados para el teatro” [“possible influence in the external characterization of the characters created for theater”]
(Rodríguez 224-225). These resources are complimented by (3): three paintings that function as visual illustrations of the performance of the melancholiac.

El príncipe melancólico, set in the Kingdom of Hungary, starts with a fight between two brothers: the older, aggressive Prince and the younger, passive Leonido. The conflict revolves around their rivalry for the affections of Rosilena, who prefers Leonido. At the start of the second jornada, Fabio (the protagonist’s accomplice) describes to the King the symptoms of his master’s newly acquired, and love-inspired, melancholia. However, in an aside, he discloses its fictional nature: “¡Ello va bien enredado!” [“That’s good as a fiction”] (785). Although the Prince’s pathology is presented as a farce, it is “essentiellement ambiguë, la mélancolie du protagoniste est à la fois réelle et simulée” [essentially ambiguous, the protagonist’s melancholy is at the same time real and simulated] (Orobitg 274).

The play evolves as a performance of the different symptoms of an affected and codified melancólico. There are several moments in the text that thematize the pathology’s ailments: the character becomes contemplative; his language is ambiguous and grandiloquent; he displays depression and then extreme fury; he stops eating (a central factor that triggers the characters’ actions); he believes he has two heads; he thinks he is invisible and a giant; he becomes pale; etc. More than being clichés identifiable in the pseudo-medical treaties, these facets embody conventionalities from melancholy meant to be parodied through the actor’s bodily and verbal expressions. This is because Lope, in Spain, like Jonson [in England] regarded melancholy both as an affectation and an affection, part of the lower function of the mind that comedy should ridicule” (Lyons 27).

Of all the affectations of melancholia thematized by Lope, the two most ridiculed are the frenetic and the saddened types. The binary division of this essay is inspired by a textual reference: in a moment of melancholic delirium, the Prince believes that he has “dos cabezas” [“two heads”] (826). Although the specific referent for this bicephalic condition is ambiguous, this partition can be interpreted as a reference to the two most celebrated types of melancholy.

The first head: a lycanthropic and hot melancholiac

The first account of the frenetic melancholic takes place during the first jornada [act], when Conde (Leonido’s ally) tells the King the reasons behind the fight between the brothers. This account of staged action constitutes a tool for hypothesizing on the performance of the Prince. Conde tells the King that the older brother wanted to kill the younger because Leonido represents an obstacle to the Prince’s love/lust for Rosilena. The King reacts to this description of unprincely behavior thus:
¿Que porque le defendía
el infante el casamiento
aunque lobo hambriento
estos extremos hacía? (1.495-498).

[Because the Infante opposed the marriage, this hungry wolf displayed such extremes?]

The word “extremos” can illustrate the way in which the comediante played the Prince during the first scene. His body movement was “extreme” in that it was meant to convey the heir’s intention to “quitalle de por medio” his brother and “matadle” [get him out of the way; kill him], suggesting intense affectedness and corporeality (1.476-478). These gestural guidelines direct the actor interpreting the Prince’s first melancholic attack from the psychotic end of the spectrum.

The King’s comparison of his son to a “lobo” creates an image replete with cultural symbolism and conveys latent stage directions. The significance of this metaphor is evinced in the repeated description of the Prince as a wolf-like beast. For example, when the Prince describes the different things that the melancholic delirium causes him to believe himself to be, he mentions: “soy una fiera brava, / dura e incomprendible” (2.1065-1066) [I am a fearsome wild beast, unfeeling and incomprehensible]. Likewise, at the end, Rosilena reveals that the Prince “todo aquello ha fingido” (3.2790) [he has faked all of it] –that is, the symptoms of melancholia. Conde then expresses his disbelief: “que estoy asombrado / de que esa bestia supiese / hacer tal…” (3.2813-2815) [I am amazed that that beast knew how to do so]. The protagonist’s “fier[ez], “brav[ural]”, and “bestia[lidad]” are depictions semantically connected to the image of the wolf and serve as prompts for the comediante’s acting.

The allusions to wolves to describe the Prince’s violence might be a reference to the “melancolía no natural” [unnatural melancholy], defined by Andrés Velázquez in his 1585 Libro de la Melancholia [Book of Melancholy] as “insania o manía, insania lupina o licantrpia” [insanity or hostility, lupine insanity or lycanthropy] (Serés 315). Burton’s description of the features of lycanthropic melancholy is more detailed. He writes that “Lycanthropia” “Lupinam insaniam, or Wolf-madness” is classified as “a kind of melancholy”. He mentions that it can be diagnosed “when men run howling about graves and fields in the night, and will not be persuaded but that they are wolves, or some such beasts” (Burton 125). Three aspects of Burton’s description are key to the present reconstruction.

The first is the allusion to howling. To portray a lupine melancholic, the actor could have entered the stage chasing his brother and producing a
howling-like noise. Also, after this shocking appearance, he might have screamed the first words of his speech, hurling them at his hated brother: “¡Acaba, infame! ¡Pon mano!” [“Let’s finish this once and for all, you scoundrel! Let’s fight!”] (1.45). Likewise, throughout the performance, the Prince’s melancholic howls might be heard from beyond the stage from the room where he was confined by the King.

The second key point pertains to space.

Burton depicts the lupine melancholiac wandering “about graves”. In one of the most famous scenes of Lope’s play, “salen RUFINO y ACACIO, amortajados, de una sepoltura que habrá artificialmente en el teatro” [“enter Rufino and Acacio, shrouded, from a grave that will be artificially created in the theater”] (between 2.1370-1380). When the spectators saw the Prince interact with this improvised sepoltura, they would have been reminded of a topical image similar to Burton’s. Lope might also have had this commonplace in mind when imagining the grave scene.

The third key point is Burton’s depiction of the lycanthropic melancholiac as “run[ning] … about,” which provides a clue to the actor’s movement. Regarding the sepoltura scene, the implicit cue for the comediant is to run wildly around this opening/grave artificially created on the tablado [platform]. However, beyond this specific moment, this description suggests that whenever frenzy dominated the Prince’s psyche, the actor’s pace would have been quick and feverish.

In his 1605 Conocimiento, curación y preservación de la peste [Knowledge, Healing, and Prevention of the Plague], the medic/humanist Alonso de Freylas wrote that the melancholiac “tiene gran promptitud y facilidad en sus obras … apresurada respiración, es atrevido y determinado, inquieto” [has great quickness and ease in his actions … hurried breathing, he is bold, determined, restless] (211r). Taking both Burton’s and Freylas’ ideas into account, it can be assumed that hurried, restless, and animalized movements and gesturings characterized the comediant’s portrayal of the turbulent symptoms of this sickness. Carducho’s description of “locura” [madness] –a word used as a synonym of melancholy –complements the hypothesis of kinesic celerity: “las acciones … vanas y sin propósito, ridículas, volviendo el cuerpo, manos y piernas sin causa alguna” [vain and purposeless actions, ridiculous movement of the body, hands, and legs without any cause] (1.408).

Probably aware of a similar conception of madness –and of his audience’s knowledge of it– the player would have moved his torso and upper and lower limbs without a clear purpose. Lope’s intention to ridicule this pathology would have also inspired the actor to engage in seemingly aimless, affected,
and crazy movement. This style of acting would have been employed early in the play, when the Prince threatens to kill his brother.

This frenetic body language would also have been evident in the aforementioned sepoltura scene. There, the servants Acacio and Rufino interpret two dead characters who want to force the Prince to eat (his refusal to eat is one of the central motifs of the plot). The Prince soon discovers the deceit and threatens the charlatans: “Y matallos deseo” … “Digo que no he de parar / hasta que los vea ahorcar” [I want to kill you” … “I say, I’m not going to stop until I see you both hung] (2.1498-1506).

The actor surely adopted an emphatic and chaotic physicality in order to convey the Prince’s persistent hostility towards the criados [servants]. He could have imitated a madman’s corporal turbulence or the wolf’s quick, instinctive pounce. The Prince’s threat to continue his violence until he hangs both Acacio and Rufino suggests that the comediante could have been running around the stage, chasing the other two characters, furiously trying to grab them – thus ridiculing the pathology.

This tumultuous and aggressive stage behavior can also be compared to Carducho’s model of “la ira y la furia”:

los movimientos de la ira y furia intrepidos, sin orden, y fuera de si, la boca abierta y torcida, que rasga miembros, ó aprieta los dientes, mira fijo, y mui abiertos los ojos, y la boca cerrada, sacando la quijada de abaxo mas afuera que la alta; y tal vez echado en el suelo dando puñadas en la tierra con grandes vozes, tiembla, echa espuma por la boca, y fuego por los ojos. (406)

[the movements of anger and fury are intrepid, without order or control, the mouth is open and twisted, the limbs, torn apart, or he clenches his teeth, fixes his gaze, his eyes wide open and his mouth closed; his jaw protrudes, the lower more forward than the upper part; and maybe lying on the floor grabbing fistfuls of soil, screaming, he trembles, his mouth foams, and are fiery].

This description works as a methodological device to hypothesize the possible gesticulations of the actor, as the word furia is constantly repeated throughout the text. For example, when a concerned Leonido asks the Prince about his mental state, he answers that he fights against himself “por conservar el intento, / que tiene furiosas olas” [“to preserve his purpose, for his mind is attacked by furious waves”] (2.1053-1054). It is probable that the comediante assumed the facial gestures of fury (similar to those stated in the Diálogos). Hence, he would have clenched his teeth as he pronounced his lines, his mouth would have
foamed with rage, and his fiery gaze would have been fixated on the unwanted interlocutor. These expressions would have conveyed both the Prince’s internal quarrel and his anger against his brother/rival.

In the passage where the Prince alludes to the different creatures he thinks he is, the actor would have also conveyed rage as he recited: “Pues soy un fiero gigante, / y las furias de Atamante, / en mí cifradas veréis” [I am a fiery giant, and you'll see the fury of Athamas embodied in me] (1.1076-1078). The reference to “Atamante” (a King from Greek mythology) is linked both to madness (an episode of uncontrolled fury led him to kill his son) and to the imagery of the wolf (after his frenzy, he was fed by wolves). The lycanthropic “fier[eza]” and “furi[a]” implied by the intertextual reference would have been conveyed by the comediante by, for instance, hitting the tablado with his fists to make clear the Prince’s intention to kill his brother and Acacio and Rufino. Arcangelo Migliarini’s 1801 painting Atamante preso dalle Furie [Athamas Overtaken by the Furies] (fig. 1) provides a visual illustration of how the turbulent gestures provoked by the Prince’s wrath might have been played.

Textual evidence for this reading is found when the King asks Fabio how the Prince laments (second jornada). Fabio reiterates the notion that one of the
symptomatic heads of this bicephalic Prince is violent, while the other is contemplative: “a ratos vocea y grita, / y otros está sosegado” [at times he screeches and screams, at others he is calm] (2.771-772). In relation to the first, Fabio notes: “como que se está abrazando, / le verás, mil voces dando, / hablar con el recio fuego” [he seems to be ablaze, you will see him screaming a thousand times and shouting at the implacable fire] (2.780-782).

Fabio’s account implies that the *comediante* would produce loud paralinguistic signifiers such as howling not only during the scenes in which the Prince talks to himself or to others, but sporadically throughout the performance. When the melancholiac is offstage, he could emit them from the room where the Prince is convalescing. Indeed, the allusion to the Prince’s “mil voces” hints at the constant repetition of such sounds, resounding throughout the Palace/corral.

That the audience would have heard the actor’s intermittent screaming from both the stage and from backstage becomes clearer at the end, when Rosilena, performing metatheatrically as the Prince had earlier, pretends to be in love with him. The cheated Prince then reveals that his melancholia was a ruse to convince the King to allow them to marry. Like an actor complimenting another’s technique and resources, Rosilene celebrates his fine portrayal of the frenetic melancholic: “tan levantado intento” [such an elevated intention] (3.2618). “Intento” defines the Prince’s actions as a charade, while “levantado” characterizes his intentions as admirable.

Rosilena highlights the Prince’s verbal expression: “¡Bravas palabras hablabas / allá en tus melancolías!” [You spoke wildly in your melancholy!] (3.2615-2616). “Bravas” could refer both to the harsh content of the Prince’s words or to their frenetic tone. Significantly, Rosilena’s compliment focuses precisely on the paralinguistic features of the Prince’s performance, demonstrating the importance of such an acting tool to convey his feigned pathology.

Fabio’s account also includes probable gestural guidelines for the actor interpreting the frenetic melancholic, notably in the line: “como que se está abrazando”. In her study of acting techniques in Golden Age Spain, Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros discusses “acotaciones” [stage directions]. She highlights the repeated use of “las lexicalizaciones que subrayan la intencionalidad de manifiesta simulación de la acción (los como que, hace que, hacer acciones de, de manera que, parece que)” [lexicalizations that highlight the intentionality of the manifest simulation of the action (the as if, does as if, performs the actions of, in the manner of, seems as if)] (179-180). Authors introduced these *didascalias* into their dramas “cuando se señalaba que [los actores] debían actuar como si lo sintieran” [to signal that the actors were to convey authentic feeling] (179-180). Although Rodríguez refers
primarily to the annotations from the poet's own hand, implied directions are also present in the dialogue.

So, how did the actor perform as if his character felt burnt? A very literal interpretation might suggest that the actor would have pretended to have caught fire. Someone ablaze runs around, rolls on the floor, and frenetically shakes his limbs, trying to extinguish the flames. This agonizing movement might have been more exaggerated, as Fabio mentions that the fire consumes him from inside out – involving, thus, all of his body: “Diz que un león encendido / le deshace las entrañas” [He says that a blazing lion consumes his insides] (2.1023-1024).

Another way to understand how the comediant might have performed the melancholic’s experience of an internal fire is found in Huarte’s description of the effects of burning melancholy. Elaborating on the recognizable symptoms of this condition, Huarte notes that, contrary to “cold melancholy,” burning melancholy produces patients who are “lujuriosos, sobervios, altivos, renegadores, astutos, doblados, injuriosos, y amigos de hacer mal y vengativos” [lustful, arrogant, haughty, blasphemous, astute, insulting, and prone to do wrong, and vengeful] (462-463). These features can be contained in the word “crueldad” [cruelty], a visual model in the Diálogos: “aspéra es la crueldad en los movimientos, y en el mirar, la frente sin gracia, arrugada y partida en medio, el modo ofensivo y suelto, violento, encendiado” [harsh is cruelty in its movements and gaze; the forehead is graceless, frowning with a furrowed brow, its manner offensive and careless, violent, ablaze] (406). “Encendido” is related to the notion of the heated-up melancholic. To convey violence, offensiveness, and general bad behavior during the Prince’s fiery episodes, the actor would have moved in a rapid and disjointed way, dashing around the stage and flailing his arms. More specifically, he would have frowned and harshly fixed his gaze on both the characters and the audience.

An example of such cruelty is found in the third act, when the King asks his son to eat in order to regain his health. To this, the Prince arrogantly complains:

Eres médico inhumano,
y aquesta es conclusión clara,
Que lo enfermo no repara
y fortalece lo sano. (3.2051-2054)

[You are an inhumane doctor, that’s obvious. You neither heal the sick nor strengthen the healthy.]

The King responds to the Prince’s violent demand for a “repara[ción]” from his father –that is, for the hand of Rosilene– in two asides: “¡Vive Dios, que me
estremece!” and “¡Hace que me atemorice!” [God knows how he makes me tremble!... He terrifies me!] (3.2048-2058). These lines contain gestural cues for both the comediante playing the frightened King and the one playing the frightening Prince. The father’s terror suggests that the actor in the role of the Prince must appear threatening. Therefore, he must have used his voice – screaming–, his facial gestures –frowning and cruelly staring at the other player–, and body movements –waving a menacing fist– to elicit such fear.

The second head: the contemplative and cold melancholiac

Another, more recognizable type of melancholy exhibited by the Prince is the contemplative and sad kind. Fabio tells the King that, when the Prince is not displaying fury, he “está sosegado” [he is calm] (772). Isolation is a complement to such inaction. The play contains numerous references to “ese loco, [que] en su aposento / est[á]” [that madman, [who] is in his room] (635-636). When the King asks Leonido “¿Dó está el príncipe, tu hermano?”, the younger brother answers: “En su aposento estará” [Where is the prince, your brother?... He’s probably in his room] (3.2021-2025).

The Prince’s lethargy in these moments contrasts with the corporeal frenzy of the Prince’s other head. However, the most distinctive detail of these two facets of this passive melancholia is that they are ramifications of a state that today would be characterized as depression. Burton notes: “we call him melancholy that is dull, sad, sour, lumpish, ill-disposed, solitary, any way moved, or displeased” (127). For the early modern audience, the displeased, solitary, and secluded melancholiac would have been a readily recognizable type. His symptoms were a cultural commonplace with origins that can be traced back to Galen, who writes: “one thing seems to be common” to all melancholiacs as “has been stated by Hippocrates: ‘If fear or despair continues for a long period, such a thing is melancholia’” (264). Fear and, especially, despair contrast with the main physical features of the “melancolía producida por el calor”. To convey this opposition, the actor would have constructed his character taking into account the “melancolía fría” “con sus efectos precisos: temor, tristeza, etc.” [“melancholia produced by heat” “cold melancholia” “with its precise effects: fear, sadness, etc.”] (Serés 76).

Textual allusions to “tristeza” are scattered throughout the play. For example, during the first dialogue between Leonido and the Prince, the former describes the latter’s malady as a “mortal tristeza” [mortal sadness] (2.988). Later on, the King alludes to the Prince’s “congojas” and to his “pena” [grief, sorrow] (3.2668-2669). In this scene he also accepts that his son “está de tristeza lleno” [is full of sadness] (3.2661). How, then, were the symptoms of the protagonist’s mortal grief portrayed by the comediante?
One of the most condensed and visually stimulating depictions of this psychopathology is found in Carducho’s *Diálogos*:

la melancolía, pensativos, y llenos de tristeza, los ojos hundidos, fixos en la tierra, la cabeza baxa, el codo sobre la rodilla, la mano debaxo de la quixaja, echado debajo de qualque arbol, ó entre piedras, ó caverna, el color palido y amarillo. (403-404)

[melancholy, pensive and full of sadness, his eyes sunken, fixed on the earth, his head down, his elbow on his knee, his hand under his chin, he is lying under a tree, or among rocks, or inside a cavern, his color pallid and yellowish.]

Carducho recommends first painting the melancholiac “echado” and, second, in some remote location such as a “caverna”. Both of these descriptions coincide with the Prince’s “sosegado” state inside of his cave-like “aposento”. An example of this attitude comes when, at the start of the second *jornada*, the younger brother tells the older one: “Álzate, hermano, del suelo” [Get up, brother, from the floor] (2.955). This implies that, during the Prince’s calm moments, the *comediantes* would sometimes have assumed a prostrate position.

Carducho also assigns crucial importance to pensiveness, and Huarte echoes this thought: “contemplar y meditar enfría y deseca el cuerpo y lo hace melancólico” [to reflect and meditate cools down and drains the body, making it melancholic] (262). Lope provides ample references to the Prince’s propensity for rumination. For example, during the first meeting between the sickened Prince and Leonido, the concerned younger brother asks the melancholic older brother: “Hermano, ¿qué hablas a solas?” The Prince answers: “Lucho con mi pensamiento”. Then, more enigmatically, he adds: “Soy pensamientos y humo / [...] Soy pensamiento insufrible, / soy dolor que no se acaba” [Brother, are you talking to yourself?; I am thought and smoke; I am unbearable thought, I am sorrow that never ends] (2.1051-1063).

The link between “pensamientos” and cold melancholia’s “sol[edad]” and “dolor” was established as early as (pseudo)Aristotle’s famous *Problemata* XXX. From then on, Western culture has associated the act of thinking with the melancholic temperament (Klibansky). Huarte writes that “la tristeza y la aflicción gasta y consume, no solamente la humidad del celebro pero los huesos deseca; con la cual la calidad se hace el entendimiento más agudo y perspicaz” [sadness and affliction not only wear down and consume the moisture of the brain, but also dry the bones; as a result, this quality makes the wit more acute and penetrating] (332). The melancholic’s sorrowful
“agud[ez]a” and “perspica[cia]” would have been aspects present on the comediante’s mind when preparing for the role.

Following the Diálogos, the actor would probably have placed his elbow on his knee and his hand under his chin to suggest a state of contemplation. This posture would have been presented when the Prince mentions that he fights against his thoughts (as, for example, during the scene between the two brothers) and/or when other characters allude to his pensive condition (appearing inside his aposento, away from the main stage action). The image of the contemplative melancholiac with his hand under his chin was popular in painting and would have been familiar to the actor and the audience. Two examples are El Bosco’s San Juan Bautista en meditación [Saint John in Meditation] (fig. 2) and José de Ribera’s Media figura de mujer [Half Figure of a Woman] (fig. 3).

The relation between melancholia and the postures of the characters in these images endures even today. El Bosco’s painting is the cover illustration of Roger Bartra’s 2001 book Cultura y melancolía. Las enfermedades del alma en la España del Siglo de Oro [Culture and Melancholy. Soul Sicknesses in the Spain of the Golden Age]. Ribera’s portrait is the cover illustration of the program for 2015 exposition Tiempos de melancolía: creación y desengaño en la España del Siglo de Oro [Times of Melancholy: Creation and Disillusionment]...
in the Spain of the Golden Age] at the Museo Nacional de Escultura of Valladolid. Additionally, the picture of Saint John depicts two other attributes of the melancholiac noted by Carducho: the prostrate position and the isolated, rocky landscape. It is safe to suppose that the comediante would have used these visual commonplaces in his performance.

Another recognizable characteristic of the contemplative melancholiac described by Carducho is the bowed head and lowered eyes. Leonido mentions seeing the Prince with “la cabeza bajada” [“bowed head”] –a pose that would have denoted both pensiveness and depression (2.1044). Elsewhere, the younger brother summons the older one thus: “Príncipe, escúchame acá, / alza los ojos del suelo” [“Prince, listen to me, raise your eyes from the ground”] (2.944). These textual cues require specific head and eye gestures from the comediante. Again, this symptom possesses a striking similarity to the way in which El Bosco depicted his character’s gaze.

These bodily expressions –prostration, elbow on knee, hand under chin, lowered gaze– would have been complemented by other paralinguistic signs. Two main vocal signs related to this type of pathology are suggested by the dialogue. The first is the Prince’s “hablar entre dientes” [“mumbling”] (2.1043). In Fabio’s exposition of the protagonist’s symptoms to the King, he mentions that he “desvaría” and “Verasle hablar entre sí” [“he is delirious”; “You will see him talk to himself”] (2.1186-1187). These actions suggest two of the main features of his pathology: solitude (he is his own interlocutor) and pensiveness (he is discussing his own thoughts).

The connection between mumbling and meditativeness is explicitly stated in the text when Leonido asks about the content of his brother’s ruminations: “Fabio: ¿qué habla entre dientes?”. The complicit criado answers with an oxymoron: “Mil disparates notables” [“Fabio, what does he mumble about?”; “A thousand ridiculous pieces of nonsense”] (2.1019-1020). Following the textual cue, the comediante—with bowed head and mouth half-closed– would have mumbled incoherent (but somehow remarkable) words such as: “yo soy invisible”; “soy casi divino”; “yo soy la paz de tu guerra / y, finalmente, tu hermano”; etc. [I am invisible, I am almost divine, I am the peace in your war and, finally, your brother] (2.898; 2.912; 2.1070-1071). Although these expressions seem to be “disparates”, they also represent poetic and/or philosophical elucidations of the ontological conception of the melancholic self (hence, they are intellectually alluring).

The second paralinguistic action probably performed by the comediante is sighing. Huarte establishes the connection between this type of melancholy and this vocal sign: “cuando se enfría [la melancolía] nacen ... suspiros y lágrimas” [when melancholy cools down sighing and tears are born] (462-463). Likewise, Burton notes that some of the most common symptoms of
melancholia are “weeping, sighing, sobbing” and that melancholiacs are always “groaning, sighing, pensive, sad” (316; 322). Bridget Lyons mentions in her study of melancholia in England that “other attributes and postures [of the melancholiac] were derived from the lover of the courtly-love tradition: sighing, pallor, an inability to eat or sleep” (22). These are aspects that the comediante would have had in mind when representing a character who so evidently draws from the tradition of courtly love.

To exemplify the Prince’s “gran melancolía” to the King, Fabio highlights that his son can be seen “muchos suspiros dando, / cual tierno niño llorando” [great melancholy, sighing constantly, as crying as though a tender child] (2.1183-1189). Additionally, the many exclamations produced by the Prince – introduced by “oh”– can be read as textual directions for the actor to sigh. An example of such suspiros is the incoherent (but highly poetic) way that the Prince describes his brother: “¡Oh, paraninfo del cielo […]! / ¡Oh, semejanza de dios, / que eras beatico y bello!” [“Oh, a section of heaven! Oh, similar to a God, you were blessed and beautiful!”] (2.945-948). The comediante’s sighs would have communicated the Prince’s jealous grief with regard to his brother’s generosity and grace –attributes that are partly responsible for Rosilena’s preference for him.

**Conclusion: the dramatic and the political actors**

An aspect that I have deliberately left untouched until now is the setting of *El Príncipe melancólico*: Hungary. If “las añejas relaciones dinásticas entre la casa de Austria y el reino húngaro constituyen la clave de la elección de Hungría como espacio” [the old dynastic relationships between the house of Austria and the Hungarian Kingdom constitute the key for choosing Hungary as the setting”], then, a political intention can be read behind Lope’s decision to place his parodic critique of melancholy in the (Austro-) Hungarian court (Sáez 294). It should be remembered that the performance of a royal disease was acted and witnessed by subjects of the Spanish branch of the Austrian Habsburg family. Hence, we can apply to an exiled (and bitter) Lope what Matthew Ancell notes about a well-established (and content) Calderón: “appearances to the contrary, many of Calderón’s works contain an embedded critique of the monarchy that manifests itself on the aesthetic level and even in the plot” (65). How is this veiled critique related to the possible performance of the Prince’s melancholia?

At the time the play premiered, the temperament of the second Habsburg King of Spain, Felipe II, was commonly defined as melancholic. Many of his contemporaries –from international ambassadors to those closer to the court– recount how “en los últimos años del reinado, hacia 1590, los rasgos de melancolía se acentúan” [in the last years of his reign, around 1590, the
symptoms of his melancholia are accentuated] (Botello 172). Old age and the weight of his political ineptitude (represented by the defeat of the Armada) caused the King to display the saddened and pensive symptomatology of melancholia –hence, his epithet: “El Prudente” [The Prudent]. In the eyes of one French courtier, “el rey comienza a envejecer... su rostro no es tan hermoso, lo que demuestra que su espíritu debe estar oprimido por las preocupaciones, que le hacen más melancólico de lo que solía ser” [the King begins to get older... his face is no longer beautiful, this shows that his spirit must be oppressed due to his worries, which make him more melancholic than he used to be] (Botello 172). Most of the spectators at the corrales between 1588 and 1595 were well aware of the psychopathological symptoms of the head of state. Therefore, the physical features of the second head of the fictional Prince's melancholia might have reminded them of their own King: sadly pacing around the isolated halls of El Escorial, hand under chin, eyes fixed on the floor, mumbling strange ruminations, and constantly sighing.

However, the audience might have also remembered that “otro de los más notorios enfermos de melancolía en la corte de los Austrias fue el príncipe Carlos, hijo de Felipe II” [another of the most notable sufferers of melancholia in the court of the Austrias was Prince Carlos, son of Felipe II] (Atienza 103). Motherless and deformed, he was the great-grandson of Juana la Loca, and, in the Prince's psyche, “se alternaban estados furiosos y períodos de melancolía” [furious states alternated with periods of melancholia] (Atienza 103). As a consequence of the repetitiveness and extremity of these psychological crises, the King decided to confine him. Carlos died under mysterious circumstances in 1568.

An episode from the real-life Prince's imprisonment –narrated by the chronicler Cabrera de Córdoba in his 1619 Felipe Segundo, Rey de España [Philip the Second, King of Spain]– possesses shocking similarities to part of the plot of Lope's play. Cabrera describes how Carlos, like Lope's character, refuses to eat: “desanimado como dejado de la esperanza de libertad estuvo tres días tan sin comer con profunda melancolía que ya casi le tenía la mitad de la muerte” [dejected, as though he had lost all hope of freedom, he did not eat for three days due to the extreme melancholy that was almost killing him] (Vol.1. 427). These similarities between the historical and fictional melancholiacs would have not gone unnoticed by the audience, as “el príncipe Carlos pu[do] ser visto como un emblema del lado más oscuro de la melancolía: un temperamento que incita a la violencia, la desesperación, el terror y finalmente la locura y la muerte” [The Prince Carlos could have been seen as the emblem of the dark side of melancholy: a temperament that incites violence, desperation, terror and, finally, madness and death] (Atienza 106). Therefore, as the comediente performed the lycanthropic and furious
side of the Hungarian Prince’s melancholia –howling and running around the stage– the audience might have thought of Carlos de Asturias.

Works Cited


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Index

A

Actor xii, 112-113, 117, 155, 156-169, 177-187, 193-194, 197-199, 201, 224, 248; Actor, female xii, 93-94, 100, 112, 202
Actress: see Actor, female 112
Adaptation 227-250
Adler, Stella 182
Admiratio 186
Alfonso V of Aragon ix
Allen, Woody 177
Almada, Teatro Nacional de 21-33
Ana de San Bartolomé 175 N8
Anagnorisis 51
Anti-Semitism 135-136. See also Jews
Appia, Adolphe 21 N2
Aranda, Conde de 52
Aristotle 81, 172: Poetics 81, 212
Association for Hispanic Classical Theater (AHCT) xii, 222, 253
Astrólogo borracho, El (anonymous) 191
Astrólogo embustero, y burlado, El (anonymous) 196-199
Astrology / astrologer xv, 189-204
Audience xiii, 68, 71, 181, 187, 201, 202, 226, 248, 249; Audience composition 70; Audience reception 78
Auto de los Reyes Magos, El 189
Auto sacramental xi, 61, 189
Autor (Impresario) 57, 58, 59-73, 62, 70, 105
Avicena 172
Avuso, Manuela de 91-92

Azevedo, Ângela de: El muerto disimulado 196-197

B

Baccio del Bianco, Luigi 42, 43
Baltasar, Francisca 62, 91
Bances Candamo, Francisco 190
Baroque 6, 19, 21, 22, 22 N5, 38, 39, 47, 48, 51, 52, 78, 177, 239, 241, 249
Bascone, Diez de 62
Beat (in theater) xv, 221-235
Belbel, Sergi 25
Berfield, Dennis 113
Bermúdez, Jerónimo 24 N10
Black Legend 128
Blood libel 127, 135, 135 N8
Body language 158-161, 185
Bosch, Hieronymus (El Bosco) 32, 165
Bosco, El: See Bosch, Hieronymus
Brahe, Tycho 190
Buen Retiro, Palace of the xi, 42 N9
Burton, Robert 155, 157-158, 163, 166

C

Caballero, Leandro 58, 61-62, 66, 67, 68, 69, 72
Cabrera de Córdoba, Luis 168
Calderón de la Barca, Pedro xi, xiii, xv, 23, 167, 190-191: El alcalde de Zalamea 25; Andrómeda y Perseo 42; El astrologo fingido 193, 194-196; Darlo todo y no dar nada 112; La fiera, el rayo y
la piedra 42; Los flatos 221, 222, 223; La garapiña 221, 222-223, 225, 228, 229, 230; No hay burlas con el amor xv, 172-187; El médico de su honra 20, 182; El pésame de la viuda 221, 222, 223, 224, 226, 227, 228, 230; El toreador 221, 223-224, 230, 231; La vida es sueño 155, 229, 176, 193; Las visiones de la muerte 221, 222-223, 226, 228, 231
Camões, Luís de 24; As Lusíadas 24
Cáncer y Velasco, Jerónimo 214
Cancioneiro Geral 24
Cañizares, José de 39, 50; Marta la Romarantina 39; Juana la Rabicorta 50; Don Juan de la Espina plays 39
Carducho, Vicente 153, 155, 162, 163, 164, 166
Carlos, Prince of Asturias 168
Carlos I of Spain 37
Carlos III of Spain 50
Carlos V of the Holy Roman Empire, I of Spain 92
Carnestolenda 222
Casona, Alejandro 25 N11
Castanheira, José Manuel 20, 25-33
Castro, Francisco de 190
Castro, Inés de 19-33
Castro y Bellvis, Guillén de 102; El Narciso en su opinión 102-105
Catholic Monarchs: See Isabel I of Castile; Ferdinand II of Aragón
Cazuela x, 41, 200
Cervantes, Miguel de x, 96, 178, 213; La cueva de Salamanca 218; Don Quixote 213; La elección de los alcaldes de Daganzo 218-219; Entremeses 178, 209-220
Chamizal Festival: See Siglo de Oro Theater Festival
Charcot, Jean-Martin 176
CNTC: See Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico 25
Coliseo 37, 41; Coliseo del Buen Retiro 43; Coliseo de los Caños del Peral 40; Coliseo de la Cruz 38 N4, 50, 52
Colón, Juan 61
Colonization 128
Coloquio 201, 203
Columbus, Christopher 128
Comedia x, xi, xii, xiii, xvi, 20, 21, 22, 43, 47, 48, 58, 61, 63, 66, 68, 102, 73, 79, 80, 83, 86, 91, 92, 100, 105, 110, 134 N6, 179, 191, 193, 200, 203, 209, 213, 216; Comedia de capa y espada 80 N4; Comedia de enredos 80 N4, 86, 178; Comedia heroica 41, 52; Comedia de magia xii, xiii, 37-53; Comedia palatina 6; Comedia de santos 41, 52; Comedia de teatro 39; Comedia de tramoya xi, 39, 46, 52; Comedia militar 41, 52
Comediante: See Actor
Comédie Française 25 N11
Comedy x, 5, 15, 81, 155, 156, 211, 212, 242, 249, 250. See also Humor
Comic effect 77-88
Commedia dell’arte x, 40
Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC) 20, 25, 32, 33, 213
Conversos 135, 136, 137, 142, 147, 148, 149 N17
Convivencia 130
Coronel, Bábara 91, 100, 101
Index

Corral de comedias x, xi, xii, 37, 40, 41, 48, 56, 63, 67, 155, 160, 168, 186-187, 191, 193, 194, 200, 201, 211, 213; Corral de la Cruz 41; Corral de la Pacheca 40; Corral del Príncipe 40, 41
Cosmetics 80-81
Costumbrismo 50
Costume xiv, 67, 77-78, 185, 190, 194, 198, 200, 202, 204; Costume Price 98-99, 101
Covarrubias, Sebastián de 192
Criada 103
Cromwell, Hannah J 185
Cross-dressing 78-88, 97, 98-99, 101, 241

D
Dama 80 N4, 84, 86, 100
De la Cruz, Rodrigo 61
De la Torre, Gabriel 61, 70, 72
De las Llamosas, Lorenzo 190
De los Reyes, María 100
De los Ríos, Nicolás 62
Depression: See Melancholia
Didascalia 48, 50, 117, 161-162, 183, 191, 198
Dido, Ángela 100
Discovery space 41, 49, 186, 191, 200, 202, 203, 204

E
Echarri, Bernardo 68, 71
Enrique IV of Castile 139 N10
Enrique, José 12
Entremés xii, xv, 61, 67, 112, 178, 189, 191, 193, 203, 209-222
Erdman, Harley 109-122
Erras y Eraso, Pedro 70
Escorial, El 154
Escotillón 41, 46, 47, 51
Espinosa, Pablo 61, 70
Esquivel Navarro, Juan de 116-117

F
Fado 33
Farce 210, 213, 215, 217, 219
Farthingale: See Guardainfante
Felipe: See Philip
Ferdinand of Aragon ix, 128, 129, 130 N3, 148-150
Ferreira, António 24 N10
Ficino, Marsilio 172
Figuró 102
Fin de fiestas 210
France, influence on Spanish theater 37
Francisca de Santa Teresa 190;
Coloquio para representar en la profesión de Sor Ángela María de San José 201
Franco, Francisco 129
Freylas, Alonso de 158

G
Galán 177, 210, 223
Galen 163, 172, 172 N1, 174, 229
Gallego, Fernando 200
Galli Bibiena family 44-45
Galli Bibiena, Ferdinando 44-45
Ganassa (Alberto Naseli) 39-40
García Lorca, Federico 29 N14
García Vicente, Francisco 177
García, Ignacio xiii, 21-33
Gasque, Juan 63
Gender roles 77-88, 109-122
Géneros menores 213
Gesture xv, 3, 9, 10, 12, 84, 88, 118,
134, 153, 155, 159, 160, 163, 166,
171, 172, 175, 176, 179, 184, 190,
194, 198, 199, 204, 239, 246
Góngora, Luis de 12, 181
Gracioso 3, 14, 62, 78, 78 N2, 81, 82
N5, 86, 97, 103, 193, 200, 241,
248
Guardainfante 109-122
Gulbenkian ballet 29 N15
Guzmán, Leonor de 139 N10
Gynecology 175

H
Habsburgs 167, 173
Henry IV of Castile: See Enrique IV of Castile
High and low culture xii
Hippocrates 163
Honor x, 4, 10, 20, 176, 180, 181,
182, 183, 198, 214, 216, 217, 218,
219, 239; honor estamental
[caste honor] 4
Hormiga, La (theater group) 221-235
Hornby, Richard 224, 225
Huarte de San Juan, Juan 155, 162
Huarte y Mendicoa, Fermín de 70
Huarte, Fermín de 57-73
Humor x, xii, 82, 83, 85, 191, 194,
198, 202, 203, 210, 214, 221-227.
See also Comedy
Hysteria 172-173, 180

I
Ibañez, Juan de 57-73
Ibn Sina: See Avicena
Innocent VIII 140 N14
Inquisition 128, 135, 140 N14, 142
Invincible Armada 149, 153, 172,
211
Irony 14, 16, 147-148, 249
Isabel (Isabella) I of Castile ix, 127-
150
Italy: Italian influence on Spanish theater ix, xi, ix, xiii, 37-53

J
Jácara xii
Jews 128, 128 N1, 129, 130, 135,
135 N7 and N8, 136, 137, 138,
140, 141, 142, 143, 147, 148, 149,
172 N1: Edict of Expulsion 141,
142
John Paul II, Pope 129
Jonson, Ben 156
Jornada x
Juana (la Beltraneja) 130
Juana Inés de la Cruz xiv: Los empeños de una casa xiv, 77-88,
96, 97; Respuesta a Sor Filotea
86-87; “Hombres necios” 86-87
Juana of Castile (Juana la Loca)
168
Juegos de escarnio ix
Juegos escolares ix

K
Kaufman, Gina xiv, 109-122

L
Laban, Rudolf 115-116
Labanyi, Jo 26 N13
Lanini y Segredo, Francisco 214: El parto de Juan Rana 214-215
Lazzi 226
Leff, Thomas 21
León Marchante, Juan Manuel 190, 199; Loa de planetas, y signos 199
León, Melchor 62
Lighting x, 27, 42, 43, 44, 52, 117, 185, 186, 250
Loa 67, 78, 190, 199, 200, 201, 203, 222, 226, 227, 228
Lotti, Cosimo xi, 38, 43, 42, 42 N8
Lope de Vega: See Vega
Ludic: see Humor
Luis I 37 N1
Lusophìlia 23
Luzán, Ignacio de 52

M
Machiavelli, Niccolò 127, 128 N1, 150
Madrigal y Tamayo, Jerónimo de 57-73
Malachite, Felicia McNeill 113
Maria Luisa Gabriela of Savoy xii
Mariana de Austria 172, 213
Marieta, Juan de 134-135
Marsillach, Adolfo 20
Martínez, Ana: See Baltasar, Francisca
Medieval theater 189
Melancholia / Melancholy xiv-xv, 153-169; female melancholia 172-187
Melanchthon, Philip 172
Melo, Francisco Manuel de 24 N10
Mendoza, Bartolomé de 57-73
Metalinguistic conventions 249
Metsu, Gabriel 175
Mexía de la Cerda, Pedro 24 N10
Mieris, Franz van d.Ä 175

Migliarini, Arcangelo 160
Mira, Magüi 5
Miró, Pilar 5
Mise-en-scène 20, 38-53. See also Set design
Mujiganga xii, xv, 190, 221, 222-231
Montero, Jorge 70
Montherlant, Henry de 25 N11
Movement (stage) 115-117, 156-161, 189, 193-194, 198-201, 202-203. See also Gesture
Mujer esquiva xv, 172, 176-177, 178, 180
Murillo, Bartolomé Esteban 104
Music xv, 38, 47, 184, 209-214, 216-220
Muslim 22, 94, 128, 128 N1, 129-130, 172 N1

N
Naseli, Alberto: See Ganassa
Neoclassicism 38
Netherlands 174-175
Newton, Isaac 190

O
Opera 38 N4, 39, 40, 42

P
Palencia, Alonso de 129, 136, 129 N2, 149
Palmyreno, Lorenzo ix
Paralinguistic signs and signifiers xiv, 38m 153, 154, 155, 161, 166, 195, 199, 209, 210. See also Music
Parody 15, 17, 83, 85, 155, 181, 222
Paso x, xii
Pasoaes, Texeira de (Joaquim Pereira Teixeira de Vasconcelos) 30 N17
Patricio, António 29 N16
Pavis, Patrice 120
Pedroche, Pepa xiii, 21-33
Pérez, Cosme 82 N5, 213, 230, 231
Performance space ix, xiii-xiv, 57-73, 68-69, 185-187: cloister as 201-203; prison as xiii, xiv, 57-73. See also Corral, Set design
Persiani, Giuseppe 25 N11
Perspective (in stage design) 43-44, 52
Peruzzi, Baldassare 44
Philip II of Spain 42 N8, 153, 154, 167, 168, 172, 211
Philip III of Spain 172
Philip IV of Spain xi, 42 N8
Phil. V of Spain xii, xiii; theater under 37-53
Piccinini, Filippo 42
Pinedo, Baltasar de 62
Poetic justice 32, 216, 238, 241, 248, 249
Porres, Gaspar de 61, 62
Portugal: representation in Spanish theater 19-33; War with Castile 141
Prisons, as performance spaces. See Space, performance
Props ix, xiii, 3-16, 41, 66, 183, 189, 190, 194-199, 201, 202, 204, 250
Pulgar, Fernando de 130 N3, 136, 149

Q
Quevedo, Francisco de 81; Sueños 178
Quiñones de Benavente, Luis 213: El guardainfante 112-113

R
Racine, Jean-Baptiste 23
Ramírez, Jerónimo 134
Ramos, Isabel xiii, 3-16
Rana, Juan: See Pérez, Cosme
Renaissance ix, 38, 82, 172, 187
Repertorio Español 3, 4, 4 N1, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14
Ribera, José de 165, 174
Rich, Joshua 184
Robles, Luisa de 104
Rodríguez, Belange 11
Rodríguez, Rafael 5, 25
Rojas Villandrando, Agustín 62
Rojas y Sandoval, Cristóbal 62
Rojas, Fernando de: La Celestina 209
Romance 212, 216-220, 227, 228, 230
Romancero 24, 209, 210;
Romancero general 216
Rueda, Lope de ix-x, 58
Ruiz de Alarcón, Juan 237, 238: Mudarse por mejorarse (Trading Up) xv, 227-250; La verdad sospechosa 227, 228
Ruíz Moreno, Cristóbal 66, 67, 68, 71, 72
Ruíz, María 25
Ruíz, Miguel 59, 61-62, 62 N4, 63, 69-70

S
Sabbatini, Niccola 43, 46, 47
Sachetti, Giovanni Battista 41
Salvo y Vela, Juan: El mágico de Salerno 38
Sánchez, Germán 62
Santa Cruz, Alonso de 173
Sanz, Julio 25
Index

Sarao 78
Satire 12, 15, 16, 85, 86, 144, 210, 215, 217
Saudade 33
Scenography 38-53. See also Set design, Props, Corral de comedias
Sebastian I of Portugal 22
Segovia, Manuel 32
Semantics 117, 174
Semiotics of theater 3, 210, 239, 249
Serlio, Sebastiano 38, 43-4
Set change 44, 50; 52. See also Set design
Shakespeare, William: Hamlet 155; Macbeth 225, 228; The Merchant of Venice 142, 143, 143 N15, N16, 144, 147; Othello 224
Sierra, Silvia 8
Siglo de Oro Theater Festival, El Paso, Texas 79, 102, 109, 121, 221, 222, 225
Sixtus IV 140 N14
Sixtus V 190
Soares de Alarcón, Juan 24
Sound: See Paralinguistic signs and signifiers
Stage directions: See Didascalia
Stage machinery xi, xiii, 15, 37-53, 54, 128, 195. See also Tramoya
Staging xiii, xiv, 19-33, 78, 177-187, 190, 197. See also Performance space, Props, Set design
Stanford, Klyph 185
Stanislavski, Konstantin 182, 224, 225
Stanlake, Christie 224, 225, 228
Steen, Jan 174, 175
Stile recitativo 42
Sumptuary laws 92-95, 100, 105

T
Teatro breve 215. See also Entremés, Mojiganga
Téllez, Gabriel. See Tirso de Molina
Teresa of Avila 175 N8
Tertulia 41
Tickets: prices of theater tickets 38 N4, 58
Tijera, Juan Francisco 190
Tirso de Molina 23 N7, 109-122: Antona García 134 N6, El amor médico 134 N6, Doña Beatriz de Silva 134 N6, Marta la piadosa xiv, 109-122, El melancólico 154, 155
Toquemada, Tomás de 135-136
Torelli, Giacomo 45-46
Torres Naharro, Bartolomé de ix, 22
Torres, Francisco de 63
Tragedy x, 19, 21N2, 23, 24, 24 N9, 26, 28, 212
Tramoya xi, 39, 41, 43, 46, 47, 50, 52
Trap door. See Escotillón
Traveling troupe 191
Trufaldini 40, 48

U
Unamuno, Miguel de 30 N18, 31
Units (in theater) x, 52, 193, 211
Urbina, Isabel de 153
V

Vaca, Josefa 101
Valdés, Pedro de 63
Vázquez Freijo, Norberto 221-231
Vázquez, Diego 61
Vega, Félix Lope de x-xi, 24, 24
N10, 42 N9, 190: El Arte nuevo de hacer comedias x, 211, 221,
229, 249; El caballero de Olmedo 178; El castigo sin venganza 176;
El cerco de Santa Fe 134 N6; ¿De cuándo acá nos vino? 25; La
hermosa aborrecida 134 N6; Los locos de Valencia 176; El mejor
mozo de España 96, 97, 134 N6; El niño inocente de La Guardia
xiv, 127-150; El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón
134 N6; El perro del hortelano xiii, 3-16; El príncipe
melancólico xiv, 153-169
Velázquez, Andrés 157
Velázquez, Diego de 104
Velázquez, Jerónimo de 62
Velez de Guevara, Luis xiii, 19-33:
La corte del demonio 134 N6; El
diablo cojuelo 229; La luna de la
sierra 134 N6; Reinar después de
morrir xiii, 19-33; La Serrana de
la Vera 25, 96-97, 134 N6
Verse xii, 121 N4, 30, 50, 98, 103,
113 N1, 135 N7, 193, 212, 213,
217, 219, 228; verse forms x, 87
N8, 203, 210, 216, 229; Verso
dulce 211
Vicente, Gil 42 N8
Villamil, Asunción 25
Villanueva, Diego de 52
Vitruvius 44
Vives, Juan Luis: The Education of
a Christian Woman 118

W

Wagner, Richard 46 N13
Wassenbergh, Elisabeth
Geertruida 175
Weyer, Johann 172
Williams, Tennessee: Streetcar
Named Desire 224, 225

X

Ximénez de Luna, Pedro 70

Y

Yepes, Rodrigo de 134-135

Z

Zamora, Ana 21 N3
Zamora, Antonio de 40; Diablos
son los alcahuetes 48-49
Zarzuela 31 N19, 40, 41, 48
Zingarelli, Niccolò Antonio 25 N11
Zurbarán, Francisco de 104