The *Commedia dell'Arte* in the English Imagination, 1571-1611

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This thesis examines how the *commedia dell'arte* manifested in the English imagination in the period 1571-1611. This form of professional, semi-improvised performance practice emerged from Italy in the mid-sixteenth century to capture the hearts of audiences across Europe and introduce regional dramaturgies to the literary and theatrical innovations of the Cinquecento. There are frequent references to the masked stock characters and extemporising routines of the *arte* in extant English print, and scholars have often found parallels between the dramas and performance practices of English playwrights and Italian practitioners. However, these studies are complicated by the lack of direct exposure to the *arte* in performance. The Italians made only a handful of visits to England in the 1570s, after which they would not set foot on English soil again for over twenty years.

Utilising methods from contemporary transcultural theory, this thesis approaches the *commedia dell'arte* as a culturally porous theatrical apparatus of constituent parts that became disentangled from the whole during their migratory journey. These constituent parts were transferred at different rates, at different times and through different means, and as such were adapted and repurposed to the demands of specific cultural and political moments along the way. In other words, the *commedia dell'arte* did not pass into the English imagination all at once, a direct exchange from one culture to another through sustained exposure to Italian performance, but rather percolated through a series of piecemeal translations and appropriations. As such, this thesis contends that the *commedia dell'arte* found in extant print and manuscript records in the period has little resemblance to or bearing on the activities of the Italian practitioners on the continent. Rather, it was highly situated and syncretic, constructed by writers and dramatists to interrogate and reflect anxieties over difference, belonging, and what it meant to be English.

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Abbreviations

AN	-	Archives Nationales – Minutier Central des Notaires de Paris
APC	-	Acts of the Privy Council of England
CSP	-	Calendar of State Papers
CSPV	-	Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice
CCP	-	Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House
CMS	-	Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury
CPR	-	Calendar of the Patent Rolls
FSL	-	The Folger Shakespeare Library
LPH	-	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII: Addenda*, ed. by J. Gairdner, R. H. Brodie and A. C. Wood, Vol 1 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1929)
MCR	-	Middlesex County Records
OED	-	Oxford English Dictionary
RAL	-	*Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James I,* ed. by R.E.G. Kirk and Ernest F. Kirk, 4 vols (Aberdeen, 1900-1908)
SP	-	State Papers
STC	-	*A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English books printed abroad, 1475-1640, compiled by A.W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, revised, revised and enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson and K.F. Pantzer*, 3 vols (London: Biographical Society, 1986-1991)
TNA	-	The National Archives
Wing	-	*Short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English books printed in other countries, 1641 – 1700, compiled by Donald Wing*, 3 vols (New York: Index Society, 1945- 1951)

Style Note

As this is in part a cultural study of the developing imagination in contemporary print, all playbooks and texts cited will be early editions rather than modern edited versions. For plays and texts with multiple editions printed between 1571 and 1611, the earliest editions will be cited unless the treatment of the *commedia dell'arte* changes in successive versions. Quotations are given in the original spelling and all contractions have been kept. The same applies to indented quotations of dialogue between characters in a play, which has not been standardised but remains as originally printed. All foreign language quotations and proper nouns will remain in roman type, including the names of the *maschere*. However, standalone foreign language terms will be italicised, including collective nouns for the *maschere* such as *innamorati* and *vecchi* (the 'young lovers' and the 'old men'). All translations are mine unless specified in the accompanying footnote. Page numbers will be given rather than sheet signatures unless the page numbers are confused.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on library and archive services from March 2020, I have been unable to access a number of texts to check references and scan high resolution images of figures from Agne Beijer and Pierre Louis Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes* (Paris, 1928). Missing page numbers have been noted as 'page range inaccessible' accordingly.

Introduction

In a letter dated 5 August 1568, Giovanni Paolo de' Medici expressed his boredom with the tedious Venetian comedies performed at the Florentine court: 'mi viene in fastidio li zanni, li venetiani et le puttane' (I am getting weary of the Zanni, the Venetians and the whores).[1] He writes of the stock characters (*maschere*, or masks) of what is now referred to as the *commedia dell'arte*, a type of professional, semi-improvised performance practice that had recently surfaced amidst Italy's flourishing urban theatrical cultures to widespread esteem and notoriety. By the end of the century, its itinerant practitioners (*comici*) had captured the imagination of cities and courts across France, Bavaria, Spain, Poland, and the Low Countries, carrying with them the theatrical and literary innovations of the Cinquecento. Yet while patronised by monarchs and nobles, offered lucrative contracts by citizens, and memorialised in paintings and print, these troupes (*compagni*) were not without their critics. For the Florentine magnate, the novelty of their formulaic playmaking quickly diminished; for the more piously minded, they were dissolute performers with wanton women (*attrice*) playing women's parts, encouraging a susceptible populace to sin with bawdy comedies of cuckoldry and scatology. For Thomas Nashe, the English satirist and prose writer, their extemporised urban comedies were far inferior to the emergent English secular theatre tradition:

> our Sceane is more statelye furnisht than euer it was in the time of *Roscius,* our representations honourable, and full of gallant resolution, not consisting like theirs of a Pantaloun, a Whore, and a Zanie, but of Emperours, Kings and Princes.[2]

[1] Quoted in Alessandro d'Ancona, *Origini Del Teatro Italiano*, 2 vols (Turin: E. Loescher, 1891), ii, p. 461. The '*venetiani*' refers to the stock character Magnifico, a Venetian gentleman.
[2] Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the diuell* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 18373), sig. F4r.

Nashe wrote twenty-four years after Medici, and some nine-hundred miles away in London, yet the same dismissive contempt for the tripartite character dynamic of Magnifico, Courtesan, and Zanni resonates over time and space, bringing the form's meteoric ascendance from novel Lenten season money-spinner to Italy's preeminent theatrical export into perspective. For better or for worse, in these few short decades, the *commedia dell'arte* had become embedded within the cultural landscapes of Europe as far afield as England. References to the *maschere* and the peculiar improvised performance practices of the *comici* pepper contemporary English print and drama, and similarities in characterisation, plot, and scenography have occasioned a rich and diverse scholarship on the Anglo-Italian theatrical exchange. Yet despite the apparent resonances, contemporary knowledge of the *commedia dell'arte* could hardly have stemmed from the same weary familiarity with performance expressed by Medici. Throughout the forty-year golden age period with which this thesis is concerned, both the *arte* and its practitioners were conspicuously absent from England. Whilst winning the hearts and imaginations of French and Spanish audiences, the *compagni* made only a handful of short trips across the channel throughout the 1570s, and then would not return to English soil for over two decades.

There is a self-conscious awareness of this absence in the scholarship on the English interaction with the *commedia dell'arte*, which has attempted to marry this lack of exposure with the apparent acquaintance of contemporary writers like Nashe with its basic precepts. As explored at length below, earlier studies were preoccupied with excavating the moments of contact that facilitated the transfer of a cohesive dramatic form – a traveller attends a performance in Paris or Venice and then returns home to tell his friends of the particulars.[3] Such models of causal influence were

[3] For significant early twentieth-century studies of the causal influence of the *commedia dell'arte* on English drama, see Winifred Smith, *The Commedia Dell'Arte: A Study in Italian Popular Comedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912); Oscar J. Campbell, '*Love's Labour's Lost* Restudied', in *Studies in Shakespeare, Milton and Donne* (New York: MacMillan, 1925), pp. 83-116; Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia Dell'Arte, 1560-1620, with Special Reference to the English Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), i; Lea, 'Connections and Contrasts Between the

challenged in the late 1980s as scholars applied innovative intertextual methods to early modern playmaking, thereby recognising the degree of cross-cultural interplay involved in dramatic and literary production.[4] This engendered a line of inquiry that focused on playmaking as manifestly 'transnational', marked by a mobility and interconnectivity that had been obscured by pervasive notions of a 'national' culture.[5] Records of perambulating cultural go-betweens including players, merchants, diplomats, and travellers of all kinds were no longer simply evidence of contact in themselves but the historical residue of an extensive and entangled network of knowledge exchange through which neoclassical dramatic conventions and innovations were disseminated amongst and subsumed into disparate European theatrical cultures.

The focus on interconnectivity in transnational histories of the *commedia dell'arte* has given rise to the application of a one-size-fits-all methodology to distinct encounters characterised by the particular cultural dynamics of the places and spaces in which they occurred. This is more suitably applied to sustained interactions with the form taking place within connected, culturally diverse urban centres like Paris, Lyons, Antwerp, and Madrid. With England, however, a Protestant island nation where direct exposure was sporadic, such an approach prescribes a set value to the few available sources as documentary evidence of contact and exchange. A more productive way of approaching the English encounter with the *commedia dell'arte* is to prioritise representation and interrogate what extant English sources pertaining to the *commedia dell'arte* suggest about how the form manifested in the English imagination. Both Nashe and Medici's contempt for the same tripartite configuration of Magnifico, Courtesan, and Zanni might locate England's interaction with the *commedia dell'arte* within

Commedia Dell'Arte and English Drama', *Rivista Di Studi Teatrali*, 9.10 (1954), 114–26; and Louis B. Wright, 'Will Kemp and the Commedia Dell' Arte', *Modern Language Notes*, 41.8 (1926), 516–20.

[4] Predominantly Louise George Clubb's *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), which will be discussed on pages 27-28 of this introduction.

[5] Significant essay collections include *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008); *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson, Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Pavel Drábek and M.A. Katritzky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

a wider European history of the form's ascendance, but what forms of encounter facilitated the transmission of the *arte* into the English cultural landscape? How did these processes shape engagement? And in what innovative ways did writers and dramatists engage with, appropriate and adapt the *arte* in their works when at a distance from the performance cultures of the continent?

This thesis addresses these questions in three interrelated ways. First, it identifies theatrical engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* as just one facet of a much larger cultural phenomenon that takes place across many different mediums. When the wide range of sources relating to the English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* are analysed collectively in their historical, literary, and dramatic contexts, a clearer and far more detailed history of the English interaction with the form emerges. Second, it views exposure to the *commedia dell'arte* as manifold (and often irrecoverable) processes of translation and appropriation. The *commedia dell'arte* did not pass into the English cultural landscape all at once, a direct exchange from one culture to another as a result of sustained interaction with Italian performance, but rather percolated in a piecemeal manner into the imaginations of writers and readers, dramatists and theatregoers through print, performance, and by word of mouth. Finally, it examines how these processes of translation and appropriation resulted in a situated and syncretic *commedia dell'arte* that did not directly correspond to the performance practices of the *compagni* on the continent, but was continually adapted and repurposed to reflect the concerns of new cultural moments. Both English contact with the *commedia dell'arte* and the migration of the *comici* was facilitated by huge shifts in the political, spiritual, and cultural landscapes of Europe as reformation, trade, and expansion disrupted the systems through which early modern peoples determined difference and derived a sense of belonging.[6] The contention of this thesis is that the *commedia dell'arte* imagined by English writers

[6] This will be discussed below. For key studies on the emergence of English nationhood in the period, see Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Lotte Jensen, *The Roots of Nationalism: National Identity Formation in Early Modern Europe, 1600-1815* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016); Anna Suranyi, *Genius of the English Nation: Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern*

and dramatists in this period reflected these concerns over difference and belonging. It functioned as both a cultural manifestation of pervasive anxieties around English inferiority to other European nations, and, when articulated by writers and dramatists as a cohesive form of strange theatre, expressed a coherent, superior English cultural identity befitting their global ambitions.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to first unravel what is meant by *commedia dell'arte*, a slippery term anachronistically applied to the activities of the *comici* in this period, and what this form of elusive performance practice actually encompassed.[7] We must then consider the misconceptions that have arisen around the *commedia dell'arte* over its near 400-year history and how these have been perpetuated by scholarship. The merits and limitations of transnational approaches to England's interaction with the form will then be explored at length, before an alternative methodological model is proposed that draws from contemporary theories of transculturality and transculturation. Finally, the parameters of the thesis will be outlined, both in terms of the materials and period covered, followed by a commentary on the limitations of the study, and how they have been figured into the methodology.

i. Defining Commedia dell'Arte

Today, the *commedia dell'arte* is often thought of as an exclusively non-literary, experimental form of farcical comedy improvised around three-act plots, the popular counterpart to the serious, five-act

England (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008); Philip Schwyzer, *Nationalism in the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[7] There is an extensive and varied historiography on the *commedia dell'arte*. Several texts that have made a particularly significant contribution to knowledge of its composition, see Pierre Louis Duchartre, *La Comédie Italienne. L'improvisation, Les Canevas, Vies, Caractères, Portraits, Masques Des Illustres Personnages de La Commedia Dell'Arte* (Paris: Librairie de France, 1924); Cesari Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte* (Milan: Mondadori, 1985); Siro Ferrone, *Attori Mercanti Corsari. La Commedia Dell'Arte in Europa Tra Cinque e Seicento* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1993); *The Routledge Companion to the Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by Judith Chaffee and Ollie Crick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia Dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

scripted plays of the *commedia erudita*, written in imitation of Plautus and Terence and performed by scholars at the universities.[8] Whilst the student performers were amateurs, the practitioners of the *commedia dell'arte*, both men and women, established professional companies that would perform popular comedies to popular audiences in the piazzas and public squares of cities and towns across Europe. Each player specialised in a particular mask and worked hard to cultivate a commercially viable public persona around its stock characteristics.[9] The relationships between these characters hinged on established hierarchies: parents and children, young and old, men and women, masters and servants. True to its origins in the pre-Lenten carnival revelry of early modern Christendom, the plots (*scenari*) revolve around the subversion of these power dynamics.[10] The setting is urban, though the content far from urbane. Basking in a Rabelaisian aesthetic, it is a low sort of slapstick, bawdy, and often scatological comedy that lightly critiques flagrant abuses of power.[11]

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[8] Gianrenzo P. Clivio, 'The Languages of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, in *The Science of Buffoonery: Theory and History of the Commedia Dell'arte*, ed. by Domenico Pietropaolo (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1989), pp. 209-37; Marvin A. Carlson's chapter on 'Dialect Theatre: The Case of Italy', in *Speaking in Tongues: Language at Play in the Theatre*, Languages at Play in the Theatre (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp. 62-104; and Erith Jaffe-Berg's wonderfully rich study of the oral performance culture of the early *commedia dell'arte*, *The Multilingual Art of the Commedia dell'Arte* (Toronto: Legas, 2009).

[9] For detailed overviews of the Italian *compagni* and *comici* in the period, see Smith, *Italian Actors of the Renaissance* (New York: Coward-McCann, inc., 1930); Kenneth Richards and Lisa Richards, *The Commedia Dell'Arte: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Basil Press, 1990); and Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy*, i, pp. 255-366. Kenneth Richard's recent essay on the *compagni* provides a concise overview of some of the key troupes and their structure. See 'The Commedia dell'Arte Acting Companies', in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by Judith Chaffee and Oliver Crick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 43-54.

[10] There are numerous volumes on the plots and *scenari* of the *commedia dell'arte*. Often dismissed as non- (or in some cases, vehemently anti-) literary, Luigi Riccoboni and Irène Mamczar's *Discorso della commedia all'improvviso*, Archivio del teatro italiano (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1973) marks an early attempt to interrogate the *scenari* as historical sources for performance practices. Several English language volumes cover the *scenari* at length, including Richard Andrews' introduction and translation of Flaminio Scala's *Il teatro* (1611), *The Commedia Dell'Arte of Flaminio Scala: A Translation and Analysis of 30 Scenarios* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008); Robert Henke's chapter on the *scenari* as literary records of an oral performance culture, 'Form and Freedom: Between the Scenario and Stage', in *The Routledge Companion to the Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by Olly Crick and Judith Chaffee (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 21-29; Natalie Crohn Schmitt's *Befriending the Commedia Dell'Arte of Flaminio Scala: The Comic Scenarios* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014); and Stefan Hulfeld's study of documents of performance, 'Notebooks, Prologues, and Scenarios', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 46-55.

[11] For good, recent studies on the comic physicality of the set routines and *lazzi*, see Louise Peacock, 'Conflict and Slapstick in Commedia Dell'Arte – The Double Act of Pantalone and Arlecchino', *Comedy Studies*, 4.1 (2013), 59–69; and Mel Gordon, *Lazzi: The Comic Routines of the Commedia Dell'arte* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1983). For recent research on *commedia dell'arte* as social commentary, see Crohn Schmitt, *Befriending the Commedia Dell'Arte*, pp. 17-59; Robert L. Erenstein, 'Satire and the *Commedia dell'Arte*' In *Western Popular Theatre,* edited by David Mayer and Kenneth Richards (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 29-47.

In the centuries since the *commedia dell'arte* made its first ultramontane crossing, the *maschere* have become household names. The two old men (*vecchi*) represent the ruling class: the Venetian Magnifico, Pantalone, and the Bolognese pedant, Dottore. The former is the face of Italy's merchant gentry: grasping and covetous, he guards what is his with an implacable jealousy that results in his (often sexual) humiliation.[12] The latter is the face of the humanist *accademie*: pontificating in absurd Latinisms, he is so preoccupied with intellectual pursuits that he is easily gulled by the more streetwise *maschere*. The central conflict comes from the *vecchi* frustrating the sexual and matrimonial designs of the two pairs of besotted young lovers, or *innamorati*, who wax Petrarchan in the Tuscan language of high literature. Pantalone might refuse his son permission to marry his enemy's daughter, perhaps because he lusts after her himself, or possibly because he has a more advantageous match in mind. It is the role of the servant Zanni, with his thick, rolling Bergamaschi accent, to overcome such obstacles to true love by weaving an elaborate web of comical and absurd deceits that eventually forces his humiliated master to acquiesce.[13] An elaborate plot calls for an extensive cast of characters, and among the *vecchi*, *innamorati*, and *servanti*, the swaggering braggart Capitano is found swearing oaths in a Napolese or Spanish accent and drawing his sword at the slightest provocation. He will lay claim to one of the *innamorata*, only to run for his life when the time comes to prove his love. The clever Zanni often has a dim-witted counterpart, perhaps the servant of his master's enemy, with whom he will perform improvised slapstick routines and feats of impressive acrobatic skill. They may fight for the love of the maidservant, the hand of the *innamorata*'s nurse, or the bed of the procuress.

[12] For more on the role of Pantalone in performance, see Pietro Spezzani, *Il Primo Repertorio Linguistico di Pantalone* (Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1962). For a more recent, detailed study of the *maschera*, see Peter Jordan's case study on Pantalone in *The Venetian Origins of the Commedia Dell'arte* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 120-71.
[13] For more on the Bergamasque servant, discussed at length in Chapter Three, see Claudia Gotti's 'Lavorati Bergamaschi Nel Porto-Mercato Di Venezia Tra i Secoli XV e XVI' and Alessandra Mignatti, 'Nomen, Omen! Riflessione Sull'etymologia Dello Zanni', in *Zani Mercenario Della Piazza Europea*, ed. by Anna Maria Testaverde (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 2004), pp. 29-63, 64-80.

As a form that was improvised around sparse written plot, therefore leaving very little in the way of textual records, this idea of the *commedia* dell'arte, continually perpetuated and expanded by historians, performance scholars, and dramaturgs throughout the form's long history, is as misleading as it is accurate. It is a hotchpotch of conflicting origin stories and misconceptions of early performance practices, each of which expresses the ideas and ideologies of those that co-opt it, and the spirit of the time and place in which it is reimagined. This presents obvious obstacles to a historically situated analysis of the form; even the term '*commedia dell'arte*' is anachronistic, and does not appear in print until the publication of the impresario Carlo Goldoni's *Teatro Comico* in the mid-eighteenth century.[14] It has since come to celebrate a type of theatre born from the artistic ingenuity of its actors, yet Goldoni's term '*arte*' (meaning trade) attached the form to the player/artisans who wore the liveries of their profession craft. It was a vocation, unlike writing *erudita*, a pursuit of the *accademie* that was imagined as another facet of the literary humanist civilising process that brought Europe out of the dark and into the light.

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the *commedia dell'arte* had many names. Some focused on the formula, like the *commedia braccio*, *improvviso*, or the pejorative *d'istrioni* (the extemporal, improvised, or actor's comedy). Sometimes the *maschere* that stole the show, for better or for worse, spawning such names as the *commedia di Zanni* (the servants' comedy) and the *commedia di Gratiani* (the Doctors' Comedy).[15] The association with professionalism that the term *arte* presupposes, however, has always been a consistently identifiable characteristic of the form, and some early accounts refer to a *commedia mercenario* (mercenary comedy), highlighting both its artisanal roots and the occupation of its practitioners as performers.[16] Surviving evidence indicates that contracts were often drawn up that committed a group of individuals to certain obligations for a period of time in exchange for

[14] Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte*, pp. 67-70.
[15] Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 5.
[16] Ibid.

remuneration.[17] The earliest of these documents is dated 23 February 1545, in which the *capocomico* Ser Maphio ditto Zanini and several other artisans from Padua, Venice, and Treviso agreed to perform in Padua for a season before journeying to Rome to play before the crowds during Carnival.[18] It specifies that all must contribute to the cost of purchasing a horse for travelling; that none may engage in any other theatrical endeavours during the time period or forfeit their share of the profits; that those who fall sick will be provided for; and that the cashbox will be secured with seven locks and must only be opened with unilateral consent. Three other contracts dated between 1545 and 1553 have surfaced in the Archivio Notarile di Padua that list similar obligations for similar seasonal commitments.[19]

These early contracts place the *commedia dell'arte* within the context of carnival performance and the wider professional entertainment cultures of early modern Italy. Marketplace mountebanks and *cialatani*, types of quack purveyors of miracle cures and illicit products, incorporated elaborate routines into their sales pitches. As M.A. Katritzky has recently shown that while the professional *comici* worked to distinguish themselves from marketplace entertainers, numerous players began their careers in the piazza.[20] There was a substantial overlap in their performance practices, with entertainers of all sorts drawing from a pool of stock routines, characters, and plots. This of course complicates a definition of the *commedia dell'arte* as a strictly professional form of performance, something Robert Henke has also noted in relation to a diary entry by King Ferdinand of Bavaria during the wedding celebrations of crown Prince Wilhelm and Princess Renée of Lorraine in Munich in February 1568. Ferdinand recalls how the entertainments would often interweave and intersect, obscuring the

[17] For the first work on the Italian theatre as a fundamentally commercial enterprise, see Ferrone, *Attori Mercanti Corsari.*
[18] Roberto Tessari quotes the full contract in *La Commedia Dell'Arte: Genesi d'una Società Dello Spettacolo* (Rome: Gius. Laterna & Figli, 2013), page range not accessible.
[19] Henke, *Performance and Literature*, pp. 69-70.
[20] M.A Katritzky, 'Was the Commedia Dell'arte Performed by Mountebanks? Album Amicorum Illustrations and Thomas Platter's Description of 1598', *Theatre Research International*, 23.2 (1998), 104–25.

boundary between amateur and professional performance.[21] The distinction between the *arte* and the amateur scripted *erudita* is more the result of inherited notions of a high/low model of production and consumption of Italian renaissance culture in the period than any noticeable and sustained differentiation in content. Louise George Clubb's work, which will be commented on in greater detail on pages 27-28, brought the reciprocity of university drama, professional *arte* performance, marketplace entertainments, high literature, and cheap print during the period into focus, challenging the perpetuation of 'popular' culture as something running parallel to serious dramatic and literary production. Even the *maschere*, the visually evocative symbols of the *commedia dell'arte*, were not necessarily the exclusive property of the *compagni*. They are found in print *dialoghi*, *novelle*, *cantastorie*; some were performed in the tragedies and pastorals of the *commedia erudita* and the *commedia grave* (serious comedy).

The idea that designating the *arte* 'popular' reflects a particular kind of audience is built on the outdated notion that the *comici* exclusively performed in the marketplace. Troupes may have taken to the trestle stage in the piazzas, but these spaces were diverse, and the courts of the Medici, Valois, and Habsburg are about as far from 'popular' as it is possible to be. With this in mind, it is important to exercise caution when searching for social commentary in the *commedia dell'arte*. Many troupes were certainly formed as a commercial enterprise during the Lent season and drew heavily from carnival revelry. However, speaking truth to power was not the intention of these professional players, many of whom worked tirelessly to have their art legitimised and protected by civic authorities.[22] It can be questioned whether the ritual humiliation of the Venetian Magnifico was intended as anything more

[21] See Katritzky, 'The Diaries of Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria: Commedia Dell'Arte at the Wedding Festivals of Florence (1565) and Munich (1568)', in *Italian Renaissance Festivals and Their European Influence*, ed. by J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 143–72.
[22] Perhaps the most famous example of the *comici*'s hostility towards marketplace performers is found in a letter from Isabella Andreini, the star of the celebrated *i Gelosi*. See Katritzky, 'Was the *Commedia dell'arte* Performed by Mountebanks?', p. 108.

than a form of gentle social satire, especially when considering how, outside carnival, many troupes had their eyes set on lucrative seasons performing before kings and dukes at courts across Europe. Political sideswiping would prove a risky strategy to secure patronage, and there was little to be gained by ruffling the feathers of the Counter Reformation councils tasked with determining the Church's position on secular art, especially when the presence of women on stage drew fervent opposition from senior figures like Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti.[23]

As noted about, much speculation around the history and performance practices of the form has transpired because it has left so few manuscript and print documents of performance. Though invaluable sources for early performance practices, the *scenari* provide a great deal of scope for ahistorical takes that propagate romanticised notions of a 'spontaneous', improvised, folkloric form of comedy. The theatre historian Pierre Duchartre would conceive of *commedia dell'arte* extemporising in the early twentieth century as something organic which 'magically appeared from nothing' in a moment of creative inspiration, responding in unique ways to momentary stimuli that could never be recovered nor repeated.[24] The spontaneous creative energy behind these irrecoverable and unique moments of improvisation are emblematic of the early modern preoccupation with self-fashioning identities and worlds and one's place within them. The *comico* is 'at once sculptor and sculpture', writes Scott McGehee, the spirit of an age.[25] Something decidedly utilitarian about *commedia dell'arte* improvisation has appealed to the radical spirit of successive generations and provided the opportunity for artistic and political liberation.[26] The freedom that improvisation offered from the tyranny of the oppressor – whether church, state, playwright, director, academe, or one's own cultural heritage – has

[23] See Bernadette Majorana, 'Commedia Dell'Arte and the Church', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 133-48.
[24] Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy: The Improvisation, Scenarios, Lives, Attributes, Portraits, And Masks Of The Illustrious Characters Of The Commedia Dell'arte*, trans. by Randolph T. Weaver (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 50.
[25] Scott McGehee, 'The Pre-Eminence of the Actor in Renaissance Context: Subverting the Social Order', in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by Judith Chaffee and Oliver Crick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 9–20.
[26] McGehee, p. 10.

stoked the imaginations of artists, performers, writers, sculptors, and scholars from the Avant-garde onwards.

However, recent research into performance practices of the *comici* suggests that their extemporising had more in common with certain freestyle forms of modern jazz and rap than today's dramatic improvisation.[27] A tightly structured *scenario* would guide the players' interactions with each other throughout the drama. While these unscripted interactions provided room to improvise, each *comico* possessed a common place book, or *zibaldione*, filled with speeches, songs, and *lazzi* (comic routines) that were easily adapted to the demands of different narratives. As both Richard Andrews and Henke have observed, the *scenari* contain clear 'insertion points' where structured improvisation could then be interpolated without derailing the plot.[28] Elasticity was key; certain *comici* were renowned for performing certain speeches, songs, or lazzi, and audiences expected to see them performed regardless of the whether the plot would permit it. The routines must therefore have always been modular and flexible, leaving enough room to be expanded upon or brought to an abrupt halt depending on the audience's reaction.

Another layer of confusion is added by the surprisingly broad repertoires of the professional troupes indicated by surviving collections of scenari. Flaminio Scala's 1611 collection of fifty plots, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative*, contain a range of genres and modes. Over the course of his thirty-year career as the *innamorato* Flavio in the troupe *i Gelosi*, Scala compiled a collection of forty comedies, one tragedy, and nine plays that we might think of as hybrid pastoral romances. Other surviving manuscript *scenari* attest to the popularity of the magical pastoral in particular, as well as the 'shepherdes crookes', 'arrowes for nymphes', and 'sythe for Saturne' listed amongst the properties provided by the Revels

[27] Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 178. See also Crohn Schmitt, 'Improvisation in the Commedia Dell'Arte in Its Golden Age: Why, What, How', *Renaissance Drama*, 38 (2010), 225–49.
[28] Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 120.

Office to a company of Italians in London in July 1574.[29] Some *commedia dell'arte* performers wrote 'literature' as well, including Isabella Andreini, who penned both the celebrated pastoral drama *La Mirtilla* in 1588, and a collection of verse in 1601.[30]

The versatility that a broad repertoire would necessitate also challenges the preconception of individual *comici* as specialists in certain roles. This is perhaps perpetuated by the known exploits of a few celebrated performers like Isabella Andreini, *inammorata* and prima donna of *i Gelosi*, her husband Francesco, a Capitano, and Tristano Martinelli, inventor of the servant mask Arlecchino, or Harlequin. Yet while they forged successful careers by cultivating public personas inflected by their on-stage mask, the commercial demand for novelty meant all were skilled at multiple roles across genres. The celebrated *comico* and later performance theorist Pier Maria Cecchini, for example, played both Magnifico and first Zanni.[31] It is also important to note that playing Magnifico or Zanni did not simply mean learning a stock way of talking, moving, and emoting. This was an actor's theatre, after all, and each actor brought their own skills and understanding of the masks to performance. Each character was therefore far from what we would call 'stock', as Richard Andrews has shown in his translation and analysis of Scala's *Il teatro*. Pantalone was not always the old, lecherous, covetous, jealous, Venetian merchant. He could also be a loving and protective father, a dedicated husband, and a man from Florence or Genoa coming to terms with the decrepitation of age.[32]

Defining the *commedia dell'arte*, then, is a tricky business. Whenever a seemingly distinct attribute emerges, it inevitably slips through the fingers when contextualised within the wider literary and

[29] See, for example, 'The Three Satyrs' translated by Lea (ii, pp. 663-74) from Corsini Manucript MS. Cors. i. 9; Ibid, i, p. 233.
[30] For more on Andreini as pastoral writer, see Laura Anna Stortoni and Mary Prentice Lillie, *Women Poets of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Italica, 1997), pp. 224–25; Ilana Walder-Biesanz, 'Writing Pastoral Drama as a Woman and an Actor: Isabella Andreini's *Mirtilla*', *Italian Studies*, 71.1 (2016), 49-66; Rosalind Kerr, 'Isabella Andreini (Comica Gelosa 1560-1604): Petrarchism for the Theatre Public', *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 27.2 (2006), 71-92.
[31] Virginia Scott, 'France', in *Commedia in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 76-88 (p. 78).
[32] Scala and Andrews, *The Commedia Dell'Arte of Flaminio Scala*, xix-xxii; Crohn Schmitt, 'Commedia Dell'Arte: Characters, Scenarios, and Rhetoric', *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 21.1 (2004), 55–73 (p. 56).

dramatic cultures of the Cinquecento. Lea concluded that as it does not 'keep still within the boundaries of definition', it can only be said to exist 'by virtue of a quorum of its characteristics.'[33] There is, however, a recent trend in the historiography of the *commedia dell'arte* that attempts to untangle its hopelessly knotted history by tracing the appropriation and reinvention of the *arte* through its various aesthetic and political iterations over time.[34] It does so by distinguishing between the 'myth' and the 'reality' of the *arte*. The former refers to inherited ideas of the *commedia dell'arte* that simultaneously denigrate the form as low culture and elevate it as utilitarian, universal, and inherently politically subversive. The latter is primarily concerned with the Italian theatre that emerges when these documents of performance are properly historicised.[35] In response, more flexible definitions are now offered by theatre historians that shift focus from the contents of the drama to the historical conditions of performance; Eric Nicholson recently appraised the *commedia dell'arte* as 'the innovatively professional and versatile form(s) of performance developed and exported throughout Europe by Italian theatre artists' – vague enough in the particulars of performance to allow a degree of flexibility yet acutely aware of the importance of its historically situated migration.[36] As a cultural history of the translation and appropriation of this form in a regional context, this thesis will also approach the *commedia dell'arte* as historically embedded – more as a method of performance that came about due to a fortuitous shift in geopolitical conditions than a structured dramaturgy.

Though originally confined to the universities, a handful of enterprising dramaturgs at the turn of the century recognised the cultural and financial potential of a modern drama set in the urban piazzas of the Italian cities that handled the everyday domestic tensions and confrontations of their

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[33] Lea, i, p. 1.
[34] See essays in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al.
[35] For an in depth overview of the historical 'myth' and 'reality', see Ferdinando Taviani's chapter 'Knots and Doubleness: The Engine of the Commedia Dell'Arte', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 17–33.
[36] Eric Nicholson, 'Commedia Dell'Arte in Early Modern English Drama', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Anglo-Italian Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 358-75 (p. 358).

inhabitants. At the same time, the re-emergence of abandoned trade routes and cross-European dynastic marriages during the sixteenth-century created the stability and capital for Italian rulers to nurture the arts as legacy projects in imitation of their classical predecessors.[37] Over the course of a few decades, a secular theatre emerged that was steeped in the amateur university *erudita* comedies, the performance practices of itinerant showmen, and the folk traditions of *carnivale*. Its practitioners came from across the social spectrum, with educated aristocrats forming troupes with marketplace performers, courtesans, and workers from the lower artisanal classes to perform a secularised theatre of the day that became commercially viable all year round, rather than just the Lenten period during carnival. It is the activities and practices of such troupes and performers that are here referred to as the *commedia dell'arte*. As already seen, these practices and activities were far from uniform, but recognisable key features can be identified across the *compagni* from which a more succinct definition of the *commedia dell'arte* can be drawn. Professional (in the sense that performance was the primary source of seasonal income), itinerant Italian troupes with women playing women's roles in a type of semi-improvised drama structured around written plots.[38] These dramas tended to play on traditional urban class structures through the interactions of stock characters, some of which wore masks (Pantalone, Dottore, Zanni, Capitano) and some of which did not (the *innamorati*). The central difference between the secular theatre found emerging in England, France, and Spain during this period and the *commedia dell'arte* is that the latter was first and foremost an actor's rather than a

[37] Henke, 'Border-Crossing in the Commedia Dell'arte', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 19-35 (p. 31).
[38] The significance of the *attrice* to the development of the *commedia dell'arte* has been the subject of substantial scholarship. For key works, see Tessari, *La Commedia Dell'Arte. La Maschera e I 'ombra* (Milan: Mursia, 1981); Kathleen Gill, 'Women and Performance: The Development of Improvisation by the Sixteenth-Century Commedia Dell'Arte', *Theatre Journal*, 43.1 (1991), 59–69; Jane Tylus, 'Women at the Windows: "Commedia Dell'arte" and Theatrical Practice in Early Modern Italy', *Theatre Journal*, 49.3 (1997), 323–42; Katritzky, *Women, Medicine and Theatre, 1500-1750: Literary Mountebanks and Performing Quacks* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007); and Rosalind Kerr, 'The Italian Actress and the Foundations of Early Modern European Theatre', *Early Theatre*, 11.2 (2008), 181–97.

playwright's theatre, a composite drama of speeches and routines from an individual actor's repertoire that were then threaded together around a written plot into a collective, group performance.

With the fluidity of early modern theatrical production in mind, it is important that we do not wholly extricate the *commedia dell'arte* from the performance cultures emerging concurrently all over Europe. As such, this thesis will refer to the dramatic activities of these troupes by two names depending on the nature of the discussion at hand: the *commedia dell'arte* when referring to the performance of semi-improvised modular plays by the *comici*; and the 'Italian professional theatre' when referring to these activities as belonging to a wider, interconnected, professional theatrical activity that was taking shape across a continent in the period.

ii. Overview of the field

Even with a clearer view of what the *commedia dell'arte* actually encompassed, we should not dismiss the pervasive misconceptions around the form altogether. As a recent contextual study of the *arte* has stressed, the intermittent periods of renewed popularity that the *commedia dell'arte* enjoyed across the centuries means that historical realities have become too entangled with historical myths for one to be celebrated as authentic and the other dispelled as folkloric and erroneous. Rather, they are 'two profiles of the same face', argues Ferdinando Taviani in the opening chapter, and to be an effective researcher of the *arte*, it is necessary to practice 'strabismus' – 'a method which is similar to diplopia, namely the simultaneous perception of two images of the same object' - both to understand the historical nature

of the form and so as not to perpetuate any received notion of what constitutes *commedia dell'arte* then and now.[39]

This due diligence requires treating the *commedia dell'arte* presented in the historiography with the same critical eye as the *arte* found in primary sources. Early comparative studies of English and Italian theatre is reliant on certain assumptions around both the nature of the form and the nature of cross-cultural exchange that have come to shape subsequent research. The frequent characterisation of the *commedia dell'arte* as its own distinct dramaturgy, for example, is the residual impetus of eighteenth-century writers and dramatists like Goldoni towards categorising the best and the worst of Cinquecento Italy into high and low forms. The two overlapping research strands that emerged in early scholarship of the Anglo-Italian theatrical interaction were constructed from this clear delineation. The first focuses on how the apparent parallels between the Italian *scenari* and *maschere* and the plots and comic types of Shakespeare's plays suggest a substantial degree of intercourse between the two. After Max J. Wolff's early speculative account of how the Scala scenario, 'Flavio tradito', may have informed *The Two Gentleman of Verona*, similar comparative approaches soon became commonplace.[40] Henry David Gray argued that five *scenari* in the manuscript Locatelli Collection of *scenari* in the *Biblioteca Casanatense* in Rome were clearly the 'basic source' of *The Tempest* (c. 1610-1611).[41] Frank Ardolini then provided a thought-provoking study on the 'cheat-the-hangman' *lazzi* associated with the mask Pedrolino and the scene in which Pedringano avoids the noose in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (c.1582-1592).[42] The need to historicise the drama of the period was stressed by Walter

[39] Taviani, p. 33.
[40] Max J. Wolff, 'Shakespeare Und Die Commedia Dell'Arte', *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, 46 (1910), 1–20.
[41] Henry David Gray, 'The Sources of *The Tempest*', *Modern Language Notes*, 35 (1920), 321–30.
[42] Frank Ardolino, 'The Hangman's Noose and the Empty Box Kyd's Use of Dramatic and Mythological Sources in The Spanish Tragedy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 1977, 334–40.

Kerr, who argued that the Shylock of the early modern stage was not the 'bloodcurdling melodramatic villain' of modern performance but instead a comic Pantalone figure.[43]

The second research strand in studies of the Anglo-Italian theatrical interaction was slightly more nuanced in its treatment of Italian professional theatre as a mode of practice rather than an independent and coherent dramaturgy. Winifred Smith first observed the possibility of a more fluid relationship between the regular university comedy and the *arte* of the professional stage in her early essays and survey of *commedia dell'arte*. The influence of the former 'in determining the character of the popular Italian drama in the Renaissance has been somewhat overlooked', she writes, precisely because of the tendency to draw such clear distinctions.[44] Kathleen Lea would expand on this notion in her richly documented two-volume history of the *commedia dell'arte* with 'special reference to the English stage'. Unsatisfied with the degree to which a whole history of Anglo-Italian cultural exchange had been constructed around disparate references to a few *maschere* in the works of Shakespeare, Lea argued instead that the influence of the *arte* on London's theatrical landscape was 'mainly sporadic and superficial'.[45] She was also the first to broaden the scope of Italian 'popular' comedy to incorporate other types of performance such as marketplace mountebanks and *ciarlatani*, and her opening description of the *commedia dell'arte* is remarkable. It remains a 'drama with no new substance, but with a new flavour, which, once tasted, is as unmistakable as it is hard to define.'[46] The only criticism of this more inclusive perspective is that Lea overlooks the fluid intercourse between the *arte* and Italian academic and literary culture more broadly.[47] While the parameters have expanded, the title *Italian Popular Comedy* suggests that inherited notions of high and low, literary and performative still prevail. This is most noticeable in the analysis of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Its similarity to surviving *scenari*

[43] Walter Kerr, 'In Search of Shylock', *Horizon*, 3.2 (1960), 90–96 (p. 91).
[44] Smith, *The Commedia Dell'arte, a Study in Italian Popular Comedy*, p. 561.
[45] Lea, ii, p. 454.
[46] Lea, i, p. 1.
[47] Ibid.

suggests that in this instance the contact between the Shakespeare and Italian improvised drama must have been 'considerable'; 'Artistically', however, Italian influence 'is almost negligible.'[48] We must instead 'imagine an earlier version' onto which is worked 'Shakespeare's heavenly alchemy'.[49] The playwright, in his infinite wisdom, takes the *scenario* and 'points out traces of that alloy that maketh the metal work the better.'[50]

The publication of Louise George Clubb's seminal work of intertextual scholarship, *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (1989) opened up new possibilities for research into the English interaction with the *commedia dell'arte* in this early period. Clubb argued that Italian theatre was far more diverse, and European theatrical exchange far more complex and incremental, than previously imagined. 'There lurks a notion of commedia dell'arte', writes Clubb, 'as a gestural and choreographing medium not only different from written drama but constitutionally antiliterary … and therefore quite irrecoverable.'[51] The idea of the *commedia dell'arte* as a 'carefree, spur-of-the-moment' creation that rails against the tyranny of the author had passed from generation to generation as a kind-of theatrical folklore, completely detached from the literary and dramatic cultures of the Cinquecento. Clubb instead proposed that Italian theatre did not consist of parallel, independent dramas, but was collectively made up of structural units equivalent to the semiotic and functional units of language, or narremes in narratology, that are 'embodied in the real material world of theatrical performance by actual actors before actual audiences.'[52] These units, which she terms theatregrams, whether topoi, characters and characterisation, actions, relationships, or other neoclassical minutiae, are detachable, and can be recombined and reformulated in innovative ways when transported across linguistic,

[48] Ibid, ii, p. 359.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Clubb, pp. 249-50
[52] Henke, 'Border-Crossing in the *Commedia dell'arte*', p. 20.

cultural, and geographical boundaries.[53] The *commedia dell'arte* was therefore not disconnected to the theatrical activities of the universities but belonged 'to an entire system in which scripts and scenarios, the piazza and court, and the literary and the oral, continually interact.'[54]

Clubb's emphasis on the cross-fertilisation of genres and traditions through the contamination of sources provided the bedrock on which a generation of theatre historians constructed an intertextual methodology of transmission and exchange that places local theatrical traditions within transnational context. Michele Marrapodi's championing of Anglo-Italian intertextualities has resulted in several significant essay collections that place works on the *arte* in *2 Henry IV* alongside reflections on George Gascoigne's reworking of Ariosto's *erudita* comedies or the staging of gendered civilities found in Italian conduct manuals and *novelle*. Andrew Grewar's impressive work on clowning and dialogic exchanges between lovers pointed excitedly to a whole new way of engaging with the networks of cultural and intellectual exchange that lay behind the emergence of a European neoclassical drama. More engaged interest with women's professional performance also engendered a substantial body of comparative work dedicated to excavating the theatregrams of the early modern Italian *attrice* in the works of Shakespeare.[55] Julie D. Campbell's observation that the 'impressive comic skills' of the continental *attrice* go a long way in explaining the sudden emergence of 'witty, wilful, and elegant' Shakespearean women like Beatrice, Rosalind, and Viola, and spoke not to moments of

[53] Clubb, p. 6.
[54] Henke, 'Back to the Future', p. 231.
[55] See also, Frances K. Barasch, 'Italian Actresses in Shakespeare's World: Vittoria and Isabella', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 19.3 (2001), 5-9; Pamela Allen Brown, 'The Counterfeit Innamorata, or the Diva Vanishes, *Shakespeare Yearbook*, 10 (1999), 402-26; Allen Brown, 'Dido, Boy Diva of Carthage: Marlowe's Dido Tragedy and the Renaissance Actress', in *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater,* ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 113-30; Julie D. Campbell, "'Merry, nimble, stirring spirit (s)" Academic, Salon and Commedia dell' arte Influence on the Innamorate of *Love's Labour's Lost*', in *Women Players in England, 1500-1660*: *Beyond the All-Male Stage*, ed. by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin (Ashgate: Farnham, 2008), pp. 154-70; and Nicholson, 'Ophelia Sings Like a *Prima Donna Innamorata*: Ophelia's Mad Scene and the Italian Female Performer', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 81-98.

undocumented physical exposure but to the layered intertextualities of a European-wide theatrical renaissance that was facilitated, rather than caused, by the peregrinations of the *comici*.[56]

Despite *commedia dell'arte* studies responding to a wider intellectual shift away from intertextualities of New Historicism toward the somatic and material conditions of performance, Clubb's modular model of cross-cultural theatrical exchange still resonates. Eric Nicholson has side-lined the 'prevailing interpretations of Ophelia as rejected lover and/or repressed virgin' and recentred musicality in the 'mad scene', finding clear parallels in the histrionic *pazzi* (mad scenes) of the Italian *virtuosa*.[57] More recently, Theatre Without Borders (TWB), a collective of international theatre historians leading research into transnational theatre networks over the last two decades, published a mission statement in 2014 that called for an interdisciplinary approach to early modern European drama that engenders transnational contexts for individual national theatrical phenomena.[58] Studying regional dramaturgies as the cultural expressions of insular societies ignores the degree of interconnectivity of early modern urban societies and therefore the cultural plurality at the heart of dramatic production. The itinerant *compagni*, Henke writes, were the 'perfect transnational machine', disseminating modular theatregrams and performance practices across Europe in a flexible form of urban drama that resonated with an increasingly metropolitan audience and their new, culturally diverse urban mode of living.[59] This focus on reciprocity has been fruitful when analysing the activities of the itinerant *compagni* in places such as France and Spain. As will be explored at length in Chapter Two, the *comici* were integral to the cultural 'Italianisation' of the French court following Henri II's wedding to Catherine de' Medici, an event that precipitated the success of the Italian troupes in Paris

[56] Campbell, '"Merry, nimble, stirring spirit[s]", p. 148.
[57] Nicholson, 'Sing Again, Sirena: Translating the Theatrical Virtuosa from Venice to London', in *Waterborne Pageants and Festivities in the Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J.R. Mulryne*, ed. by Margaret Shewring and Linda Briggs (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 373–89 (p. 82).
[58] This is set out by Henke and Nicholson in the introduction to *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, pp. 1-5.
[59] Henke, 'Border-Crossing in the Commedia Dell'arte', p. 23.

from the early 1570s. There is ample evidence of Italian players writing letters to patrons and fellow performers, writing and printing five-act plays, buying and leasing properties, and making use of the court system to file disputes over pay, property, and even importing/exporting goods.[60] After a performance by *i Gelosi* at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in May 1577, the court diarist Pierre l'Estoile would lament 'that the last four preachers in the city put together did not attract so many when they preached their sermons'.[61] In Spain, Alberto Naselli, in *arte* 'Zan Ganassa', would reside in the capital for almost a decade living off the perpetual popularity and financial viability of the *commedia dell'arte* amongst Iberian audiences. In 1589, the doctor Juan de Pineda would recall how he and his wife skipped meals in order to afford the entry fee to one of Ganassa's performances at the Corral de Príncipe.[62] It is difficult to overstate the impact of these travelling performers on the cultural lives of their host cities. By the early 1580s, *commedia dell'arte* had permeated the Parisian imagination to the extent that its stock characters provided powerful motifs for the printed satirical propaganda of both Politique and League factions during the latter years of the Wars of Religion. Ganassa's hand is found not only in the drama of early Spanish theatre, particularly the works of dramatist Lope de Vega, but in the architecture of the *siglo de oro*. It was to his specifications that the *corrales* were renovated with a roof and machinery for setting-up and moving set pieces and large properties.[63] At the same time, the Italians were responsive to the particularities of their new environments, and incorporated everyday observations of cultural peculiarities into their routines. They created a theatre 'decisively characterised by

[60] The Italian presence is France has a long and extensive historiography. See Armand Baschet, *Les Comèdiens Italiens à La Cour de France Sous Charles IX. Henry IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Plon, 1882); Emile Picot, *Les Italiens in France Au XVIe Siècle* (Paris: Imprimeries Gounouilhou, 1901); Duchartre, *La Comédie Italienne*; and Ferrone, *Arlecchino. Vita e Avventure Di Tristano Martinelli Attore* (Rome: Gius, Laterna & Figli, 2006).
[61] Translated in William D. Howarth, *French Theatre in the Neo-Classical Era, 1550-1789*, p. 84.
[62] See N.D. Shergold, 'Ganassa and the "Commedia Dell'arte" in Sixteenth-Century Spain', *The Modern Language Review*, 51.3 (1956), 359–68; and Nancy D'Antuono, 'Commedia Dell'Arte and the Spanish Golden Age Theatre', in *The Routledge Companion to the Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by Judith Chaffee and Oliver Crick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 238-45 (p. 95).
[63] María del Valle Ojeda Calvo, 'The Iberian Peninsula', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 89-97 (p. 90). See also, Charles Davis and John E. Varey, *Los Corrales de Comedias y Los Hospitales de Madrid: 1574-1615. Estudio y Documentos* (London: Tamesis Books, 1997), pp. 47-48.

nomadism', writes Siro Ferrone, 'marked by the linguistic and cultural interplay that such mobility necessarily cultivates.'[64] This might interpolating topical jokes, political lampoons, and macaronic word play, but it could also mean changing the very fabric of the *commedia dell'arte*. Around 1584, Tristano Martinelli, the second Zanni in *i Confidenti*, crafted the mask Arlecchino, perhaps the most evocative face of Italian theatre today, from the 'hellequin' devils of earlier French *mystères*; a recently unearthed *zilbaldione* belonging to Abarago Frescobaldi, in *arte* 'Stefano Botarga', who resided in Spain with Ganassa's *i Naselli* throughout the 1570s and 1580s, contains amongst records of stage business, interludes, and *scenari*, a Spanish-language translation of Cinzio's tragedy *Orbecche* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[65]

iii. The Limitations of Transnationalism

While clearly a productive model for engaging with performances in Paris and Madrid, there are certain methodological problems that arise from applying a uniform transnational approach to regional encounters. Studies that rely on spatially and temporally anchoring documentary evidence can only ever be as fruitful as the records are plentiful. English exposure to the *commedia dell'arte* in performance will be covered at length in chapter one of this thesis, but suffice to say they had nowhere near the same level of sustained exposure to the form as the Spanish, Germans, or French, who benefitted from the dynastic alliances and re-established trade routes that prompted greater mobility and financial prospects for Italian companies abroad. The earliest records of English contact are found in a handful of letters from dignitaries in Paris in the early 1570s that marvel at a novel type of physically-inflected

[64] Ferrone, 'Journeys', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 67–75 (p. 84).
[65] Valle Ojeda Calvo, *Stefanelo Botarga e Zan Ganassa* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2007), pp. 57-129.

theatre. These accounts appear to have precipitated a brief period of Italian performance on English soil, although court and city records number just a few in total and include individual performers, puppeteers, and small troupes amongst the grander touring companies of the *commedia dell'arte*. After the departure of the Mantuan Drusiano Martinelli and his troupe in 1578, Italian performers are almost entirely absent until the early seventeenth century.[66] Overseas, a number of records point to interactions between English theatre companies and Italian players in Paris, Antwerp, and Utrecht from the 1580s into the early 1600s.[67] There are also three extant reports of *commedia dell'arte* performance in the print and manuscript travelogues of English travellers to Orléans, Florence, and Venice.[68]

Despite this relative dearth of contact, recent studies on the *commedia dell'arte* in England mirror earlier works by prefacing comparative approaches with these few instances of contact to account for the proliferation of Italianate theatregrams in the works of contemporary dramatists, most often Shakespeare. 'The sporadic presence of Italian actors on English soil', writes Daniele Vianello, 'became relevant in light of the influence the *commedia dell'arte* had on Elizabethan theatre and dramatic writing'.[69] Eric Nicholson has observed how, whilst the documentary evidence of exposure is 'sparse and haphazard', it is 'sufficient enough to allow the postulation that early "commedia" troupes also could have performed in London, and likewise that English travellers to the Continent would have had opportunities to attend "commedia" shows.'[70] Frances K. Barasch has recently reiterated these sentiments, noting how the itinerant professional *comici* 'inspired the development of theatres in

[66] These encounters will be explored at length in Chapter One, pp. 56-59.
[67] Pavel Drábek and M.A. Katritzky, 'Shakespearean Players in Early Modern Europe', in *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, ed. by Bruce Smith, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), ii, pp. 1527–33.
[68] These will be examined in Chapters Two and Three.
[69] Daniele Vianello, 'Introduction: Commedia Dell'Arte: History, Myth, Reception', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 1-14 (p. 6).
[70] Nicholson, 'Commedia Dell'Arte in Early Modern English Drama', p. 359.

Madrid, London, and Paris.'[71] This type of information exchange is invariably integral to early modern European intellectual culture, and English knowledge of the *commedia dell'arte*. In a letter to his friend John Chamberlain dated 27 September 1587, the English ambassador to Venice, Stephen Powle, wrote how the 'Comediantis many years since banished Venice be renewed at Murano where I wish you to hear Madonna Francischina, Horatio, and the Old Pantalon with his Zane.'[72] The lack of further explanation suggests that Chamberlain was already familiar with at least some of the *maschere* of the *commedia dell'arte*. Within the context of cross-cultural networks of information exchange, this letter is particularly pertinent considering how Chamberlain, remembered for his extensive correspondence with Powle's successor, Dudley Carlton, was known to have his finger on the pulse of contemporary affairs. He was a 'Paul's walker', haunting the middle aisle of St Paul's Cathedral, one of London's principal information exchanges, to such an extent that he was appointed a commissioner to oversee its repair in 1620.[73]

However, applying the same methodology to the English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* has led to the perpetuation of several misconceptions. The reliance of transnational studies on moments of extractable contact to map the expansion of the *commedia dell'arte* has resulted in contact zones between the English and the Italian professional theatre being substantiated around very tenuous evidence. Winifred Smith first observed the possibility of English contact with the *commedia dell'arte* as early as 1550, when the Privy Council made a payment of £20 each to the 'Alberto, Francisco, Ambrosio, Vincentio, and Marck Antonio, the Kings Majesties violen players'.[74] This Marc

[71] Barasch, 'Hamlet versus Commedia Dell'Arte', in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literary Theories*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 105-18 (p. 105).
[72] Quoted in Virginia F. Stern, *Sir Stephen Powle of Court and Country: Memorabilia of a Government Agent for Queen Elizabeth I, Chancery Official, and English Country Gentleman* (London: Associated University Presses), p. 83. Thank you to Professor Michael Brennan for providing the reference.
[73] P. J. Finkelpearl, *Chamberlain, John (1553–1628), Letter Writer* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5046>.
[74] '19 September 1550', *Records of English Court Music: Volume VII: 1485-1558*, ed. by Andrew Ashbee (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), p. 116.

Antonio could quite possibly be Marc Antonio de Gabiati, the *comico* performing at Castel St Angelo in 1550 and 1551 whom Joachim Du Bellay observed performing as Magnifico in a duet with Zanni at the Roman carnival in 1564. He could also be the Neapolitan musician 'Marcantonio, *Veneto*' who recited comedies with 'music, singing and dancing' at Mantua in 1567. This possibility still proves tantalising. Henke makes passing reference to this payment as potential evidence for early English engagement with the Venetian *buffone*, versatile marketplace performers discussed in Chapter Three. Artemis Preeshl pushes this even further and identifies this payment as the documentary record of a seismic event: 'Inroads made by Marc Antonio and others', she writes, 'paved the way for the *buffone* in the English arts in the 1550s and *commedia dell'arte* players in England in the 1570s.'[75] These were not itinerant players that had come from Venice or Mantua to perform at Edward's court but rather the in-house entertainment. As the record clearly states, they were the 'Kings Majesties violen players': the Milanese Ambrose Lupo, patriarch of the Lupo dynasty of court musicians, Alberto, Francisco, and Vincentio Kellim from Cremona, and Marc Antonio Galliardello from Venice, all of whom entered the service of Henry VIII in the early 1540s.[76] Whilst Italian musicians at the English court are found performing in plays during England's brief courtship of the Italian *comici*, and acted as information points for England's increasingly Italianate tastes, finding the *arte* whenever an Italian performer is recorded in the accounts works to obscure rather than elucidate English interaction with the form.

Conversely, the few legitimate sources that offer an insight into how the English engaged with the *commedia dell'arte* run the risk of becoming documentary evidence of contact. In his recent overview of English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte*, Henke writes that 'Shakespeare's friend Thomas

[75] Artemis Preeshl, *Shakespeare and Commedia Dell'Arte: Play by Play* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 4.
[76] Payments made to the Kellim brothers are found throughout the *Records of English Court Music: Volume VII: 1485-1558*. See also, David Lasocki, *The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531-1665* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995); for a short note on the Lupo family, see John Milsom, *Lupo* (Oxford University Press, 2011) <https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.013.4095>.

Nashe seems to recount an actual trip to Italy' in his anti-Martinist tract *An Almond for a Parrat* (1589).[77] Nashe, under the pseudonym Cutbert Curry-knave, recalls a return journey from Italy during which he became acquainted with 'that famous Francatipp Harlicken' at Bergamo.[78] They discuss the seditious anti-episcopal writings of Martin Marprelate – welcome news to the Italians who light bonfires and hold street parties in honour of Martin and the Pope – and embrace when the Italian hears of Cutbert's friendship with the English stage clown William Kempe, renowned across Europe for his 'pleasaunce'.[79] The likelihood of such a meeting having ever taken place is negligible. Nashe's life is unusually plottable even amongst some of his high-profile contemporaries, and he remained relatively stationary his whole life. It is unlikely, then, that the boy from Norwich was wandering the foothills of the Veneto when he bumped into the 'famous Francatipp' Harlicken', especially when such a mask does not actually exist. Rather, he conflates the stage personas of two well-known Italian *comici*, Tristano Martinelli (Arlecchino) and Gabriele Panzanini (Francatrippa).

Henke's analysis of Nashe's Arlecchino also reveals the tendency to think of the English interaction with the *commedia dell'arte* as an exclusively theatrical exchange, and this reference is presented as evidence of the *commedia dell'arte*'s 'continual pull on the English *theatrical* imagination' [my emphasis].[80] This preoccupation with the theatre as physical exposure has created a blind spot in studies of this interaction. In a recent volume of edited essays, TWB scholars offered a definition of 'theatre' that encompasses a range of performative activities in early modern Europe:

> This theatre operates through transnational connections, encounters and networks. In keeping with the early modern notion of *poetry* – what we now think of as *theatre-making* – theatre is a social event in a particular, physical place and at a particular time. It is created in concrete material conditions; using, interrogating and innovating cultural conventions, and

[77] Henke, 'England', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 115-22 (p. 116).
[78] Nashe (pseud. Cutbert Curry-Knave), *An Almond for a Parrat; Or, Cutbert Curry-Knaves Almes* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 534), sig. A3r.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Henke, 'England', p. 115.

> *figuring forth* images, ideas and concepts for the spectator to contemplate (*theorise*) and respond to.[81]

In prioritising the theatre and the theatrical (and English language scholarship on the English interaction with the *commedia dell'arte* in the sixteenth century has focused exclusively on the theatre), undue emphasis is placed on physical exposure as the principal form of interaction. Henke intends to situate Nashe as a node in an entangled transnational network; he is 'Shakespeare's friend', the implication being that despite the lack of prolonged contact with the Italian *comici*, those who were exposed to the form belonged to a wide-reaching network of fellow writers, actors, and, most importantly, playwrights. The value of the record is thereby tied to what it reveals about the Anglo-Italian theatrical exchange. However, representations of the *commedia dell'arte* on the stage were just one part of a much bigger, interconnected cultural engagement taking place in a range of literary forms, modes, and genres.

iv. Methodology

It is evident from these limitations that the English interaction with the *commedia dell'arte* requires a new methodological approach that shifts focus from England's participation in the development of a transnational theatrical culture nurtured by the perambulations of cultural go-betweens, to the complex processes of translation and appropriation of which this particular engagement is comprised. Though this shift from an inter or transnational perspective might presuppose the use of more local schemes of interpretation that ground this interaction within an explicitly 'English' setting, the purpose

[81] Drábek and Katritzky, 'Introduction', in *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Pavel Drábek and M.A. Katritzky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 1–22 (p. 6).

of this study is not to extricate this particular engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* from its wider European contexts. Rather, it is to explore how attempts to delineate exclusionary parameters around an emergent sense of Englishness were engendered by political and spiritual shifts and increased cross-cultural encounters fragmenting traditional systems of identification, belonging, and difference. For this reason, this thesis will draw on methods from contemporary transcultural theory to properly engage with the fluidity and tensions around cultural identity present in early English representations of the *commedia dell'arte*.

Wolfgang Welsch's seminal treatise on transculturality called for a new model of culture to replace the out-of-date totalising, nation specific Herderian monoculturalism. To Welsch, the migration of the post-war period, as well as the widespread access to information and communication technologies promoted in part by the western neoliberal project has resulted in day-to-day expressions of cultural identity at both an individual and societal level to be pieced together from different elements from here and there.[82] Transculturality, then, as Afef Benessaieh argues, can be defined as a 'sense of movement and the complex mixedness of cultures in close contact'.[83] Central to these formulations of individual and collective identity is the mobility and connectedness that globalisation and digital technology have enabled. An 'an inherent feature of every transcultural historiography', writes Madeleine Herren in a guide to transcultural methodologies, 'is a global level of analysis'.[84] As such, there are potential problems with using transcultural methods to interrogate pre-modern cross-cultural encounters. In literary studies, transculturality is often the domain of scholars of contemporary and comparative literature writing about generational experiences following post-war migrations and the narrowing of global boundaries. 'Whereas transcultural experience used to be the privilege of the

[82] Wolfgang Welsch, 'Transculturality: The Changing Form of Cultures Today', *Filozofski Vestnik*, 22.2 (2001), 59–86.
[83] Afef Benessaieh, 'Multiculturalism, Interculturality, Transculturality', in *Amériques Transculturelles - Transcultural Americas*, ed. by Afef Benessaieh (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), pp. 11–38 (p. 14)
[84] Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, and Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural Histories: Theories, Methods, Sources* (London: Springer), p. 76.

elite,' writes Irene Gilsenan Nordin, 'it is now the reality for a significant part of the world's population'.[85] Of course, scholars of the early modern period would argue against the clear division of pre-modern societies into elite and plebeian factions as it propagates oversimplified notions of historical access to culture. For example, Norden argues that translingualism – the carefully crafted unconscious movement between tongues and dialectical registers – 'attracted more attention in the twentieth century, as a result of increased migration and the prominence of bilingual writers such as Samuel Beckett, Joseph Conrad, and Vladimir Nabokov'.[86] Pre-modern experimentation with language, she argues, is simply macaronic wordplay.[87] Yet both the extensive scholarship on polyglossia and vernacular translation cultures, as well as more recent studies into early modern urban multilingualism, reveal both a literary culture that engaged with Latin, Greek, and vernacular languages in generative ways, and a society that was far more at ease with language learning than our own.[88]

Neither can we claim that access to funds or a passport was a prerequisite for transcultural experience. As a study of a situated cultural interaction, this thesis will repeatedly return to early modern London's populations of migrants from overseas, who made up a not-insignificant percentage of London's exponential population growth in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Throughout the turbulent 1560s and 1570s, when religious persecution drove continental Protestants to seek refuge in England, the City was home to approximately 10,000 migrants at any one time. Considering London's population has been estimated at between 75,000 and 200,000 residents at the end of the century, strangeness and difference must have been an integral, everyday part of life in the early

[85] Irene Gilsenan Nordin, Julie Hansen, and Carmen Zamorano Llena, 'Introduction: Conceptualising Transculturality in Literature', in *Transcultural Identities in Contemporary Literature*, ed. by Irene Gilsenan Nordin, Julie Hansen, and Carmen Zamorano Llena (Leiden: Brill, 2013), i–xxvii (x).
[86] Nordin et al, xxii.
[87] Ibid.
[88] See John Gallagher, '"Ungratefull Tuscans": Teaching Italian in Early Modern England', *Italianist*, 36.3 (2016), 392–413; and Gallagher, *Learning Languages in Early Modern England*, Oxford Scholarship Online, First (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

modern metropolis.[89] These migrants brought with them new industries, new skills, new materials, and new spatial and cultural practices. Language communities formed, with Dutch, French, and Italian voices layered into the City's vibrant soundscapes.[90] Merchants, financiers, sailors, political representatives, and indentured servants from Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and North America were to be found working at the docks and in the factories, trading at the Exchange, worshipping in the churches, and walking in the streets. While the scale and speed of cultural interplay was nothing like the modern, globalised world, the production of new linguistic, material, somatic, intellectual, and literary culture from this plurality was not simply a possibility of city life, but integral to the makeup of the urban experience. There are, then, clear overlaps in the transcultural experiences engendered from new modes of urban living and the transculturality evolving from a new, globalised moment, something that Welsch tentatively recognised: 'Modern societies are differentiated within themselves to such a high degree that uniformity is no longer constitutive to, or achievable for them (and there are reasonable doubts as to whether it ever has been historically).'[91] While mass media and affordable telecommunication systems have increased the speed and nature of connectivity between peoples and cultures, Globalism is not a prerequisite of transcultural identities and experiences – rather a globalised culture makes complex mixedness more visible.

A transcultural approach reveals the inadequacy of traditional markers of belonging such as nationhood because they do not reflect the dynamic porosity of cultural production in a (post)modern age. Nor, it seems, the *pre-modern* either, and scholars have increasingly identified such methods as useful tools for conceptualising the fragmented identities engendered by the pronounced economic,

[89] Vanessa Harding, 'The Population of London, 1550–1700: A Review of the Published Evidence', *The London Journal*, 15.2 (1990), 111–28.
[90] For the seminal study of the soundscapes of early modern London, see Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Neither Smith nor subsequent works on the subject mention the ways in which strangers and strangeness contributed to the auricular culture of the city. This is a worthwhile topic for further study.
[91] Welsch, p. 62.

social, and cultural shifts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[92] Although the contemporary English perhaps had a stronger sense of their ancient shared heritage than their continental neighbours, the idea of the nation as a united territory with a common consciousness expressed in a shared common language and culture did not gain currency until the nineteenth-century advent of the nation state.[93] There was no rhetorically constructed single national will enforcing conformity and allegiance to the soil of one's birth in the early modern period. Within England's disputed and fluctuating borders, five separate languages (Cornish, Manx, English, Welsh, and French) were spoken, amongst numerous other distinctive regional dialects that provided stock comic material for their fellow Englishmen on the London stage. Contemporaries were far more likely to envisage their own place in the world in relation to the corporate structure, their allegiance to the monarch (or powerful local family), and the region in which they lived, worked, and worshipped. Even the well-oiled centralised bureaucratic machine of the Tudor state had limited reach in far-flung areas of the realm, and a look at the confusing terminology around identity and belonging in the period shows how pervasive micro and macro levels of difference were in contemporary discourse.[94] However, at the same time, a sense of English nationhood has been found emerging in this period as reformation and

[92] A theory of transculturality as it pertains to early modern cross-cultural encounters has not yet been provided, perhaps due to the difficulties in drawing clear parallels between different moments and types of contact. However, the 'Tranculturalisms, 1400-1700' edited by Jyotsna Singh has produced several enlightening volumes on global cultural encounters in the period. The European Research Council funded project TIDE (Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c1550-1700) interrogates how the types of cultural exchange facilitated by travel in the period impacted English conceptions of their own identity. There are several works on the types of cultural production that occurred following Ottoman and European expansion. See, for example, Albrecht Classen, *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013); Dirk Hoerder, Christiane Harzig, and Adrian Shubert, *The Historical Practice of Diversity: Transcultural Interactions from the Early Modern Mediterranean to the Postcolonial World* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003); and Brigit Blass-Simmen and Stefan Weppelmann, *Padua and Venice: Transcultural Exchange in the Early Modern Age*, Contact Zones (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017). Other studies have focused more on global trade and contact in Goa and South India. See Bindu Malieckal, 'Early Modern Goa: Indian Trade, Transcultural Medicine, and the Inquisition', *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, 26 (2015), 135-57; and Heidi Rika Maria Pauwels and Monika Horstmann, *Patronage and Popularisation, Pilgrimage and Procession: Channels of Transcultural Translation and Transmission in Early Modern South Asia*, Studies in Oriental Religions (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009).

[93] This will be explored further in Chapter One.

[94] See Nandini Das et al, *TIDE: Keywords* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, Forthcoming), a collection of keyword studies on terms relating to identity, difference, and belonging in early modern England.

expansion necessitated a new, unifying identity marker to galvanise a people against Rome and give voice to the imperial ambitions of the state. Of course, the construction of a heterogeneous Englishness was continually undermined by and readjusted to the complex mixedness generated by travel, trade, and metropolitan life. What we find is not a single, clear notion of Englishness, but a loosely affiliated network of statesmen, colonists, merchants, translators, pedagogues, scholars, poets, and playwrights all appropriating and rejecting different cultural practices according to their own ideas, concerns, and motivations.

Though the itinerant *comici* were proliferators of the neoclassical innovations and theatregrams that playwrights and players appropriated to craft an English secular theatre, there is a problem with conceptualising the English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* as a product of 'complex mixedness'. If, as Benessaieh suggests, transculturality is engendered by the 'relational webs and flows of significance' of proximate cultures, then the absence of the *comici* from English soil complicates a transcultural reading of this engagement.[95] As noted above, there was no reciprocity to this particular engagement as English writers and dramatists exercised no discernible influence on the *commedia dell'arte* of the Italian *comici* during this period. Control over the representation of the *commedia dell'arte*, its parameters, and its subsequent interpretation rested with those cultural mediators – the English writers and dramatists – who brought the form to a wider audience.

The idea of 'transculturation' instead provides a useful way of thinking about this particular instance of appropriation. First coined by the Cuban essayist Fernando Ortiz, it articulates the reinvention of a common culture in colonial and imperial societies as peoples and things converge.[96] Ortiz was primarily concerned with the southern hemisphere, and the dynamics that resulted from the slave trading in Cuba; however, subsequent post-colonial sociologists and anthropologists placed

[95] Benessaieh, p. 11.
[96] Fernando Ortiz and Harriet De Onís, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

greater emphasis on the spaces in which the simultaneous processes of deculturalisation and *métissage* (cross-fertilisation) occur in the creation of new culture. Mary Louise-Pratt's concept of a 'contact zone' – 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other' – has had lasting currency amongst historians of cross-cultural encounters, offering a way of shifting focus away from moments of contact to the nodes of activity in which everyday, unrecorded acts of cultural mediation took place.[97] Transnational theatre historians have adopted a versatile notion of contact zones to similar ends. 'The university town of Padua and the international *entrepôt* of Venice', writes Henke and Nicholson 'were both "contact zones" featuring a high degree of cultural mobility and multicultural exchange.'[98] Janie Cole has recently adopted the term in a supranational sense. Rather than identify geographical space (ie. Paris) as the contact zone in which French and Italian theatrical encounters occurred, she argues that the more abstract space around Marie de' Medici, patron of companies and organiser of entertainments, facilitated exchange.[99] TWB scholars have also conceptualised theatre in the period as not only taking place within contact zones but constituting a contact zone in itself.[100] Though much later than the period with which this thesis is concerned, the collection of *scenari* held in the archives of the *Museo correr* in Venice and first printed in the final years of the seventeenth century can be thought of in these terms. It is likely that these plots were first staged at the City's oldest permanent playhouse, the *teatro San Cassiano*, built in 1637, to a cross-section of Venice's exceptionally diverse society.[101] In this instance, the stories of pirates, shipwrecks, Turks, and slavery were not simply tantalising windows into an unknown and untouchable world beyond the bay for a

[97] Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession*, 91 (1991), 33–40 (p. 34).
[98] Henke and Nicholson, p. 10.
[99] Janie Cole, 'Representations of female power: Musical spectacle at the Paris court of Maria de Medici, the Italian Minerva of France', in *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Pavel Drábek and M.A. Katritzky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 1–22 (p. 2).
[100] Henke and Nicholson, p. 19; Jaffe-Berg, *Commedia Dell' Arte and the Mediterranean: Charting Journeys and Mapping 'Others'* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 3-8.
[101] Jaffe-Berg, *Commedia dell'Arte*, p. 31.

culturally and nationally homogenous audience, but a mirror of the realities and everyday anxieties of international commerce on the peninsula, where travellers from all over came to trade.

Of course, many pre-modern appropriations of Pratt's notion of contact zones to describe spaces of condensed cross-cultural activity write over key imperial contexts. They ignore 'the notion of dominance' that Benessaieh notes as central to transculturation, a process by which the (primarily) non-dominant group takes elements of the dominant group's culture and adapts them.[102] Of course, this is not to say that unequal power relations did not underscore cross-cultural encounters in pre-modern, pre/proto-colonial environments; rather, the spaces in which these encounters occurred were not, as Daniel Viktus has since noted, 'of the colonial variety', but were marked instead by confusion and ambivalence.[103]

This thesis places renewed emphasis on the power imbalances implicit in this particular cross-cultural interaction. It argues that the relative absence of the *comici* from English soil differentiates the English interaction with the *commedia dell'arte* from its European neighbours, permitting the English to appropriate and shape a *commedia dell'arte* on their own terms through acts of transculturation. This process was inflected by England's conception of itself as a non-dominant group – an importer rather than exporter of culture in the period that had belatedly embraced European humanism and – unlike its Catholic enemies overseas – was yet to realise its imperial ambitions. What emerges is a complex and contradictory power dynamic, where the English are both dominant and non-dominant, and their representations of the *commedia dell'arte* an expression of cultural superiority driven by an implicit acknowledgement of their inferiority.

Accordingly, this thesis will therefore apply a modified transcultural approach to the English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte*. It will remain attuned to the implicit transculturality that

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[102] Benessaieh, p. 16.
[103] Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*, Early Modern Cultural Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US : Imprint : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 8.

underscores the ways in which this versatile, mobile, and flexible form of performance practice permitted the English to articulate cross-cultural anxieties in a new English cultural framework. At the same time, it will observe how aspects of the form were appropriated and reconfigured to create something entirely new, situated, and syncretic through a process of transculturation. Such a study necessitates placing a broad array of historical, literary, and dramatic sources in conversation with each other, including religious and political polemics; English romance and foreign language *novelle*; translated news books; journals and private correspondence; state papers, legal records, and petitions to the Crown, parliament, and the Lord Mayor of London; dictionaries and language manuals; printed English and Italian drama; and both print and manuscript *scenari*. Those sources that have traditionally been used as evidence of contact or intellectual exchange, such as the accounts of travellers or Nashe's satirical pamphlets, will be analysed in both their literary contexts and the cultural moment in which they were written. Conversely, rather than engaging in close textual analysis of extant English play books in order to uncover similarities between English and continental modes of performance, drama will be approached as just one expression of a multifaceted cultural engagement. As such, the *commedia dell'arte* that emerges in this study does not necessarily correspond to the performance practices and repertoires of the *comici* overseas. Rather, it is highly situated and syncretic, shaped by its translation into an English setting and its subsequent appropriation on arrival. Of course, many of the manifold translations and instances of adaptation and appropriation that informed this dynamic are irrecoverable; however, certain examples can be identified that then reflect on the broader nature of this engagement. As such, each chapter will interrogate a different aspect of this complex interaction, focusing first on the cultural contexts of exposure, then alternative modes of translation, followed by the processes of appropriation in print and adaptation on stage.

Chapter One, entitled '*Commedia* in Context: Italians in England and English Abroad', addresses how the sources frequently used in transnational studies as evidence of the *commedia dell'arte*'s

migration into the English theatrical landscape are carefully constructed literary responses to the discourse around strange encounters at home. By reading these records of physical exposure within a context of a widespread and pervasive anxiety over English cultural porosity and the instability of *Englishness* as a marker of identification, it will show how the appetite for Italianate culture that first brought the Italian *compagni* to England created, in the minds of its critics, a nation divorced from itself. The *commedia dell'arte* would subsequently come to be tied to ideas of encroaching strangeness, an association that lasted into the following century.

In Chapters Two and Three, the focus falls on how the diffuse and porous nature of the *commedia dell'arte* had implications on how aspects of the form migrated and were received in England. Chapter Two, entitled '*Commedia* in Translation: English Print Culture and the French Wars of Religion', will shift critical focus from physical encounters to modes of translation, and how the type of contact determined the way in which the form came to resonate in the cultural imagination. The Arlecchino in Nashe's aforementioned pamphlet *An Almond for a Parrat* will be shown to bear residual marks of its translation out of a French satirical setting. It will then show how a peculiar pamphlet printed in England in 1595 offers a rare insight into how the *commedia dell'arte* was reframed when translated across different linguistic, cultural, geographical, and political spaces. Chapter Three, entitled 'Appropriating *Commedia*: Zanni Naturalised', shifts focus away from how modes of translation delineate the parameters of usage to how repeated appropriation of certain tokens inscribes them with new, culturally specific nuances and associations. It takes the servant mask Zanni as its subject, tracing usage in contemporary print from the character's origins in the cultural milieu of Cinquecento Italy through to its naturalisation as English literary and theatrical stock. It will observe how Zanni's characteristics were reconfigured in an English setting to denote a pervasive, multifaceted, and threatening strangeness that both undermined and helped formalise conceptions of Englishness.

Having established the complexity of contact and reception, Chapters Four and Five consider the *commedia dell'arte* as it was imagined on stage by playwrights, players, and audiences as a cohesive form of theatre practice. Chapter Four, entitled '*Commedia* in Performance: Gesture', will examine English representations of the form's physicality and gestures, its most significant attribute in the minds of contemporary English commentators. The centrality of kinesics to the success of the *comici* as they crossed linguistic and cultural boundaries has resulted in a substantial scholarship on the art of this non-verbal theatre performance. However, the transfer and influence of this embodied semiotics on English drama is complicated by the lack of physical exposure. This chapter will therefore reconstruct what the *commedia dell'arte* may have looked like in performance on the English stage, the contexts that shaped this depiction, and how gesture was used to articulate English cultural superiority. Chapter Five, entitled '*Commedia* in Performance: Making Material Memories', will then observe how a syncretic *commedia dell'arte* became embedded in the contemporary cultural memory. The focus falls on the explicitly *arte*-inspired scene in Ben Jonson's Venetian city comedy *Volpone* (1605) as an exemplar of the dynamic of cultural production that informed English representations of the *commedia dell'arte* on stage in the period. The dramaturgical decisions made by the playwright (and enacted by the actor) are shown to not only give new resonances to the *commedia dell'arte* that would shape subsequent performances of the form on the English stage, but created a situated, syncretic *commedia dell'arte*.

Whilst broadly chronological, moving from translation to appropriation and adaptation, this thesis does not approach this interaction as a linear progression from obscurity into widespread recognition. Certain individuals operating within certain intellectual networks clearly had fairly in-depth knowledge of the *commedia dell'arte* at an earlier point than others. It cannot be said with any certainty, after all, that Horatio was a widely known name for the *innamorato*, or that Franceschina was a commonly recognised mask in 1587 when Powle wrote his letter to Chamberlain. After all, as late as

1600, Thomas Nashe found it necessary to gloss one of the most well-known *maschere*, the Doctor 'Gratian' (Gratiano), with an explanatory note in his translation of Tomaso Garzoni *L'Hospidale de' pazzi incurabili.*[104]

As the focus on an 'English' imagination may seem to endorse the kind of essentialism that transculturality is intended to deconstruct, it is important to note what the term 'English' actually encompasses in this thesis. English denotes the ways in which the peoples of early modern England wrote, spoke, and thought about the *commedia dell'arte*, but with an acknowledgement that it was not subsumed into a pre-existing English way of writing, speaking, and thinking, but in fact contributed to the creation of this 'English' culture – porous, inconsistent, and continually up for debate. Imagination is here taken to mean the collective conceptualisation of *commedia dell'arte* as expressed in a range of disparate sources over the course of the period in question. Though the formalising energy of 'memorialisation' plays an important role in how culture is conceptualised on a collective scale, the term 'memory' is too limiting in this context, too fastened to what came before. As this thesis presents a transcultural history of the *commedia dell'arte* with an emphasis on the innovative process of transculturation, the term 'imagination' properly exemplifies the creative cognitive processes at the heart of the English interaction with this versatile, dynamic, and developing form of theatre practice.

v. Scope and Limitations

The focus of this thesis is a forty-year period beginning with Lord Buckhurst's mission to the Valois court in 1571 and ending with the printing of Scala's *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* in 1611. Whilst

[104] 'Gratian in their Comedies is the name of an ignorant Doctor'. Nashe, *The hospitall of incurable fooles: erected in English, as neer the first Italian modell and platforme, as the vnskilfull hand of an ignorant architect could deuise* (London, 1600; STC (2nd ed.) / 11634), sig. A3v.

Buckhurst's embassy marks both the earliest extant account of *commedia dell'arte* performance by an English observer and the earliest known reference to the form in English, Scala's *Il teatro* brought the *commedia dell'arte* to print for the first time, and in doing so, formalised it. He situates the plot, rather than the actor, at the heart of performance (rather than, as Hulfeld notes, 'a pretext to string together favourite routines'), and provided both amateurs and professionals with access to the building blocks of the *commedia dell'arte*.[105] There is nothing to indicate that *Il teatro* was reprinted in England. Nor is it found in any of the contemporary book catalogues or itineraries consulted over the course of this research. John Florio, translator, linguist, lexicographer, and champion of the Italian language and culture in England, does not include the text among the 250 Italian volumes that informed his expansive Italian-English dictionary *Queen Anna's World of Words* printed in the same year. He does, however, list *La bravura dell capitano Spavento* (1607), a five-act adaptation of an *arte* performance written by Francesco Andreini, Scala's *i Gelosi* colleague who wrote the epistle for *Il teatro*.[106] It is also difficult to explain away the indebtedness of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1613) to the Scala *scenari* 'Rosalba incantatrice' and 'L'arbore incantato moralis' as simply the product of extensive cross-fertilisation.[107]

Focus invariably falls on the cultural imagination of early modern London rather than the commonwealth as a whole simply by nature of the sources that have been left to posterity. This is not to say that Italians did not perform a variety of entertainments in other English cities or provincial towns. On the contrary, those who did brave the channel and other obstacles appear to have travelled widely. The Chamberlain's Accounts for Norwich in 1546/7 provide the earliest record of Italian performers in England when 'certen Spaniards & Ytalyan' who 'dawsed antycks & played dyvrs other

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[105] Hulfeld, 'Notebooks, Prologues, and Scenarios', p. 54.
[106] John Florio, *Queen Annas new world of words, or dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues* (London, 1611; STC (2nd ed.) / 11099), unpaginated. For Andreini's text, see Roberto Tassiani's edited edition *La bravura dell capitano Spavento* (Pisa: Giardini, 1987). The same text was enjoyed by a readership without Florio's special interest; a stationer's bill for the Earl of Salisbury's library dated the following year includes the texts amongst several other Italian language volumes. See 'Accounts, 10 June 1608', CMS, xxiv, p. 151.
[107] Clubb, 'Italian Stories on the Stage', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy*, ed. by Alexander Leggatt (Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 30-46 (pp. 45-46).

feets'.[108] On 14 September 1573, 'Italyans' were paid five shillings 'for serteyne pastymes' at Nottingham.[109] The 'Italian Tumblers or Players' found following Elizabeth's procession from Windsor to Reading in July 1574 are perhaps the same company paid by City officials for a performance at Dover the same year.[110] Neither can it be assumed that these places operated outside the networks of information exchange found in the capital. As will be observed in Chapter One, the Italian merchant communities of northern Europe aided the ultramontane migration of the *commedia dell'arte* and facilitated contact between *comici* and court. While the grip that the Italian transnational companies once held on the import/export business in port towns like Bristol and Southampton had weakened substantially as the centralised bureaucracy of successive Tudor regimes expanded, strangers and their descendants still had a visible presence in these cities. However, the kinds of foreign material and intellectual culture that passed through the docks are less visible in the records, and with neither London's printing capabilities, nor the urbanisation that made printing on such a scale commercially viable, a study of how England's smaller cities and provincial towns imagined a novel form of Italian performance practice is currently untenable. As such, London is taken as an indicator of wider urban experience. After all, it is, as Thomas Nashe quipped, both 'the fountain whose rivers flow round about England', and the 'garden of sinne, the sea that sucks in all the scumy chanels of the realm'.[111]

[108] Lea, i, p. 352-353.
[109] Ibid, p. 353.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*, sig. D3v; Nashe, *Christs teares ouer Ierusalem Whereunto is annexed a comparatiue admonition to London* (London, 1593; STC (2nd ed.) / 18366), p. 91.

1. *Commedia* in Context

This study begins by considering what a handful of disparate records of English exposure to the *commedia dell'arte* in performance can reveal about how this novel form took shape in the contemporary imagination. While such records of exposure are diverse, and found across a range of sources, the focus here falls on first person accounts, prioritising English voices in order to interrogate English perspectives.[1] These accounts can be neatly categorised into diplomatic correspondence and travel literature. Included in the former are several letters sent to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, by dignitaries during embassies to the Valois Court in the early 1570s; the latter are encounters with the *compagni* found within the pages of the manuscript and printed accounts of English travellers to Florence and Venice during the 1590s and early 1600s. Only two such accounts survive from the period that refer to the *commedia dell'arte* in any detail. The first is found in the manuscript fourth volume of the *Itinerary* (1617) of Fynes Moryson, the bursar of Peterhouse College, Cambridge. Moryson had from his 'tender youth … a great desire to see foreign countries', and, after two years of preparations, set out on a four-year journey across Europe in 1591, and then again between 1598 and 1600.[2] His travels eventually took him to Italy, where he enrolled at the University of Padua and from there visited Naples, Rome, and Florence, where he observed a *commedia dell'arte* performance during Carnival at the *stanzone delle commedie* theatre in the Uffizi.[3] The account of his travels spans four volumes (of which three were printed in 1617) and adhere to the formulaic 'methods' of earlier travel writers – systematic

[1] Other records, which consist of secondary accounts of English players at foreign courts, are interrogated elsewhere in this thesis. See, in particular, 'Chapter Three: Appropriating Commedia: Zanni the English Denizen', pp. 152-153.
[2] Fynes Moryson, *An itinerary vvritten by Fynes Moryson Gent. First in the Latine tongue, and then translated by him into English* (London, 1617; STC (2nd ed.) / 18205), p. 197.
[3] The fourth volume of Moryson's *Itinerary* was edited by Charles Hughes. See Charles Hughes and Fynes Moryson, *Shakespeare's Europe; unpublished chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary, being a survey of the condition of Europe at the end of the 16th century* (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 1903), p. 399. For a biographical overview of Moryson, see Edward H. Thompson, 'Moryson, Fynes (1565/6–1630), Traveller and Writer', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19385>.

chorographical accounts arranged according to specific themes, including national character, manners, and customs. It is by all accounts (Moryson's included) a mundane text that details exchange rates at length and offers a reserved appraisal of each country, although it is underscored by a moralistic tone that often implicitly evaluates cultural peculiarities against an English equivalent.

The second account is found in the curious tome *Coryates Crudities* (1611) written by the even more curious Thomas Coryate. Born in Odcombe, Somersetshire to the village rector, Coryate studied at Oxford until 1599, whereafter he is found in the company of Henry, Prince of Wales (probably through his connection to several esteemed Somersetshire families).[4] A peculiar man with a keen wit and a face shaped like a sugar loaf, he appears to have performed the role of pedant fool for the amusement of Henry's circle of literary wits, including Ben Jonson, Michael Drayton, and John Donne. In 1608, Coryate set out on a five-month journey across Europe with the intent of seeing Venice, 'the most resplendent mirrour of Europe'.[5] There he observed a troupe of Italian *comici* perform at a permanent playhouse.[6] Three years later (and at considerable personal cost), Coryate printed an account of his travels. While Moryson's *Itinerary* is a more formulaic and methodical third person relation, Coryate's excruciatingly detailed, semi-farcical text is deeply conscious of the precepts of genre, chronicling the author's reactions to the world around him in a visceral first-person narrative. Compiling and printing the *Crudities* was an event in itself, prefaced by 160 pages of panegyric verses, acrostics, and epistles contributed by writers including Jonson, Drayton, and Donne that playfully mock the absurdity of the 'legstretcher' of Odcombe who 'walks *per spasso*' (for fun).[7]

[4] There is a substantial body of work on the *Crudities*, but a concise biography of Coryate, see Michael Strachan, 'Coryate, Thomas (1577?–1617), Traveller and Writer', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2006) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6364.
[5] Thomas Coryate, *Coryats crudities hastily gobled vp in five moneths trauells in France, Sauoy, Italy, Rhetia co[m]monly called the Grisons country, Heluetia aliàs Switzerland, some parts of high Germany, and the Netherlands* (London, 1611; STC 5808), sig. A5r
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, sig. C2v.

Their respective accounts of *commedia dell'arte* performance often precede the main analysis in comparatist studies of the English dramatic engagement with the Italian professional theatre as evidence of an extensive network of intellectual exchange. The idea is that knowledge of the *maschere*, *scenari*, and *lazzi* were disseminated by not only Moryson and Coryate, but other travellers who either did not think to record their travels, or whose accounts have not survived. Andrew Grewar's recent work on the *commedia dell'arte* in Shakespeare begins by noting that English travellers 'brought home accounts of the theatrical performances they had seen abroad'.[8] Robert Henke has recently suggested that the 'visits and reports of travelers to Italy such as Coryate' were a source of exchange that explains the English playwrights' 'real acquaintance with the commedia dell'arte'.[9] Eric Nicholson has noted how the emergence of the English 'Grand Tour' by the mid-sixteenth century brought the sons of the aristocracy and gentry on 'educational' trips to northern Italian universities. Presenting a modification of Mary Louise Pratt's theory of transcultural spaces, Nicholson argues that a traveller to Padua sych as Philip Sidney would have 'found themselves in an inter-cultural "contact zone"' that was a 'particularly flourishing area of *commedia* activity'.[10] In Venice, he continues, a seductive 'city of glamour and luxury' that had long captivated the English, travellers like Coryate would have been exposed to the intersecting performance cultures of the Cinquecento. In Pamela Allen Brown's study of the Italian diva in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (c.1599-1603), Moryson's observations of carnival performance in Florence are presented as a rare *coup d'œil* of the networks responsible for the proliferation of Italian theatregrams in contemporary English drama:

[8] Andrew Grewar, 'The Old Man's Spectacles: Commedia and Shakespeare', in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 300-11 (p. 300).
[9] Robert Henke, 'England', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 115-22 (pp. 116-18).
[10] Eric Nicholson, 'Commedia Dell'Arte in Early Modern English Drama', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Anglo-Italian Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 358-75 (p. 361).

> Erudita, popular plays, and novelle supplied matter for the new stages, while arte masks, gestures, and lazzi became familiar tropes. English playwrights and actors eagerly culled information about Italian playing via contacts with Italian language teachers, musicians, artisans, and merchants, but their most important contacts were the Italian players they saw at work, at home and abroad. The new actresses were a must-see for travelers who reported on the mixed troupes. Fynes Moryson commented on the improvisatory skill of the Italian players he saw in Florence, 'espetially the women'.[11]

Of course, there is no doubt that these men circulated information about the *commedia dell'arte* at home; as already observed in the introduction to this thesis, Stephen Powle demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the *maschere* in a letter to John Chamberlain, the inveterate 'Paul's walker', dated September 1587.[12] It is possible that the number of those who actually witnessed the *commedia dell'arte* in performance may, to some imprecise extent, correspond to the numbers who travelled to these contact zones in the period. Robert Dallington advised prospective language learners in his *Method of Trauell* (c.1598) to visit Florence, suggesting that they do 'not read any booke of Poetrie at the first, but some other kind of stile, and I think meetest some modern Comedie.'[13]

The accounts of travellers, however, are far richer sources for the study of the English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* than previously supposed. Literatures of travel, after all, were not solely concerned with conveying novel information. They emerged from a humanist system of knowledge grounded in *historia* – a flexible rhetorical exercise and 'godmother to early modern empiricism' that 'straddled the distinction between human and natural subjects' and over time came to incorporate descriptions of people, places, ethnography, natural history, and topography within a

[11] Pamela Allen Brown, '"Cattle of This Colour": Boying the Diva in As You Like It', *Early Theatre*, 15.1 (2012), 145–66 (pp. 146-47).
[12] Virginia F. Stern, *Sir Stephen Powle of Court and Country: Memorabilia of a Government Agent for Queen Elizabeth I, Chancery Official, and English Country Gentleman* (London: Associated University Presses), p. 83
[13] Robert Dallington, *A method for trauell Shewed by taking the view of France. As it stoode in the yeare of our Lord 1598* (London, 1605; STC (2nd ed.) / 6203), sig. H4v.

wider framework of political history.[14] With the increased flow of peoples and ideas in and out of England during the period, the authors, compilers, and translators of travel narratives framed their descriptions of 'new' lands, peoples, and their cultural, political, and spiritual practices in ways that promoted certain interests and actions. They were propaganda for advocating evangelical, commercial, and proto-colonial ventures, or a means of engaging in political affairs and cultural discourse at home.[15] They were spaces in which English writers responded to the impact of macro shifts in the political and spiritual makeup of Europe on the perceptions of their own identities. They were a space in which a nascent sense of English nationhood was interrogated and constructed, presented in opposition to certain strange customs, values, and behaviours, whilst encouraging the appropriation of other strange practices *as* English.

Accordingly, as Manfred Pfister points out, when engaging with English representations of strange lands and strangers, it is important to 'take into account the constructedness of the stereotypes' found therein and how they reflect 'the interests, needs and anxieties of the English themselves'.[16] Different forms of travel and different destinations prompted different conversations, and the discourse around travel to Italy was especially contentious. On the one hand, it was educational and profitable to the commonwealth, and helped to assuage English concerns over their parochial culture by providing an aesthetic model for public and private life. On the other hand, it exposed both the

[14] Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi, 'Introduction', in *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), pp. 1, 31. See Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'From the "History of Travayle" to the History of Travel Collections: The Rise of an Early Modern Genre', in *Richard Hakluyt and Collected Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Jowitt, Claire and Daniel Carey (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), pp. 25–44.

[15] Claire Jowitt and Daniel Carey, 'Introduction: Early Modern Travel Writing: Varieties, Transitions, Horizons', in *Studies in Travel Writing*, ed. by Claire Jowitt and Daniel Carey, 13.2 (2009), 95-98; Andrew Hadfield, 'Changing Places in English Renaissance Literature', in *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance, 1545-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1-14.

[16] Manfred Pfister, 'Shakespeare and Italy, or, The Law of Diminishing Returns', in *Shakespeare's Italy: Functions of Italian Locations in Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 295–303 (p. 299).

traveller to the allure of a strange land and its atheistical, politically duplicitous, epicurean inhabitants.[17] The Italies and Italians found in works like Moryson's *Itinerary* and Coryate's *Crudities* are not simply impressions formed from forays into the unknown, but were complex and layered, constructed as much from these perceptions and expectations as the actual experiences of the traveller overseas.

As contemporaries quarrelled over models for the correct consumption of Italian cultural exports, it is unsurprising that English writers recognised the *commedia dell'arte*, a form of experimental, nomadic theatre, as fertile material for engaging in these debates. This chapter will therefore contextualise representations of the *commedia dell'arte* found in early documents of exposure within the political and cultural discourses around contact with Italy and the Italianate both at home and overseas. It will begin by placing early instances of contact with the *commedia dell'arte* within the context of a growing appetite for the Italianate in the early decades of Elizabeth's reign, fostered by the vibrant communities of native English traders and strangers residing in London. Having established this context, this chapter will then observe how the discourse that arose around the *commedia dell'arte* following the departure of the last Italian troupe in 1578 was shaped by anxieties around the integrity of English economic sovereignty and cultural identity. Overseas travel will be shown to have been a particularly alarming form of cross-cultural contact that corrupted an individual through sensory immersion. It will be observed how the suspicion that was directed at travellers would consequently shape the form and content of their relations. The *commedia dell'arte* presented by Moryson and Coryate was not intended to relay novel information but regurgitates well-known associations. Instead, we find

[17] See Sara Warneke's work on the rise of educational travel amongst young gentlemen to learn languages, diplomacy, and other tools of statecraft. Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995). For the criticism that followed from this increased cross-cultural contact with Italy in particular, see Warneke, 'A Taste for Newfangledness: The Destructive Potential of Novelty in Early Modern England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 26.4 (1995), 881–96 (pp. 892-96); and 'Educational Travelers: Popular Imagery and Public Criticism in Early Modern England', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 28.3 (1994), 71–94.

in the playhouse an Italy in microcosm, a space in which the erosion of Englishness through the immersive cultural experiences of travel was enacted.

1.1 Early Contact with Court

Early accounts of contact with the *commedia dell'arte* during diplomatic missions abroad suggest that while English observers struggled to find the right terminology to describe the spectacle before them, they were enthralled by the sight all the same. During his embassage to Paris to congratulate Charles IX on his marriage to Elizabeth of Austria, Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, wrote to Burghley of the 'comedie of Italians' organised by the Mantuan-born Louis Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers, 'that for the mirth and handling thereof deserved singular commendacion.'[18] The following June, Edward Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, informed Burghley of the week's festivities during his embassage to the Valois court to ratify the Treaty of Blois. On the Friday he attended 'some pastyme showed [Charles IX] by Italian players'; the following Tuesday he was entertained by the Duke of Anjou with 'vearie many sorts of excellent musycke … an Italian playe, & dyvars vawtars & leapers of dyvars sorts vearie excellent'.[19] The real novelty of Tuesday's entertainment was reported to Burghley by another in Clinton's party, Sir Thomas Smith, who marvelled at:

> an Italian Comedie wth candid vaulting wth notable supersaltes, & through hoopes, and last of all the Antiques, of carrying of men one upon an other wch som men call Labores Herculis,

[18] Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia Dell'Arte, 1560-1620, with Special Reference to the English Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934), ii, p. 347. Evidence of English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* has been comprehensively documented by several scholars over the last century. The most significant contributions are Lea's two-volume work, Winifred Smith's 1912 study, and Kenneth and Lisa Richards' 1990 documentary history of the *commedia dell'arte* in Europe.

[19] Lea, ii, p. 347.

> These things may better be declared by word of them that saw & can skill of it, then by writing especially of me.[20]

This enthralling form of comedy, with its acrobatic *lazzi* interspersed throughout the action, did not conform to the precepts of neoclassical comedy as Smith understood them, and his report of these novel performance practices captured the imagination at home. A condensed period of Italian theatrical activity in England followed Lincoln's mission: the next summer, the Privy Council requested that the Lord Mayor license a troupe of Italian players to 'shewe strange motiones' in the City.[21] A year later, in July 1574, the Revels Office were ordered to equip a troupe of Italian performers who followed the Royal progress from Windsor to Reading with the necessary means 'ffor the Ayrynges, Repayryngs, Translatynges, preparing, ffytting, ffurnishing, Garnishing Attending, & setting foorth, of sundry kyndes of Apparell properyes & furniture'.[22] Included amongst the elaborate entertainments staged at the Kenilworth residence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, during Elizabeth's three-week visit in July 1575 was an extraordinary display of acrobatics by an Italian performer (possibly the Florentine Antonio Soldino, who Lincoln had seen perform in Paris three years earlier).[23] His 'feats of agilitie' and contortions were so impressive that Robert Laneham found them 'not expressibl by pen or speech' in his printed account of proceedings.[24] In April 1577, an Italian troupe performed before the Queen at Durham House, and the following January, the Privy Council drew up a 'passeporte' for the *comico* Drusiano Martinelli, probably in the company of the renowned *bravura* Vincenzo Belando, to perform within the City limits:

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[20] Ibid, p. 348
[21] 'A Letter to the Lord Mayor of London, 1573', APC, viii, p. 131.
[22] Quoted in E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), iv, p. 271.
[23] Lea, ii, p. 354-355.
[24] Ibid, p. 355.

> To the Lord Majour of London to geve order that one Dronsiano, an Italian, a commediante and his companye, may playe within the Cittie and the Liberties of the same betwene this and the firste weeke in Lent.[25]

After Drusiano's departure in 1578, it was twenty-two years before an Italian troupe can be found performing on English soil again. On 29 August 1602, a company headed by the *capocomico* 'Flaminio Curtese', who had worked alongside the renowned French impresario Valleran le Conte in Paris since at least 1600, performed before the Queen at Oatlands Palace in Surrey.[26] The reason for this gap is unclear, although Laura and Kenneth Richards have suggested several convincing possibilities in their survey of *commedia dell'arte* sources, including: hostile legislation, such as the 1584/5 Vagabond Act, which gave license to only a few playing companies; the presence of women actors in Italian troupes who were forbidden to perform on the London stage; opposition from an emergent, local commercial theatrical enterprise; and geographical obstacles like the English Channel.[27] However, the dearth of records between these two dates does not necessarily indicate a total absence of Italian professional performance on English soil, and inordinate emphasis should not be placed on the records of the Revels Office as the definitive source. It is likely that only the major companies of the *commedia dell'arte* would have been invited to perform at court, and there are lengthy periods in which even the most celebrated performers leave no clue as to their whereabouts in the records. Yet there are rumblings of less accomplished entertainers travelling to London from France. In July 1591, Robert Weston, the son of a notable Clerkenwell recusant and double agent for Lord Burghley, presented Sir Francis Bacon with news of several Italian 'espyalls and intellegencers' who intended to enter the realm in the guise of 'tumblers' in order to gather information and bring it back 'into Fraunce'.[28] A second, redacted

[25] Ibid; 'Dronsiano's License', 1578, TNA, London, PC2/12.
[26] W.R. Streitberger, 'Appendix I: Calendar of Court Records and Spectacles', in *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 290.
[27] Richards and Richards, pp. 105-9.
[28] 'Gives the addresses of 10 seminaries Weston's intelligences to Francis Bacon', July 1591, TNA, London, SP 12/239 f. 163.

version of the memorandum incorrectly dated as 1584 notes how the Italians planned to meet with a number of English recusants in the liberty of the Clink, a hotbed of Catholic evangelism, with the intention 'to corrupt' the City's residents.[29] It is unclear whether these Italians were actually itinerant performers who were expected to gather useful information during their travels, or disguised seminary priests ordained at the College of Douai like Weston and many of his Clerkenwell associates (although it is worth noting that there is no reference to this particular mission in the College records).[30] Either way, such a disguise would surely draw attention to the men unless Italian performers were fairly commonplace in the Liberties. Beyond the legal jurisdiction of the Corporation, they could have performed and spied freely while leaving frustratingly few traces of their activities in the City records.[31] The occasional sighting in the household records of aristocratic patrons show that some Italians were still willing to make the journey after 1578; in 1596, and then again in 1606, an Italian by the name of Jacomo was paid twenty shillings by the Percy family 'for playing a comody by himself' at Petworth House.[32]

The motivation behind inviting Italian performers into the realm was part of a sustained campaign to introduce the material, intellectual, and artistic cultures of Italy to England and dispel the country's parochial reputation on the continent.[33] From the reign of Henry VIII onwards, London was home to a small but visible population of migrants from the Italian city states and Spanish and Papal Territories. Unlike the thousands of northern European Huguenot and Calvinist refugees who fled to Protestant London during the 1560s and 1570s, these Italians were for the most part economic

[29] 'Memoranda of Papists and Priests; the Bull of excommunication; the catalogue; certain foreigners to come over disguised as tumblers, for spies and intelligencers', 1584, TNA, London, SP 12/175 f. 175.
[30] I have scoured the records of the College of Douai for any reference to Italian intelligencers and missions to England between 1590 and 1592 to no avail. See *The First and Second Diaries of the English College, Douay: And an Appendix of the Unpublished Documents*, ed. by Thomas Francis Knox (London: David Nutt, 1878), p. 226-248.
[31] Lea, ii, p. 357.
[32] *Records of Early English Drama. Sussex*, ed. by Cameron Louis (Toronto: Brepols, 2000), xl.
[33] For a recent overview of Elizabethan consumption of Italianate culture, see Michael Wyatt, 'La Regina Helisabetta', in *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 117-54.

migrants come to cater to the appetite for all things Italianate.[34] They can be found working behind the scenes as the English attempted to cultivate a European civility. Italian tailors made garments for wealthy courtiers.[35] Italian hairdressers styled Elizabeth's hair before processions.[36] Italian perfumers came into the realm with English gentlemen to furnish the wealthy and aspirational with heavily scented gloves and bags.[37] Italian glassblowers produced delicate, clear *cristallo* in Italian-owned glasshouses.[38] Italian fencers opened schools to teach aristocratic patrons more civilised modes of

[34] One rich source of information on the Italian presence in early modern London are the contemporary census surveys and lay subsidies. These have been collated and printed in four volumes by the Huguenot Society of London under the title *Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James I, Edited by R.E.G. Kirk and Ernest F. Kirk* (Aberdeen, 1900-1908). According to the Returns for May 1571, the most accurate stranger census taken in the period, there were at least 138 Italians living in the city. RAL, i, p. 479.

[35] Notably Francis Rouse, a Venetian tailor who resided in St Dunstan's in the East, Tower Ward. RAL, i, pp. 233, 245; RAL, ii, pp. 11.

[36] An unknown Italian woman, possibly the wife of the merchant Venetian merchant Innocent Lucatello, appears in the Revels records twice in 1573/4, first for dressing the hair of maskers for a performance at Hampton Court, and again for 'Lending the Heares' (presumably headpieces) to the Children of the Chapel Royal for a performance. See *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. by Albert Feuillerat (London: David Nutt, 1908), p. 219.

[37] Italian perfumers had resided in London since at least the early sixteenth century, although the fashion for kid-skin gloves embalmed with Ambergris and other imported ingredients among the wealthy native-English population dates to around the 1550s. Three glove-perfumers can be found operating in London during Elizabeth's reign: Francis Jetto, Lucatello, and Guglielmo Bisco. All three had strong ties to the court. Lucatello is recorded as having come into the realm with an English gentleman sometime around 1552, and it is presumably near his patron that he settled. Bisco is recorded in the *Returns* as 'for most part at the court'.[37] Jetto resided with the Italian court musician Antonio Conti. RAL, ii, pp. 18, 26. For more on perfumers in early modern London, see Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Baltimore, ML: John Hopkins University Press, 2011), pp. 126-153.

[38] In 1567, the French Huguenot window-glass manufacturer Jean Carré applied to the Privy Council for a manufacturing license. The application survives in the state paper, requesting a twenty-one-year monopoly over both the production of window-glass in the Venetian fashion, and the production of *cristallo*, a valuable clear glass traditionally produced by artisans from the Venetian island of Murano. It chimed with assurances of locally sourced materials; everything was to be found within the realm, bar the soda ash, which would be imported from Spain by the Venetian Giacomo Suigo. The monopoly over window-glass was granted, with the proviso that he also train Englishmen in the skill. The monopoly over *cristallo*, however, was denied, although this does not seem to have deterred Carré, who can be found the following year running a furnace in St Benet Fink, Broad Street Ward, and employing the Venetian glassmakers Joseph Casselari and Thomas Cavallo. By December 1570, another seven Muranese workmen resided with Carré in the St Benet Fink: Vincent Figlio, Dominic Casselari (potentially a relative of Josepho), Marco Guardo, Lawrence Farlonger, Francis Gilio, Biasio Brandarmin (or Brandium), and John Morato. In 1572, Carré died, and two years later the Venetian-born surgeon and broker Jacob Verzelini applied for Carré's license. He had already built the furnace at the time of application, suggesting, once more, that the Italian was the first proprietor of the Crutched Friars glasshouse in St Olave's Hart Street, where he had resided in since the early 1560s. Three of Carré's workers, Vincent Figlio, Dominic Casselari, and Marco Guardo relocated to the site of the Crutched Friars, where they resided alongside the newly settled Venetians Zatario Brunoro, Satario Moro, Augustin Corona, Marcas Fingamo, Jerolimo Fero, and Baptista Sorte.

fighting.[39] Italian humanists tutored royalty and aristocrats.[40] Italian linguists wrote language manuals for English presses to teach eager English students.[41] Italian lawyers profoundly shaped English jurisprudence.[42] Italian engineers revolutionised London's infrastructure.[43] Italian musicians would form dynasties that remained at the heart of musical culture at the English court until the end of the seventeenth century.[44]

Italians can also be found directly facilitating knowledge of Italian drama through London's expanding international book trade. Ascanius de Renialme, a Venetian-born resident of Blackfriars with strong ties to both Dutch and Italian printing houses, was the most prolific importer of foreign language books after the French Huguenot Thomas Vautrollier.[45] John Wolfe, the accomplished printer of foreign language materials in London during the latter decades of the sixteenth century,

[39] Rocco Bonetti, a Bergamasque fencing master, first opened a 'colledge' in Warwick Lane before securing John Lyly's lease over rooms in the dissolved Blackfriars Monastery. Bonetti enjoyed the Robert Dudley's patronage, and statesmen like Walter Raleigh and Lord Cobham, who resided in rooms next door, were among his students. His assistant and successor, Vincenzo Saviolo, would write a fencing manual in 1595. See *Vincentio Sauiolo his practise In two bookes. The first intreating of the vse of the rapier and dagger. The second, of honor and honorable quarrels* (London, 1595; STC (2nd ed.) / 21788).
[40] Giovanni Battista Castiglione tutored both Edward and Elizabeth and was a close confidant of the latter, appointed Groom of the Privy Chamber soon after her coronation. For Carré's licenses, see 'Pierre Briet and Jean Carre to Cecil', 9 August 1567, TNA, London, SP 12/43 f.103; and 'Jean Carre to the Secretary', July [?] 1567, TNA, London, SP 15/13 f.179. For Verzelini's license, see TNA, London, PROB11/54. For records of the Italian glassblowers, see RAL, i, p. 354; RAL, ii, pp. 39, 49, 166. See also, Eleanor S. Godfrey, *The Development of English Glassmaking 1560-1640* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 5-15.
[41] John Florio printed two dual language dialogue manuals in London, *Florio his firste fruites which yeelde familiar speech, merie prouerbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings* (London, 1598; STC (2nd ed.) / 11096); and *Florios second frutes to be gathered of twelue trees, of diuers but delightsome tastes to the tongues of Italians and Englishmen* (London, 1591; STC (2nd ed.) / 11097).
[42] Most notably Alberico Gentili, the Italian jurist hailed as the father of international law, who first came to England in August 1580s. Seven years later he was appointed Regius Professor of Civil law at the University of Oxford, a post he held until his death in 1608. Sir Julius Caesar, the son of Cesare Aldemare, a fellow of college of Physicians, also had a distinguished legal and political career first as a Judge of the Inner Temple and then as Chancellor of the Exchequer under James I. See Artemis Gause, 'Gentili, Alberico (1552–1608), Jurist', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10522>; Alain Wijffels, 'Caesar [Formerly Adelmare], Sir Julius (Bap. 1558, d. 1636), Civil Lawyer', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4328>.
[43] The Mantuan Federigo Giambelli, who engineered the 'hellburners' that were crucial to the Dutch victory during the siege of Antwerp in 1585, resided in London for most of his life, where he worked on several sanitation projects. See 'Federigo Gianbelli to Walsingham', March 1586, TNA, London, SP 84/7 f.4.
[44] Italian court musicians have been noted in the introduction to this thesis, p. 63.
[45] R. Julian Roberts, 'Renialme, Ascanius de [Known as Ascanius] (c. 1550–1600), Bookseller', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/47036>.

initially trained in Venice before returning to London in the 1570s.[46] He clearly maintained a network of associates overseas; in 1585, he printed Anthony Munday's celebrated adaptation of Luigi Pasqualigo's regular comedy *Il Fedele* (1576).[47] Six years later, he printed four of Pietro Aretino's five regular comedies: *Il marescalco* (1533), *La cortigiana* (1534), *La talanta* (1542), and *Il ipocrito* (1542).[48] In the same year, the Tuscan humanist Giacomo Castelvetro imported some 3,000 foreign-language volumes whilst residing at the house of the French Ambassador on the Strand.[49] He also hailed from a family of theatrical innovators; his uncle, the influential literary critic Lodovico Castelvetro of Modena penned the *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta* (1570) which led to the adoption of the Aristotelian three unities as standard in Italian neoclassical dram. Giacomo clearly inherited this interest; in the epistle to a 1591 edition of Guarini's *Il pastor fido* (printed by the semi-Italianised 'Giovanni Volfeo a spese di Giacopo Casteluetro'), he reports ordering several copies of the play from Italy for his English acquaintances as in 'molti di questi singulari spiriti destò un non picciol desiderio di poterla vedere' (many of these singular spirits aroused a small desire to see her).[50]

Some of these Italians may have even facilitated contact with the *commedia dell'arte*. The Bolognese court musician Alfonso Ferrabosco the Elder and several other Italians (possibly Leicester's Master of Horse Claudio Corte, and the renowned humanist scholar Petruccio Ubaldini) were paid £10 for a play at Whitehall on 27 February 1576.[51] What they performed is unknown, although Ferrabosco was remarkably transient for a pensioned member of the Royal household, travelling back

[46] Jason Lawrence, 'Appendix: John Wolfe's Italian Publications', in *'Who the Devil Taught Thee So Much Italian?': Italian Language Learning and Literary Imagination in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 196-210.
[47] Anthony Munday, *[Fedele and Fortunio] [The deceites in loue: excellently discoursed in a very pleasaunt and fine conceited comoedie, of two Italian gentlemen. Translated out of Italian, and set downe according as it hath beene presented before the Queenes moste excellent Maiestie]* (London, 1585; STC (2nd ed.) / 19447).
[48] Pietro Aretino, *Quattro Comedie del diuino Pietro Aretino Cioè Il Marescalco La cortegiana La Talanta, L'hipocrito. Nouellamente ritornate, per mezzo della stampa, a luce, a richiesta de conoscitori del lor valore* (London, 1588; STC (2nd ed.) / 19911).
[49] No catalogue has survived. Sheila E. Dimsey, 'Giacopo Castelvetro', *The Modern Language Review*, 23.4 (1928), 424–31.
[50] Battista Guarini, *Il Pastor Fido tragicomedia pastorale* (London, 1588; STC (2nd ed.) / 12414), sig. A2r.
[51] Lea, ii, p. 362-364.

and forth to Rome on several occasions in the 1560s and 1570s.[52] Perhaps he familiarised himself with the novel practices of the *comici*, and this record indicated the porous relationship between amateur and professional performance.[53] More direct contact may have been facilitated by members of London's community of Italian merchants and financiers. They had thrived in London since the thirteenth century, and whilst rapidly decreasing in size and influence from the end of the fifteenth century, a small number of extraordinarily wealthy and well-connected transnational trading companies remained, operating from warehouses and mansions by the Port in the City's eastern wards.[54] They cultivated personal and business relationships with the Crown, and offered substantial loans to finance domestic and foreign policy in exchange for lucrative monopolies. Though most traded wholesale goods like wine, cloth, and fish, these companies had factories and connections in every European commercial centre at their disposal to cater to the English appetite for novelty. When Leicester sought new hangings for the dining chamber at Kenilworth in preparation for Elizabeth's visit in 1575, he commissioned his 'dear friend and the best Italian I know', Benedict Spinola, a merchant from Genoa.[55] Spinola may have had a hand in procuring the services of the *comici* and acrobat Soldino for the event as well. His family back in Italy were certainly well acquainted with the troupes. In 1605, Benedict's relative Giovan Battista Spinola sent a letter to Flaminio Scala – who he affectionately refers to as Flavio, the name of Scala's *innamorato* – requesting he come to Genoa

[52] See Andrew Ashbee's concise biography, 'Ferrabosco, Alfonso (Bap. 1543, d. 1588), Composer', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9352.
[53] Lea, ii, pp. 362-69; Henke, 'Back to the Future: A Review of Comparative Studies in Shakespeare and the Commedia Dell'Arte', *Early Theatre*, 11.2 (2008), 227–40 (p. 229).
[54] The earlier history of the community has been covered in several studies. See M. Bratchel, 'Alien Merchant Colonies in Sixteenth-Century England: Community Organisation and Social Mores', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 14.1 (1984), 39-62; and Bratchel, 'Italian Merchant Organisation and Business Relationships in Early Tudor London', *Journal of European Economic History*, 7.1 (1978), 5-32. Even studies of the later community, such as Bratchel's 'Regulation and Group-Consciousness in the Later History of London's Italian Merchant Colonies', *Journal of European Economic History*, 9.3 (1980), 585-610, stop at the 1560s. References to the Italian merchants are found in several studies of the Italian influence on Tudor London, including Wyatt's 'La Regina Helisabetta', pp. 139-48.
[55] John Bennell, 'Spinola, Benedict (1519/20–1580), Merchant', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/52156>.

urgently to perform in a Twelfth Night entertainment.[56] A similar relationship between the *comici* and the merchant diaspora is found elsewhere across Europe. Merchants from Lucca, Florence, and Milan organised a production of Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbienda's *La calandria* (1513) by a Florentine troupe for Henri II and Catherine de' Medici's royal visit to Lyons in September 1548.[57] In September 1571, The permission of the Prévost des Marchands was just as important to Zan Ganassa as that of Charles IX when he came to perform in Paris.[58] The Italians in particular held a lot of sway, and Vincenzo Belando would later thank France's influential Lucchese residents for their protection and preferment in the epistle to his *Lettere facete e chiribizzose in lengua antica, venitiana* (1588).[59] In the Low Countries, Martinelli and his troupe are found in Antwerp at the bequest of several Italian merchants in 1576 during the 'Spanish Fury' – a particularly violent episode of the Eighty Year's War when mutinous Spanish troops massacred between 7,000 and 18,000 soldiers and civilians in one day.[60] This same tour brought Martinelli to the English court, and whilst I can find no trace of the Italian merchants who protected the troupe at Antwerp in the English records, it is possible that the logistical side of the journey to England was organised by a transnational company.

[56] 'Giovan Battista Spinola a Flaminio Scala: «Habbiamo risoluto questo Carnovale»', 25 December 1605, Mantova, Archivio di Stato - Archivio Gonzage, C-5413.
[57] Henke, 'Border-Crossing in the Commedia Dell'arte', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 19-35 (p. 28).
[58] Ibid.
[59] Belando would later dedicate his 1609 comedy *Gli Amorosi Inganni* to the Buonvisi family. Vincenzo Belando, *Lettere facete e chiribizzose in lengua antica, venitiana* (Paris, 1585), epistle.
[60] Siro Ferrone, *Arlecchino. Vita e Avventure Di Tristano Martinelli Attore* (Roma-Bari: Gius, Laterna & Figli, 2006), pp. 12-13.

1.2 Hostility to Italian Influence

Martinelli and his troupe knowingly capitalised on the English appetite for continental refinement – or, at least, that was the intention. Discord existed between the Crown and gentry on one hand, who for the most part revelled in the economic and cultural benefits of (limited) migration to England, and the City authorities on the other, who kept a close eye on their strange neighbours for fear that cheap labour and innovative skills would undercut the Corporation's monopolies on trade. While attitudes towards strangers were complex, and it would be misleading to state that it was entirely hostile, intermittent periods of dearth (more frequent in the latter decades of the sixteenth century) led to a general feeling of malaise that was easily stoked into anti-migrant sentiment.[61] Strangers were accused of flooding the market with foreign goods, causing inflation, and then syphoning the revenue out of the realm (and, in the case of the Italians, into the coffers of hostile foreign powers).[62] The Crown and other trade legislators had been entranced with soporific gifts whilst the strangers subverted English dominion over their own trade. In 1559, a petition was delivered to parliament that called for the reinstitution of several statutes limiting the legal, economic, and residential rights of strangers. It warned that:

> The Italians above all other to be taken heed of, for they in all times pass to go to and fro everywhere and for themselves serve all princes at once, and with their perfumed gloves and wanton presents, and gold enough to boot if need be, work what they list and lick the fat even from our beards.[63]

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[61] See Nigel Goose, "'Xenophobia" in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England: An Epithet Too Far?', in *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, ed. by Lien Luu and Nigel Goose (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2003), pp. 110-35; Scott Oldenburg suggests that the entertainments staged along the coronation route during Mary's procession through the London in 1554 were carefully staged by the City to emphasise the value of strangers to London's economy. See 'Toward a Multicultural Mid-Tudor England: The Queen's Royal Entry Circa 1553, "The Interlude of Wealth and Health", and the Question of Strangers in the Reign of Mary I', *EHL*, 76.1 (2009), 99–129.

[62] Lien Luu, '"Taking the Bread out of Our Mouths": Xenophobia in Early Modern London', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 19.2 (2010), 1–22.

[63] 'Considerations delivered to the Parliament, 1559', CCP, I, p. 161.

Wealthy and well-connected, the City's Italian merchants provided a useful scapegoat for English merchants looking to take advantage of rising tensions. Several more petitions were delivered to parliament and the Lord Mayor throughout the following decades, usually by those with connections to the Merchant Taylors Company.[64] They tended to focus on England's major industry, wool production, which was in sharp decline as domestic consumption shifted to imported cloth. Strangers were to blame, of course, both those who trafficked cambric, silk, and taffeta across the channel and the religious refugees who set up manufacturing industries upon their arrival in the 1560s and 1570s. Other complaints, like a 'Declaration of the misdemeanors which various Italian merchants daily use' delivered to parliament in 1561, took aim at the migrant presence in general. Though they might be 'denized [extended certain legal rights] or born here amongst us, yet they keep themselves severed from us in church, in government, in trade, in language and marriage.'[65] Strangers bought up the fairest houses in the City, whilst simultaneously overrunning certain areas, living in squalid conditions that lead to an increase in crime, disease, and moral decay in the surrounding parishes.[66] Petitions were presented to both Privy Councillors and London's Court of Common Council that laid out plans to enfranchise the subjugated English by stripping away the already limited residential, economic, and retailing rights of strangers. Many were successful; in 1573, the Common Council passed a bill that ordered migrant artisans to 'teach their arts to Englishmen and set no strangers on work but their own children.'[67] A year later, an Act of Common Council was passed that prohibited the children of

[64] Luu, p. 16.
[65] Oldenburg, *Alien Albion: Literature and Immigration in Early Modern England* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p. 15.
[66] 'A complaynt of the Cytizens of London against the great number of strangers in and about this cytty', 1571, TNA, London, SP 12/20 f. 34.
[67] Luu, 'Immigrants and the Diffusion of Skills in Early Modern London : The Case of Silk Weaving', *Documents Pour l'histoire Des Techniques*, 15.1 (2010), 32–42 (p. 40).

strangers from taking-up apprenticeships, with the requirement that both sets of grandparents must be native-born.[68]

Though they appealed to a general nostalgia for an imagined past, these petitions indicate an increasingly outward facing mentality that sought to establish Englishness as something ambitious and imperial, rather than insular, isolationist, and subject to the generosity of strangers. In Robert Wilson's 1582 proto-city comedy *The Three Ladies of London*, the transient Italian merchant Mercadorus is instructed by the allegorical Lady Lucre to establish trade links with the Ottoman Empire:

> Lady Lucre:
> Then thou must carry beside leather, tallow, beef, bacon, bell-metal and everything,
> And for these good commodities trifles to England thou must bring,
> As bugles to make baubles, coloured bones, glass, beads to make bracelets withal.[69]

Alan Stewart has shown how Lucre's shockingly unchristian greed in this passage reflects ongoing tensions over trade regulations.[70] While immigrant artisans and merchants like Mercadorus had created the conditions for England's growing international standing, they 'were precisely the elements of which it could be least sure'.[71] London had become subject to the will of strangers, who clothed, fed, and armed the common enemy of Christendom with church bell metal for shot in exchange for beads and baubles to satisfy the appetite of a city glutted on strange luxuries. Stewart draws on several parliamentary debates in his analysis, but it may have been one high profile conflict in particular that provided Wilson's audience with a model for Mercadorus. In 1575, the Lucchese magnate and resident

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Robert Wilson, *A right excellent and famous comœdy called the three ladies of London Wherein is notablie declared and set foorth, how by the meanes of lucar, loue and conscience is so corrupted, that the one is married to dissimulation, the other fraught with all abhomination* (London, 1584; STC (2nd ed.) / 25784), sig. B3r.
[70] Alan Stewart, "'Come from Turkie": Mediterranean Trade in Late Elizabethan London', in *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, Early Modern Cultural Studies, ed. by Goran V Stanivukovic (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 157-77.
[71] Stewart, p. 173.

of St Olave Hart's Street, Acerbo Velutelli, successfully petitioned his good friend Leicester for a ten-year monopoly on the import of all sweet oils and currants from Venice.[72] It was a surprising move given the inevitable outrage that would follow. The Doge responded immediately by increasing import duties on all English goods brought into the city, and the Lord Mayor, Cecil, and the Privy Council were petitioned by both furious Venetian residents whose business was disrupted by Velutelli's monopoly, and English merchants affected by the increased levy on their goods.[73] The Italian initially managed to stave off these attacks by offering native Englishman a share in the privilege. However, when the Venetians increased import duty on English merchandise again in 1581, the recently formed joint-stock Turkey Company petitioned Elizabeth directly, and she immediately revoked Velutelli's license.[74]

The incident confirmed to Londoners that the strangers had no interest in the safety or prosperity of England. It is notable that Wilson's play – performed just after the Turkey Company was granted a charter by the Crown to trade with the Ottoman Empire – presents an unusually benign image of the Turk.[75] The Catholic European Mercadorus, on the other hand, is perfectly willing to commit apostasy to avoid paying his debts while all along exporting English goods and exchanges the church bells shattered by reformed iconoclasm to the common enemy of Christendom for strange trifles that subdued the impressionable English. The strangers had provided English traders with

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[72] Diogene Franceschini's letter to Giovanni Francesco Morosini, the Venetian Ambassador in France, in the Venetian State Papers provides a full account of the circumstances. See 'Venice: February 1576', CSPV, viii, pp. 544-47 (p. 546). For an concise analysis of this affair, see Maria Fusaro, 'The Reversal of Balance', in *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean : The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England, 1450-1700*, Cambridge Core (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 48-57.

[73] 'Velutelli's response to these petitions survives in the State Papers. Petition of Signor Acerbo Velutelli to the Council, touching his licence for the importation of corinths, or currants; with particulars of his claims', 1581, TNA, London, SP 12/165 f.160.

[74] 'Petition of Merchants trading to the Levant, complaining of the licence granted to Acerbo Velutelli, obtained by untrue suggestions, of the whole trade and bringing in of corantes and Greek oils, to the great damage of the trade of the English merchants', 1583, TNA, London, SP 12/165 f.156.

[75] See 'The Letters Patents granted by her Maiestie to Sir Edward Osborne, M. Richard Staper, and certaine other merchants of London for their trade into the dominions of the great Turke' printed in Richard Hakluyt's *The principall nauigations, voiages and discoueries of the English nation made by sea or ouer land, to the most remote and farthest distant quarters of the earth at any time within the compasse of these 1500. Yeeres* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 12625), pp. 172-75.

access to international markets for luxury goods and cheaper labour and resources. Now, it was time for the English to take back control.

This hostility to Italian purveyors of Italianate wares provides a useful context in which to consider Martinelli's visit. Few records of the occasion have been unearthed, but Winifred Smith's suggestion that James Burbage offered his newly opened Theatre playhouse to the Italian troupe has gained currency in scholarship over the years.[76] There is, however, no evidence to corroborate this speculation. It is not even clear if Martinelli ever performed in London. Passport or no passport, the Crown had limited legal jurisdiction within the City, and no record of the Lord Mayor's response to the Council's request survives in the State Papers or the Court of Common Council minutes. It is worth noting that similar requests had previously been ignored. In July 1573, a letter sent to the Lord Mayor from the Privy Council requesting a permit for 'certeine Italian plaiers to make shewe of an instrument of motiones' (probably a mechanical puppet show) went unanswered. The following week, a second letter was sent with the disgruntled signatories 'merveling that he did not [respond] at their first request.'[77] It was not unheard of for the City to butt heads with Privy Councillors on the matter of strangers; in 1579, the Earl of Warwick sent several letters to the Lord Mayor requesting Freedom of the City for the strangers John Leonard and Henry Rodes. Eventually the Mayor replied, refusing on the basis that native 'artisans and citizens' were 'eaten out of the trades and livings by strangers and foreigners.'[78]

Of course, there is no explicit evidence of the City authorities rejecting Martinelli's license outright, although it is worth noting that 1578 was a plague year, with bills of mortality recording thirty

[76] Smith, *The Commedia Dell'Arte*, p. 175. See also, Henke, 'Back to the Future', p. 227; and Ferrone, 'Lione, Anversa, Londra, Parigi, pp. 119-120.
[77] The outcome of this second letter is unclear, although there appears to have been no need for a third one. 'A Letter to the Lord Mayor of London', 1573, APC, viii, pp. 131-32.
[78] Luu, 'Natural-Born versus Stranger-Born Subjects: Aliens and Their Status in Elizabethan London', in *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart London* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), pp. 57–75 (p. 63).

deaths per week just a fortnight after the Italian's proposed visit.[79] The London authorities had been significantly slower than other European urban centres in enforcing an official protocol to manage the outbreaks that periodically ravaged the city. From September 1577, however, the Privy Council requested a detailed strategy for subsequent epidemics. Precautionary measures were not enforced until October 1578, when the Lord Mayor's Procession was cancelled to prevent public congregation, although if the City authorities wanted an excuse to refuse or restrict the Italians performing, the threat of plague would have been adequate. Whatever the circumstances around his visit, the Italian clearly did not think it worth his while to return to England again. Strikingly, he does not appear to have made a lasting impact on his prospective audience either. Following a short visit to Elizabeth's court around the same time as Martinelli's troupe, the Italian mountebank Scoto of Mantua would enter the English imagination as an almost folkloric figure, providing English writers with evocative material well into the seventeenth century.[80] Martinelli and his troupe, on the other hand, are never mentioned again.

Hostility to the proliferation of Italian culture in England would certainly come to shape how the *commedia dell'arte* manifested in the imagination in their absence. Martinelli came to Elizabeth's court at a time of intense identity crisis. The political and religious upheavals of reformation, the far-reaching cultural and intellectual impact of continental humanism, and new cross-cultural exposure from reinvigorated foreign trade and early imperial ventures left the English to ruminate over what exactly constituted *Englishness* beyond vague legal definitions of an inheritance through blood and/or soil.[81] Exactly how this emergent national consciousness was to be culturally expressed was a matter of intense debate, although it was clear to all involved that the inter-cultural landscape nurtured by successive Tudor monarchs had resulted in a nation divorced from itself. Drawing on contemporary

[79] Chambers, iv, p. 347.
[80] Scoto will be discussed at length in Chapter Five, pp. 251-252.
[81] Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), p. 87-90.

notions of national identity based in genealogy and climate, critics of Italianate consumption argued that the English were transformed from their natural state by strange commodities that had subjugated the realm to the will of foreign, hostile powers.

A particular cause for concern was the burgeoning market for imported luxury cloth. This had not only decimated the domestic wool trade, but in an age when clothing fashioned subjecthood, the abundance of strange materials, styles, and manufacturers from the continent also threatened to obfuscate the systems through which difference and belonging were delineated. Increased availability meant lower prices, and fabrics that had traditionally been used in the livery of the aristocracy were now readily available to anybody with the means to pay. Alarmed, the Crown resurrected and augmented a series of earlier sumptuary laws in 1574 to promote wool production and regulate the 'excess of apparel and the superfluity of unnecessary foreign wares' of recent years.[82] The laws were ineffectual and poorly enforced, however, mostly due to the reliance of London's economy on these markets. Following a number of amendments, they were permanently repealed in 1597.

The rhetoric of English versus strange in the statutes hints towards another troubling implication of the mass consumption of luxury imported goods. If the English were to carve out an exclusively English identity, they needed a national dress that suited the national climate and made use of the materials delivered to them by God. Yet, as Robert Greene depicts in his *A Quip for an vpstart courtier* (1592), the appetite of the English for strange goods undermined this attempt. The tract contains a dispute between Clothbreeches, embodying England's traditional industry, and Velvetbreeches, brought into England by his 'companion new fanglenesse', embodying the pride and greed of upstart gentleman who value private gain over 'publike commodity'.[83] As the wool industry

[82] Kirk Melnikoff, 'The "Extremities" of Sumptuary Law in Robert Greene's "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay"', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 19 (2006), 227–34 (p. 232).
[83] Robert Greene, *A quip for an vpstart courtier: or, A quaint dispute betvveen veluet breeches and clothbreeches Wherein is plainely set downe the disorders in all estates and trades* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 12300), sigs. V3r, E4r.

declined and velvet breeches became more widely available, Englishness became increasingly marked by strangeness. William Rankins lamented how the English 'hewe downe thy flourishing tree, and make thy beauty an habitation of wilde foules, and birdes of the ayre'.[84] The 'attire they use', declares John Lyly's eponymous *Euphues* (1581), 'is rather led by imitation of others, than their owne invention, so that there is nothing more constant in England, than the inconstancie of attire.'[85] He touches on a pervasive anxiety here. What if strangeness defined the English? 'Strangers deride our strangeness', lamented Rankins, a concern briefly depicted by Thomas Nashe in his satirical travelogue *The Vnfortunate Traueller* (1594). On arriving in Rome, the protagonist Jack Wilton is an immediate source of bemusement for the locals:

> I being a youth of the English cut, ware my hair long, went apparelled in light colours, and imitated four or five sundry nations in my attire at once; which no sooner was noted, but I had all the boys of the city in a swarm wondering about me.[86]

Conscious of their belated embrace of European intellectual culture and their as yet unfulfilled geopolitical ambitions, the English feared they lacked cultural authority and were 'scornefully mocked of them who they endevor to follow'.[87] Andrew Boorde included a verse poem entitled 'The naturall disposition of an English man' in his 1542 *The first boke of the introduction of knowledge* underneath a woodcut of a semi-naked man holding shears and cloth (fig. 1). 'I am an Englysh man, and naked I stand here', it reads, 'Musyng in my mynd, what rayment I shal were'.[88] Rankins mentions 'the German Painter' who 'made the Englyshe naked, because hee knew not of what guise to make the chaungeable

[84] Wiliam Rankins, *The English Ape, the Italian Imitation, and the footesteppes of Fraunce* (London, 1588; STC 339:31), p. 2.
[85] John Lyly, *Euphues and his England* (London, 1581; STC (2nd ed.) / 17072), sig. D4r.
[86] Thomas Nashe, *The vnfortunate traueller. Or, The life of Iacke Wilton* (London, 1594; STC (2nd ed.) / 18380), sig. J4r.
[87] William Rankins, p. 19.
[88] Andrew Boorde, 'The natural disposition of an English man', in T*he fyrst boke of the introduction of knowledge* (London, 1542; STC (2nd ed.) / 3383), sig. A3v. See also Nandini Das, *Gresham's World: Global Traffic, Trade and the Metamorphosis of England* (Gresham College, 2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M1UXndsg_c> [accessed 14 December 2020], 1:15-5:20.

variety of his attyre', possibly in reference to the Flemish painter and sometime London resident Lucas de Heere, who used the same iconography to represent the English in his c.1550 costume book *Théâtre de tous les peuples et nations de la terre* (fig. 2).[89] While watching the Ducal procession in Venice, Coryate delights in the clear distinction in dress between social and political rank, before lamenting that the Venetians had taken to drawing the English 'starke naked with a paire of shears', ready to make his clothes 'according to the vaine invention of his brain-sicke head'.[90] This iconography was actually a conventional way of depicting the changeable gentry across Europe; the historian Bartolomeo Grassi depicts the Venetian national costume as a man standing naked and ready to take ideas from foreign styles in his 1585 costume book *Dei very ritratti degli habiti di tutte le parti del mondo*.[91] However, English anxieties were not entirely misplaced in this regard, and the extravagance of travellers and ambassadors was often a source of bemusement for the locals. Tomé Pinheiro da Veiga, thought to be generally polite about the English mission to the court of Phillip III, made note of the ambassador Charles Howard's costume on several occasions. During one audience with the King in 1605, Pinheiro noted that 'Vinha o Almirante meyo à Ingleza, meyo à Hespanhola' ('The Admiral was dressed half in the English fashion, and half in the Spanish fashion').[92] On another, 'Elle se vestiu à Hespanhola' ('He was dressed in the Spanish fashion').[93]

[89] Lucas d'Heere, 'The Naked Englishman', in *Théâtre de tous les peuples et nations de la terre*, 1550, University Library of Ghent, Ghent, f. 126r. <http://lib.ugent.be/catalog/rug01:000794288>.
[90] Coryate, p. 262.
[91] Bartolomeo Grassi, *Dei veri ritratti degl' habiti di tutte le partie del mondo, intagliati in rame. Lib. 1* (Roma, 1585), page currently inaccessible.
[92] Tomé Pinheiro da Veiga, *Fastigimia* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2009), p. 69. Thanks to Dr João Melo for the reference and translation.
[93] Ibid, p. 76.



Figure 1. Andrew Boorde, 'The natural disposition of an English man', in T*he fyrst boke of the introduction of knowledge* (London, 1542; STC (2nd ed.) / 3383), sig. A3v.



Figure 2. Lucas d'Heere, 'The Naked Englishman', in *Théâtre de tous les peuples et nations de la terre*, 1550, University Library of Ghent, Ghent, f. 126r.

The strangeness of the English was also embedded within their mother tongue. The vernacular translation cultures at the heart of humanism had drastically expanded English vocabulary between 1570 and 1630 as neologisms were incorporated into the language from foreign works.[94] Some, like George Pettie in his translation of Stephano Guazzo's *Civile Conversazione* (1574; trans. 1581), praised the adoption of 'inkhorn terms' as the 'ready way to inrich our tongue, and make it copious, and it is the way which all tongues have taken to inrich them selves'.[95] Many others argued that unfettered access to foreign print materials brought about through expansion, trade, and travel had resulted in the dilution of a pure, indigenous language. Thomas Wilson argued in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553) that 'Some seeke so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mothers language.'[96] More visionary opponents to unfettered translation undertook a revisionist mission to revive their natural tongue by inventing new words and phrases around English grammar systems. During the Edwardian reforms of the early 1550s, the classical scholar John Cheke translated the Gospel of Matthew with an extraordinarily nationalist bent, devising terms as he saw fit to avoid incorporating any foreign vocabulary or figures of speech.[97] Almost three decades later, the poets Edmund Spenser and Philip

[94] Peter Burke, 'Nationalisms and Vernaculars, 1500-1800', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. by John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-12 (p. 8); and Warren Boutcher, 'From Cultural Translation to Cultures of Translation?' in *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660*, ed. by Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson (London: Palgrave Macmilla, 2015), pp. 22-40.
[95] George Pettie, *The civile conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo written first in Italian, and nowe translated out of French by George Pettie, devided into foure bookes* (London, 1581; STC 245:02), sig. B2v.
[96] Thomas Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique for the vse of all suche as are studious of eloquence, sette forth in English* (London, 1553; STC (2nd ed.) / 25799), p. 86.
[97] Neil Rhodes, 'Pure and Common Greek in Early Tudor England', in *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660*, ed. by Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 54–70 (pp. 41-2).

Sidney would undertake a similar exercise, creating an undefiled, Protestant, and wholly paradoxical new 'old' language structured around a Chaucerian Middle English.[98]

The issue was not translation per se, but the types of texts translated. Englishing foreign vernaculars required close regulation so as to avoid both polluting the native tongue with unnecessary neologisms, and introducing English readers to otherwise unknown profane and dangerous conceits. Stephen Gosson, the playwright and satirist remembered for his vehement attacks on the secular English stage in the late 1570s and early 1580s, took particular issue with 'wanton Italian bookes', which:

> being translated into english, haue poysoned the olde maners of our Country with foreine delights, they haue so hardned the readers harts y^{e} seuerer writers are trode vnder foote, none are so pleasunte or plausible as they, that sound some kinde of libertie in our eares.[99]

He makes specific reference to a William Painter's collection of translations from Matteo Bandello, Giovanni Fiorentini, and several *novelle* from Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (although Painter is sure to stress in the epistle that he 'culled' over a hundred from the volume 'that be worthy to be condempned to perpetuall prison'). Of course, what constituted a 'wanton' book was also contested. Some tracts were initially well-received by more conservative pedagogues and writers but would later court controversy as anti-Italian sentiment became more entrenched. Roger Ascham, a fierce critic of the 'subtle, cunnyng, new, and diuerse shiftes' of translated Italian romances, commended Thomas Hoby's translation of Baldassare Castiglione's celebrated courtly conduct manual, *Il cortegiano* (1561),

[98] See Cathy Shrank's 'Poetry and the Commonwealth', Craig A. Berry's 'Chaucer', and Mary Ellen Lamb's 'The Sidney Circle', in *Edmund Spenser in Context*, ed. by Andrew Escobedo, Literature in Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 176–84, 246–53, 254–63.

[99] Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions prouing that they are not to be suffred in a Christian common weale, by the waye both the cauils of Thomas Lodge, and the play of playes, written in their defence, and other obiections of players frendes, are truely set downe and directlye aunsweared* (London, 1582; STC (2nd ed.) / 12095), sig. B6r.

as a useful textbook for educating the sons of the gentry for a career in civil service.[100] Over time, however, Castiglione's instruction on how to carefully curate the public self became the textual exemplar of the Italian's deceptive, deceitful, and ambitious nature, teaching readers, as Peter Burke notes, to transform the 'body into a moving, feeling, dissimulating work of art where outward form masked inward content'.[101]

1.3 The Sensory Snares of Travel

The traffic of people and materials went both ways, and access to strange clothes, strange manners, and strange speech patterns in the markets, booksellers' shops, and playhouses of London was facilitated by the cultural mediators who left the relative safety of England to journey overseas. These merchants, diplomats, intelligencers, artists, and educational travellers were at once central to the economic and political function of the state, and dangerous to the security of the commonwealth. The Crown cast a suspicious eye on all those who ventured abroad, and a passport with certain stipulations was to be obtained from the Crown. In reality, however, there was little way to monitor who they met, where they went, and what they did there once they were outside the realm. A traveller might convert. They might sell or be duped into giving away sensitive information. They might make lucrative financial arrangements without the Crown receiving its rightful share of the profits. They might even become enamoured with strange lands and strange practices to the detriment of their English identity.

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[100] Roger Ascham, *The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children, to vnderstand, write, and speake, the Latin tong but specially purposed for the priuate brynging vp of youth in ientlemen and noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as haue forgot the Latin tonge* (London, 1570; STC 832), p. 231r.

[101] Niall Atkinson, 'The Social Life of the Senses: Architecture, Food, and Manners', in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance*, Cultural History of the Senses, ed. by Herman Roodenburg (London: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, Plc., 2014), pp. 19-41 (p. 27).

The particular dangers posed by travel to Italy to both the individual and the commonwealth has been the subject of extensive criticism.[102] However, it is necessary to reiterate the somatic implications of exposure to 'Italian disguises' overseas to properly understand the ways in which the *commedia dell'arte* was presented in contemporary travel writing. Its classical inheritance revived, the architectural splendour, modernised infrastructure, and flourishing artistic legacy made Italy an enticing destination. Yet it was also the home of Papism, political perfidiousness, and Epicureanism, and the vogue amongst the sons of the aristocracy and gentry for educational travel to the cities and universities was a source of consternation amongst for conservative commentators. To travel was to immerse yourself in a new somatic environment which, in keeping with early modern physiology, had the potential to transform the disposition of the traveller. Timothy Bright's *A Treatise on Melancholy* (1586), for example, adheres to the commonly held thesis that sensory experience is registered in the brain. If an object is found 'offensiue or pleasant', a reaction is produced in the heart that stimulates the humours and alters the physiological composition of the body, engendering 'those stormes of outrageous loue, hatred, hope or feare, wherewith bodies so passionate are here and there, tossed with disquiet.'[103] The issue here was whether the traveller could rightly distinguish between the 'pleasant' and the 'offensive'. With the increased ocularcentricity of the sixteenth century came a new sensory anxiety – the eye, notes Stuart Clark, was 'imbued with uncertainty and unreliability, all too susceptible to delusions, misapprehensions, and moral corruption.'[104]

Immersion in the sensory snares of Italy, argued Ascham in *The Scholemaster*, created a new, composite identity:

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[102] See, for example, Kenneth R. Bartlett, 'Travel and Translation: The English and Italy in the Sixteenth Century', *Annali d'Italianistica*, 14 (1996), 493–506; and Warneke, 'Educational Travelers: Popular Imagery and Public Criticism in Early Modern England', 71–94.

[103] Timothie Bright, *A treatise of melancholie Containing the causes thereof, & reasons of the strange effects it worketh in our minds and bodies* (London, 1586; STC (2nd ed.) / 3747), pp. 93-5.

[104] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 11.

> If some yet do not well understand, what is an Englishman Italianated, I will plainlie tell him. He, that by living, & travelling in Italie, bringeth home into England out of Italie, the Religion, the learning, the policie, the experience, the maners of Italie. That is to say, for Religion, Papistrie or worse: for learnying, lesse commonly than they carried out with them: for pollicie, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a mynde to medle in all mens matters: for experience, plenty of new mischieves never knowne in England before: for maners, varietie of vanities, and change of filthy lyving. These be the inchantementes of Circes, brought out of Italie, to marre mens maners in England.[105]

While not the originator of this phrase, Ascham is the first to use the image of the 'Italianate Englishman' in the sense of an importer of the tripartite sins of atheism, epicureanism, and political subtlety that transformed the Englishman after prolonged, immersive exposure.[106] There was a great deal of discrepancy in how travel writers – as well as translators and compilers of accounts – attempted to assuage fears over their exposure to the 'inchantements of Circes'. Different forms of travel necessitated different modes of engagement, although all tended to revert back to the etymological root *travaile*. Travel was a strenuous, arduous, and often thankless form of selfless, self-imposed exile. However, this exile was only temporary. The traveller was always sure to stress their prodigality, and though they toiled abroad in the pursuit of knowledge, they toiled abroad so as to return home and better service of the commonwealth. The 'end goal of his *trauells*, writes Robert Dallington in *A Method for trauell* (1605), is 'the ripening in knowledge; and the end of his knowledge is the service of his countrie.'[107] The threat of transformation could be countered by employing a combination of 'right reason' with more practical measures, such as steering clear of the hotbeds of sedition and corruption

[105] Ascham, p. 26r.
[106] George B. Parks has traced English use of the aphorism to Sir William Paget during the French war of 1546/7. Paget, who Parks surmises heard the aphorism from one of the Italian captains, uses the phrase to describe those English captains who follow the Italian example of defrauding their soldiers' by 'pollyng and nypping' their payroll to a fraction of the amount due. See George B. Parks, 'The First Italianate Englishman', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 8 (1961), 197–216. For the discourse around the Italianate gentleman in England, see Michael J. Redmond, "'I Have Read Them All": Jonson's *Volpone* and the Discourse of the Italianate Englishman', in *The Italian World of English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (London: Associated University Presses, 1998).
[107] Dallington, sig. B1r.

like Rome or the Colleges of the Society of Jesus. When exposure to corruption was inevitable, the traveller must be a wary Ulysses and stop their ears to resist the siren's song.

Framing travel as the selfless pursuit of knowledge by a Ulyssean servant to the Crown led to the adoption of certain precepts in the literature around travel. An early form of comparative ethnography and anthropology subsequently emerged that helped formalise English perceptions of their own national identity, the world, and their place in it through a discourse of difference that tended to assert the cultural supremacy of a people favoured by divine providence.[108] Italy was fertile terrain for such comparisons, and for Moryson, the *commedia dell'arte* provided a means to address the incongruity between Italy as the cradle of the classical revival and the everyday practices of the dissolute, papistical epicureans who populated its states and territories. While Dallington offered a sharp critique of what he saw as Italian degeneracy from a blessed state in classical antiquity, Moryson drew on national stereotypes of the deceitful Italian to challenge the historical veneration of Rome and the veracity of Italian accomplishments. 'Why should wee beleeve Livy', he writes, 'more in the Actions of Curtius, of Manlius, of the Fabij, and like worthy men, then in the sweating of stones, Nodding of Images, and like superstitious Miracles' reported by the contemporary Roman Church.[109] The triumphs of the Florentines, Venetians, and Romans might be carved into Italy's magnificent cityscapes, but this means very little when the venerated subject is so undeserving of praise. The morally dissolute mix-gendered performances of the Italian *compagni* provided a suitable example. An *attrice* by the name of Lucinia was 'so liked of the Florintines,' writes Moryson, 'as when she dyed they made her a monument with an Epitaphe.'[110]

[108] Anna Suranyi, *Genius of the English Nation: Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern England* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2008), pp. 18-20.
[109] Hughes and Moryson, p. 399.
[110] Ibid, p. 465.

1.4 Breaking Decorum in Moryson's *Itinerary*

Whether such a statue ever existed is uncertain, although it is something that might be expected of the Italies constructed in works such as the *Itinerary*. Moryson uses this same comparative framework in his assessment of an Italian professional performance witnessed during Carnival, when 'publike Comedies acted by Cittizens' are performed in every Italian city:

> in Florence they had a house where all the yeare long a Comedy was played by professed players once in the weeke and no more more, and the partes of wemen were played by wemen, and the cheefe Actours had not their parts fully penned, but spake much extempory or upon agreement betweene themselves, espetially the wemen, whose speeches were full of wantonnes, though not grosse baudry (which the Italians like, but neede no such provocation), and their playes were of Amorous matters, Never of historyes, much less of tragedies, which the Italyans Nature too much affects to imitate and surpasse.[111]

Very little in this passage would have made for novel reading by the time Moryson set off on his travels in the mid-1590s (apart from, perhaps, the observation of a permanent playhouse, the *stanzone delle commedie*, located at the rear of the Uffizi). By the time Moryson printed his *Itinerary* in 1617, however, these details would have been common knowledge. Improvisation had long been recognised as a key conceit of Italian professional performance. In George Whetstone's 1582 Boccaccian romance collection, *A Heptameron of ciuill discourse*, an adaptation of Margueritte of Navarre's work of the same name, a group of Florentine gentlemen and ladies entertain each other over the course of a seven-day quarantine from the plague at the country residence of Signor Philomexus. On the fifth evening, the group are entertained by a troupe of professional comedians who, given a 'Theame' around which to

[111] Ibid, p. 424-25.

organise a play, 'put themselves in order, [and] … patched a Comedie together'.[112] Momentarily forgetting that he is a Florentine native, Signor Philomexus informs his guests that Italian players are not 'tide to a written device, as our English Players are, but having certayne groundes or principles of their owne, will, Extempore, make a pleasant showe of other mens fantasies'.[113] In Thomas Kyd's perennial play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, first performed between 1584 and 1589 and reprinted several times throughout the 1590s, Hieronymo praises the 'Italian tragedians who were so sharp of wit,/That in one hour's meditation/They would perform anything in action'.[114] In Nashe's satirical tract *An Almond for a Parrat* (1589), which is discussed at length in the next chapter, the *commedia dell'arte* mask Harlequin entreats the author to relay 'many particulars, of the order and maner of our playes, which he termed by the name of representations'.[115] The presence of women on the Italian stage was such a commonly held attribute of Italian professional theatre by the 1590s that Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse*, one of the most reprinted secular texts of the decade, describes the *commedia dell'arte* as the theatre in which they employ 'whores and common courtesans to play women's parts'.[116] Those with a good memory might even recall the performance of the Italian *attrice* during Elizabeth's progress from Windsor to Reading in 1574. The stringently devout Remembrancer for the City, Thomas Norton, certainly would not have forgotten in a hurry. Immediately after the show, he complained to the Court of Common Council of the 'unchaste, shamelesse, and unnaturall tumblinges of the Italion Woemen' that no doubt played some part in the ongoing plague by incurring God's wrath.[117]

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[112] George Whetstone, *An heptameron of ciuill discourses Containing: the Christmasse exercise of sundrie well courted gentlemen and gentlewomen* (London, 1582; STC 25337), sig. R2r.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish tragedie containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 15086), sig. K1r.
[115] Nashe (pseud. Cutbert Curry-Knave), *An Almond for a Parrat; Or, Cutbert Curry-Knaves Almes* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 534), sig. A3v.
[116] Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the diuell Describing the ouer-spreading of vice, and suppression of vertue. Pleasantly interlac't with variable delights: and pathetically intermixt with conceipted reproofs* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 18371), sig. F4r.
[117] Quoted in Lea, ii, p. 354.

Though Moryson's scornful account of a travelling English troupe in Frankfurt suggests he was disinclined towards the stage in general, his report of the Florentine performance draws on the discourse around the correct form, practice, and purpose of neoclassical drama, implicitly suggesting a Protestant English cultural supremacy over Italian Catholic degeneracy.[118] At the centre of these debates was decorum, the principle of classical rhetoric taken from Horace's *Ars poetica* that loosely translates into English as 'appropriateness'.[119] As this translation suggests, the term was laden with ambiguity. Classical decorum was primarily an issue of verisimilitude, commonly expressed by renaissance theorists as holding up a mirror to the world.[120] It would therefore break decorum if a Bergamaschi peasant was to speak Latin (correctly) on the premise that a rustic would not know the language.[121] A stricter interpretation would criticise any distortions of the unities of time, place, and action as expressed in Aristotle's *Poetics*, or the set precepts that clearly delineated genres: comedies should depict the lives of ordinary citizens, whilst tragedies dealt primarily with emperors, kings, princes, and potentates. The English came late to these discussions, with the rapid growth of secular theatre taking place in the mid-1570s with the construction of the first playhouses built specifically *for* play (as opposed to the inns, temporary structures, and gardens in the suburbs). One key theorist, Philip Sidney, took a dismal view of the London stage in his *The Defence of Poesie*, which was circulating in manuscript around 1581 before eventually being printed in 1595. The English playwrights observed 'rules neither of honest civility nor skilful poetry', and their 'Playes bee neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in maiestical matters'.[122] Conversely, this criticism could

[118] 'So as I remember that when some of our cast dispised Stage players came out of England into Germany, and played at Franckford in the tyme of the Mart'. Hughes and Moryson, p. 304.
[119] Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 216-17.
[120] Ibid, p. 216.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* (London, 1595; STC (2nd ed.) / 22535), sigs. J1r-J1v.

not be levelled at the Italian *comici*, whose scenari abided for the most part by the classical decorum typified by the regular *erudita* comedy.[123] It is with an embittered tone that the well-travelled Sidney notes that even 'the ordinarie players in *Italie* will not erre' in the Aristotelian unities.[124] John Florio would cite indecorous playmaking in one of his characteristically scornful jibes at English parochialism in his dual-language manual *Seconde Fruites* (1591). In one dialogue, three Italians visitors to London offer a discuss the evening ahead of them:

G. E dopo descinare anderemo a veder qualche comedia.	G. And then after dinner we goe see a plaie.
H. In Inghliterra non recitano vere comedie.	H. The plaies that they plaie in England, are not right comedies.
T. E pur non fan altro che recitar tutto il giorno.	T. Yet they doo nothing else but plaie euery daye.
H. Si, ma non sono vere comedie, ne vere tradegie.	H. Yea but they are neither right comedies, nor right tragedies.
G. Come le nominereste voi dunque?	G. How would you name them then?
H. Rapresentationi d'historie, senza alcun decoro.	H. Representations of histories, without any decorum.[125]

The criticism levelled at Italian professional performance by the English centred more on practice. The inclusion of women actors, and a denouement frequently based on the ritual humiliation of an authority figure through sexual domination and cuckolding, constituted a carnivalesque deviation from a third kind of decorum: the dignity of performance and the display of socially acceptable behaviour.[126] In his survey of neoclassicism in the epistle to *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), a two-part adaptation of

[123] One notable divergence being the use of regional dialects rather than standardised Tuscan speech for all characters. See Andrews, p. 217.
[124] Sidney, sig. H4v. Sidney uses ordinary to mean not just professional but unrefined and course. The earliest entry in the *OED* for such usage is from Sidney's *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (London, 1590; STC (2nd ed.) / 22535), sig. Kk3v: 'Any ordinarie person (borne of the mud of the people)'. 'Ordinary, n.', OED, www.oed.com/view/Entry/132360 [Accessed 15 January 2021].

[125] Florio, *Florios second frutes*, p. 22.
[126] Andrews, p. 216.

Cinthio's *De gli hecatommithi* (1565) for the stage, George Whetstone condemns 'rashe witted wryters' for disregarding principles of decorum found in Terence, Plautus, and Menander.[127] The Englishman 'groundes his worke, on impossibilities' in making 'a Clowne companion with a Kinge: in theyr grave Counsels, they allow the advise of fooles', thereby breaking decorum in its generic sense.[128] The German is 'too holye', and 'presentes on euerye common Stage, what Preachers should pronounce in Pulpets', thereby breaking decorum in terms of suitability and the sanctity of the topic. Through the influence of the itinerant *comici*, the French and Spanish mimic the Italian, who is 'so lascivious in his comedies, that honest hearers are greeved at his actions', thereby breaking decorum in the sense of undignified behaviour.[129]

While Whetstone plays on notions of national character by dividing contemporary neoclassical theatre along national lines, fervent critics of English neoclassical theatre like Gosson maintained that access to strange dramaturgies in print (and possibly physical contact) had resulted in the English adopting a gallimaufry of strange 'deuices'. The '*baudie Comedies* in *Latine, French, Italian*, and *Spanish*' imported by men like Wolfe and Castelvetro were thoroughly 'ransackt, to furnishe the Playehouses in London.'[130] Presenting the strange worlds of these plays in city theatres to an impressionable English audience had troubling implications. The somatic experience of the playhouse, like that experienced through travel, overrides right reason, and by immersing playgoers in a constructed Italy of 'cookes, queanes, knaves, baudes, parasites, courtezannes, lecherouse olde men, amorous yong men', the

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[127] George Whetstone, *The right excellent and famous historye, of Promos and Cassandra devided into two commicall discourses* (London, 1578; STC (2nd ed.) / 25347), epistle. Whetstone's own experience of Italian comedy abroad. A soldier in Antwerp with the poet George Gascoigne when the Spanish Fury broke out, he witnessed the 'new Italian sportes' of an itinerant *compagni*.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] William Painter, *The palace of pleasure beautified, adorned and well furnished, with pleasaunt histories and excellent nouelles* (London, 1566; STC (2nd ed.) / 19121), sig. C7r; Gosson, sig. B6r. Gosson admits to his own past offences in this regard; in 1579, he penned the lost play *The Comedie of Captain Mario* which appears to have drawn on the popularity of the neoclassical *bravura*, a more romantically inclined adaptation of the Plautine braggart *miles gloriosus*. See Gosson, sig. C8r.

players corrupt them with animated tales of 'love, cosenedge, flatterie, bawderie, slye conneighance of whordome'.[131] The frontispiece of Rankins's *The Mirrour of Monsters* identifies how 'vices, & spotted enormities … are caused by the infectious sight of Playes'.[132] This infection was spread by watching the performer's 'gestures' or 'motions', causing the mind to ruminate on immoral thoughts and thereby corrupt their heart. 'The shamelesse gestures of Plaiers,' writes Philip Stubbes, 'serve to nothing so much as to move the flesh to lust, and unclennesse'.[133] Gervase Babington took a similar stance: 'prophane & wanton stage playes or interludes' that 'by gesture, by speech, by conueyances, and deuices to attaine so vngodly desires'.[134]

This was, by nearly all contemporary accounts, a hard physiological truth, and as such defenders of the English stage had to reckon with the issue of staging the impure. With typical contrarian flair, Thomas Nashe cast playgoing in *Pierce Penilesse* (1592) as not only the least harmful means to avoid sloth during the idle hours of the day, but a civic good that was beneficial to a healthy commonwealth.[135] He frames the somatic exposure of playgoing not as not only aural or visual, but gustatory as well, with playwrights and players the physicians who prescribe 'sour pills of reprehension wrapped in sweet words' to heal the ills of the commonwealth and prevent these ills from spreading.[136] Playgoing was actually an exercise in nation-building – in the liberties of London, the theatres 'boast in large impressions what worthy men (above all Nations) *England* affords', reanimating what has long since 'lain long buried in rusty brass and worm-eaten'.[137] The brave bones of Sir John Talbot, the 'English Achilles' in Shakespeare's *1Henry VI*, is there 'new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand

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131 Gosson, sigs. C5r-C5v.
132 William Rankins, *A mirrour of monsters wherein is plainely described the manifold vices, &c spotted enormities, that are caused by the infectious sight of playes* (London, 1587; STC 20699), frontispiece.
133 Philip Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses contayning a discouerie, or briefe summarie of such notable vices and imperfections, as now raigne in many Christian countreyes of the worlde* (London, 1583; STC 23376), sig. L6v
134 Ibid.
135 Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*, sig. F3r.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.

spectators at least'**.** Nashe's comparison between the London companies and 'the Players Beyond the Sea' quoted in the introduction to this thesis stresses the civic-minded nature of the English theatrical tradition:

> our scene is more stately furnished than ever it was in the time of Roscius, our representations honourable, and full of gallant resolution, not consisting, like theirs, of a pantaloon, a whore, and a zany, but of emperors, kings, and princes, whose true tragedies, *Sophocleo cothurnoi*, they do vaunt.[138]

For the titular Pierce, English dramatists surpassing their Sophoclean antecedents in the pursuit of a noble, English tradition was made possible by a more relaxed approach to the unities and generic conventions. The London stage was more impressive in its stage properties, its stories of English kings and great men more praiseworthy, and its satisfying restoration of the status quo and measured punishment of sin more relevant to the life of the spectator. The theatre of the players beyond the seas, on the other hand, like Italy itself, had decayed since classical antiquity. They did not seek to instruct but simply entertain, forbearing 'no immodest speech, or unchast action that may procure laughter.'[139] The disingenuous distinction between English and Italian theatrical customs may not have resonated with readers as an accurate portrayal of playgoing in London, but it offered Moryson a useful comparative framework through which to consider theatre as a form of national cultural expression. He echoes Pierce in his appraisal of the Florentine performance when dismissing the *commedia dell'arte* as 'Amorous matters', preferring to rouse delight with the satisfaction of the *innamorati* in love and the fulfilment of sexual desire, than inspire through socially conscious and instructive histories and tragedies. While his account has none of the bite for which Nashe was famous, Moryson's observations of Italian performance practices provide an opportunity to assert his Ulyssean credentials

[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

and the cultural supremacy of the English in opposition to the degenerate nature of the Italians. It is a good thing that the speeches of the *attrice* are 'full of wantonnes, though not grosse baudry' because the Italian character 'neede[s] no such provocation' to lust. Though tragedies and histories are preferable to 'Amorous matters', the Italians' forbearance of the former is probably a good thing, considering how, unlike the English, 'the Italyans Nature too much affects to imitate and surpasse' bloody, vengeful violence.

1.5 Coryate's *Crudities* and Playhouse Corruption

Coryate is far more playful in his handling of the *commedia dell'arte*, finding the ill-reputed Italian professional theatre an opportunity for exploring the somatic enticements to sin that Italy and Italian cultural practices conjured in the English imagination. A marked departure from the methods, itineraries, and surveys of earlier travellers, the *Crudities* offers a first-person account of the pedant-cum-jester's experience of travel that is deeply conscious of the rhetoric around sensory exposure.[140] Much is made of the Ulyssean traveller in the prefatory materials, including a humorous comparison between the relative merits of 'Don Ulysses of Ithaca and Don Coryate of Odcombe'.[141] Richard Badley praised his prodigality. Not even 'Immortall Mantua could not steale thy love,/Nor once from Odcombe thine affections move./Wherein, Ulysses-like, thou didst display/Such love, as he bore to his Ithaca.'[142] During the Italian leg of his journey, however, Coyate's particular susceptibility to its

[140] This extraordinary volume has received substantial scholarly attention, particularly in regard to the Coryate's narrative style and circumstances around its printing. See Katharine A Craik, 'Reading Coryats Crudities (1611)', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 44.1 (2004), 77–96; Michelle O'Callaghan, 'Coryats Crudities (1611) and the Sociability of Print', in *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 102-27; and Philip S. Palmer, '"The Progress of Thy Glorious Book": Material Reading and the Play of Paratext in Coryats Crudities (1611).(Report)', *Renaissance Studies*, 28.3 (2014), 336-355.
[141] Coryate, p. 47.
[142] Ibid, p. 109.

sensory snares provides several amusing demonstrations of Italianisation in action. Whilst in Mantua, he was enraptured by the somatic delights of the market:

> Withal they have abundance of delectable fruits growing about the city, whereof I saw great variety in the marketplace the Sunday morning when I departed therehence, and no small diversity of odoriferous flowers. Truly, the view of this most sweet paradise, this *domicilium Venerum & Charitum* did even so ravish my senses, and tickle my spirits with such inward delight that this is the city what of all other places in the world, I would wish to make my habitation in, and spend the remainder of my days in some divine meditations amongst the sacred muses, were it not for their gross idolatry and superstitious ceremonies which I detest, and the love of Odcombe in Somersetshire.[143]

His senses 'ravisht' by the olfactory fruits of the city and marketplace, Coryate dwells on a life spent in paradise before quickly reassuring the reader of his contempt for the papacy by resubstantiating the expected rhetoric of prodigal attachment to home found in the accounts of Ulyssean travellers. Another example comes from the Venice leg of the journey, where the city provides a particularly fertile space in which to playfully interrogate this same disjoint between the splendour and the depravity of Italy. Despite the city's gradual decline in the sixteenth century, the myth of '*La Serenissima*', of its splendour and invulnerability to military assaults, still arrested the English imagination at the time of Coryate's arrival. It was the world's marketplace, a city floating on a lagoon with a celebrated 'corruption-proof' republican constitution that it fiercely defended from Papal interference.[144] Ascending the tower of Saint Mark's Church, the awesome cityscape overwhelms the traveller with the symmetry of Venetian civil life. It is the 'goodliest prospect in all the world', writes Coryate, 'For therehence you may see the whole modell and forme of the citie … There you may have a *synopsis*, that is, a general view of little Christendome'.[145] Venice's architectural equilibrium had long

[143] Ibid, p. 264.
[144] David McPherson, *Shakespeare, Jonson, and the Myth of Venice* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), pp. 48-51.
[145] Coryate, p. 283.

been a powerful aesthetic presence in the myth of the city and analogous of its unique civic structure. Their 'streets, their Churches, their Monasteries, their market places', he enthuses, are all 'publike buildings of rare magnificence'.[146]

There is, however, a pronounced discord here. The magnificence of the City from above – and the civic harmony Coryate alludes to – is distinctly at odds with the cultural practices of the inhabitants below. This dissonance is epitomised throughout by the infamous courtesans, who were not only tolerated by Venetian law but in many cases belonged to the citizen class.[147] 'Such licentious wantons', Coryate laments, 'in so glorious, so potent, so renowned a City'.[148] Of course, they provide Coryate with ample material for close shaves with sensory corruption. When first mentioning the courtesans, he is sure to stress that the traveller must remain vigilant against their wiles with standard Ulyssean imagery:

> As for thine eyes, shut them and turne them aside from these venereous Venetian objects. For they are the double windowes that conveigh them to thy heart. Also thou must fortifie thine eares against the attractive inchauntments of their plausible speeches.'[149]

After a lengthy discourse on avoiding the various auricular, ocular, and olfactory snares of these 'licentious wantons', Coryate trails off into a conflicting discourse. 'A virtuous man', he writes, 'will be confirmed and settled in virtue by the observation of some vices, then if he did not at all know what they were.'[150] He then proceeds to relate his visit to the house of a courtesan, which, he assures the reader, was strictly an evangelical mission to turn the sinner towards God. It is at the playhouse, however, that Coryate is ensnared by the 'allurements of these amorous Calypsoes'**:**

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[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid, p. 264.
[148] Ibid, p. 270.
[149] Ibid, p. 268.
[150] Ibid, p. 229.

> I was at one of their Play-houses where I saw a Comedie acted. The house is very beggarly and base in comparison to our stately Play-houses in England: neyther can their Actors compare with vs for apparel, shewes and musicke. Here I obserued certaine things that I neuer saw before. For I saw women acte, a thing that I neuer saw before, though I have heard that it hath beene sometimes vsed in London, and they performed it with as good a grace, action, gesture, and whatsoever conuenient for a Player, as euer I saw any masculine Actor.[151]

Again, there is very little in the way of novel information here, although Coryate's comments are unusual in their complimentary appraisal of the *attrice*, routinely condemned as 'whores and curtizens' across the continent as they enticed men to sin with lascivious words, songs, and gestures. Gosson noted how 'There setchey abroche straunge consortes of melody, to tickle the eare; costly apparel, to flatter the sight; effeminate gesture, to ravish the sence; and wanton speache, to whet desire too inordinate lust'.[152] John Rainolds expounded on the same fears: **'**For in certaine playes, called the playes of *Flora,* the players were not men, but wemen, and those lewde ones, professed whoores and strumpers: which, besides all wanton filthines of words, did shew them selves naked also to the people, and used most shamefull motions and gestures.'[153] By the beginning of the seventeenth century, English playwrights had adopted the name Franceschina, the courtesan *maschera*, for women characters with questionable chastity. In George Chapman's Italianate comedy, *May-Day* (1601-2), Franceschina is both the subject of the old Magnifico Lorenzo's lustful advances and the wife of the absurd *bravura* Quintiliano.[154] Three years later, John Marston recognised the transcultural potential of the mask, giving the name to his eponymous Dutch courtesan.[155] While in Spain, the Jesuit Pedro Hurtado de

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[151] Ibid, p. 247.
[152] Gosson, *The schoole of abuse conteining a plesaunt invectiue against poets, pipers, plaiers, jesters, and such like caterpillers of a co[m]monwelth* (London, 1579; STC 12097.5), p. 14.
[153] John Rainolds, *Th'overthrow of stage-playes, by the way of controversie betwixt D. Gager and D. Rainoldes wherein all the reasons that can be made for them are notably refuted* (London, 1599; STC 20616), p. 70.
[154] George Chapman, *May-day A witty comedie, divers times acted at the Blacke Fryers* (London, 1611; STC (2nd ed.) / 4980).
[155] John Marston, *The Dutch courtezan As it vvas playd in the Blacke-Friars, by the Children of her Maiesties Reuels* (London, 1605; STC (2nd ed.) / 17475).

Mendoza argued that the spectator is moved to sin by the 'spiritose, abili nella danza e nel canto, esperte nell'arte della recitazione' ('witty women, skilled in dance and song, experts in the art of acting').[156] However, staging debauchery to an impressionable audience was the greater cause for concern. In 'representing these impurities, […] women are more brazen than the most brazen prostitute.'[157] Through the somatic enchantments of their public performance of feminine sexuality, they 'drag the audience to lust, and [many men] fall madly in love and try to conquer [the women] with gold and silver, spending a lot of money for their maintenance, clothes, and accessories.'[158] In June 1577, the French court diarist Pierre l'Estoile despaired at the influence of the Italian players who had taken both Paris and the Valois Court by storm:

> the Court assembled and issued an order forbidding the Italian comedians, *I Gelosi*, to perform any more in Paris. Some said … that their comedies taught nothing but fornication and adultery, and served as schools of debauchery for the youth of Paris of both sexes. And in truth their influence was so great, principally among the young ladies, that they took to showing their breasts … which shook with perpetual motion and served as bellows to their forge.[159]

With these frequent condemnations in mind, Coryate's complementary assessment is even more striking. 'In an astonishing statement,' writes Henke, 'Thomas Coryate magnanimously concedes that the Italian actresses can act with good grace, action, and gesture.'[160] However, his is neither a measured nor progressive take intended to cut through the hysteria, but simply another playful representation of the traveller's folly. The man who relates the exact dimensions of monuments and city squares in

[156] Nicholson, 'Sing Again, Sirena: Translating the Theatrical Virtuosa from Venice to London', p. 374.
[157]Quoted in Nicla Riverso, 'Fighting Eve: Women on the Stage in Early Modern Italy', *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 37.2 (2016), 23–47 (p. 29).
[158] Ibid, p. 27.
[159] Quoted and translated in Julie D. Campbell, '"Merry, Nimble, Stirring Spirit[s]": Academic, Salon and Commedia Dell'Arte Influence of the Innamorate in *Love's Labour's Lost*', in *Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyong the All-Male Stage*, ed. by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), pp. 145-70 (p. 148).
[160] Henke, 'Back to the Future', p. 232.

excruciating detail suddenly breaks off from his relation of the performance to comment on the courtesans above in the gallery:

> Also their noble and famous Cortezans came to this Comedy, but so disguised, that a man cannot perceive them, for they wore double maskes upon their faces, to the end they might not be seene: one teaching from the toppe of their forehead to their chinne, and under their necke; another with twiskes of downy or woolly stuffe covering their noses. And as for their neckes round about, they were so covered and wrapped with cobweb lawne and other things, that no part of their skin could be discerned. Upon their heads they wore little blacke felt caps very like to those of the Clarissimoes that I will hereafter speake of. Also each of them wore a black short Taffata cloake. They were so graced, that they sate on high alone by themselves in the best roome of all the Play-house.[161]

For Coryate, the *commedia dell'arte* is the vehicle for a joke. Here, in a Venetian playhouse, the unwary Ulysses is immersed in sin, and the 'shamelesse gestures' of the *attrice* literally 'move the flesh' to desire as he turns his head away from the stage to consider the 'noble and famous courtesans' in the audience. His natural 'Pride of Apparrel' as an Englishman is stimulated, and he lingers on the French lawns and Levantine taffetas of their attire. Aroused by the spectacle, he searches their 'disguised' bodies for a hint of bare skin.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has contextualised records of exposure to the *commedia dell'arte* in performance within the complex, interweaving cultural milieu of late sixteenth-century London in order to interrogate how

[161] Coryate, p. 247.

these records functioned as part of a wider discourse of cultural identity and porosity. Early diplomatic accounts of the *commedia dell'arte* brought news of the recent vogue in continental theatre to an increasingly Italianate court at home. A period of brief but concentrated contact with the *comici* on English soil followed, which does not appear to have been wholly successful. A growing discontent with the appetite for strange novelties that both undercut English trade and undermined attempts to culturally articulate an emergent sense of English nationhood contributed to a contemptuous view of the Italian professional theatre that would come to shape later engagement.

With these contexts in mind, it is necessary to tread carefully when engaging with traveller's accounts as documents of exposure. Neither Moryson nor Coryate's report of *commedia dell'arte* performance intended to relay novel information to the reader. Rather, they represent a complex kind of knowledge production, framed (and no doubt shaped) by real performance whilst simultaneously contrived, a story of Italianisation and moral corruption that played to pre-existing English anxieties over travel and expectations of a degenerate form of theatre practice. To journey overseas was to expose both oneself and the commonwealth to unnecessary dangers; to travel to Italy, the rich, architecturally splendid seat of the classical revival, was to risk exposure to Papism, perfidiousness, and epicureanism. The travelogue provided a space in which to present one's perambulations to 'Circes Court' as an undesirable and dangerous pursuit of knowledge undergone solely for the benefit of the commonwealth. As such, the Italies and Italians found in these texts were constructed in part from expectations and stereotypes at home, drawing on the discourse around encroaching strangeness occasioned by the appetite for novelty and foreign material and intellectual culture that brought the *comici* to England in the first place. The *commedia dell'arte* offered a useful cultural practice for the traveller to condemn in light of the frequent criticisms of secular drama and the playhouse as a space in which the audience is unconsciously turned towards sin. Moryson's relation of a performance at the *stanzone delle commedie* is shaped by contemporary debates over the correct form, purpose, and practice

of contemporary drama. Consisting of nothing but 'Amorous matters' meant to delight, it is implied that the *commedia dell'arte* is far from the instructive histories and tragedies held up by defenders of English playmaking as exemplars of the English theatre. Conversely, the playful, first-person escapades of Coryate in the *Crudities* explore the unsettling sensory environment of Italy, and how exposure to vice turns the individual towards lust. A remarkable text, *Crudities* portrays an unwitting traveller as Italianisation takes hold, encouraged to dwell on the courtesans, the embodiment of Venice's sexual depravity, by the 'shameless gestures' of the attrice. Though remarkably different contributions to a broad literature of travel in the period, both offer not an impartial, novel observation of the Italian professional theatre, but something shaped by anxiety – a manifestation of situated cultural concerns at a moment when England was turning outwards.

2 *Commedia* in Translation: English Print Culture and French Political Satire

There is a third extant account of *commedia dell'arte* performance written by an Englishman abroad during this period that speaks to a more complex system of exposure to and engagement with Italian professional theatre in the period. In *The vievv of Fraunce* (1604), a reflection on the nature and purpose of travel and travel writing informed by the author's peregrinations across France in the mid- and late 1590s, Robert Dallington recounts a story of King Henri IV of France and Navarre's undignified cavorting with a dissolute *compagno*:

> You saw here in Orleans, when the Italian Commedians were to play before him, how himself came whifling with a small wand to scowre the coast, and made a place for the rascall Players (for indeed these were the worst company, and such as in their owne Country are out of request) you have not seene in the Innes of Court, a Hall better made: a thing, me thought, most derogatory to the Maiesty of a King of Fraunce.[1]

Whereas Moryson and Coryate's first-hand descriptive accounts of performances in Florence and Venice focus on the *comici* and their practices, Dallington's second-hand account is principally concerned with Navarre. Drawing on the *res gestae* tradition in travel writing – the relation of the deeds and accomplishments of great men and rulers – Dallington censures the Bourbon King for the overfamiliarity commonly attributed to the French, 'with whom a stranger cannot so soone be off his horse, but he will be acquainted'.[2] Navarre's 'naturally very affable and familiar' demeanour exemplified the 'lightness and inconstancie' of his subjects, although Dallington's offhand comment that it is 'more (we strangers thinke) then fits the Maiesty of a great King of France' gives this seemingly innocuous account a subversive political bite.[3] To understand this reproach, and the implications of

[1] Robert Dallington, *The vievv of Fraunce* (London, 1604; STC (2nd ed.) / 6202), sigs. H4r-H4v.
[2] Ibid, sig. H3v.
[3] Ibid, sig. X1r.

Dallington's decision to frame it around a second-hand account of indecorous antics, it is necessary to first consider the sustained period of bloody violence that preceded Navarre's ascension to the throne.

The Wars of Religion, a series of brutal conflicts between France's Catholic and Protestant populations that had waged from the early 1560s, had been in a period of brief respite when in 1576, Spain under Philip II, the Papacy, and the French House of Guise formed the Holy League. This alliance of Catholic powers sought to violently suppress France's growing population of Calvinist Huguenots and unseat the incumbent Valois King Henri III, who took a conciliatory stance towards the religious question that verged on tolerance. Henri had no legitimate heir, and at his death the Crown would pass to the next in line, the devoutly Protestant Henri of Navarre. Following the assassination of the King by Catholic fanatic Jacques Clément in August 1588 as he prepared to lay siege to League-occupied Paris, Huguenots and Politiques (Catholic moderates who supported varying degrees of toleration for the sake of peace) confirmed Navarre's ascension as Henri IV. The League, still in control of the congressional États-Généraux in Paris, declared the new King a pretender. With the prospect of a reformed France on the horizon, Navarre's success was of the utmost strategic importance to the Protestant English state. Providence had already saved them from invasion once that year, but with Spain rapidly rebuilding its depleted armada, Elizabeth and her councillors carefully manoeuvred to prevent the League gaining a stronghold from where Philip could launch a devastating assault on England's exhausted forces. Their response was multifaceted. Navarre was supplied with troops and funds, and a small number of London printers were employed to oversee the mass importation and translation of moderate Catholic and Huguenot propaganda to galvanise support at home for Navarre's cause. Over 130 translations survive from the period 1585 to 1594, making this decade one of the most prolific periods of vernacular translation into English in both the sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries.[4] Ultimately, England's hopes for a reformed France were dashed when Henri – once the indefatigable champion of the Huguenot cause – returned to the Roman fold in 1593 to secure the crown and bring an end to decades of violence. 'Paris is well-worth a mass', he is apocryphally reported to have said, a sentiment that deeply embittered his English allies. They had expended a great deal of resources in fighting Spanish forces in Rouen and along the northern coast in the hope of seeing a Protestant on the throne, and despite promises of religious toleration, his conversion constituted an appalling betrayal.

They were not the only ones to greet the conversion with suspicion and disbelief. To ardent Leaguers and Huguenots alike, Henri's duplicity revealed that he was no different from his Valois predecessors. For the Leaguers, his protestations of tolerance missed the point of all the bloodshed and did nothing to remove the threat posed by a thriving reformed church in France. For the Huguenots and their sympathisers, his inability to assert the authority of the Crown against Papal (and by extension, Spanish) interference, as well as his preferment of Medici relatives and their compatriots to positions of power, mirrored the politically impotent, dissolute, and Italianate days of the old kings. Throughout this period, critics of the Crown found a particularly rich source of satirical material through which to creatively express their consternation in the itinerant *comici* who had been embraced with open arms by successive Valois and Bourbon courts. The *maschere* – stock characters with social status visually encoded on their bodies – offered an obvious and vibrant source of material for polemicists to castigate a distracted and dispassionate monarch whose ineffectual governance sustained foreign influence in French domestic affairs. A masked stranger winning the hearts and

[4] I am indebted to Lisa Ferraro Parmelee's brilliant work on the textual presence of the French Wars of Religion in early modern England. See 'Printers, Patrons, Readers, and Spies: Importation of French Propaganda in Late Elizabethan England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 25.4 (1994), 853–72; and *Good Newes From France: French Anti-League Propaganda in Late Elizabethan England* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1996). For a general study of significant peaks in English translations of foreign news items, see Sara Barker, '"Newes Lately Come": European News Books in English Translation', in *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640*, ed. by S.K. Barker and Brenda M. Hosington (Leiden, Brill, 2015), pp. 227-44 (p. 232).

capturing the imaginations of the people through carefully crafted performances chimed with common themes of disguise, dissimulation, and a destructive strange presence at the heart of government that ran through propaganda on all sides.[5]

With this political and polemical context in mind, Dallington's inclusion of a second-hand account of *commedia dell'arte* performance in his assessment of Navarre clearly resonates with the bitterness of a recent betrayal. The indecorous mingling of French King and Italian clowns is reminiscent of the Christmas celebrations at the English Inns of Court when seniority was turned on its head and a Lord of Misrule elected from the common scholars. Such a comparison makes plain that the tumultuous, degenerate, and Italianate days of the Valois were far from over. France was once more overfamiliar with England's Catholic enemies, and 'Familiarity', Dallington reminds us, 'breeds contempt and corruption'.[6] It is striking, given England's limited contact with the *comici* in this period, that he framed his censure around an indecorous interaction with a company of Italian players. The evidence of direct textual contact is just as thin; of the 130 political tracts translated into English, only one contains an overt reference to the Italian professional theatre. However, a lack of concrete documentary evidence in the way of extant print materials does not necessarily preclude this type of exposure. Cheap print, after all, was inexpensive and ephemeral, and surviving print tracts represent a fraction of what was produced by printers and sold by booksellers in the period. When textual traces of the *commedia dell'arte* are placed within their literary and historical contexts, however, certain references are found to be heavy with significance from prior iterations, and a satirical heritage emerges in how writers incorporated and utilised them within their texts.

The last chapter showed how discussions of the *commedia dell'arte* found in first-hand accounts of performance overseas were not necessarily conduits of novel information but rather contributed to

[5] J.H.M. Salmon, 'French Satire in the Late Sixteenth Century', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 6.2 (1975), 57–88 (p. 63).
[6] Dallington, sig. H4v.

wider conversations on cross-cultural contact and identity at home. This chapter offers a window into alternative types of transmission, exploring how the textual manifestation of the *commedia dell'arte* in French political satire shaped the ways in which certain facets of the *arte* initially took root in the English imagination. In order to trace this inheritance, the first half of this chapter will pay close attention to one well-known *maschera* in particular: Arlecchino, or Harlequin, an arresting character who captured the hearts and minds of the French theatre-going public around the mid-1580s. Before long, his popularity (and notoriety) brought Arlecchino/Harlequin into the world of French cheap print, where through his association with the Crown and Court, he became a token of Valois extravagance, political negligence, and the subjugation of France to Spain and the Papacy. Having established this French context, this chapter will then turn to London, where scattered references to Arlecchino/Harlequin reveal an indebtedness to this French context. The second half of this chapter will look in closer detail at the processes of translation that are inevitably obscured by the ephemerality of cheap print during the period. The one anti-League satire that references the *commedia dell'arte* that survives in English translation also survives in several earlier French and Italian versions. By analysing this unique cluster of texts together, this chapter will interrogate how *commedia dell'arte* was reframed – what survived and what was lost – as it moved in print across different geographical, confessional, political, and linguistic boundaries on its journey across the channel.

This chapter introduces two interconnected ideas mentioned in the introduction that underscore the processes of translation, appropriation, and adaptation examined in the following chapters. The first is that the *commedia dell'arte* should not be thought of as a static, cohesive form of performance practice, but an apparatus of detachable parts – of *maschere*, *scenari*, *lazzi* – that mutated during their migratory journey as they became entangled with new cultural moments and were adapted and repurposed to fit new cultural frameworks. In other words, the language and practices of *commedia dell'arte* did not pass into the English cultural landscape through sustained interaction with Italian

performance, but rather percolated through diverse sources. Specific tenets of Italian improvised drama, such as particular masks, thereby became tokens of the kinds of transcultural experience engendered by increased, multifaceted cultural interconnectivity. As this chapter observes, Harlequin would emerge as an evocative figure in the English imagination precisely because of its transcultural significance as the cultural manifestation of the tentacular political and spiritual infiltration of a hostile southern enemy. The second idea is that as England did not experience the same degree of physical exposure to performance as mainland countries like France, its interaction with these constituent parts should not be thought of as direct exposure but as a series of piecemeal translations in the early modern sense of the word: an act of cultural mediation that facilitates 'the movement of an integral meaning or spirit from one context to another'.[7] The cultural, geographical, and political moment of these translations shaped how these parts were interpreted and appropriated as they percolated across the channel. This chapter, therefore, provides just one example and analysis of the complex and multi-layered processes of transmission and translation that shaped how the *commedia dell'arte* would come to manifest in the English imagination.

2.1 Arlecchino in Paris

There are sporadic records of Italians performing in France from the early 1540s.[8] It is not until 1571, however, when Zan Ganassa and his troupe *i Naselli* arrived in Paris in the train of Charles IX's bride-to-be, Elisabeth of Austria, that it can be said with any certainty that the *commedia dell'arte* had arrived.[9]

[7] Tom Roberts, 'Translator', in *TIDE: Keywords*, ed. by Nandini Das and others (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, Forthcoming).
[8] Virginia Scott, 'France', in *Commedia in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 76-88 (p. 76).
[9] Ibid.

Charles was enthralled by the troupe's performances during their wedding celebrations, and soon after granted Ganassa a license to perform at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Capital's premier theatre on the Rue Mauconseil, where they appear to have stayed the year.[10] Preferment and invitations to other Italian companies to perform at court and in the cities followed, and within a few short years, as theatre historian W.L. Wiley noted in his celebrated study of the French secular stage, 'Paris and its environs belonged almost completely to the Italians'.[11] After a performance by *i Gelosi* at the Hôtel in May 1577, the court diarist Pierre l'Estoile would bemoan how 'il y avoit tel concours et affluence de peuple, que les quatre meilluers prédicateurs de Paris n'en avoient pas trestous ensemble autant quan ils preschoient.' (there was such a crowd and abundance of people that the four best preachers in the city put together did not attract so many when they preached).[12] By the mid-1580s, the *commedia dell'arte* was firmly entrenched in the cultural fabric of France's urban centres. In Paris, one *comico* in particular had captured the hearts and imaginations of the playgoing public; Tristano Martinelli had first come to French capital from his native Mantua in 1577 with his brother Drusiano as the second Zanni in the troupe *i Confidenti*.[13] He appears to have made little impact at first; in 1584, however, on his third visit to the city, he achieved meteoric success with his newly devised mask, the vaulting, tumbling, bumbling servant Arlecchino. Immediately recognisable by his diamond patched jacket, Arlecchino, or Harlequin in the French, was not simply cut from the smock of the Bergamasque porter like his Zanni forebears. He was a composite character, an Italian servant born from the 'hellequin' devils of early French *mystères* with his black half-face mask, black baton, and frequent forays into demonic or

[10] It was the acrobatic feats of *i Naseli* player Antonio Soldino that would impress Lord Lincoln during his embassy the following July. See Lea, ii, p. 355.
[11] W.L. Wiley, *The Early Public Theatre in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 20. While Lucy Rayfield has recently shown that we ought not to lose sight of a growing, revitalised French theatre in this period, the popularity and influence of the Italians was still prolific. See Rayfield's recent doctoral thesis, 'Sur Le Patron de Plusieurs Bons Autheurs Italiens : Poetics, Performance and Politics in French Comic Theatre (1540-1580)' (Unpublished DPhil. Thesis, Balliol College, Oxford, 2018).
[12] Pierre l'Estoile, *Journal de Henri Iii, de Henri Iv et de Louis Xiii* (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1826), i, p. 150.
[13] Siro Ferrone, *Arlecchino: Vita e avventure di Tristano Martinelli attore* (Rome: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 2006), p. 69.

supernatural realms.[14] This hybridity drew the ire of some contemporary practitioners and playwrights back in Italy; while praising the *comico* Simone de Bologna for observing the proper 'dicoro de la Bergamascha lingua' (decorum of the Bergamasque language) in the prologue to *La Fiamella* (1584), Bartolomeo Rossi wrote disapprovingly of Martinelli's Arlecchino for his flagrant dismissal of the principle characteristics of the servant mask.[15] However, Martinelli's ability to shift from Italian to French (mirroring his own self-translation between Arlecchino and Harlequin) provided his French audiences with a mask that they could claim as ancestrally one of their own. A combination of this accessibility and his own tireless self-promotion led to resounding commercial success, and whilst an actor might perform a number of roles across their career, by the end of the decade, the Mantuan was styling himself as 'Tristano Martinelli, *detto Arlechino comico*', or '*alias* Arlecchino' in personal correspondence.[16] In a letter dated 1588, he even addresses his mother as 'mia madre Lucia Martinelli, madre d'Arlecchino'.[17]

While adored at court and in the public theatres alike, this period of preferment for Martinelli and the Italian troupes was seen by critics of Valois profligacy as simply another cultural manifestation of the ongoing Italianisation of France's spiritual and political institutions.[18] The dynastic alliance forged between the Florentines and the House of Valois following the marriage of Catherine de' Medici to Francis II in 1547 had engendered a long period of political and financial preferment for the Italians at the French court. Bankers, financiers, merchants, courtiers and clergymen would come to exert considerable influence over all facets of French life during the period, filling the coffers of

[14] See the manuscript collection of Arlecchino images produced by Martinelli for Maria de' Medici, *Compositions de Rhetorique* (Paris, 1601), unpaginated. For an analysis of the early iconography of Harlequin, see M.A. Katritzky, 'Harlequin in Renaissance Pictures', *Renaissance Studies*, 11.4 (1997), 381-419; and Sandra Pietrini, 'Anti-Rhetorical Strategies in Early Modern Images of Comic Actors: Harlequin's Iconography and its Surviving Medieval Features', *Early Modern Culture Online*, 5 (2018), 53-71.
[15] Bartolomeo Rossi, *Fiamella Pastorale* (Paris, 1585), sig. A4v.
[16] Katritzky, 'Harlequin in Renaissance Pictures, p. 383.
[17] Ibid.
[18] See Henry Heller, *Anti-Italianism in Sixteenth-Century France* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

kings and nobles with *scudi* in exchange for honours, contracts, and letters patent on valuable imports and exports.[19] When the first Italian troupes arrived in the early 1570s, they were yet another group of southern interlopers whose success was facilitated by an exclusive network of politically influential strangers. The preferment bestowed on them by successive monarchs over the following decades did nothing to close the political rift that had opened up between the Crown and the fervently Catholic Parisian authorities, and they initially rejected the letters patent obtained from Charles by Naseli's company in 1571.[20] In June 1577, they stood firm on their decision to reject the letters granted by Henri III to *i Gelosi* on the grounds that the players belonged to a 'school of debauchery and adultery' that taught nothing but 'wantonness to the young people' of Paris.[21] In a flagrant break from constitutional tradition, an enraged Henri reissued the letters without the need for parliamentary ratification.[22]

The year of Harlequin's triumph, however, proved particularly galling. A declaration forbidding the performance of the religiously provocative *mystères* at the Hôtel on the grounds that they might reignite violence between the City's Protestant and Catholic factions was issued by the Crown in early 1585. This constituted a significant financial blow to the French occupants, who relied heavily on the passion plays during the Lent season. Conversely, the Italians enjoyed a year of unprecedented success, with Henri offering use of the now often vacant Hôtel to Martinelli and *i Confidenti*.[23] A month after the declaration, a satirical verse tract appeared in the bookshops of the Rue de la Petite Bretonnerie, entitled *Histoire plaisante des Faicts et Gestes de Harlequin Commedien Italien*

[19] Ibid, pp. 93-113
[20] Armand Baschet, *Les Comèdiens Italiens à La Cour de France Sous Charles IX. Henry IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Plon, 1882), page currently inaccessible.
[21] Quoted in Howarth, p. 83.
[22] Baschet, page currently inaccessible.
[23] Ferrone, p. 70.

(1585).[24] It tells the story of Harlequin's decent into hell to retrieve the infamous Madame Cardine, a recently deceased Parisian brothel owner, who now lies shipwrecked on the Acheron. She offers the Zanni her old position as chief bawd of Paris in return for his help. A delighted Harlequin literally jumps at the offer, leaping, vaulting, and somersaulting past Charon, Cerberus, and Pluto before eventually being consumed in the burning flames of the storm-tossed river. Though playful in tone and excessively scatological, there is a clear hostility towards France's gradual Italianisation in the *Histoire*. The burlesque depictions of shipwrecks and resurrections clearly parodies the plots of several recently printed Italian comedies, including Rossi's *La fiammella pastorale* (1584), Giovanni Maria Cecchi's *La romanesca* (1585), and Fabrizio de Fornaris's *Angelica* (1585), which was performed earlier in the year by *i Confidenti* with Martinelli in his usual role.[25] The reader of the *Histoire* is encouraged not to be taken in by the 'plaisant' theatre that pleases the heart, and Harlequin's theatrical virtues – his dexterous leaps, vaults, and somersaults – are revealed to be nothing but devilry, the enticing tricks of a vulgar whoremonger.[26] With a keen nose for self-publicity, Martinelli responded a fortnight later with *Response di gestes d'Arlequin au poète*, a 174-stanza poem that he recited as a prologue to a performance before audiences at the Hôtel. In his *Response*, Harlequin dreams of returning to the underworld, this time to track down the real pimp – the poet of the *Histoire*, who is identified as Gros Guillaume, the recently unemployed clown of the *Enfants-Sans-Souci* troupe.[27] In a succession of obscure quips, Harlequin accuses Guillaume of stealing his material when working under him at the theatre. It is all water under the bridge, however, and should the celebrated 'porco sguattero di cucina' (Kitchen Pig) wish to return to work, he will always be welcome back at the Hôtel to clean the toilets.[28]

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[24] *Histoire plaisante des faicts et gestes de Harlequin commedien italien, contenant ses songes et visions, sa descente aux enfers pour en tirer la mère Cardine, comment et avec quels hazards il en eschappa après y avoir trompé le roy d'iceluy, Cerberus et tous les autres diables* (Paris, 1585)

[25] Rossi, *Fiamella Pastorale*; G. Cecchi, *La Romanesca* (Paris, 1585); and F. de Fornaris, *Angelica, comedia di Fabritio de Fornaris Napolitano ditto il Capitano Coccodrillo, Comico Confidente* (Paris, 1585)

[26] Ferrone. p. 89.

[27] *Response di gestes d'Arlequin au poete, fils de Madame Cardine*, *A Paris, Pour Monsieur Arlequin* (Paris, 1585), sig. A3r.

[28] Ibid.

The excitement of the affair must have offered something of a distraction to a capital continually on the brink of war with itself, and more pamphlets would follow, each more scatological than the last.[29] However, care should be taken so as not to lose sight of the subversive political undertones amidst all the human waste. Guillaume's tracts played to the Parisian public's heightened xenophobia, his puns jeering at the nepotism that had become a hallmark of Henri's reign. His frequent use of the adjective '*joyeux*' or the adverb '*joyeusement*' when referring to Harlequin in the *Histoire* alludes to Henri's favourite, Anne de Bartanay, Duke of Joyeuse, whose seemingly endless promotion through the ranks was a source of consternation amongst opposing factions at Court.[30] Madame Cardine, the famous bawd and Queen of Hell, is a thinly-veiled reference to the Queen Mother, who critics saw as the corrupting power behind the throne, elevating fellow Florentines into senior positions and arranging royal marriages to further the Medici dynastic project. By the time Guillaume attacked Martinelli in print, the depiction of Catherine as a sinister strategist using theatre to distract and beguile was commonplace in Huguenot polemic in particular. In the aftermath of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the extravagant carnival celebrations that followed the conciliatory wedding of Margaret of Valois to Henri of Navarre was portrayed as a ritualistic preparation for the slaughter of the Godly later that week.[31] The eminent French Lawyer and politician Innocent Gentillet, who fled to Geneva in the wake of the massacre, accused Catherine in his *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner* (1576) of orchestrating the massacre on behalf of her Florentine family and the Italian Church.

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[29] These are (Gros Guillame), *Sallade de Harlequin a luy envoiée par le Capitaine la Roche, appotiquaire Luquoys pour la guarison de sa maladie Neapolitaine* (1585); and Martinelli's *La Duplique faire pour le Seigneur Arlequin, en forme de contrepeterie au nez de Rober Triplupart l'Andouiller, urinal des Poetes, & colonnel des Gadoues de la Bastille de Prosepine, Avec un Recipe de Haulte-fustaye pour desembrener ceste grand' piece poltronesque. A ce Lifrelofrier de l'Hostel de Bourgogne qui en ses vers poltrons ose attaquer le Seigneur Arlequin, Festin* (Paris, 1585).
For an overview of this pamphlet war, see Delia Gambelli, 'Arlecchino: dalla "preistoria" a Biancolelli', *Biblioteca Teatrale*, 5 (1972): 17-68 (pp. 24-32).

[30] Delia Gambelli, *Arlecchino a Parigi* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997), p. 68-75; *Histoire plaisante*, sigs. A1v, A2v, A3v.

[31] Frank Ardolino, "'In Paris? Mass, and Well Remembered!": Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy and the English Reaction to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 23.1 (1990), 401–9 (p. 406).

A later English translation, possibly from a lost Latin copy, accuses Catherine of distracting the public with:

> toyish playes and trifles, that they might give no attendance unto true wisedome devised this policie, to raise up jeasters and fooles in Courts, which creeping in, by quipping and prettie conceits, first in words, and after by bookes, uttering their pleasant jeasts in the Courts and banquets of kings and princes, laboured to root up all the true principles of Religion and Policie.[32]

The same year, the printer and scholar Henri Estienne painted a similar picture of Catherine distracting her son with 'pleasures' while French political and religious autonomy was subverted to strangers.[33] With an eye to mounting political tensions, l'Estoile reflected dolefully on the situation at court after *i Gelosi* were installed at the Hôtel in July 1577: it was 'la corruption de ce temps', he writes, 'estant telle que les farceurs, bouffons, putains et mignons avoient tout le credit' (the corruption of this age that jesters, buffoons, whores, and minions have all the credit).[34] As preachers fervently sermonised throughout the arrondissements on contrition and good Catholic practice in the face of political uncertainty, Henri grew increasingly frivolous and Italianate, absorbed in the 'Carnival revelries and burlesques' of strange entertainers.[35]

Drawing on these long held associations, Guillaume casts Harlequin as the star of these grotesque entertainments – the Master of Ceremonies, the State bawd's official, the 'grand Courier du

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[32] Innocent Gentillet, *A Discourse vpon the Meanes of vvel Governing also known as the Anti-Machiavel* (London, 1576; (2nd ed.) / 11743), sig. A3r. For the original French copy, see Innocent Gentillet, *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner* (Geneva, 1576). Though the first surviving French edition was published in Paris in 1576, there are several references to an earlier Latin version by the name of the *Anti-Machiavel*, including in a letter dated 7 March 1576 from reformer Simon Goulart to Bonaventura Vulcanius, the Dutch humanist and Professor of Greek at Cologne. See C. Edward Rathé, 'Innocent Gentillet and the First "Anti-Machiavel"', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 27.1 (1965), 186-225. This translation is taken from the 1602 edition printed in London by Adam Islip.

[33] Henri Estienne, *Ane mervellous discours upon the lyfe, deides, and behaviours of Katherine de Medicis Quene mother: wherein are displayed the meanes which scho hath practised to atteyne unto the usurping of the Kingdome of France, and to the bringing of the state of the same unto utter ruyne.* (London, 1576; STC (2nd ed.) / 10551), sig. B2r.

[34] *Les Mignons*, it should be noted, was the term used by Henri's critics to refer to his frivolous, Italianate inner circle that were the cause of so much conflict. L'Estoile, i, p. 202.

[35] Ibid, p. 114.

petit Cupidon' (the Great Pimp of little Cupid), an Italian masked with a French name.[36] For his own part, Martinelli played up to his imagined role as the itinerant southern Secretary to the Queen Mother, and his *Response* contains a particularly ill-humoured reference to the brutal suppression of Calvinist rebels by the Duke of Parma in the Low Countries. 'De te punir j'ay bien meilleur moian,' he warns, 'Plus que n'a l'Espagnol contre le Flaman' ('I know a better way to punish you than the Spaniards do the Flemish').[37]

Though lasting just a few weeks, this pamphlet exchange would have a lasting impact on the broader cultural manifestations of the *commedia dell'arte* in France. In the months following the controversy, l'Estoile transcribed an overtly political pamphlet into his journal in which Harlequin presides over mock court proceedings. Henri III's buffoons, Chicot and Sibilot, represent Navarre and the Louis II, Cardinal of Guise, the Leaguer choice for the heir to the throne, and argue for and against the former's claim on the Crown in implausible terms.[38] In 1589, l'Estoile would record a Leaguer song that attributed Navarre 'la face barbue d'Arlequin' (the bearded face of Harlequin).[39] In 1592, a Breton Leaguer compared Royalist leaders in Nantes and Angers with Pantalone, Zanni, Orazio, Isabella, and Harlequin. The following year, an enigmatic single-sheet placard entitled *Astrologie Novvelle recreative et plaisante dv Seignevr Harlequin Astrologie Roial* appeared in which Harlequin appears as the Royal Astrologer, alluding to Catherine's well-known interest in astrology and consultations with Nostradamus. In this tongue in cheek appropriation of an anti-Valois trope, Royalist polemicists depict Harlequin balancing an astrolabe on his protuberant codpiece whilst portending doom for the League in the signs of the zodiac (fig. 3).[40]

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[36] *Histoire plaisante*, sig. A2r.
[37] *Response Di Gestes*, sig. A2r.
[38] l'Estoile, *Registre-Journal du Regne de Henri III, Tome IV*, ed. by Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schrenk (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 2001), p. 67.
[39] Ibid, p. 179.
[40] *Astrologie Novvelle recreative et plaisante dv Seignevr Harlequin Astrologie Roial*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnber, HB2023.

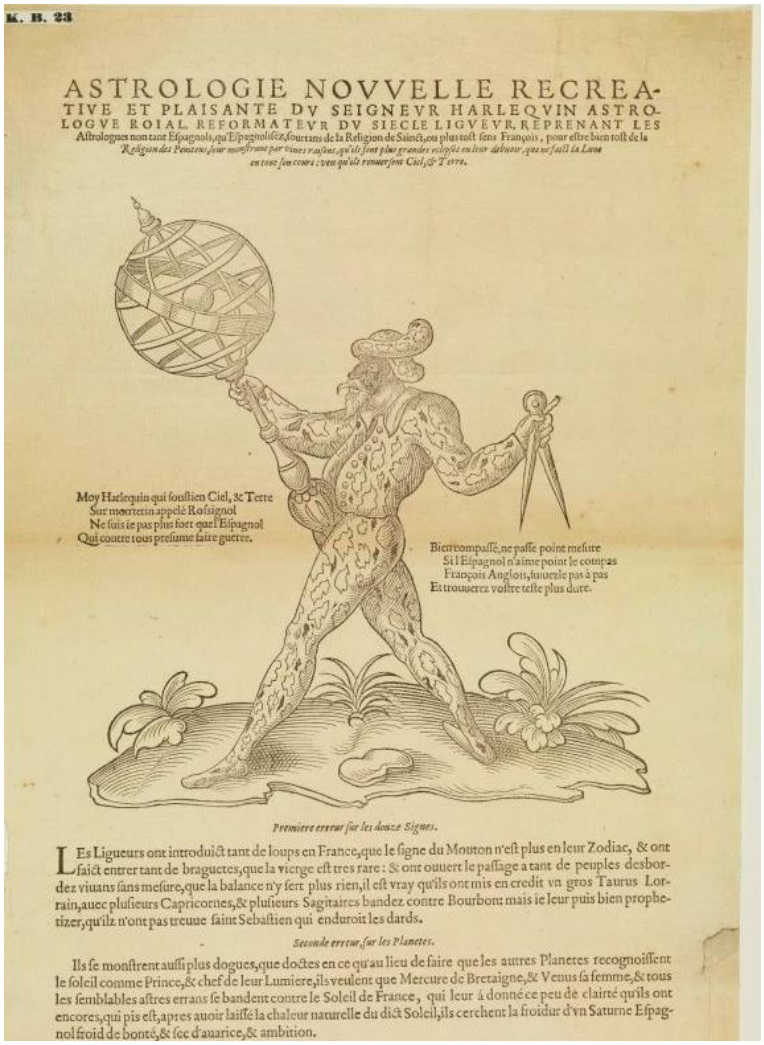


Figure 3. *Astrologie Novvelle recreative et plaisante dv Seignevr Harleqvin Astrologie Roial*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnber, HB2023.

2.2 Harlicken in London

There is no concrete evidence to suggest that either Guillaume's or Martinelli's tracts made their way to England. If imported and sold by booksellers in the original French, they leave no record in the stock lists and itineraries of printers and bibliophiles. If translated into English, no copies have survived. Yet wherever reference to Harlequin is found in English print from this period, he retains

vestiges of a life. These are fleeting and elusive, often amounting to nothing more than the English adoption of 'Harlequin' or its variants over 'Arlecchino'. However, a close reading of usage with an eye to the historical moment of composition reveals a textual inheritance from French satirical print.

The first extant reference to Harlequin in English – which is also the first direct reference to the *commedia dell'arte* in English print – is found in Thomas Nashe's satire, *An Almond for a Parrat*, printed in 1589 in response to the anti-episcopal tracts of several puritan authors writing collectively under the *nom de plume* 'Martin Marprelate'. Martin's call for a reformation of the English Church along Presbyterian lines was marked by an unusual and compelling theatricality; his first foray into print, *The Epistle* (October 1588), established the rules of play.[41] The language was distinct, homely, and rustic, designed to appeal to a broad readership and drum up popular support against the popish hierarchy of the English Church.[42] The direct addresses to the reader, sudden self-congratulatory remarks, innuendo, and fits of laughter transformed the printed text into not just a paper stage, but a paper theatre, giving voice to a constructed readership in the marginalia and the body of the text. Here they shout their support or disapproval in pantomimic fashion, spurring the author on or provoking indignant pleas for silence.[43] Martin justified taking such an indecorous approach to solemn subject matter through Scripture: 'Geve not the foole an aunswere after his foolishness, lest thou become like unto him. But make the foole an aunswere to his foolishnesse, lest he be wyse in his owne conceipt'

[41] See Joseph Black, 'The Rhetoric of Reaction: The Martin Marprelate Tracts (1588-1589), Anti-Martinism, and the Uses of Print in Early Modern England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28.3 (1997), 707–25.
[42] Martin's theatrical railing has a long scholarly history. For earlier contributions to the subject, see Raymond A. Anselment, 'Rhetoric and the Dramatic Satire of Martin Marprelate', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 10.1 (1970), 103–19. For recent key contributions, see Black, 'The Martin Marprelate Tracts (1588-89) and the Popular Voice', *History Compass*, 6.4 (2008), 1091–106; Black, "Handling Religion in the Style of the Stage': Performing the Marprelate Controversy', in *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England: The Performance of Religion on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Williamson Elizabeth (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 153–74; See also, Christopher A. Hill, 'Dost Thou See a Martin Who Is Wise in His Own Conceit? There Is More Hope in a Fool than in Him', in *Renaissance Papers 2014*, ed. by Jim Pearce, Ward J. Risvold, and Nathan Dixon (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), pp. 109–21.
[43] See Evelyn B Tribble, *Margins and Marginality : The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), pp. 88-121.

(Proverbs 26:5).[44] Rambling defences of the English Church settlement by clergymen such as John Bridges, the Dean of Salisbury, were too foolish to deserve any serious rebuttal, so were simply responded to in kind. 'Againe may it please you to giue me leaue to play the Duns', Martin writes in the *Epistle*, 'dealing with master docters booke, I cannot keep *decorum personae*'.[45]

While more orthodox parties raged against Martin's 'scoffing, mocking, rayling' stage persona, others recognised the effectiveness of his rustic rhetorical flair.[46] At the instigation of the Bishop of London Richard Bancroft, a number of prose writers and playwrights including Nashe, Robert Greene, and John Lyly penned refutations that answered Martin's abuses by simultaneously adopting and chastising his colloquial, theatrical style. Despite claims to the contrary, Martin was not just playing the fool, but was a fool, and so to make their point intelligible, opponents were required to 'speake plaine English, to call thee a knave in thine owne language.'[47] By the summer of 1589, the theatricality of the whole affair had clearly proved too tempting for the London stage players, who, under constant attack from puritan polemicists, took it upon themselves to air their grievances and hold Martin to account. Soon 'everie stage Plaier made a jest' of him who 'took it very grievously, to be *made a May game upon the stage*'.[48] It is possible that the May-game described by Nashe and Lyly in their co-authored *Mar-Martine* (1589) actually took place. The printer of Martin's tracts, John Penry, is cast as 'the foregallant of the Morrice, with the treble belles' while '*Martin* himselfe is the Mayd-marian, trimlie drest vppe in a cast Gowne'.[49] Again, this indecorous staging of spiritual matters is defended on the

[44] Quoted in Christopher Hill, 'Decorum Personae: *The World Turned Upside Down* and the Praise of Folly', *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism*, 36.3 (2014), pp. 219-30 (p. 112).
[45] Martin Marprelate (pseud.), *Oh read over D. John Bridges, for it is a worthy worke: or an epitome of the fyrste booke* (London, 1588; STC (2nd ed.) / 17453), p. 7.
[46] Thomas Cooper, *An Admonition to the People of England* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 5682), p. 34.
[47] Thomas Nashe (pseud. Cutbert Curry-Knave), *An Almond for a Parrat; Or, Cutbert Curry-Knaves Almes* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 534), sig. F3r.
[48] *Martins Months Minde* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 17452), p. 177.
[49] Nashe, *The Returne of the renowned Caualiero Pasquill of England* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 19457), p. 92.

same lines; seeing how 'vices [Martin and his sons] make plaies of Churche matters', 'hir Maiesties men' have answered in kind and with 'Jigges and Rimes'.[50]

In what appears to be in reference to Martin's on-stage thrashing, Nashe, as the pseudonymous, 'Cutbert Curry-Knave', would playfully dedicate *An Almond* to the esteemed clown of the Lord Strange's Men, William Kempe: 'To that most comical and conceited Cavalier Monsieur du Kempe' he writes, 'Jestmonger and Vice-Gerent General to the ghost of Dick Tarlton'.[51] He facetiously heaps praise on the clown, who with the age of patronage in decline, makes as good a dedicatee as any 'ruffling Courtier'.[52] Cutbert recalls how during a short-stay in Bergamo on his return home from Venice:

> It was my happe sojourning there some foure or five dayes, to light in felowship with that famous Francattip Harlicken, who perceiving me to bee an English man by my habit and speech, asked me many particulars, of the order and maner of our playes, which he termed by the name of representations: amongst other talke he enquired of me if I knew any such Parabolano here in London, as Signior Chiarlatano Kempino. Very well (quoth I,) and have beene oft in his company. He hearing me say so, began to embrace me a new, and offered me all the courtesie he colde for his sake, saying, although he knew him not, yet for the report he had hard of his pleasance, hee colde not but bee in love with his perfections being absent.[53]

Despite the erroneous conflation of Arlecchino and Francatrippa (performed by Gabriele Panzanini), there is a striking conventionality in Nashe's reference to the 'famous' mask. There is no need to qualify who or what Harlequin is as he interrogates Cutbert over 'the order and maner of our playes', nor why Cutbert should meet him in Bergamo, the native country of the servant mask. If any doubt

[50] *Martins Months Minde*, p. 177.
[51] Nashe, *An Almond*, sig. A2r.
[52] Nashe might be referencing Kempe's travels abroad with the Earl of Leicester's Men some years before. For more, see Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 185-95; and Pavel Drábek and M.A. Katritzky, 'Shakespearean players in early modern Europe', in *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, ed. by Bruce Smith, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), ii, pp. 1527–33.
[53] Nashe, sigs. A3r-A3v.

remains, his reference to English drama as 'representations' clearly aligns him with extemporal Italian professional theatre.[54] Scholars have read this celebration of Kempe's clowning as an attempt by Nashe to place England's emergent secular tradition within a more refined neoclassical tradition that had developed on the continent. Kirk Melnikoff has argued that this peculiar reference to the 'famous' *maschera* 'essentially connects Cutbert and the "Francattip Harlicken" as followers of Kemp', disciples of an 'itinerant and improvisational' tradition that was transnational in nature but perfected in England.[55] Pamela Allen Brown has put greater emphasis on the wish of contemporary writers to see England connected to the 'transnational world of play' beyond its borders. In Kempe they finally found 'a performer who ranked with the dazzling pantheon of performers abroad', and in Harlequin's jubilant praise of the 'Chiarlatano' is a celebration of the Clown as a 'praiseworthy cultural hybrid' that 'cannot be named in correct Italian or in correct English, for the court of judgment lies somewhere in between, beyond nations'.[56]

Such optimistic readings of this exchange are complicated by the fact that, as has been noted in the previous chapter, the English were rarely complimentary of this particular strange theatrical tradition. Nor do they take into account that immediately before *An Almond* was printed, Nashe's employers had publicly condemned the London players for bringing controversy to the playhouses. The slow response of the Privy Council may have at first been a deliberate decision to turn a blind eye to what was unfolding in the capital (what better way to counter sedition that having it laid bare on the public stage?). By November 1589, however, with the controversy showing no sign of abating, the

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Kirk Melnikoff, 'The Limits of Clowning in the Age of Marprelate: The Anti-Martinist Tracts and *2 Henry VI*', in *Renaissance Papers 2010*, ed. by Andrew Shifflet and Edward Gieskes (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), p. 50. Though scholars have generally agreed this conflation of masks to be an error on Nashe's part, Kenneth Richards agrees with Allardyce Nicoll's earlier assertion that Nashe may have meant 'Francattip' to read 'French'. See Allardyce Nicoll, *The World of Harlequin: A Critical Study of the Commedia Dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 84; and Kenneth Richards, 'Elizabethan Perceptions of *Commedia dell'Arte*', in *Cultural Exchange between European Nations during the Renaissance*, ed. by Sadlik Zadewski and Nicholas Antoni (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1994), pp. 213-28 (p. 217).

[56] Pamela Allen Brown, '"I Care Not, Let Naturals Love Nations": Cosmopolitan Clowning', *Shakespeare Studies*, 35 (2007), 66-73 (p. 71).

Council wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, that 'there hathe growne some inconvenience by comon playes and enterludes in and about the Cyttie of London, in [that] the players take upon themselves to handle in their plaies certen matters of Divinytie and of State, unfitt to be suffred.'[57] Edmund Tilney, Master of the Revels, was instructed to issue a ban on all matters 'unfytt and undecent to be handled in playes', including those of 'Divinitie and State.'[58] There is a notable shift in tone in the anti-Martinist tracts that were printed thereafter, and whilst the writers still revelled in the opportunity for unbridled indecorum, they are harsher in their assessments of its explicit theatricality. 'These tinker termes, and barber jestes from *Tarleton* on stage,' write Nashe and Lyly, '*Martin* in his bookes of lies, hath put on every page'.[59]

Cutbert's chance meeting with Harlequin seems less like a celebration of a transnational clowning tradition considering what happens next. Whilst the new companions converse over the particulars of English and Italian performance methods and Arlecchino's admiration for Kempe's 'perfections', the town around them erupts into raucous celebrations:

> I hard such ringing of belles, such singing, such shouting, as though Rhodes had beene recovered, or the Turke quite driven out of Christendome, therewithal I might behold an hundreth bonefiers together, tables spred in the open streetes, and banquets brought in of all handes. Demaunding the reason of him that was next me, he told the newes was there (thankes be to God,) that there was a famous Schismatike one Martin newe sprung up in England, who by his bookes, libels, and writings, had brought that to passe, which neither the Pope by his Seminaries, Philip by his power, nor all the holy League by their underhand practises and policies could at any time effect: for wheras they lived at unitie before, and might by no meanes be drawne unto discord, hee hath invented such quiddities to set them together by the eares, that now the temporaltie is readie to plucke out the throtes of the Cleargie, & subjects to withdraw their allegeance from their Soverayne: so that in short time, it is hoped they will bee

[57] Quoted in Kristen Poole, 'Saints Alive! Falstaff, Martin Marprelate, and the Staging of Puritanism', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 46.1 (1995), 47–75 (pp. 61-2).
[58] Ibid.
[59] Nashe and Lyly, *Mar-Martine I know not why a trueth in rime set out maie not as wel mar Martine and his mates, as shamelesse lies in prose-books cast about marpriests, & prelates, and subvert whole states. For where truth builds, and lying overthroes, one truth in rime, is worth ten lies in prose* (London, 1589; STC (2nd ed.) / 17461), unpaginated.

> up in armes one against another, whiles we advantaged by this domesticall envy, may invade them unawares, when they shall not be able to resist.[60]

What at first appears to be an homage to a shared neoclassical tradition is suddenly undercut by Harlequin's exclamation of 'thankes be to God' at the news of Martin's seditious tracts. With his theatrical quips and 'quiddities', Martin had turned the laity against the Clergy, and by extension, against 'their Soverayne' as the head of the English Church. There is a clear indebtedness to French print here, and placing the threat of invasion in the mouth of Harlequin serves as a reminder of the political and religious ramifications of mingling the profane with the profound on both real and paper stages. Most of the Huguenot polemics and Catholic apologies attributable to the presses of the small coterie of English printers employed by the state during this period propagated a constitutional theory of sovereignty that had been advanced by French humanists earlier in the century as tied to a historically, naturally, and culturally distinct Gallic state.[61] Like the reformed Church in England, the Catholic Church in France was first and foremost French, and the survival of ecclesiastical (and by extension political) independence from Rome was essential for the survival and prosperity of a French identity. Duty to the monarch, whose own duty was to maintain this independence, was thereby enshrined as the fundamental conceit of what it meant to be French.[62] Such a formulation served to discredit native political opponents as not only servants to a strange power, but turned strange by sedition. *The Anti-Spaniard*, written by an anonymous French 'Catholic Gentleman' and translated into English by Anthony Munday in 1590, stressed that the independence of the Catholic Church in France as a French institution hinged on the independence of its political leadership. Control over the Church was and always should be held by the monarch, rather than operating as a secondary branch of a

[60] Nashe, *An Almond*, sigs. A3r-A4r.
[61] Namely Richard Field, John Wolfe, and John Charlewood, who it is worth noting printed Nashe's first contribution to the controversy, *The returne of the renowned caualiero Pasquill of England*. Parmelee explores the French political tracts translated and printed in their workshops in detail. See Parmelee, *Good Newes From France*, pp. 27-52.
[62] Ibid, p. 40.

transnational institution open to the underhanded machinations of that power's political motivations. 'O most miserable wretches then that we be', bemoans the author, 'Can not our Catholique religion continue without the safety of an aged Spaniard?'[63] Even the Huguenots, who had relied heavily on their northern Protestant neighbours for support 'have maintained themselves as true French'.[64] The English translation of James Mettayer's *The Masque of the League* (1591) further distils this idea of national identity into true and 'false French-men', the one accepting Henri's rule as divinely appointed and the other rising in rebellion against the royal estate.[65] He posits a dogmatic, totalising language of belonging with no room for dissent: 'I beseech you let there be no other termes used among us but Spaniard & French.'[66]

By the time *An Almond* was printed in November, the accusation that Martin's schismatic activities served the aggressive foreign policy of the Catholic League had become common fare in the rhetoric of his opponents, who found in the France of Moderate and Huguenot polemic a frightening (and therefore potent) example of the consequences of religious schism.[67] The enemy within was just as dangerous as the one lurking beyond the bay, and nonconformity would 'advantage the holy league as much in this meanes of sedition, as all *Philips* power by invasion'.[68] While Martin raged against the popery of the ecclesiasts ('What will the Puritans seeke to keepe out the Pope of Rome, and maintaine the Pope at Lambeth?'), Lyly would incorporate the formulation of identity found in the translated French tracts to make allegiance the central issue of the controversy.[69] It is Martin who plays 'the Pope, in taking vppon him to discharge her Maiesties Subiects of the allegiance they owe to theyr naturall Prince, and in stealing away from the crowne of England, as many english harts as would

[63] Antoine Arnauld, *The Coppie of the Anti-Spaniard* (London, 1590; STC (2nd ed.) / 684.5), p. 4.
[64] Ibid, p. 5.
[65] James Mettayer, *The Masque of the League* (London, 1591; STC / 450:08), sig. A3r.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Black, 'The Rhetoric of Reaction', p. 717-18.
[68] Nashe, p. 14.
[69] Marprelate (pseud.), *Oh read over D. John Bridges*, sig. A4r; Nashe, *The returne of the renowned Caualiero Pasquill of England*, sig. B4v.

harken to him, to translate them at his pleasure to a forraine power'.[70] English identity is tethered to allegiance, and all who turn their backs on their sovereign by denying her Church relinquish all claim to Englishness. As such, in his 'unmasking of Martin', Cutbert reveals a stranger with a 'Spanish heart'.[71]

The conversation about clowning and performance that precedes the citywide celebrations in *An Almond* has implications on how Harlequin manifested in the English imagination during this early period. In Cutbert's mind, Kempe is the best recipient for 'these tidinges' for he could 'make much of them with [his] clownery'.[72] Yet this indecorous theatricality is the issue, and Cutbert's enthusiastic endorsement of the satirical power of Kempe's on-stage satirising is undercut by Harlequin's own praise of the Clown. He is 'Signior Chiarlatano Kempino' – a fellow 'Parabolano', or marketplace pedlar who takes to a stage to sell faulty remedies.[73] Dedicating this tract to Kempe therefore serves not as a celebration of his prodigious satirical skills or as an opportunity to align English secular theatre with more prestigious European neoclassical traditions; nor does it reflect, as Henke has argued, an 'actual conversation that Nashe might have had, probably recently, with an Italian actor'.[74] It is a reminder of the political and religious ramifications of mingling the profane with the profound on both wooden and paper stages. Look overseas to France, look to the schism nursed by strangers and see the consequence a 'factious faith'.[75]

Other contemporary references to a French Harlequin surface elsewhere. John Marston would refer to a '*French Herlakeene*' in his stage play *The Malcontent* (1604), and Thomas Heywood would praise the French and Italians for their 'excellente' performances as the *maschere* in his *Apologie for Actors*

[70] Nashe, *The returne of the renowned cavaliero*, sig. B2v.
[71] Nashe, *An Almond*, sigs. A4r, C2v.
[72] Ibid, sig. A4v.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Robert Henke, 'Border-Crossing in the Commedia Dell'arte', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 19-35 (p. 31).
[75] Nashe, *An Almond*, sig. C3v.

(1613).[76] A more illuminating reference to the mask is found in John Eliot's French-English dual-language manual, *Ortho-epia Gallica* (1593), printed a few years after the Marprelate Controversy. Printed by Richard Field for John Wolfe (for whom Eliot translated several French political tracts into English in the late 1580s), the text satirises the manuals written by migrant tutors in London who had gained popularity amongst cosmopolitan citizens and gentry. In one dialogue, a potential customer spots a portrait of the mask in a painter's shop:

> What say you of this figure?
>
> I say that if it be Venus, she hath not her face well painted.
>
> It is an Italian Harlekin.
>
> He is beleeve me, verie well counterfeited for a foole. He is not verie well shadowed for a wise man.
>
> What wanteth there?
>
> He is crump-shouldered and crooked, and hath a Hawkesnose.[77]

Frances Yates has convincingly argued that this portrait of the mask Harlequin is intended to lampoon the most well-known advocate of Italian culture and language of the day: John Florio. Eliot imitates and restructures a number of dialogues in Florio's *Seconde Fruites* (1592), printed the previous year, to parody the author with a nationalist fervour. His description of the mask's large-acquiline 'Hawkesnose' (rather than the snub-nose of Martinelli's Harlequin) was a sign of Florio's supposed haughty nature, aggrieved that he was not 'verie well shadowed' by sufficient patronage at this point in his career.[78] Nose aside, the description reveals close similarities to the 'crump-shouldered and

[76] John Marston, *The malcontent. Augmented by Marston. With the additions played by the Kings Maiesties servants* (London, 1604; STC (2nd ed.) / 17481), sig. E2v; Thomas Heywood, *An Apologie for Actors* (London, 1613; STC (2nd ed.) / 13309), sig. E2v.

[77] John Eliot, *Ortho-epia Gallica Eliots fruits for the French: enterlaced vvith a double nevv inuention, vvhich teacheth to speake truely, speedily and volubly the French-tongue.* (London, 1593; STC (2nd ed.) / 7574), p. 75-6.

[78] Louis Turquet Mayerne notes a 'hawke nose' as a 'signe of a haughtie nature' in his *The generall historie of Spaine containing all the memorable things that have past in the realmes of Castille, Leon, Navarre, Arragon, Portugall, Granado, &c. and by what meanes they were united, and so continue under Philip the third, King of Spaine, now raigning*, trans. by Edward Grimeston (London, 1612; STC (2nd ed.) / 17747), p. 775.

crooked' mask depicted in contemporary illustrations, namely Martinelli's own 1601 pamphlet *Composition de Rhetorique* (fig. 4) and an earlier collection of cheap engravings printed in Paris, known as the 'Recueil Fossard', depicting several *commedia dell'arte* scenes, dating to the time Martinelli first donned the mask (fig. 5).[79] What is more, this kind of lampooning, as Eliot, a translator and tutor of French would have known, was itself commonplace in contemporary French print; a League pamphlet printed the year prior to *Ortho-epia Gallica* compared the Huguenot Commissioner of Anjou, Philippe Gourreau de la Proustière to Pantalone:

> Prends donc ta robe à hault collet,
> Tes peaulx, ta camisole rouge,
> Ta barbute au lieu d'un bonnet,
> Ton faulx nez courbe comme un vouge,
> Ta granrdague, et montre ton bouge,
> Avec tes chausses de rollet.[80]
>
> Take your high collar dress,
> Your skins, your red camisole,
> Your beard instead of a hat,
> Your false nose curved like a vouge,
> Thy great dagger, and show thy move,
> With thy shoes of rollet.

Once more, then, a writer closely connected to the key figures of Burghley's propaganda campaign appears to have recognised the varied and visually evocative satirical potential of Harlequin. It is used as a token of Italianisation in a manner that closely resembles contemporary French usage, yet has been extricated from the political contexts of the Wars of Religion. Here in Eliot's hand, as elsewhere, Harlequin embodies a set of associations that were inscribed onto the mask in the midst of war-torn

[79] See Katritzky, 'Harlequin in Renaissance Pictures', p. 394; Charles Sterling, 'Early Paintings of the *Commedia dell'Arte* in France', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 2.1 (1943), p. 29.
[80] Quoted in Raymond Lebègue, 'Premières infiltrations de la Commedia dell'Arte dans le théâtre français' (Communication de M. R. Lebègue (Sorbonnĕ) au XIVe Congrès de V Association, le 27 juillet 1962), 165–76 (p. 171).

Paris yet are repurposed to a new end – a situated, English discourse concerned with cultural porosity and the erosion of English identity.



Figure 4. The frontispiece of Martinelli's *Compositions de rhétorique de M. Don Arlequin, comicorum de civitatis Novalensis, corrigidor de la bonna langua francese et latina, condutier de comediens, connestable de messieurs les badaux de Paris, et capital ennemi de tut les laquais inventeurs desrobber chapiaux* ([s.n.] (Imprimé de là le bout du monde), 1600).



Figure 5. Il Segnor Horacio and Harlequin. Reprinted in Agne Beijer and Pierre Louis Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes qui ont été répresentées en France sous le règne du Henry III. Recueil, dit de Fossard, conservé au musée national de Stockholm*.

2.3 Tracing *Commedia dell'Arte* in Text-to-Text Translation

There are sure signs of a satirical inheritance in how both Nashe and Eliot use the mask. However, the ephemerality of early modern cheap print and the difficulties faced in plotting an unorganised international print network means that the translations that brought Harlequin from Paris to London have left only residual traces of his prior incarnations.[81] Without traceable examples of text-to-text translation, it is difficult to ascertain how the translator as cultural mediator engaged the *commedia*

[81] Sara Barker and Brenda Hosington, 'Introduction', in *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640*, ed. by S.K. Barker and Brenda M. Hosington (Leiden: Brill, 2015) xv-xxix (xxvii-xviii).

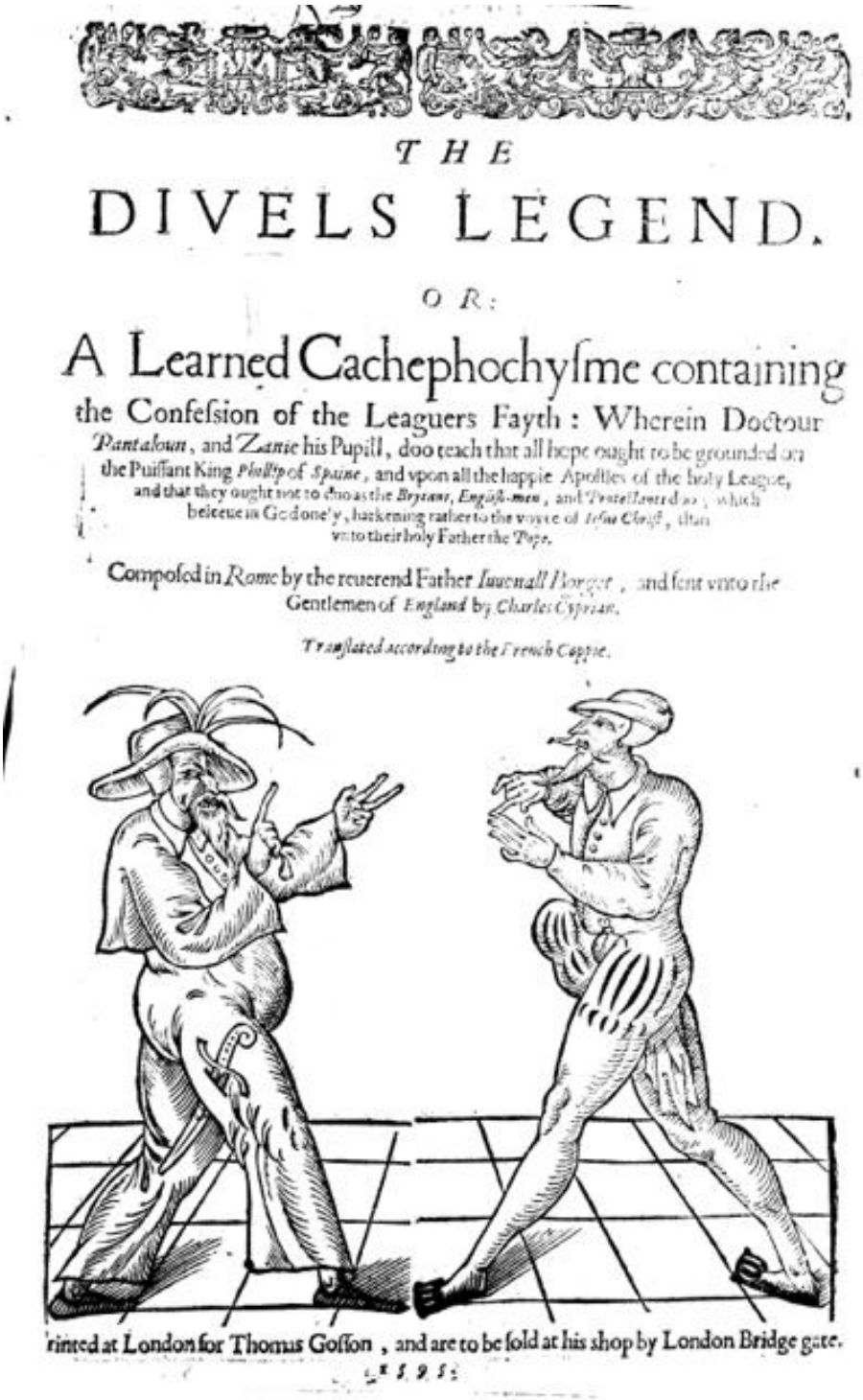
dell'arte found in the original text, what was incorporated, adapted or ignored in an effort to make this obscure form of performance practice relevant to a new concern and intelligible to a new, English readership. There is, however, one reference to Harlequin from the period that can be positively identified as deriving from an earlier French anti-League satire. In 1595, the printer John Danter and bookseller Thomas Gosson collaborated on a curious pamphlet containing two separate translated French *commedia dell'arte* satires. The one that references Harlequin derives from a placard previously mentioned, the *Astrologie Novvelle recreative et plaisante dv Seignevr Harlequin*, in which the mask prophesises the violent end of the League. Danter and Gosson's *A nevv pleasant and delightfull Astrologie, inuented by reuerend Maister Harlequin the royall Astrologer, calculated for the Leaguers Merydian* (fig. 3), now converted from placard to pamphlet without the impressive woodcut, is as enigmatic as the original French copy. There is nothing relating to the *commedia dell'arte* in the prognostication that offers a definitive conclusion about the processes and decisions that informed its translation (although it probably further cemented associations drawn between the mask and the political uproar occurring across the Channel). The second pamphlet onto which the *Astrologie* is appended, however, is far more revelatory. *The Divels Legend* (fig. 6), composed by an unknown author or authors under the pseudonym 'Father Juvenal Borget', contains a dialogue between 'Doctor Pantalone and his disciple Zanni' in which the Catholic League is satirised for its irreligious creed steeped in hypocrisy, greed, and the promotion of foreign interests at the expense of French religious and political sovereignty.[82] It opens with Pantalone, here a tutor rather than a merchant, enquiring of his student Zanni as to why he 'abiurest the touche of holy water, forgetst thy praiers, and hast lost the memorable vse of thy Beads'.[83] With a barrage of grotesque and sacrilegious imagery, the servant reveals that he has dedicated himself to the 'holy (O

[82] Juvenall Borget (pseud.), *The divels legend. or: a learned cachephochysme* (London, 1595; STC 3388).
[83] Ibid, sig. A2r.

lie) league' and 'conioyned with her Happie Apostle', Philip of Spain.[84] At Pantalone's prompting, Zanni then divulges the inner workings and ambitions of the League.[85]

The Divels Legend is the fourth iteration of the satire, which was published in France three times between 1592 and 1594, each with the author given as some variation on the pseudonymous 'Juvenal' or 'Giuvenal Borgetto' or 'Porgetto' and the importer as 'Charles Cyprian', probably an allusion to the *Cena Cypriani*, a fourth-century biblical parody that enjoyed renewed favour following the publication of the first print edition in Paris in 1564. Though undated, it is likely that the earliest version is a French language placard entitled *Le Cakephachisme doctrinal et confession de foy ligueuse, ou le Docteur Pantalon et Zanni son disciple enseignent que toute espérance doit estre fondée sur le tres-puissant Roy Phillipes* (fig. 7), that was probably printed in Rouen or another northern city between 1592 and 1593. The next iteration is a dual-language Italian and French pamphlet printed with the Italian title *Il Cathechismo, Dottrinale, E confession di fede Spagnola, che il dottor Pantalon & Zany suo discepolo insegnano ch'ogni fede* (fig. 8), printed in Paris in 1594. Another version, *Le Cacochyme ou catéchisme du Docteur Pantalon & de son disciple Zani*, which will not be analysed here as it shares the same political context as *Il Cathechismo*, is tacked onto the end of an edition of the popular anti-League *Satyre Ménippée* printed in Paris (although with the false imprint 'Turin') in 1594. It appears that both *Il Cathechismo* and *The Divels Legend* derive from *Le Cakephachisme*, with each undergoing several different translations – confessional, political, linguistic, and paratextual – to adapt the satire to a new cause in a new moment. This cluster of text therefore presents a rare opportunity to compare and contrast how the presentation of the *commedia dell'arte* in the original pamphlet survives these processes of translation or consumption by a readership with markedly different degrees of exposure to the form.

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.



THE

DIVELS LEGEND.

OR:

A Learned Cachephochyſme containing the Confeſsion of the Leaguers Fayth: Wherein Doctour *Pantaloun*, and *Zanie* his Pupill, doo teach that all hope ought to be grounded on the Puiſſant King *Phillip* of *Spaine*, and vpon all the happie Apoſtles of the holy League, and that they ought not to doo as the *Brytans*, *Engliſh-men*, and *Proteſtanted* as; which beleeue in God alone'y, hardening rather to the voyce of *Ieſus Chriſt*, than vnto their holy Father the *Pope*.

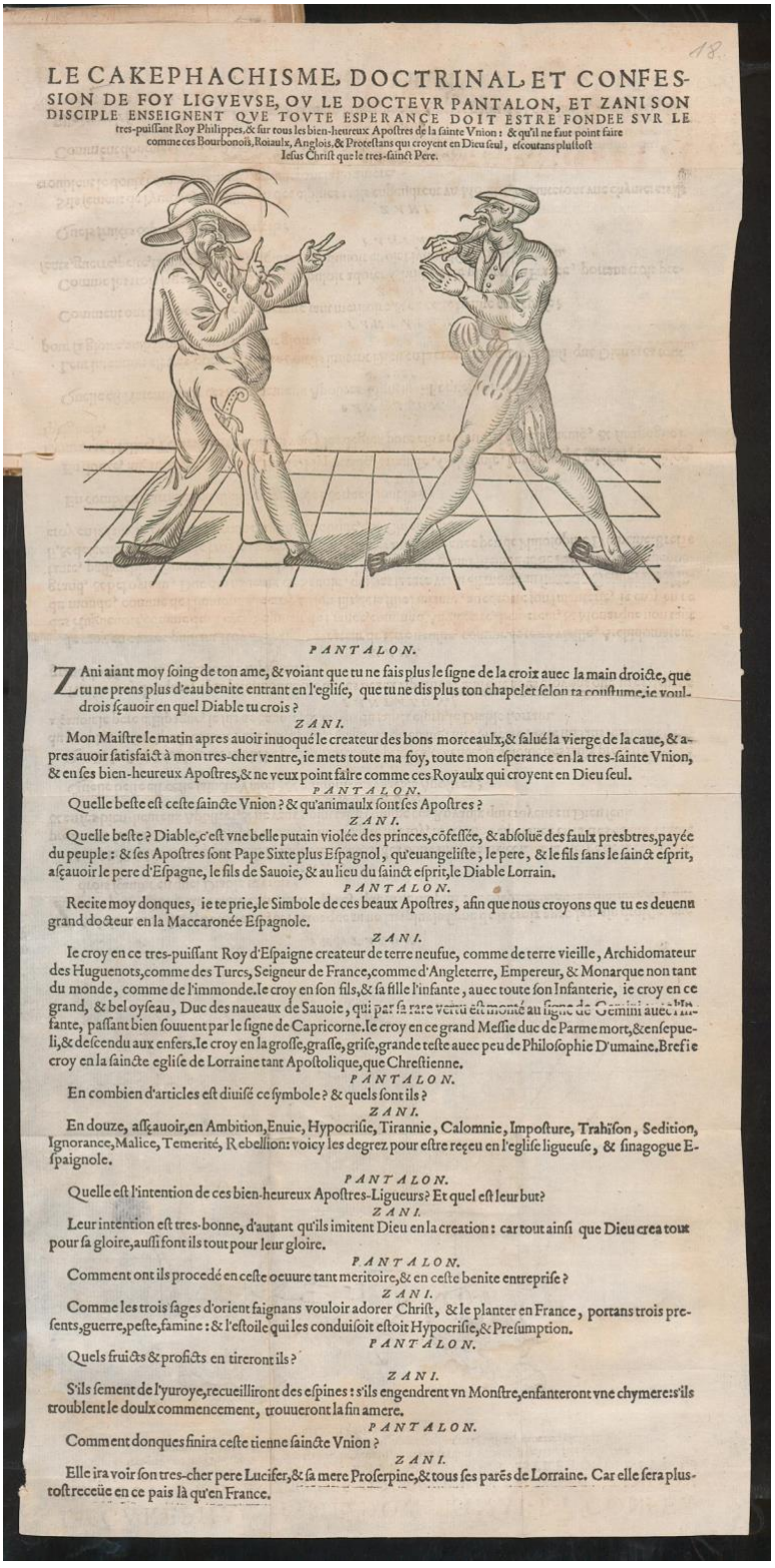
Compoſed in *Rome* by the reuerend Father *Iuuenall Horgot*, and ſent vnto the Gentlemen of *England* by *Charles Cyprian*.

Tranſlated according to the French Coppie.

rinted at London for Thomas Goſſon, and are to be ſold at his ſhop by London Bridge gate.

1595.

Figure 6. the frontispiece of *The Divels Legend* (1595), British Library, STC (2nd ed.) / 3388.



LE CAKEPHACHISME, DOCTRINAL ET CONFES-
SION DE FOY LIGVEVSE, OV LE DOCTEVR PANTALON, ET ZANI SON
DISCIPLE ENSEIGNENT QVE TOVTE ESPERANCE DOIT ESTRE FONDEE SVR LE
tres-puissant Roy Philippes, & sur tous les bien-heureux Apostres de la sainte Vnion : & qu'il ne faut point faire
comme ces Bourbonois, Roiaulx, Anglois, & Protestans qui croyent en Dieu seul, escoutans plustost
Iesus Christ que le tres-sainct Pere.

PANTALON.

ZAni aiant moy soing de ton ame, & voiant que tu ne fais plus le signe de la croix auec la main droicte, que tu ne prens plus d'eau benite entrant en l'eglise, que tu ne dis plus ton chapelet selon ta coustume, ie voudrois sçauoir en quel Diable tu crois ?

ZANI.

Mon Maistre le matin apres auoir inuoqué le createur des bons morceaulx, & salué la vierge de la caue, & apres auoir satisfaict à mon tres-cher ventre, ie mets toute ma foy, toute mon esperance en la tres-sainte Vnion, & en ses bien-heureux Apostres, & ne veux point faire comme ces Royaulx qui croyent en Dieu seul.

PANTALON.

Quelle beste est ceste saincte Vnion ? & qu'animaulx sont ses Apostres ?

ZANI.

Quelle beste ? Diable, c'est vne belle putain violée des princes, cõfessée, & absoluë des faulx presbtres, payée du peuple : & ses Apostres sont Pape Sixte plus Espagnol, qu'euangeliste, le pere, & le fils sans le sainct esprit, asçauoir le pere d'Espagne, le fils de Sauoie, & au lieu du sainct esprit, le Diable Lorrain.

PANTALON.

Recite moy donques, ie te prie, le Simbole de ces beaux Apostres, afin que nous croyons que tu es deuenu grand docteur en la Maccaronée Espagnole.

ZANI.

Ie croy en ce tres-puissant Roy d'Espaigne createur de terre neufue, comme de terre vieille, Archidomateur des Huguenots, comme des Turcs, Seigneur de France, comme d'Angleterre, Empereur, & Monarque non tant du monde, comme de l'immonde. Ie croy en son fils, & sa fille l'infante, auec toute son Infanterie, ie croy en ce grand, & bel oyseau, Duc des naueaux de Sauoie, qui par sa rare vertu est monté au signe de Gemini auec l'Infante, passant bien souuent par le signe de Capricorne. Ie croy en ce grand Messie duc de Parme mort, & enseuely, & descendu aux enfers. Ie croy en la grosse, grasse, grise, grande teste auec peu de Philosophie D'umaine. Bref ie croy en la saincte eglise de Lorraine tant Apostolique, que Chrestienne.

PANTALON.

En combien d'articles est diuisé ce symbole ? & quels sont ils ?

ZANI.

En douze, asçauoir, en Ambition, Enuie, Hypocrisie, Tirannie, Calomnie, Imposture, Trahison, Sedition, Ignorance, Malice, Temerité, Rebellion : voicy les degrez pour estre reçeu en l'eglise ligueuse, & sinagogue Espaignole.

PANTALON.

Quelle est l'intention de ces bien-heureux Apostres-Ligueurs ? Et quel est leur but ?

ZANI.

Leur intention est tres-bonne, d'autant qu'ils imitent Dieu en la creation : car tout ainsi que Dieu crea tout pour sa gloire, aussi font ils tout pour leur gloire.

PANTALON.

Comment ont ils procedé en ceste oeuure tant meritoire, & en ceste benite entrepriſe ?

ZANI.

Comme les trois sages d'orient faignans vouloir adorer Christ, & le planter en France, portans trois presents, guerre, peste, famine : & l'estoile qui les conduisoit estoit Hypocrisie, & Presumption.

PANTALON.

Quels fruicts & profics en tireront ils ?

ZANI.

S'ils sement de l'yuroye, recueilliront des espines : s'ils engendrent vn Monstre, enfanteront vne chymere : s'ils troublent le doulx commencement, trouueront la fin amere.

PANTALON.

Comment donques finira ceste tienne saincte Vnion ?

ZANI.

Elle ira voir son tres-cher pere Lucifer, & sa mere Proserpine, & tous ses parẽs de Lorraine. Car elle sera plustost receüe en ce pais là qu'en France.

Figure 7. the *placard Le Cakephachisme* (c.1592-1593), Universitätsbibliothek Bern, MUE Bong V 278:18.

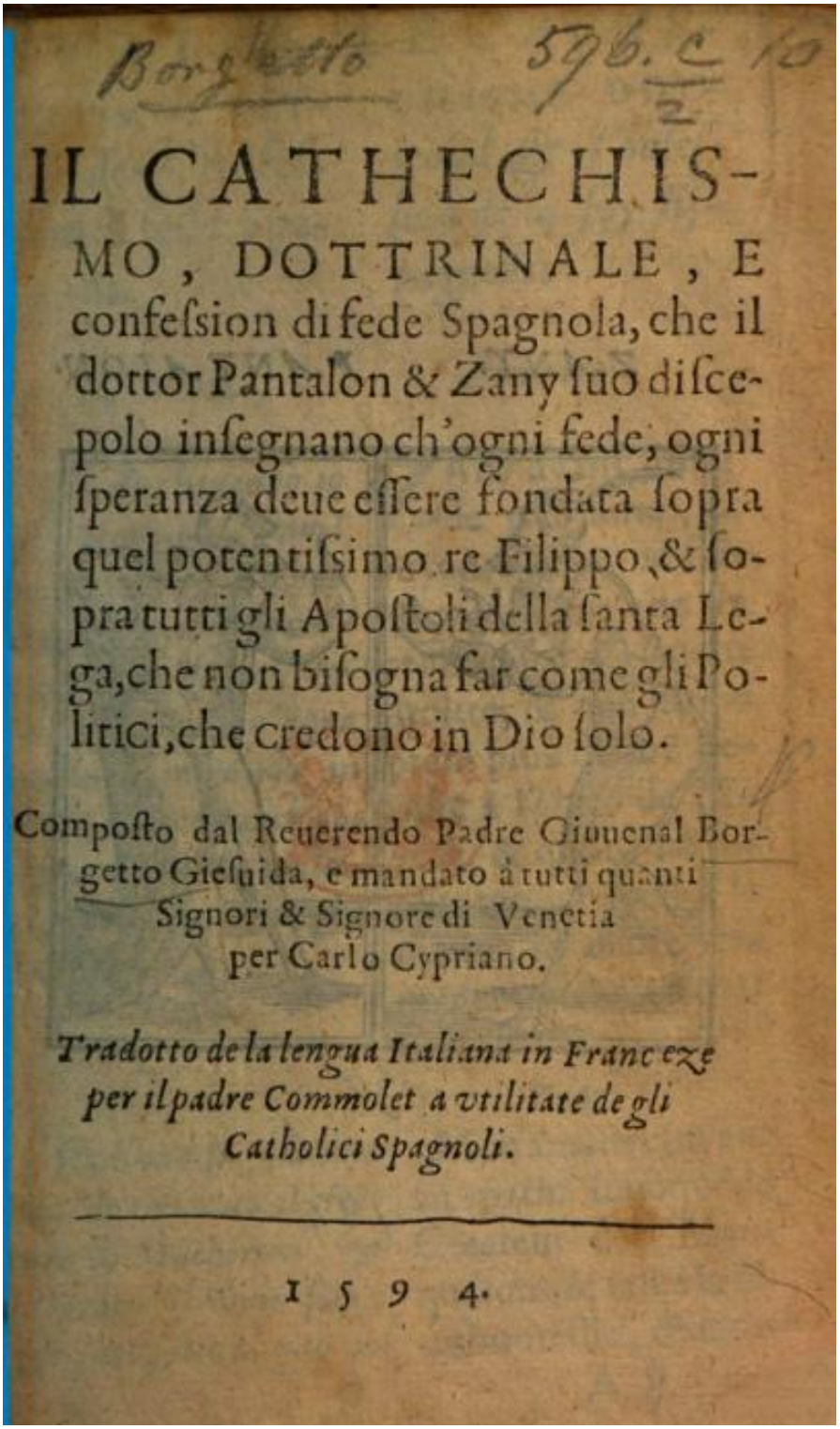


Figure 8. Frontispiece of the anonymous French and Italian language pamphlet *Il Cathechismo* (1594) Bibliothèque Nationale De France, FRBNF30262333.

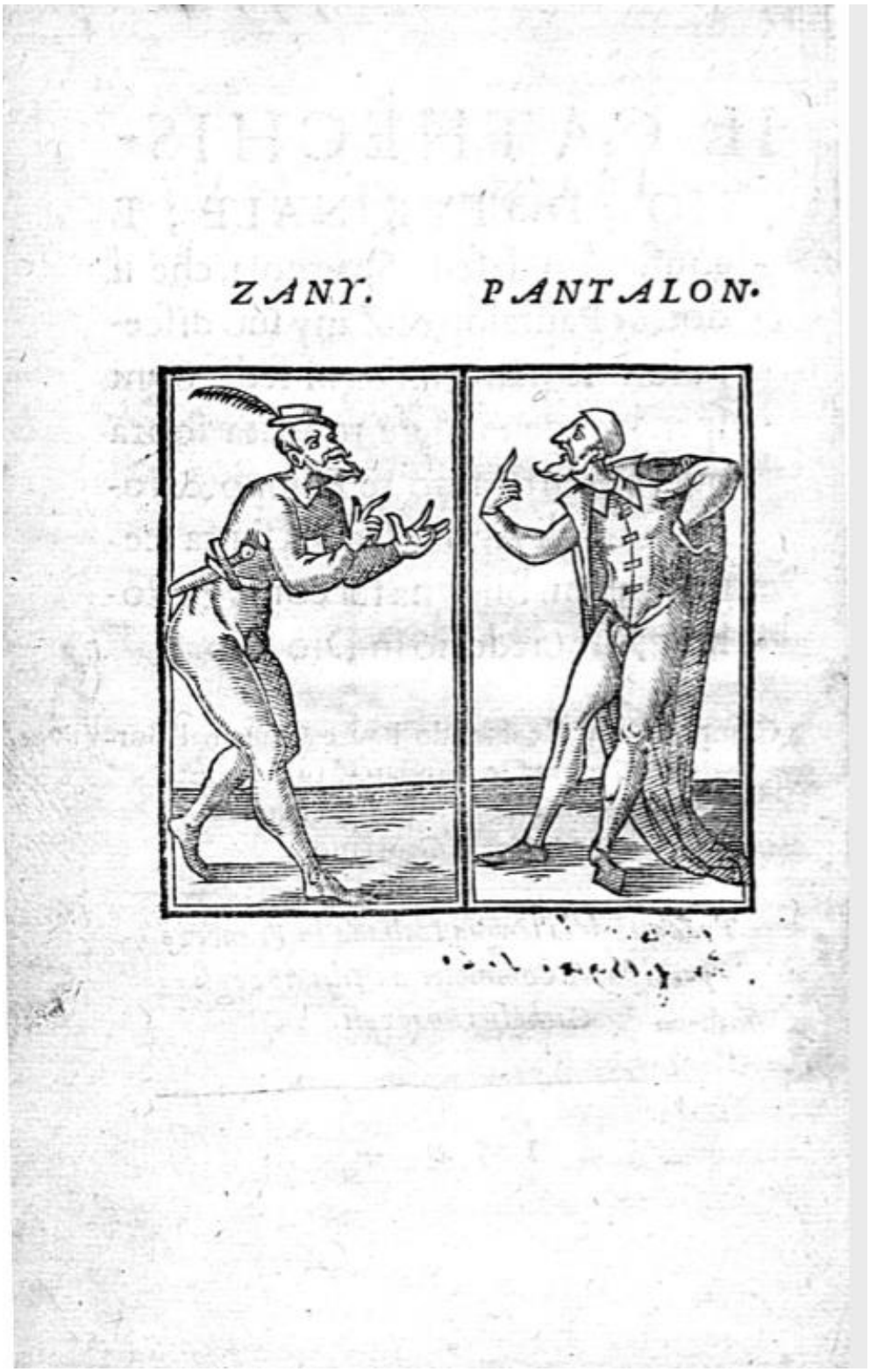


Figure 9. Inside frontispiece of *Il Cathechismo* (1594) Bibliothèque Nationale De France, FRBNF30262333.

2.3.1 Context of the First Version: *Le Cakephachisme* (1593)

Even without a date, city, or printers device, a lot can be gleaned about the first iteration of the satire, *Le Cakephachisme*, simply from its format and paratext. A placard was a common form of cheap printed satire designed to be posted around towns, passed out in crowds, and paraded through the streets. Below the title line is a large image depicting Pantalone and Zanni that is indicative of the role reversal found within the text and its *dialoghi* sources. The pair face off against each other in aggressive stances with their arms raised and their lined faces creased into snarls. Zanni's blunted wooden sword has been replaced with a large pointed blade that draws the eye. It is intended to stand out in public, with the eye-catching image of a popular form of Italian performance that in its sinister portrayal of the *maschere*, informs the viewer straight away how they are to interpret the content below.

Dating the placard is challenging. The reference to the 'grand Messie duc de Parme mort' indicates that by the time the placard was printed, Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, was already dead. This gives us the earliest possible date of 3 December 1592. The confessional stance indicated in the title line is also telling:

> Zanni son disciple enseignment que toute esperance doit estre fondee sur le tre-puissant Roy Philippes, & sur tous les bien-heureux Apostres de la sainte-Union: & qu'il ne faut point faire comme ces Bourbonois, Roiaulx, Anglois, & Protestans qui croyent en Dieu seul, escoutans plustoft Jesus Christ que le tres-sainct Pere.[86]
>
> Zanni his disciple teaches that all hope must be founded on the mighty King Philip, and on all the blessed Apostles of the Holy Union: and that it is not necessary to do like those Bourbonois, Royals, English, & Protestants who believe in God alone, more the slaves of Jesus Christ than the Most Holy Father.

[86] *Le Cakephachisme doctrinal et confession de foy ligueuse, ou le Docteur Pantalon et Zanni son disciple enseignent que toute espérance doit estre fondée sur le tres-puissant Roy Phillipes* (Paris, 1594), frontispiece.

At that point in time, the Bourbonois King of Navarre was still a Protestant, so it must have been produced before his conversion on 25 July 1593. A line of text under the image provides more contextual detail:

> Envoyé au tres illustre et excellent seigneur comte d'Essex, grand escuyer d'Angleterre, conseiller de S.M. en son privé Conseil, et a tres illustre et vertueuse dame sa soeur, Madame Riche, par Charles Cyprien.[87]
>
> Sent to the very illustrious and excellent Earl of Essex, great shield-bearer of England, counsellor in Her Majesty's Privy Council, and to his sister, the very illustrious and virtuous Lady Rich, by Charles Cyprian.

Essex's name immediately identifies this tract with the military efforts in Rouen. To establish himself legitimately on the throne after the last Valois King was assassinated in 1589, Navarre turned immediately to England. Although hesitant at first, Elizabeth recognised the opportunity for a cross-European Protestant confederation that would hinder Spain's northern expansion. Essex was dispatched with troops and funds in August 1591, and the young earl would become an enthusiastic mouthpiece for Henri's increasingly burdensome requests for aid. By the end of the year, however, the relationship between the two monarchs had become strained as Henri's reserved efforts along the northern coast left English garrisons under the frequently absent Essex's command to defend the area alone. When Navarre redirected troops from the English-supported siege of Rouen in January to engage the Duke of Parma's forces crossing into France from the Netherlands, a furious Elizabeth called for Essex's immediate withdrawal. Further requests for aid from the French Ambassador were refused outright, although a contingent of English forces would remain in France after his return.

It is unlikely that the placard was ever 'sent' to Essex, nor was it aimed at an English readership. The wordplay throughout relies on both a good knowledge of French and a familiarity with the

[87] Ibid.

precepts of Italian professional theatre. The deliberate Italianisms, such as 'Zani, aiant moy soing de ton ame', playing on 'havendo io', and 'qu'animaux sont ses apostres?', playing on 'che animali', mirror the ample use of macaronic jokes in *commedia dell'arte* performance.[88] It seems likely that *Le Cakephachisme* was aimed at disheartened French soldiers following the news of the English withdrawal.

2.3.2 Context of the Second Version: *Il Cathechismo* (1593)

The most notable difference between *Le Cakephachisme* and *Il Cathechismo* when considered side-by-side is the change in format and paratext. The single sheet placard has been adapted into a dual-language pamphlet and the overbearing woodcut of the snarling Pantalone and Zanni has been exchanged for a more delicate, Venetian-style woodcut found on the inside front cover (fig. 9). It is unlikely that the block was commissioned especially for this pamphlet – not only does the less imposing image appear to have been produced from two separate blocks, but the carnivalesque role reversal present in the *Le Cakephachisme* woodcut has been lost, and Zanni, armed with the traditional blunted wooden dagger, now stoops low in front of his less-absurdly endowed master, who makes an *invito* beckoning gesture. It is a nice addition to the pamphlet but is by no means intended as the selling point.

The frontispiece provides two crucial clues as to this version's new context. The first is the inclusion of the infamous 'Giesuida' brother Jacques Commolet, a senior League cleric and fervent opponent of any religious settlement that tolerated Protestantism, as the text's translator from a fictitious Italian original. The second is the title *Il Cathechismo*, written in large letters over two lines,

[88] See Dufour, p. 383.

places the text within the ongoing trend in Politique satire for mock-religious headings such as *Les paraboles de cicquot* (1593) (The Parables of Chicot), *Le Testament de la Ligue* (1594) (The Testament of the League), and *Le Plaisant discours d'un Seize catchéchisé* (1593) (The Pleasant Discourse of the Catechised Sixteen) that formed part of a sustained polemical campaign to galvanise warring factions into a shared hostility of the Society of Jesus.[89] Navarre's ascension to the throne had brought France no closer to peace and stability. Even if the King's forces managed to seize control of Paris, the Politiques faced the daunting task of bringing an increasingly divided country together. Reconciliation with the Papacy was key to placating the French Leaguers, who would continue calling French Catholics to arms unless Henri converted. Returning to the Roman fold, however, risked alienating both reformed allies and those Moderates opposed to Papal influence over the Gallican Church. A carefully orchestrated piece of robust political theatre was required, and the Society of Jesus, described by Luc Racaut as the 'champions of ultramontanism', provided the perfect scapegoat. The Jesuits had long been seen by many on both sides as an unwelcome fifth column in French society peddling subjugation to Spain. Their expulsion could therefore mollify one side without risking reprisals from the other. The main obstacle was Navarre himself, who had continually resisted calls from Gallican lawyers to expel the Society for the fear that the Pope would not lift his excommunication. After a failed attempt on his life just one month after ascending the throne, however, the mounting pressure became harder to ignore. The would-be assassin Jean Barrière directly implicated the Society in the plot, admitting under duress that the Jesuit rector of Paris, Father Varade had told him that regicide was 'a good thing' and exhorted him 'to be courageous, to be steadfast'.[90] The Politiques finally had the evidence they needed and seized the opportunity. If, as the Jesuits claimed, they always acted out

[89] Alain Dufour, 'Le Catéchisme Du Docteur Pantalon et de Zani Son Disciple (1594)', in *Aspects de La Propagande Religieuse*, ed. by Henri Meylan (Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1957), pp. 361–76 (p. 362). See also Geoffrey Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[90] Quoted in Eric Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy: Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590-1615)* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2017), p. 101.

of sincere religiosity, then why goad the young Barrière into regicide after Navarre had converted? Despite their protestations to the contrary, the Society were – and had always been – political pawns in the assault on French sovereignty. Charges of hypocrisy, deception, and Machiavellianism flooded the marketplace. 'O ye hipocrites', read a Politique pamphlet attributed to Antoine Arnauld, the prominent lawyer and advisor to Navarre, 'know you not in your consciences that you never desired his conversion, but his estate'.[91]

The accusations were lent further credence by a well-publicised sermon preached by Commolet earlier in February in which he hinted that regicide was justified if it furthered the League's aims.[92] 'If without force he cannot be deposed', Commolet reportedly advised, 'let men take armes against him, if by war it cannot be accomplished, let him be slaine.'[93] The vehemency of the Jesuit had made him a regular target of Politique satire; in 1587, l'Estoile recorded a parody of Rabelais's 'La bibliothèque de Saint-Victor' in his diary entitled 'La bibliothèque de Madame Montpensier' (sister to the Duke and Cardinal of Guise and outspoken supporter of League). The library is said to contain such titles as 'Les grimasses raccourcies du P. Commolet, jésuiste, mises en tablature' (An epitome of the affectations of Father Commolet, Jesuit, carefully set-in musical notation).[94] Following Barrière's testimony, however, Commolet became a symbol of the futility of a concord between warring factions when the Jesuits could still freely interfere in French political affairs.

When the Society were implicated more directly in another attempt on Navarre's life in December 1594, this time by Jean Chastel, the son of a cloth merchant educated at the Jesuit college in Clermont, the Moderates seized the opportunity and called for the expulsion of the Society once and for all. Amongst the mass of anti-Jesuit works put to the press was a tract by the prominent

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[91] *The Fleur de Luce* (title page missing), sig. A3r.
[92] Parmelee, 'Printers, Patrons, Readers, and Spies', pp. 853–72.
[93] Antoine Arnauld, *Le franc discours* (London, 1594; STC (2nd ed.) / 780), p. 31.
[94] Quoted in l'Estoile, *Journal de l'Estoile pour le regne de Henrii III*, ed. by Raymond Lefèvre, 6 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), iii, p. 478. Translated in Salmon, 'French Satire', p. 69.

Royalist Etienne Pasquier, *Le Catéchisme des Jésuites* (translated into English as *The Jesuite displayed* the same year), a transcript of an oration to the parliament in 1564 in which the author argued against the Brotherhood's initial incorporation into the University of Paris. Before the League was even established, argues Pasquier, Commolet had compared Navarre's predecessor to the biblical and Roman tyrants Holofernes, Moab, and Nero in a sermon. Pasquier went as far as to blame Commolet personally for Henri III's assassination as he and Navarre prepared for the siege of Paris in 1588. Preaching before League gentlemen imprisoned at the Bastile, the Jesuit exclaimed 'a thousand impudent blasphemies' after which the men began plotting 'the murther which they executed afterwards'.[95] By assaulting the King's body – the body of the institution that gave French Catholicism legitimacy – native-born Jesuits were, in essence, no longer French. The English copy of Arnauld's oration to the house in July 1593 cast any moderate who still held Leaguer sympathies as a Spaniard in league with the Jesuits: 'Oh sir, the Jesuites would have bin banished out of France long agoe,' he writes, 'had there bin no other Spaniards amongst us but such as are natifes and borne beyond the mountaines of the Pirene.[96] The presence of the Jesuits was not only antithetical to peace, it also compromised the Gallican identity that the Politiques had worked so tirelessly to construct.

Il Cathechismo, printed some time in 1594, takes issue with the Jesuit Colleges in particular. It was here that the Brothers translated the hearts of young French students like Jean Chastel, stripping them of their French identity and inciting them to treason. *An Answere to the last tempest and villanie of the League* (1590), an English translation of a lost anti-League polemical, draws on contemporary opposition to the barbarism of Spanish imperialism in the Americas to denounce the Jesuits as Phillip's conquistadors bent on the subjugation of sovereignty. Their Seminaries are:

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[95] Ibid, p. 19.

[96] Antoine Arnauld, *The arrainment of the whole society of Jesuits in France, holden in the honourable court of Parliament in Paris, the 12. and 13. of Iuly. 1594 wherein is laied open to the world, that, howsoever this new sect pretendeth matter of religion, yet their whole travailes, endevours, and bent, is but to set up the kingdome of Spaine* (London, 1594; STC (2nd ed.) / 779.5), p. 24v.

> the very Colonies of Spanyardes, or rather the very leaven of Spaine, unseasonably brought into this realme, which within these fewe yeeres hath empaired and sowred our dowe, and under a Pharisaicall face and countenaunce, made our Cities and Townes in Fraunce become Spanish.[97]

Maintaining the Colleges would only lead to more violence as the Brothers indoctrinated more students against their monarch with the creed of the League. In his oration, Arnauld bemoaned how the Jesuits 'impoison' the students at the Sorbonne, who would rather 'spend the money their parentes sende them in dishonest houses [ie. seminaries] then give it to their Tutors, that all the yeere long travaile for them.'[98] These houses acted as a kind-of foreign territory, where in the manner of the Ancient Romans who brought the French nobility up in their Gallic capital Autun, the Jesuits 'imprint the name' of Phillip and his government on 'the tender minds of our children'.[99]

The form of *Il Cathechismo* plays on this same discourse and the notion of a corrupting education. Here we have a single-sheet placard translated by a known conspirator and Jesuit into a dual-language manual, an increasingly common method of self-taught language learning in the period, intended to instruct – or rather indoctrinate – the reader in the heretical creed of the League as they try to learn Italian. The dialogue enacts a confrontation between pupil and tutor using two stock characters from the *commedia dell'arte*, the cultural manifestation of the ultramontanism at the heart of France's woes. The underpaid lecturer 'dottor Pantalon' questions Zanni over his sudden forbearance from making 'il Segno della Croce' (the sign of the cross) and touching 'acqua benedetta' (holy water). Zanni, perpetually foolish and impossible to educate, then proceeds to inform his master of all his sacrilegious indulgences in carnivalesque terms having since learned of the 'sanctissima unione'/'trè-

[97] *An Answere to the last tempest and villanie of the League* (London, 1590; STC (2nd ed.) / 662), p. 64.
[98] Arnauld, *The Arrainement*, p. 28v.
[99] Ibid, p. 16r.

saincte vniò' (the most sanctified union/the most sacred union) of Spain, the Papacy, and the Guise, and rejected 'gli Politici, che credono in dio solo'/'les Politiques qui e croyent qu'n Dieu Seul' (the Politiques, who believe in God alone).[100]

2.3.3 Context of the Third Version: The Divels Legend (1595)

At some point after the original *Le Cakephachisme* was posted and paraded around northern France, the French placard made its way into the hands of the London printer Thomas Gosson. The circumstances leading to this acquisition are unclear; disparate records of the international book market suggest a more haphazard system reliant on networks of personal and business correspondents rather than an established, dedicated cross-European apparatus. Publishers often relied on literary agents obtaining information, letters, and books from English subjects residing abroad, or on merchants bringing back published news items in their cargoes. Sir Edward Stafford, the English Ambassador to France between 1583 and 1590, was the most consistent purveyor of French language political works to English printers during this period. Following his withdrawal in 1591, the intelligencer William Emro, *alias* Walter Orme, became the most regular source of politique propaganda, and maintained a frequent correspondence with Burghley.

However, the acquisition of this work seems entirely opportunistic. Neither Danter nor Gosson were involved in this propaganda campaign, and nor did they have these kinds of contacts. Rather, Danter's 'scarecrow presse', as it was referred to in Gabriel Harvey's *Pierces Supererogation*

[100] Giuvenal Borgetto (pseud.), *Il Cathechismo, dottrinale, e confession di fede Spagnola, che il dottor Pantalone&Zany suo discepolo insegnano ch'ogni fede, ogni speranza deue essere fondata sopra quel potentissimo re Filippo,&sopra tutti gli Apostoli della santa Lega, che non bisogna far come gli Politici, che credono in Dio solo. Composto dal Reuerendo Padre Giuvenal Borgetto Giesuida, e mandato à tutti quanti Signori&Signore di Venetia per Carlo Cypriano. Tradotto de la lengua Italiana in Franceze per il padre Commolet* (Paris[?], 1593/4), p. 16.

(1593), was stuffed with frivolities rather than substance. The same could be said of Gosson's varied outputs, of which several ballads, plays, local news pamphlets, and the occasional pirated religious work survive.[101] This particular work can be numbered amongst a handful of foreign news item from the same year that suggest a brief and clearly unsuccessful foray into the international news market.

By 1595, of course, the the two placards collated in the pamphlet were also of diminished topicality.[102] Whilst hostilities with the Spanish continued, the League's support base rapidly dwindled after Henri's conversion put a Catholic King on the throne. However, there appears to have been little attention paid to contemporising the text other than altering the title so that the dedication to Essex and Lady Rich was replaced with 'the Gentlemen of *England*' and the reference to the House of Bourbon in the title replaced with the less specific 'Brytans' in order to recentre the '*Hugonites*' mentioned in the body of the text as reformed Britannic brethren after Navarre's betrayal. The author is also mistakenly given as 'Charles Cyprian' on the last page, although the frontispiece lists 'Juvenal Borget' as the writer and Cyprian as the exporter.

While the intelligent use of paratext and form in the previous versions was abandoned when the satire was reprinted as a quarto pamphlet, the appeal of the placard was clearly its depictions of the *commedia dell'arte*. As Christopher Cairns has noted, this woodcut was 'the only Italian theatrical image pre-dating 1600 that can be assigned to an English printer', and the scarcity of this iconography no doubt informed Gosson's decision to purchase the original.[103] It was almost certainly not commissioned in Danter's workshop; his pirated edition of Thomas Harman's *The groundword of conny-catching* contains a collage of woodcuts from popular works of cony-catching fiction, including Robert

[101] Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces supererogation or A new prayse of the old asse* (London, 1593; STC (2nd ed.) / 12903), sig. C1r.
[102] The partnership did not last into the following year and neither party appears to have established themselves in the foreign book trade thereafter Of the five news items they produced together in 1595, three were translated news items. These are *Newes from Rome and Vienna, touching the present proceedinges of the Turkes against the Christians in Austria* (London, 1595; STC (2nd ed.) / 21294); *The true copie, of a letter vvritten to a gentleman of vvorship in England Lamentably discoursing the crueltie of Bashavv Mahomet, high admirall to the great Turke* (London, 1595; (2nd ed.) / 15115.5); and *The Divels Legend.*
[103] Quote in Lea, i, p. 230.

Greene's *A notable discovery of coosenage* and *The defence of conny catching* (figs. 10, 11, & 12). As was common practice in the period, these images are mirrored in Danter's text where the engraver worked with the Greene pamphlets in front of him, copying them directly onto the woodblock which, when printed, would reverse the image.[104] The woodcut on the cover of *The Divels Legend*, on the other hand, faces the same way, is the same in proportion and detail, and appears to have been broken in two so as to fit the frontispiece of a quarto-sized pamphlet and provide value for money as separate stock woodcuts.[105]

It was not unheard of for printers and booksellers to import woodcuts with their accompanying texts at additional cost. In the epistle to the 1619 translation of Father Louis Richeome's *Tableaux Sacrés*, a book of devotional iconography, the bookseller excuses the absence of the actual 'Holy pictures' as he 'found the stamps so over-worne by meanes of a second Edition, which came foorth at the same time, that I thought the Pictures not worth the buying.'[106] A large woodcut depicting a form of theatre that most had heard of but few had seen was clearly worth the expense, however, which, considering the reduced topicality of the actual satire, may not have even been that costly. His faith in the potential of this pamphlet to make a profit in the mercenary world of cheap print was such that, while the body of the text was published in quarto, the frontispiece was a full folio sheet folded in half. Though costly, it had the additional advantage of taking up far more space than the quarto and octavo frontispieces pinned to the boards and posts that advertised the booksellers' wares in St Paul's Churchyard and would have no doubt piqued the interest of passers-by. It is also worth noting that

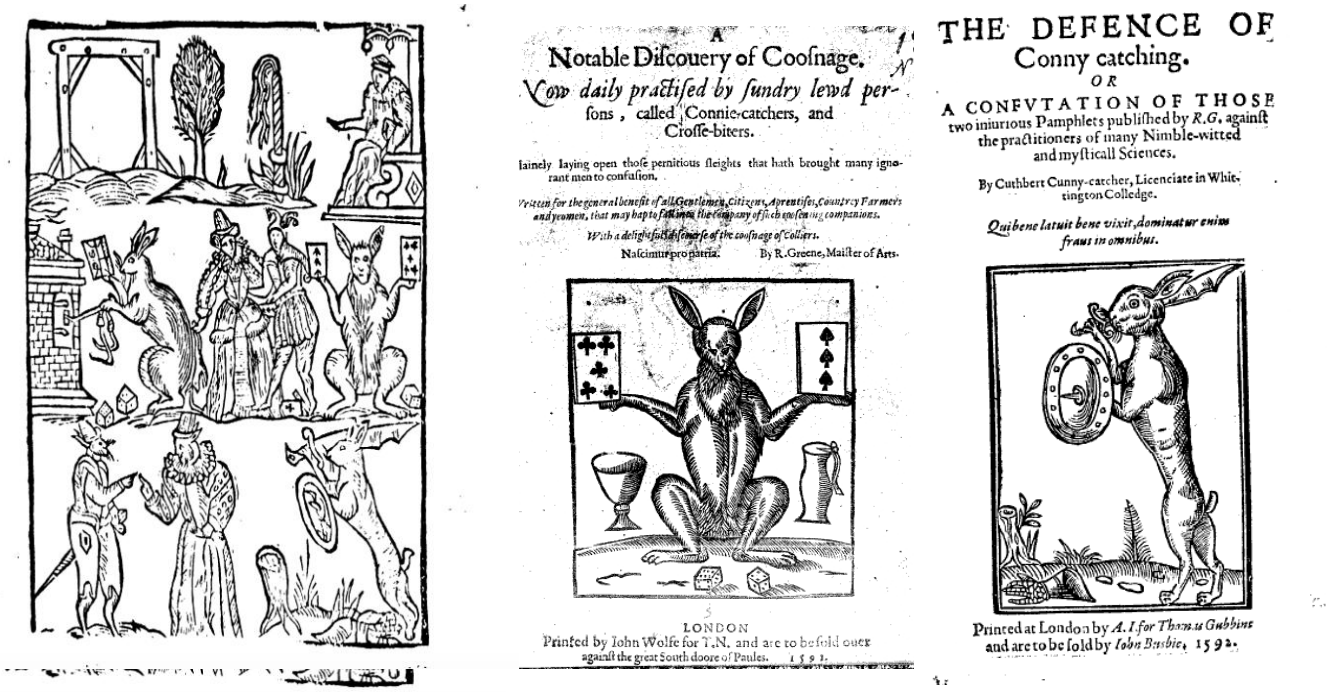
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[104] See Nandini Das, 'To Catch a Cony-catcher: The Making of the Groundwork of Conny-Catching,' (Unpublished MPhil Bibliographical Essay: University of Cambridge, 2000).

[105] Though unusual for booksellers in the period, Gosson appears to have owned the majority of the woodcuts and devices used in the texts that bear his name, despite not operating a printing house. His son Henry, who took over the business from his recently widowed mother Margaret upon being made a member of the Stationer's Company in 1607, inherited both his father's copyrights and devices. The afterlife of the *Le Cakephachisme* woodcut will be discussed in Chapter Four, pp. 232-235.

[106] Louis Richeome, *Holy pictures of the mysticall figures of the most holy sacrifice and sacrament of the Eucharist* (London, 1619; STC 210220, sig. A2r.

Gosson did not obtain the impressive wood block of Harlequin and the astrolabe from the *Astrologie Nouvelle* placard and appears to have considered the translation of this enigmatic tract less likely to sell on its own.


A
Notable Diſcouery of Cooſnage.
Now daily practiſed by ſundry lewd perſons, called Connie-catchers, and Croſſe-biters.
lainely laying open thoſe pernitious ſleights that hath brought many ignorant men to confuſion.
Written for the generall benefit of all Gentlemen, Citizens, Aprentiſes, Country Farmers and yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of ſuch lewd companions.
With a delightfull diſcourſe of the cooſnage of Colliers.
Naſcimur pro patria. By R. Greene, Maiſter of Arts.
LONDON
Printed by Iohn Wolfe for T.N. and are to be ſold ouer againſt the great South doore of Paules. 1591.
THE DEFENCE OF
Conny catching.
OR
A CONFVTATION OF THOSE
two iniurious Pamphlets publiſhed by R.G. againſt the practitioners of many Nimble-witted and myſticall Sciences.
By Cuthbert Cunny-catcher, Licenciate in Whitington Colledge.
Quibene latuit bene vixit, dominatur enim fraus in omnibus.
Printed at London by A. I. for Thomas Gubbins and are to be ſold by Iohn Busbie, 1592.

Figures 10, 11, & 12. Woodcut image on the cover of Danter's edition of Thomas Harman's *The groundword of conny-catching* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 12789.5); the frontispiece of Robert Greene's *A Notable Discouery of Coosnage* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 12279.7); and Greene's *The Defence of Conny Catching* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 5656).

Despite this apparent interest in the *commedia dell'arte*, many of the playful puns and allusions to the *arte* are lost in translation. The macaronic gags that the *compagni* were required to integrate into their performances to survive migration both within Italy and across the alps often register in print representations of the *maschere* in France during the period. The *opuscoli* (pamphlets) produced in Venice in the 1570s and 1580s that focused on the trials and tribulations of the Zanni were written in a mock-Bergamasque tongue; Martinelli's *Response di Gestes* includes a number of Italianisms and

bastardisations that the nineteenth-century editor Emile Picot once described disdainfully as 'Francais fort mal'.[107] An early seventeenth-century anti-Jesuit tract entitled *Passe-partout des Peres Jésuites* (1606) by César du Pleix also plays on the reliance of Italian troupes on multi-lingual wordplay, placing what Charles Lenient referred to as a kind of 'facetious macaronic prose variegated with French and Latin verses intermixed with burlesque scenes' in the mouths of Harlequin and Pantalone.[108] Despite the changes in paratext, format, confession and political motivation occurring when *Le Cakephachisme* was translated into *Il Cathechismo*, this wordplay remained an integral quality of the text. In *Il Cathechismo*, Zanni makes several punning references to 'macceroni', 'Maccaronée', 'macheron', or 'macqueron':

> Padrone la mattina havendo invocato il creatore di Macheroni, & salutato il divin fiasco & satisfatto al mio carissimo ventre, io pondo tutta la fede mia.
>
> Mon maistre, ayant au matin invoqué le Createur des Macquerons, & salvé la dive bouteille, & satisfait au trescher vetre, J'ay mis toute ma foy.[109]
>
> In the morning, Master, having invocated the creator of Macaroni, & saluted the divine flagon, & satisfied my dearest belly, I ponder my faith.

In *Le Cakephachisme*, the macaronic/macaroni pun is used by Pantalone, who asks Zanni to explain how is it that he has become a 'grand docteur en la Maccaronée espagnole'. Macaronic speech includes something 'foreign', transplanted (or kept, in the case of translation) from one linguistic framework into another in order evoke a particular sentiment. Here, the unknown author plays on the idea of the external invading the familiar; the Italian or Spanish language invades the French discourse, in the way the Papal State and Phillip II posed an unwanted presence and influence in and over French political

[107] For example, 'Zanni aiant moy soing de ton ame…' plays on 'havendo io', and 'qu'animaux sont ses apostres?' plays on 'che animali'. See Emile Picot, *Les Italiens in France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Imprimeries Gounouilhou, 1901), page range inaccessible.
[108] Charles Lenient, *La Satire en France Ou La Littérature Militante Au XVIe Siecle*, 2 vols (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1886), ii, p. 196.
[109] Borgetto, *Il Cathechismo*, sig. A2r.

affairs through their religious enforcers, the Jesuits. As a good pun must, the wordplay works on another level: the League has provided the gluttonous Zanni with metaphorical macaroni, false doctrinal knowledge, and in accepting he has become an accomplice to the Spanish Crown's macaronic presence in French political life. The title '*Le Cakephachisme*' works in a similar way. It is a questionable portmanteau of Catechism, Cacocphonie, the English word 'cake', again relating to the voracious appetite of the servant mask for food/League propaganda, and read phonetically, caca, relating to the often-scatological hijinks of the *arte* servant and the idea that the Zanni is in this case figuratively consuming shit.

This kind of wordplay was lost when rendered into English. The macaronic '*Cakephachisme*' is replaced with the ham-fisted 'Cachephocysme', missing the original English language pun on the Zanni's gastronomic motivations in the *scenari*. This same erasure of the servant's insatiable hunger is found when the 'grand docteur en la Maccaronée Espagnole' is translated with a qualifier 'thou art become a great Doctor in the Spanish Macharon, or the divels golden Legend'.[110] Macaroni, a delicacy that would not enter the English culinary imagination until a few years later, clearly would not registed with an English readership.[111] Instead, the nonsensical 'Macharon' is qualified by repeating the title: the 'divels golden legend'.

Though lazily edited and commercially driven, the inclusion of this title and qualifier indicates an attempt to contemporise the tract by evoking a cross-cultural anti-Jesuit proselytising tradtion. Even with the loss of their great Protestant ally, the English still recognised the value of Politique propaganda for its depictions of strife caused by Jesuit interference as they sought to widen the rift between covert English Catholics and the Society missionaries. In a similar fashion to French Catholics concerned with a semi-autonomous Gallican Church, many English adherents to the old

[110] Borget, *The Divels Legend*, sig. A3r.
[111] See Chapter Three, fn236.

faith saw the Spanish and Papal-funded Jesuit mission as a challenge to both political legitimacy and the Church hierarchy already in place. Simmering tensions would boil over in 1598 after the Jesuits elected one of their own, George Blackwell, as the Archpriest of England, resulting in a print controversy between Catholic factions that Burghley would secretly orchestrate. On 19 August 1594, Emro wrote to the Lord High Treasurer from Paris advising that he publish both Arnauld's oration to Parliament and the popular *Satire Ménippée*, the lengthy satire mentioned above that revolves around the events of January 1593, when deputies of the League estates gathered in Paris for the Etats Généraux. They had convened at the request of the Duke de Mayenne in the hopes of electing the Spanish Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia as the heir to the French throne. Throughout, the Jesuits hold clandestine meetings with violent fanatics in attendance. By reading these texts, wrote Emro, 'the world might see for what end the said [Jesuit] priests have been sent, as it were to destroy the world'.[112] Burghley clearly appreciated their value; Arnauld's oration was soon after translated and printed as *The Arrainement* by Clerk of the Signet, Charles Yetsweirt, and the *Satire* would appear the following year under the title *A pleasant satyre or poesie* in the shop of Thomas Man, a bookseller who worked closely with several printers involved in the Archpriest Controversy including Felix Kingston, Richard Field, and Adam Islip.

Attuned to the demands of the market, Gosson gave his text a distinctly anti-Jesuit flare by interpolating the title line *The Divels Legend*. It refers to the 'Golden Legend' (*Legenda aurea*, or *Legenda sanctorum*), a thirteenth-century catholic hagiographic anthology by Jacobus de Varagine, popularised in England in the late fifteenth century by William Caxton's translation. This illustrated compilation of apocrypha concerning venerated saints played a large role in late medieval autodidacticism and the religious instruction administered by lay clerics.[113] Yet early continental humanists criticised the text's

[112] 'W. Emro, [alias Walter Orme] to Lord Burghley', 30 August 1594, TNA, London, SP 12/249 f. 214.
[113] For a concise history of the *Legenda*, see Tom Devonshire Jones, Linda Murray, and Peter Murray, 'The Golden Legend', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Art and Architecture Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

use of source materials, and its mythologising of the early church. The emphasis on the supremacy of the papacy became the subject of derision in reformed and moderate thinking, and 'The Golden Legend' or the '*Legenda aurea*' quickly became a byword for the superstitious stories utilised by the Roman Church to advance the political cause of the Papacy.[114] Although the *Legenda* had fallen out of fashion due to its more 'bizarre episodes' prior to the Protestant reformation, it was roundly rejected by most Catholic authorities during the Counter-Reformation as hagiography became an 'exact science'.[115] All the same, it provided Protestants with a useful ideological reference point for the ridiculousness of the old faith. To the reformed English, the extra-scriptural accounts of popes, saints, and miracles were relics of a bygone era. The 'Golden Legend of leaden lies is no more current', wrote Robert Dallington; 'Men are no longer babes to take such Counters for good paiment, or so simple to beleeue they see a man in the Moone.'[116] This is echoed in the title of Stephen Batman's 1577 descriptive handbook of the symbols and iconography of classical deities, *The golden booke of the leaden goddess*. In George Whetstone's *The English mirror* (1586), described on the frontispiece as 'A worke safely, and necessarie to be read of euerie good subiect', the Roman Church's stifling of biblical exegesis is presented as 'a damnable policy to suppresse truth, which by disputation breaketh out of cōtrouersies.' The word of God is kept from the people while the 'popish historiographers will let you sée paltry stuffe'.[117]

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780199680276.013.0772>. See also the introduction to the recent edition, Jacobus de Varagine, Eamon Duffy, and William Granger Ryan, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, Course Book (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), ix-xx; and Morgan Ring, 'Annotating the Golden Legend in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 72 (2019), 816–62 (pp. 817-18).

[114] Philippe Desan, 'Nationalism and History in France during the Renaissance', *Rinascimento*, 24 (1984), 261-288 (p. 275). For a sustained assessment of the cultivation of French nationhood in jurisprudence, see Charlotte C. Wells, *Law and Citizenship in Early Modern France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 37-50.

[115] de Varagine, et al, xx.

[116] Robert Dallington, *Aphorismes ciuill and militarie amplified with authorities, and exemplified with historie, out of the first quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine* (London, 1613; STC (2nd ed.) / 6197), p. 58.

[117] George Whetstone, *The English myrror A regard wherein al estates may behold the conquests of enuy* (London, 1586; STC (2nd ed.) / 25336), p. 177.

Despite the Jesuits also removing the *Legenda* from their hagiographical canon, the text would become closely associated with the Society in French and English polemic in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. Edward Aggas's translation of Pasquier's *Catéchisme des Jésuites* (1594) mocked the Society founder Ignatius of Loyola who, 'not knowing one Latin worde', gave up life as a soldier to become a lay preacher 'beeing trained onely in the reading of the golden legend.'[118] In 1581, the year of Robert Persons and Edmund Campion's well-publicised mission to England, the Norwich preacher Nathaniel Woodes penned a morality play entitled *The Conflict of Conscience* in which the illiterate northern priest Caconos explains to Satan's son Tyranny why he gives more credence to the *Legenda* than the New Testament: while 'the hely Pope hymselfe is authorized' the Golden Legend, the 'Bayble in part is prohibited'.[119] Tyranny admires the Priest's subscription to such an atheistical tract:

> Tyranny: What? this Parson, seemeth connyng to be,
> And as farre as I see, in a good vniformytie:
> Yea, he is well red, in that golden Legend.[120]

The pun on the Jesuit priest's name is self-evident. The same year as Wood's play, Henry Binneman printed a selection of tales from Henri Estienne's 1566 *Apologie pour Hérodote* under the more fervent title *The stage of popish toyes conteining both tragicall and comicall partes: played by the Romishe roysters of former age*. Estienne's thinly veiled attack on the Roman Church was intended to show that the stories of antiquity are no more implausible than those circulating in modern times. The clergy are routinely mocked for their lurid deceptions, and transubstantiation depicted as a kind-of Rabelaisian cannibalism. In the epistle to his English translation, George North explains that the text has been printed because 'the

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[118] Etienne Pasquier, *The Jesuite displayed. Containing the original and proceedings of the Iesuites, togither [sic] with the fruites of their doctrine* (London, 1594; STC (2nd ed.), / 19448), sig. E1r.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Nathaniel Woodes, *An excellent new commedie intitutled, The conflict of conscience contayninge a most lamentable example of the dolefull desperation of a miserable worldlinge* (London, 1581; STC (2nd ed.) / 25966.5), sig. D4v.

auntient and opposite enimie the Pope, hath foysted in among vs Petifoggers [ie. the Jesuits], who (like sheete stealers, tinckers, or Connyskin buyers) creepe in corners to vtter their trash', and it is necessary to display their 'Couchanelle [bright red pigment, ie. clerical] colours'.[121] He takes particular issue with the 'damnable blasphemie against God and his Saints … yt booke entituled *Legenda Aurea*'.[122] The tales of friars and priests told by the Jesuits to demonstrate the holiness of the popes were 'so far from Decorum, that if the reader be tender harted or squeamish stomacked, it wil make them Seasicke to peruse them.'[123]

As the title of North's translation suggests, English reformers saw the Golden Legend as part of the Catholic theatre of distraction. The controversialist Thomas Stoughton included the Golden Legend amongst papist playmaking and rites used to beguile the laity. 'Certenly meruaile why plaies, interludes, and comedies, were in such request in the time of poperie, sith in their golden legend they might daily read or heare, and in their exercises of their religion they did daily see such pleasant things, as would make better sport then all the plaies in the world.'[124] This association with stagecraft was compounded by stories of the importance of playmaking to the pedagogy at the Jesuit Colleges overseas, and by factual accounts of priests disguising themselves to cross borders undetected; Persons arrived in England in 1580 dressed as a vagabond soldier, whilst Campion arrived disguised as a jewel merchant.[125] On at least one occasion, as noted in the previous chapter, an informant reported to

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[121] George North, *The stage of popish toyes conteining both tragicall and comicall partes: played by the Romishe roysters of former age* (London, 1581; STC (2nd ed.) / 10552), epistle.
[122] Ibid, p. 64.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Thomas Stoughton, *A generall treatise against poperie and in defence of the religion by publike authoritie professed in England and other churches reformed* (London, 1598; STC (2nd ed.) / 23316), p. 84.
[125] Sarah Johanesen, '"That Silken Priest": Catholic Disguise and Anti-Popery on the English Mission (1569–1640)', *Historical Research*, 93.259 (2020), 38–51 (p. 42); Graves, Michael A. R., 'Campion, Edmund [St Edmund Campion] (1540–1581), Jesuit and Martyr', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4539>. For more on the wider impact of Jesuit performances on the development of the Italian professional theatre, see Bernadette Majorana, 'Commedia Dell'Arte and the Church', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 133-48 (p. 138); and Natalie Crohn Schmitt, *Performing Commedia Dell'Arte, 1570-1630* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), p. 31.

Francis Bacon in 1591 of the imminent arrival of several 'espyalls and intellegencers' from the College of Douai dressed as 'Italian tumblers'.

Gosson capitalised on this association when adapting a situated French political satire for an English readership. The title actually works to dampen the topicality of the placards as it mythologises the subversion of France to the Papacy during the Wars of Religion. Both texts together become perverse parables in a heretical hagiography, *The Divels Legend*, warning against the dangers of factionalism spread by Jesuit priests. While the intelligent use of paratext, form, and macaronic wordplay is lost indicating a less engaged familiarity with the *commedia dell'arte*, we find the manifestation of an anxiety here that resonates across borders and cultures. An invasive, strange, and threatening ultramontanism was coming to England to teach dissent.

2.4 Conclusion

Even if Dallington was not directly aware of the satirical contexts of the *commedia dell'arte* when censuring the Bourbon King for his overfamiliarity, the English had inherited a textual version of the form that was layered with satirical associations. France has long been seen by historians as the conduit through which England's access to the innovations of continental Europe flowed, and the *commedia dell'arte* was no exception. It was in Paris and Versailles that Lord Buckhurst and Lord Lincoln first witnessed performances by the renowned *i Gelosi* and *i Naseli* troupes, and it was Paris that players would disembark from and return to after attempting to secure lucrative patronage at the English court. However, the importance of textual exposure and French satirical print to English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* had, until now, received little attention, with scholarly focus on theatre-to-theatre contact putting inordinate emphasis on the transnational travels of the Italian professional

troupes as the primary means of contact. This chapter emphasises the need to reappraise how we engage with a multifaceted cultural phenomenon. When looking for evidence of engagement with a cohesive dramaturgy, it is important to remember that England's encounter with the *commedia dell'arte* consisted of piecemeal translations. Nashe's Harlequin, frequently presented as a harmless figure of mirth – Kempe's Italian cousin in a parallel secular tradition, actually celebrates Martin's schismatic activities as a victory for the Catholic League, and in doing so resonates with earlier, sinister French iterations.

As literary scholars, it is frustrating when a source cannot be located to analyse for similarities, differences, and alterations that might point towards how and why the translator chose to (re)frame aspects of the foundation text in a new linguistic and cultural setting. In Nashe's case, it is possible that he did not draw inspiration from one source – textual or otherwise – at all, and his Harlequin reflects a diffuse cultural inheritance. *The Divels Legend*, however, not only gives credence to the idea that the English engaged with the *commedia dell'arte* through French satirical print, its several earlier iterations present a rare opportunity to both trace and compare how the *commedia dell'arte* faired as it was translated across confessional, linguistic, and political lines. Whilst *Le Cakephachisme* undergoes political and confessional edits to make a more immediately biting satire in *Il Cathechismo*, their topicality is diminished in the English translation, and the macaronic word play lost. Light alterations were made to reframe the satire as a general attack on theological barrenness of Catholicism and the idolatrous spectacles at the centre of Jesuit evangelism.

Such records, then, are not simply evidence of exposure. A closer analysis of the texts themselves and the immediate cultures through which they moved reveals a lot about not only how the *commedia dell'arte* arrived in England, but how it was shaped by processes of translation along the way. Harlequin behaves as a transcultural token, an embodiment of strange, invasive, and destructive forces that threatened religious, political, and cultural stability. Yet as seen with Eliot's Harlequin,

these tokens were not impervious to the effects of travel – culture is, after all, porous, and does not survive repeat appropriation unscathed. To make his *maschera* match the countenance of the champion of Italian culture, John Florio, Eliot transforms his nose from a pig's snout to a hawk's beak. The next chapter will focus on these kinds of appropriations, and what happens when the English take ownership of these tokens, and inscribe them with new, situated meaning.

3 Appropriating the *Commedia*: Zanni Naturalised

Luke Hutton, a Cambridge student turned highwayman and advocate for prison reform, was evidently struck by *The Divels Legend*. The year after the tract appeared in Gosson's shop, Hutton's subversive cony-catching pamphlet, *The Blacke Dogge of Newgate* (1596), came to press. The second half of the text contains a dialogue between Hutton the 'Author' and 'Zawny' (Zanni) whilst both languish confined in Newgate.[126] The author entreats the servant to divulge the 'knaverie, villanie, robberie, and Cunnicatching' practiced by the 'worste members in a common-wealth' in an opening invocation that closely resembles Pantalone's plea for Zanni to 'tell me what beast is that which thou callest the holy league'. [127] What follows, however, is far from a titillating exposé of the violent, merciless creed of London's criminal underworld. Having witnessed first-hand the conditions of the City's prisons and the perpetual destitution of its inmates, Hutton focuses less on the mechanics of the crime and more on the inequalities and corruption that led to criminality and imprisonment. Zawny is not presented as a grotesque, insatiable servant of the League, but a 'poor fellow' who 'lacks eloquence' confined not 'for any offence I have committed' but 'rather kept in to bribe' the guards for his cony-catching masters.[128] Though hesitant to help at first ('I am a poore man', he repeats, and 'I wil name no man, for if they should be named, their friends would be angry'), he eventually concedes, concluding that whilst all would agree that the gallows were 'fit for these Cunnycatchers', revealing their methods but protecting their names may affect their 'amendement'.[129]

It is unlikely that Hutton was aware of the print *dialoghi* that informed *Il Cathechismo* and *Le Cakephachisme*, and *The Blacke Dogge* has none of the 'Rabelasian hyperbole, the carnivalesque fantasy

[126] Luke Hutton, *The blacke dogge of Newgate both pithie and profitable for all readers* (London, 1596; STC (2nd ed.) / 14029).
[127] Hutton, sig. D2; Juvenall Borgetto (pseud.), *The divels legend. or: a learned cachephochysme* (London, 1595; STC 3388), sig. A2v.
[128] Hutton, sig. D2v.
[129] Ibid.

of class reversal' that Robert Henke identifies as a key feature of the mode.[130] Moreover, there is nothing in this local, colloquial, and topographically rich text that aligns Zawny with the Italian servant of the *commedia dell'arte* other than his name. The question, then, is what inspired Hutton to place his impassioned plea for a fairer penal system in the mouth of an Italian *maschera* extracted from a translated French satire?

The previous chapter observed how the piecemeal processes of translation that conveyed the *commedia dell'arte* into the English cultural landscape inscribed its constituent parts with certain associations. The representation of Arlecchino in English print was shown to have been weighty with significance from its previous textual iterations in the satirical polemics of the French Wars of Religion. Encapsulating shared anxieties over political, religious, and cultural infiltration by southern interlopers, the mask functioned as a transcultural token that could be moulded to the specifications of a new cultural framework and new political moment. This chapter shifts its focus from how modes of translation delineated the parameters of usage, to how repeated appropriation of less situated tokens fostered new, culturally specific associations and situated nuances – creating, through a process of transculturation, something new, simultaneously English and strange. We have seen this to some extent with Eliot's Harlequin, although here the focus will fall on the Zanni, who demands our attention for two reasons. First, the abundance of allusions to the servant mask in English print across the period in question suggests that he was a far more evocative presence in the imagination of the English readers and writers than his progeny Arlecchino. The second, interconnected reason is that a study of Zanni underscores the complexity of English interaction with Italian professional theatre in the period. The servant mask was not the exclusive property of the *commedia dell'arte* but generic stock that could be summoned into a variety of scenes in a variety of forms and genres both on stage and

[130] Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia Dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 127.

in print. An abbreviation or dialectical pronunciation of *Giovanni*, Zanni was, much like the English John, a name for a common man, a rustic, and later a servant or porter who had come down from the hilly regions of Lombardy to find work as a casual labourer in the markets and piazzas of Italy's northern metropolises.[131] Though chiefly associated with Venice, he would become a fixture of urban life in the contemporary imagination, a synecdoche of the peasant class and the hunger, insecurity, and abuse that were cornerstones of the peasant experience throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He was to be found (in some shape or form) in anthropological surveys of urban life; in print *constrasti* and *dialoghi*; in the fully scripted plays of the academic *commedia erudita*; on the trestle stages of marketplace mountebanks and quacks; in carnival revelries; and in both the small itinerant groups and the grand touring companies of the *commedia dell'arte*. With the transalpine reach of the Italian renaissance, the Zanni found traversing form and genre in Cinquecento Italy would eventually journey by foot and in print into the cultural lexicon of different regions across Europe. Marked by this versatility, Zanni presented writers with an opportunity for experimentation, and was inscribed with new resonances when appropriated into new contexts to articulate certain anxieties and concerns.

There has been a substantial amount of innovative scholarship on the servant mask in recent years. Robert Henke's analysis of sixteenth-century Italian print has shown the degree to which Zanni skirted between oral and literary cultures in the period.[132] A recent essay collection edited by Anna Maria Testaverde brings together in-depth studies of the early modern Zanni that cover subjects including etymology, routines, migration overseas, and adaptation by enterprising *comici*. In the English context, however, there is a tendency to focus exclusively on how the *commedia dell'arte* servant shaped

[131] Claudia Gotti, 'Ad Guadagnandum Facit et Trottare Rialto Lavorati Bergamaschi Nel Porto-Mercato Di Venezia', in *Zani Mercenario Della Piazza Europea*, ed. by Anna Maria Testaverde (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 2002), pp. 64–80 (pp. 64-66).
[132] Henke, p. 106-136.

the development and/or performance practices of the English clown.[133] There are, after all, striking similarities between the two comic figures. As Sara Romersberger notes, placing Shakespeare's clowns side-by-side with their 'clear-cut cousins' in the *commedia dell'arte* reveals that both are: bumpkins, clods, rustics, and 'honest fellows' who are foreigners in the metropolis and strangers to the metropolitan way of doing things; always hungry, eating, or looking for food; spewing malapropisms and miscarrying orders; tripping, leaping, bounding, and falling; being beaten or complaining of abuse; speaking in a colloquial prose that amuses and bemuses those using a higher register; and metatheatrically breaking down the boundaries of play with audience interaction.[134]

Opportunities for the transmission of such characteristics are well-documented. Louis B. Wright's 1926 essay brought attention to Will Kempe's travels to the continent, both solo and with the Earl of Leicester's Men, where he probably 'came under the influence of the commedia dell'arte clowns and probably added commedia dell'arte tricks to his repertoire of native clownery.'[135] Paris seems to have served as a particularly important contact zone for this type of exchange. Sophie Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer cites a 1599 entry in Thomas Platter's diary in her study of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in which he records how the 'Italian and English actors come to [the Hôtel]'.[136] Of course, this kind of documented contact does not necessarily suggest the English Clown was constructed from an Italian tradition. Rather, taking similarities in characterisation as evidence of a comic inheritance

[133] It is worth noting that Siro Ferrone's essay on the migration of the servant mask in *Zani Mercenario della Piazza Europea* tells the story of Drusiano Martinelli's travels to England. See 'Lione, Anversa, Londra, Parigi: 1576-1578. Il viaggio dei comici', in *Zani Mercenario della Piazza Europea*, ed. by Anna Maria Testaverde (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 2004), pp. 97-130 (pp. 119-124). For several key contributions to scholarship on the Zanni mask in an English context, see Wilhelm Marschall, 'Das Sir Thomas Moore Manuskript Und Die Englische Commedia Dell'arte', *Anglia*, 1928, 193–241; Ninian Mellamphy, 'Pantaloons and Zanies: Shakespeare's "Apprenticeship" to Italian Professional Comedy Troupes', *New York Literary Forum*, 5/6 (1980), 141–51; Pamela Allen Brown, 'Courtesan, Merchant, Zany: Italian Knockoffs in The Three Ladies of London', *Performance as Research in Early English Theatre Studies: The Three Ladies of London in Context*, 2015 <http://threeladiesoflondon.mcmaster.ca/contexts/PamelaBrown.htm>.

[134] Sara Romersberger, 'Shakespeare's Clown Connection: Hybridizing Commedia's Zanni', in *The Routledge Companion to the Commedia dell'Arte*, ed. by Judith Chafee and Ollie Crick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 312-20 (p. 315).

[135] Louis B. Wright, 'Will Kemp and the Commedia Dell' Arte', *Modern Language Notes*, 41.8 (1926), 516–20 (p. 517).

[136] Sophie Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Le Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne* (Paris: A.G. Nizet, 1968), p. 49. Translated in William D. Howarth, *French Theatre in the Neo-Classical Era, 1550-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 45.

risks overlooking the centrality of intertextual contamination and the cross-fertilisation to contemporary theatrical production.[137] Writing in the wake of Louise George Clubb's seminal work on the intertextualities of early modern European literary and dramatic production, Andrew Grewar stressed in his work on theatregrams that while an Italian Zanni cannot be located in Shakespeare's plays, 'traces of the Italian players' craft' emerge through the analysis of modular speech patterns and other theatregrams.[138]

Despite successive enlightening works on theatrical intertextualities, identifying Shakespeare's sources in an alluring and elusive Italian form of performance practice remains a tempting line of inquiry. Over fifteen years after Grewar's article came to print, Henke once again advocated for more nuanced interrogations of transnational cross-fertilisation, advising against 'indiscriminate Pantalone and Zanni spotting' to evidence extensive interaction between English dramatists and the *commedia dell'arte*. By identifying Feste in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* as a Zanni, he argues, simply because Malvolio states that he in 'no better than the fools zanies', we find ourselves in the 'undesirable camp of Malvolio', ignoring the 'cake and ales' and festive culture that suggests Feste's 'derivation from the tradition of English clowning from Tarlton to Kempe to Armin'.[139] The engagement between European theatres is perhaps better understood in terms of an extensive transnational network where knowledge is obtained, broken down, adapted, and reconstituted in new innovative ways. The English secular Clown was not a direct descendant of the Italian Zanni, but certain performance practices would have no doubt been adopted, giving the English theatrical tradition a richer, transnational

[137] M.A. Katritzky's work on Pickle Herring draws attention to the possibility of certain practices originating organically from a pan-European Christian cultural tradition. See Katritzky, '"A Plague o' These Pickle Herring": From London Drinkers to European Stage Clown', in *Renaissance Shakespeare/Shakespeare Renaissances: Proceedings of the Ninth World Shakespeare Congress, World Shakespeare Congress Proceedings* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014), pp. 159–68. See also, John Alexander, 'Peter van Durant (ca. 1513-1584) Alias Pickle Herring: A Contribution to the Possible Genesis of an Early Modern Clown Persona', *Philologica Jassyensia*, 2.22 (2015), 111–23.
[138] Andrew Grewar, 'Shakespeare and the Actors of the Commedia Dell'Arte', in *Studies in the Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by David J. George and Christopher J. Gossip (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), pp. 13–47 (p. 15).
[139] Robert Henke, 'Shakespeare and the Commedia Dell'Arte', in *Shakespeare, Italy, and Transnational Exchange: Early Modern to Present*, ed. by Enza De Francisci and Chris Stamatakis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 53-64 (p. 53).

texture. Henke has recently drawn attention to English performers using routines popularised by the Italian *comici*. In 1586, Kempe would perform at the Danish court in Elsinore and at Utrecht in the Earl of Leicester's Men alongside fellow future shareholders in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, Thomas Pope and George Bryan. While in Utrecht, all three took part in an acrobatic routine entitled 'The Labours of Hercules'.[140] During the English diplomatic mission in Paris in June 1572, Sir Thomas Smith would marvel at the same '*Labores Herculis*' routine performed by Zan Ganassa's troupe. Whether Kempe and the others came into contact with this routine directly or second-hand is unclear; either way, by the 1580s at least, the English were incorporating foreign performance practices into their own repertoires.

Contrary to Henke's suggestion, a study of how the *commedia dell'arte* manifested in the English imagination benefits from indulging in some indiscriminate Zanni spotting. This chapter will therefore consider the Zanni simply as the Zanni – not a distant cousin of the English clown, nor a conduit for innovative performance practices, but as an arresting stock character that was naturalised over time into English cultural discourse. The notion of naturalisation is a useful way in which to conceptualise the findings herein. Drawn from the complex terminology around identity and belonging in early modern England, it refers to the legal status granted to a stranger or alien born overseas by Act of Parliament. Prohibitively expensive, such Acts were generally reserved for those migrants who brought substantial trade to London, or brokered deals with overseas financiers on behalf of the English government.[141] Naturalisation was therefore a process that simultaneously incorporated an individual into the legal structures that delineated nationhood while advertising a lack of native birth right. This term is here applied to Zanni not because he was of particularly reputable character (far from it, in

[140] Robert Henke, 'Border-Crossing in the Commedia Dell'arte', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 19-35 (pp. 22-3).
[141] Lien Luu, Versus Stranger-Born Subjects: Aliens and Their Status in Elizabethan London', in *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart London*, ed. by Lien Luu and Nigel Goose (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), pp. 57–75 (p. 60).

fact), but because like those adopted aliens, he never shook off this sense of difference. Though dressed in English language and adopted into English cultural discourse through repeated use, Zanni retained a pervasive sense of the strange, or the strangely familiar, becoming a literary device that, while commonplace, formed part of a growing vocabulary that interrogated contemporary anxieties around identity and difference. To interrogate this process of transculturation, this chapter will begin by looking at Zanni's origins and development in the cultural milieu of Cinquecento Italy. It will then observe how this versatility created the conditions for the mask's appropriation to new, situated discourses. It then observes how Zanni came to embody a sense of invasive, subversive strangeness that highlights English anxiety over cultural porosity.

3.1 Origins and Development

Following the death of *i Gelosi* performer Simone Panzanini da Bologna, in *arte* 'Zan Panza de Pecora', around 1585, a curious epitaph appeared in print under the title *Il lacrimoso lamento.* A *terzine* poem written in a mock Bergamasque dialect, this celebration of the late *comico*'s theatrical and literary talents made the intriguing claim that he invented the servant mask Zanni.[142] Though inaccurate, as both Simone and the author of the *lamento* would have known, it reveals something of how Zanni functioned as versatile stock that was moulded to the demands of performance and the whims of the individual performer. Panzanini may not have created the mask, but like all his contemporaries, he would have taken this malleable figure and made it his own.

[142] Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 109.

It is unknown when and where Zanni first appeared onstage or off, although the playwright whose pastorals fostered the right environment for the eventual topical reconfiguration of the Plautine slave into the Bergamasque servant can be identified with some certainty. Angelo Beolco, better known by his stage name Ruzante, was born into a Milanese noble family in 1494. Oft cited as the father of the *commedia dell'arte*, Beolco drew heavily from the quotidian experiences of provincial Tuscan life for the carnival festivities he produced for the Mantuan patricians *gli Immortali* and the Duke of Ferrara from the early 1520s.[143] He was the first to substitute the upper classes for the peasantry, finding within their lack of recourse to wealth, connections, and God a more personal drama driven by the individual's pragmatic steps towards resolving their problems. The misfortunes of his character Ruzante built on the tradition of the *mariazzo* (entertainments performed at wedding celebrations) in which the protagonist seeks to win or retain a love interest from a more handsome, wealthy, and virile adversary.[144] He almost always fails, and is ritually humiliated along the way with a series of beatings and degrading insults. While there are clear parallels here with the rough, ignorant, and unfortunate Zanni of the later *commedia dell'arte*, Beolco's most significant contribution to the development of the servant mask was his indecorous use of speech. He was possibly the first playwright and performer to incorporate Italian dialects into his drama, as opposed to the blanket use of high Tuscan *moscheta* across characters from all regions and classes. Though more a comical impression of timbre and pronunciation than an accurate representation of regional speech patterns, Beolco found dialect a more effective and honest means of signalling the character's place within the social hierarchy of the play. The action of his 1527 comedy *La Moscheta* actually satirises the absurdity of assigning the same accent and dialect to each role. It begins with Ruzante stealing money from the

[143] Linda L. Carroll, 'The Great Ruzante', in *The Routledge Companion to the Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by Olly Crick and Judith Chaffee (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 213-21 (p. 213). For Beolco's influence on the Italian scripted drama, see Alexandra Coller, 'Fathers, Daughters, Crossdressing, and Names: *L'Anconitana* and Angelo Beolco/Ruzante's Contribution to Commedia Erudita', *MLN*, 127.1 (2012), 124–41.
[144] Carroll, p. 214.

Bergamasque soldier Tonin, who, following a practical joke organised by Ruzante's rival-in-love, Menato, eventually gets revenge by sleeping with Ruzante's wife, Betia, who quickly abandons the Paduan peasant for her new, more virile lover. In an ill-advised attempt to win her back, Ruzante dresses up as a student and attempts to woo her in the Tuscan tongue. A series of comic malapropisms and mispronunciations follow, and Betia's scorn increases.

The plays of Beolco's contemporary Andrea Calmo would combine Beolco's legacy of dialectic comedy with his observations of everyday life in his native Venice to create a servant mask that closely resembles the Zanni. His crafty titular character in *La saltuzza* (1551), for example, draws on the peasant farmers who, uprooted by frequent wars and subsequent famines throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, ventured down from the mountain regions of Bergamo into the cities in order to find work. Now unskilled labourers, these *facchini* ('porters') loitered in squares like the Piazza San Marco, offering to run errands and carry heavy goods for a small sum or bowl of food. Tomaso Garzoni described them at length in his *La piazza universale* (1585), noting with jocular bemusement all the characteristics that later audiences would come to associate with the Zanni. The *facchini* are:

> Coarse fellows, simple and good-natured enough who come down from the mountains of Bergamo to fetch and carry for the rest of mankind. They serve at the Arsenal or the Dogana [Custom's House], or hawk food and wines about the city, the poorest are basket-weavers and others carry coals: as they ply for errands in the square the sacks slung over their shoulders have got them the nickname of 'Canons of the Piazza'.
> […]
> As they come through the Merceria with a load they will cry 'Way, way, for fear of jostling you with their burden … Nimble as cats they jump into the boat, throw out your cases, parcels, packages, and bundles and carry them off on their shoulders to the other end of the city. They are sturdier than mules, and when all is done give them a bowl of soup, a rind of cheese, and few ha'pence and it is a joy to watch them go off singing and jesting.
> […]
> They will take a message through all obstacles and with cracked crowns bring back the answer with the solemn loyalty of excessive stupid courtesy. As panders they are only too accomplished; you will hardly find one who is not a 'ruffiano'. Their only glean of worldly

> wisdom is their willingness to do odd jobs about the house and gossip with the ladies to do their errands with particular sweethearts…
> […]
> As a mountain race the 'facchini' are tough as timber, but not bulky, the sturdiest people you ever saw, and except for a few who have become lean with hardship, they are as round as the bottom of a barrel and as fat as the broth of macaroni… Their dress is utterly uncivilized, and you can smell their sacking miles away.[145]

They are short and stocky, yet nimble and capable of lifting heavy loads. They will spy, gossip, procure, sing, and jest. They will run errands for anyone offering a plate of macaroni which, with fresh memories of recent famines, they are ceaselessly preoccupied. They are uneducated, ignorant of the wider world, and, with the guttural timbre of their mountain dialect, near impossible to understand. It is evident that while Calmo may have introduced the Bergamasque servant into five-act, plot-based comedy, the theatrical potential of the *facchino* had long been recognised by contemporary marketplace performers. 'Their speech is so grotesque', Garzoni observed, 'that the Zanni who are like magpies to mimic pronunciation or any other characteristics have adopted it in their comedies to entertain the crowd.'[146] He does not refer to the servant of the *commedia dell'arte* here, but his predecessor – the marketplace *buffone*, versatile entertainers who often took the prefix Zan or Zuan in their stage names. They would take to a trestle stage in the piazza to perform an array of different entertainments, including *intermedi* between scene breaks in comedies, card-tricks and 'legerdemains', acrobatic stunts on horseback, and dances and *cantastorie* with musical accompaniment.[147] They were particularly adept at *contraffare*, a kind-of short character sketches that impersonated different social types.[148] The Bergamasque *facchini* was a timeless favourite. In Alessandro Caravia's 1513 epitaph to the late, great Zuan Polo, the entertainer is turned away from the gates of heaven by Saint Peter for his Lutheran

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[145] Quoted in Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia Dell'Arte, 1560-1620, with Special Reference to the English Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934), i, pp. 55-56.
[146] Lea, p. 56.
[147] Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 51
[148] Ibid.

sympathies. Escorted to hell, Zuan Polo impresses the devil Farfarel with his versatile repertoire: 'Ma pur messi un poco à contrafar/Da Bergamasco, da Puttin, da Schiavon' ('Then I began to counterfeit a bit as a Bergamasque porter, as a little boy, as a Croatian').[149] Sixty years later, Simone da Bologna received similar praise for his role in the festivities that welcomed the King of Poland to Venice on his way to be invested as Henri III of France. Spectators were particularly struck by Simone's 'rarissimo in rappresentar la persona d'un facchino Bergamasco, ma più raro nell'arguzie e nell invenzione spiritose' ('very fine in performing the character of the Bergamasque porter but even finer in his witticisms and inventions').[150]

By the 1540s, Zanni is found in carnival entertainments opposite Magnifico, a Venetian gentleman and precursor to Pantalone.[151] Joachim du Bellay fondly remembered this double act as one of the many enjoyable spectacles of the Roman carnival he attended in 1545:

> Voicy le Carnival …
> Allons baller en masque, allons nous promener
> Allongs [*sic*] voir Marc Antoine ou Zany bouffonener,
> Avec un Magnifique a la Vénitienne.[152]
>
> This is Carnival …
> Let's go dance in masks, Let's go take a stroll,
> Let's go and see Marc Antoine as the Zany play the fool
> With a Venetian Magnifico.

The Magnico/Zanni double act is further alluded to in the titles of several comedies performed in the carnival season of 1550/1551 referenced in the diaries of the Venetian chronicler Marino Sanudo. He was particularly taken by Zan Polo and his partner Benedetto Cantinella in the roles of Zanni and

[149] Quoted and translated in ibid, p. 58.
[150] Quoted and translated in ibid, p. 106.
[151] Daniele Vianello, 'Tra Inferno e ParadisoL Il "limbo" Dei Buffoni', *Biblioteca Teatrale*, 17 (1999), 108–14; Henke, *Performance and Literature*, pp. 52-54.
[152] Quoted in Ferdinando Taviani and M. Schino, *Il Segreto Della Commedia Dell'Arte* (Florence: Usher, 1986), p. 181.

Magnifico respectively.[153] Though Polo and Cantinella performed farce, pastorals, verse, and dramatic prose as a double-act, individually, and with several other members in a small troupe, it was their exploration of everyday power dynamics that caught the attention of spectators like Sanudo and tied Zanni to a master or masters in the theatrical imagination of later performers and audiences.[154]

As the Italian professional theatre became more diverse, so did the Zanni. In the following decade, theatrical life was breathed into the marketplace *facchino* by the professional *comici*. He was transformed from a piazza-loitering hand-for-hire, into a domesticated servant with masters and mistresses, neighbours, friends, and rivals.[155] The commitment of the *commedia dell'arte* to pairing – two sets of *innamorati*, two *vecchi*, and two *servanti* – would then lead to even greater experimentation with the mask's potential. As individual *comici* sculpted new characters around their skillsets and repertoires, the name 'Zanni' soon fell out of use, replaced by subsidiary *primo* masks like Pedrolino and Brighella, and *secondo* masks like Arlecchino and Pulcinella. Whilst the wily, manipulative *primo* Zanni would conspire with the *innamorati* to foil the plans of his master Pantalone or Dottore, the *secondo* Zanni, servant to Capitano or the second *vecchio*, resembled his lazy, incompetent, ravenous, and lustful forebear more closely.

Despite the best efforts of the *comici* to distinguish themselves from their less reputable colleagues, the *commedia dell'arte* did not develop in isolation.[156] The *Gelosi* shareholder and creator of the crafty Beltrame mask, Niccolò Barbieri, originally sought his fortune abroad in the company of Monferino, a mountebank from Venice.[157] In his *Satyre de contre les charlatans, et pseudomedecins empyriques*

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153 Katritzky, *The Art of Commedia: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte 1560-1620 with Special Reference to the Visual Records* (New York: Rodopi, 2006), p. 36.
154 Ibid
155 Ibid, p. 114.
156 Robert Henke's study 'The Italian Mountebank and the Commedia Dell'Arte', *Theatre Survey*, 38.2 (1997), 1–29, provides a fascinating insight into the crossover between performance practices. See also, Katritzky, 'Was the Commedia Dell'arte Performed by Mountebanks? Album Amicorum Illustrations and Thomas Platter's Description of 1598', *Theatre Research International*, 23.2 (1998), 104–25. For hostility between performers, see Chapter Four, pp. 217-218.
157 Ibid, p. 109.

(1602), Thomas Sonnet de Courval reported that the mountebank Signor Hyeronomo sought the services of the actor Galinette de Galina at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris.[158] The oft-cited journal entry by the Swiss traveller Thomas Platter recalls a performance by Zan Bragetta in Avignon in 1598 that suggests a complex commercial operation involving a seven-person troupe 'all costumed and neatly masked' ready to play an 'amusing comedy'.[159]

With this in mind, Garzoni's distinction between the *formati di spettacoli* (the *buffone*, mountebanks, charlatans, acrobats, and all other *mangiaguadagni*, or 'money-eaters') and the *comici eccelenti* (the *comici*, *attrice*, and playwrights lauded by the author for their superior skill) reflects more his appreciation for the grand touring troupes than any actual distinction between performance practices. The overlap, however, is further evidenced by the *opuscoli*, prose or verse pamphlets written by performers in which Zanni often features as the protagonist.[160] Henke's comprehensive evaluation of these 'Zanni texts' authored between 1576 and 1588 reveals a large corpus written in a mock-Bergamasque dialect that can be categorised generically as 'laments, genealogies, testaments, dream visions, *bravure*, doctrinal poems, wedding poems, dialogues, and *contrasti*'.[161] Most have amorous themes or chronicle the Zanni's pursuit to satisfy his stomach, and some, particularly those that eulogise recently deceased entertainers like the *lamento*, suggest a sense of comradery amongst a community of professionals all drawing on a theatrical heritage of stock routines and techniques.[162] Tristano Martinelli's Arlecchino mask as it appears in his pamphlet exchange with Gros Guillaume was clearly indebted to the Zanni's devilish adventures in the *opuscoli*. His descent into the underworld chimes with Caravia's *Il sogno dil Caravia* (Venice, 1541) mentioned above, as well as an *intermedio*

158 Ibid.
159 Quoted in Howarth, pp. 74-5.
160 Piermario Vescovo, 'Between Improvisation and Book', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 56–63 (p. 61).
161 Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 115
162 Ibid, p. 51

performed at a wedding festival and recorded by Marino Sanudo in which Zan Polo descends into the underworld. The anonymous *Historia Bellissima* contains similar Dantean escapades as Polo and the *buffone* Taiacalze are first required to venture through hell before ascending to heaven.[163]

Out of this melting pot of theatrical and literary invention, then, a character emerges who, even in the moment of performance, could never be contained within its boundaries. Any attempt to trace the Zanni through the *pastorale* of early *erudita* writers, into the *cantastorie* and *contrafarre* of marketplace performers, onto the ultramontane stages of the itinerant professional *comici*, and across the channel into the plays and pamphlets of English dramatists and writers creates a chronology of the servant mask that ignores the continual intersection of these different types of theatre and literature across the century. One does not end where the others begin, but all continually overlapped and informed each other.

3.2 The Mountebank's Man

There are clear vestiges of the domesticated Zanni of the *commedia dell'arte* in the way a number of writers refer to household servants of 'Zanni' to give their story some local Italian flavour. Capestrano (possibly a bastardisation of *capestrello*, defined by Florio as '*a knavish lad*'), the murdered servant at an inn in Rome is repeatedly referred to as Zanni by his mistress in *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1596).[164] In Thomas Dekker's *Blurt Master Constable* (1602), a peculiar city comedy that mingles English and Italian characters in a Venetian setting, Zanni appears on stage as a silent servant, used to deliver a message

[163] Ibid, p. 61.
[164] Thomas Nashe, *The vnfortunate traueller. Or, The life of Iacke Wilton* (London, 1594; STC (2nd ed.) / 18380), sig. L2r; John Florio, *Queen Anna's new world of words, or dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues* (London, 1611; STC (2nd ed.) / 11099), unpaginated.

or (as indicated in the stage directions) as to pull '*Coaches*' and carry '*torches*'.[165] However, the Zanni found emerging in the English imagination in the latter half of the sixteenth century reflects the plurality of contemporary Italy. He was not simply a foolish, hungry, provincial clown imported from the Italian neoclassical stage, but a versatile stock servant shaped by prior iterations and the many kinds of translations and interactions that facilitated his arrival. In fact, to the English, it was the mask's association with the perennial marketplace mountebank that would most profoundly shape his manifestation in English cultural discourse.

When mapping the anthropological phenomena of the Italian renaissance *piazza*, writers and travellers from all over Europe were consistently captivated by these itinerant performing salesmen, who took to a trestle stage ('*montare banco*', to mount a bench) in a piazza or marketplace to sell ointments and oils, marvels and miracles with entertainments and highly polished orations.[166] Michel de Montaigne was struck by a performance of the actor Joan Frimocollo, in *arte* 'Zan Fracagnola', at Pisa in 1581 when he acted with the *commedia dell'arte* troupe *i Desiosi*.[167] Thomas Platter had a particular fondness for the mountebanks, noting in his journal that 'there is a greater recourse of them in Venice' than anywhere else, where you might 'in the morning and in the afternoone … see five or sixe several stages erected for them.'[168]

English observers were similarly enraptured, although they tended to distinguish between the entertainments of the mountebanks and the *commedia dell'arte* plays of the *comici* more so than their

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[165] The iconographic and visual implications of such stage directions will be explored in Chapter Four. Thomas Dekker, *Blurt master-constable. Or The Spaniards night-walke As it hath bin sundry times priuately acted by the Children of Paules* (London, 1602; STC (2nd ed.) / 17876), sigs. D2r, E2r.

[166] There have several key English language studies on the early modern mountebank. See M. A. Katritzky, 'Marketing Medicine: The Image of the Early Modern Mountebank', *Renaissance Studies*, 15.2 (2001), 121–53; M.A. Katritzky, *Women, Medicine and Theatre, 1500-1750: Literary Mountebanks and Performing Quacks* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007). For an insightful work on the carnivalesque oration of the mountebank, see Carol Clark, '"The Onely Languag'd-Men of All the World": Rabelais and the Art of the Mountebank', *The Modern Language Review*, 74.3 (1979), 538–52.

[167] Katritzky, *The Art of Commedia*, p. 100.

[168] Katritzky, *Women, Medicine and Theatre, 1500-1750: Literary Mountebanks and Performing Quacks* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), p. 96.

European contemporaries. George Whetstone's *An heptameron of ciuill discourses* (1582), written at the tail end of English contact with the Italian professional theatre, takes place at the court of Signor Philoxenus in the countryside of Ravenna over the course of twelve days and nights during the plague season. At the close of 'The Thyrde Dayes Exercise', a mountebank draped in all manner of 'venemous vermines' takes to a scaffold to entertain the party after supper.[169] He stresses that his only desire is to 'recreate Segnior Philoxenus, and his worthie companie' rather than deceive the company into purchasing fraudulent merchandise like 'common Mountebankers'.[170] The extemporal nature of his act draws parallels with the company of 'certayne Comedians of Ravenna' who entertain the party in the evening of the fifth day. However, whilst the mountebank is joined onstage by 'a Zanni, and other actors of pleasure,' the *comici* are simply referred to as the 'players', the 'actors', or the 'Comedians'.[171] Later travellers, however, were intrigued by the apparent overlap between *comici* and mountebanks, with Zanni offering a notable intersection between pedlar and player. To Fynes Moryson, performing comic antics with the servant distinguished the mountebank from other marketplace quacks. While the mountebanks in Venice often 'have a zani or foole, to drawe Company by mirth, that they may better vent theire wares', the German 'Emperiks' are 'never with any foole to make sporte, rather carrying the gravity of great Doctours'.[172] It is unclear exactly what distinguished a Zanni from a fool in Moryson's mind, although Coryate would make a similar distinction in his relation of a mountebank performance at the Piazza San Marco. The Zanni, he notes, 'weare visards disguised *like* fooles in a play' [my emphasis].[173]

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[169] George Whetstone, *An heptameron of ciuill discourses Containing: the Christmasse exercise of sundrie well courted gentlemen and gentlewomen* (London, 1582; STC (2nd ed.) / 25337), sig. L3r.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid, sig. R2r
[172] Fynes Moryson and Charles Hughes, *Shakespeare's Europe; unpublished chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary, being a survey of the condition of Europe at the end of the 16th century* (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 1903), pp. 303, 425.
[173] Thomas Coryate, *Coryats crudities hastily gobled vp in five moneths trauells in France, Sauoy, Italy, Rhetia co[m]monly called the Grisons country, Heluetia aliàs Switzerland, some parts of high Germany, and the Netherlands* (London, 1611; STC 5808), p. 271.

One important difference in the minds of the English appears to have been performance space. Extant accounts of *arte* performance by travellers like Moryson and Coryate refer to indoor playhouses, whilst the mountebanks and charlatans work exclusively outside in the streets and city squares. This was no doubt compounded in part by Garzoni's distinction between entertainers in *La piazza*, which had been imported into England by the end of the century at least, appearing in a list of Italian-language sources prefixed to John Florio's first Italian-English dictionary, *A new worlde of words* (1598).[174] Ben Jonson would draw heavily on this text and Garzoni's *L'Hospidale de' pazzi incurabili* (1586) in creating the Piazza San Marco scene in *Volpone* (c.1605) in which the parasite Mosca dresses up as Zan Fritada, a real-life *buffone* mentioned Garzoni's text.[175] This distinction was in some sense true, and the fact that the topography of English cities was so ill-suited to public performance perhaps goes some way to explaining why records of continental mountebanks in England are so few and far between. The piazzas and marketplaces built into the urban complexes of continental cities were not a feature of urban centres like Norwich and London, where there was little in the way of accessible space for people to congregate. Even if the mountebank found a space amongst the playhouses, taverns, and bearpits in London's Liberties, there was still the insurmountable obstacle of a pronounced language barrier.

There were, of course, other obstacles to success in London. The cost of the journey across the channel would have been prohibitive for those without invitations from the Crown or wealthy patrons. Once in England, travelling without license or invitation risked falling foul of vagrancy laws, as well as punitive measures enforced by London's medical regulatory body, the College of Physicians, which was legislated to review the activities of practitioners and fine those deemed to carry-out irregular procedures. Minutes from the College's court sessions survive for 1550 to 1650 and are

[174] John Florio, *A vvorlde of wordes, or Most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian and English* (London, 1598; STC (2nd ed.) / 11098), unpaginated.
[175] This piazza scene will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.

littered with references to Empirics, Quacks, and their various charms throughout the period. However, it is not until 1616 that an entry lists an Italian defendant as a mountebank, when Matthew Lucatello was granted a license to enter Norwich for one week in order 'to sell his balsam'.[176] Whether Lucatello can actually be considered an itinerant performance salesman is unclear, and he was residing in Temple Bar outside the city walls when, twenty-four years later, he was ordered by the College to abstain from illicit activities at a censorial hearing.[177] An elaborate oration was also an essential part of the entertainment, and it is considerably unlikely that any Italian performer was well-versed in the tongue of some parochial northern kingdom. All things considered, England would have presented bleak financial prospects for any commercially minded performer.[178]

There is, then, some truth is Coryate's long-winded exposé on the mountebank as 'a meere novelty never before heard of (I thinke) by thousands of our English gallants'.[179] However, it is just another tongue-in-cheek justification for exposing himself to the temptations of the Veneto, and the joke here lies in English familiarity despite their physical absence. The absence of the mountebank and his Zanni from the day-to-day lives of the English has actually only made them more alluring. At once deeply familiar and strange, the mountebank and his Zanni became flexible tokens that could be extricated and interpolated into all manner of discourse. During his pamphlet dispute with the Harvey brothers, Thomas Nashe mocked Richard Harvey's astrological prognostications 'about earthquakes, coniunctions, inundations, the fearfull blazing Starre' to the false prophecies and promises of mountebanks.[180] In *The Defense*, Philip Sidney compared the debased practices of contemporary

[176] Margaret Pelling and Frances White, 'Lucatello, Matthew', *British History Online*, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-physicians/1550-1640/lucatello-matthew [accessed 9 September 2019].
[177] Ibid.
[178] The 'Nobilitie is very courteous,' wrote Florio of the English in his *First Fruites*, 'but the cōmons are discorteous, & especially toward strangers'. Florio, *Florio his firste fruites which yeelde familiar speech, merie prouerbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings* (London, 1598; STC (2nd ed.) / 11096), sig. C1v.
[179] Coryate, p. 272.
[180] Nashe, *Haue vvith you to Saffron-vvalden. Or, Gabriell Harueys hunt is vp Containing a full answere to the eldest sonne of the halter-maker.* (London, 1596; STC (2nd ed.) / 18369), sig. B3v.

English poets to the orations of the 'Mountebankes of Venice', whilst John Marston presented the figure as the archetypal corrupting, itinerant stranger.[181] The 'swarmes of Mountebancks', he writes in his verse satire collection *The Scourge of Villainie* (1598), act as 'Factors for lewdnes, brokers for the deuill' to 'Infect our soules with all polluting euill.'[182] As a peripheral figure, a wanderer who moved outside formal economic and social structures practising an illicit and fraudulent trade, the mountebank provided an early stock adversary for religious controversialists. For both reformers and adherents to the old faith, he was an itinerant salesman, come from Rome or Wittenberg to pedal faulty, false, and heretical elixirs as cures for the longstanding, bloody wounds of a nation on its knees. In 1565, the theologian and fellow of All Souls College, Thomas Dorman, ignited a religious controversy over the legitimacy of John Jewell's *Apology for the Church of England* (1562), a statement of faith for the Anglican Church under Elizabeth. His main rhetorical strategy was to challenge Jewell's sufficiency in the scripture:

> At this daye in manie places a man shal finde, either a shoemaker, or a cowhearde, or a barbar, or a iuggler, or a mountebancke ronneagate, or some suche other made ministre, who neuer strided so muche as ouer the tresshold into the schole where good learning is taught.[183]

In his arrogance, Jewell created a doctrine of faith despite being as unlearned as common artisans and as dangerous as a mountebank (with 'ronneagate' suggesting both an itinerant and one who wanders from the true religion as an apostate). A year later, the Jesuit priest John Rastell picked up on this useful bit of imagery in his *third booke*, comparing Jewell to the 'Mountebanks, that goe abroad with

[181] Philip Sidney, *The defence of poesie* (London, 1595; STC (2nd ed.) / 22535), sig. H2v
[182] John Marston, *The scourge of villanie Three bookes of satyres* (London, 1598; STC (2nd ed.) / 17485), sig. C4r.
[183] Thomas Dorman, *A disproufe of M. Nowelles reproufe* (London, 1565; STC 7061), sig. G4r.

diverse things for mens Bodies.'[184] He elaborates further on the nature of the mountebank, drawing an implicit comparison with Jewell's well-publicised sermons from St Paul's cross:

> These Mountebanks, are a free kind of Wanderers, Pedlars, Surgeans, Physitians, Historiographers, Poetes, or what so euer name besides you wil geve vnto them, men altogeather for the penie, which is the cause that they professe so many thinges. They take up their standing in Market places, or void roomes meere for the course of people, there they set a stoole to stand upon, or make a litle scaffold for the purpose, from which they play their part.[185]

Rastell plays on the unsettling strangeness and invasiveness of the mountebank to cast Jewell as a spiritual stranger, one who is 'estranged or made foreign to God through their 'erroneous' faith and religious practice.'[186] The otherwise prohibitive topography of the City is altered by the 'false and blind Teacher', who transforms Paul's Cathedral into a piazza by erecting a 'litle scaffold' and selling false doctrine for the benefit of strangers. He is, it is insinuated, no different from the merchants and usurers who turned the Temple in Jerusalem into an Exchange, and it falls to Rastell and his brethren to imitate Christ and expel the heretic from the House of God.

While Zanni does not appear alongside the mountebank in this particular early polemical exchange, subsequent depictions of the mask as the pedlar's stooge in works by Whetstone and others would result in the servant's appropriation into subsequent religious controversy to similar ends. Matthew Sutcliffe, Dean of Exeter, would seize upon both figures in his print attacks on the English Jesuit Robert Persons. In *A ful and round answer to N.D alias Roberts Persons* (1602), Sutcliffe responds to the Priest's punning accusation that he plays the 'Vize' (Vice as both clown antecedent in the mystery

[184] John Rastell, *The third booke, declaring by examples out of auncient councels, fathers, and later writers, that it is time to beware of M. Iewel* (London, 1566; STC 20728.5), sig. A3r.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Nandini Das and others, 'Alien-Stranger', *TIDE: Keywords*, 2019 <http://www.tideproject.uk/keywords-home/?keyword_id=35>.

plays and political advisor) to senior reformers by mocking the several *nom de guerre* Persons adopted to peddle dissention amongst the English laity:

> *He sayeth that under a vizard, I play the Vize:* as if Vizes in England plaid with vizards. But in Italy every *Mounthanke* and *Zanni* playeth with a vizard. This therefore may better fit *Parsons,* who since he came into *Italy,* hath never ceased to play the Vize, now taking the vizard of *Howlet,* now of *Philopater,* and lastly, of *N.D. alias* a noble Dizard, deserving to be called Noddy and Zanni.[187]

Contemporary English writers rarely mentioned that Italian performers were (for the most part) masked, presumably because of England's own rich history of masked entertainments.[188] However, Sutcliffe spots an opportunity to attack both the duplicity of the Jesuits and the effect of Persons' apostasy on his English identity. He is at once a Noddy, an English simpleton by birth and soil, and a Zanni, a strange, itinerant servant come from the English College at Rome to subjugate his fellow countryman to the will of a foreign power. The way in which Sutcliffe juxtaposes the Zanni and the Noddy to castigate Persons' perverse rejection of Queen and country also highlights the conditions of Zanni's naturalisation into the English cultural lexicon. As the mask was repeatedly appropriated by English writers and dramatists, a process of transculturation occurred by which his set characteristics were continually written over by English pens. As the following sections of this chapter will show, this difference was multifaceted. His itinerancy and Italian heritage was a reminder of the pervasive cultural influence of foreign nations, as well as a general representation of the precarity of the schemes through which difference and sameness were delineated.

[187] Matthew Sutcliffe, *A ful and round answer to N.D* alias *Roberts Persons* (London, 1602; STC (2nd ed.) / 23465), p. 318.
[188] See a history of the English masking tradition, see Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter, *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England*, Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama (London: Routledge, 2016).

3.2.1 Derisive Laughter

In the same year as *A ful and round answer*, Sutcliffe would again compare Persons to a Zanni in *A Challenge concerning a Romish Church*. He castigates the 'poor ideot' for refusing to answer his earlier charge of Pelagianism, the denial of inherited sin, offering instead 'three or foure place of S. *Augustine*' in defence of his claims before continuing with 'a maske on his broade face passeth on to play the *Zanni* in other matters.'[189] Though he does not elaborate further, the mountebank and the Zanni were not interchangeable, and to 'play the *Zanni*' clearly suggests a set of prescribed associations for the latter. Early references shed some light on these connotations. The Zanni in Whetstone's more benign depiction of a mountebank's entertainment, for example, purposefully performs incompetence for laughs. His role is to undermine the mountebank's authority, to make him look foolish, expose his 'knavish conditions', and pull back the curtain on his miraculous conceits through displays of ineptitude.[190] Persons is given a similar role in Sutcliffe's attack. By playing the Zanni, the Jesuit attempts to hide his true purpose under a mask of sincere religiosity. However, he is, like all Jesuits, an uneducated lay preacher, unacquainted with serious theological study and as such no more than a 'poore ideot' to be laughed to scorn.

However, there is a crucial difference between Whetstone and Sutcliffe's Zanni that reflects sixteenth-century debates on the nature of laughter. Niccolò Machiavelli's sober assessment of the purpose of comedy in the prologue to his *Clizia* (1525) provides an early theorisation of how the obscene or ridiculous is intended to provoke a kind-of corrective laughter. He suggests (and it is clear from this suggestion that criticism of dissolute stage plays was by no means a recent phenomenon)

[189] Matthew Sutcliffe, *A challenge concerning the Romish Church* (London, 1602; STC (2nd ed.) / 23454), p. 58.
[190] Whetstone, *An Heptameron*, sig. L3r.

that to instruct and to delight (*per dilettare*) are not mutually exclusive, even if they are enacted through different processes:

> Giova veramente assai a qualunque uomo, e massimamente ai giovanetti, conoscere l'avarizia d'un vecchio, il furore di uno innamorato, gl'inganni di un servo, la gola d'uno parasito, la miseria di un povero, l'ambizione di un ricco, le lusinghe di una meretrice, la poca fede di tutti gli uomini; de' quali esempi le commedie sono piene, e possonsi tutte queste cose con onestà grandissima rappresentare.[191]
>
> It is very beneficial for men, and especially for young men, to know the avarice of an old man, the fury of a lover, the deception of a servant, the gluttony of a parasite, the misery of a poor man, the ambition of a rich man, the flattery of a harlot, the little faith of all men; comedies are full of such examples, and all these things can be represented with great honesty.

In order to delight, one must move the audience to laughter, which cannot be done with serious dialogue because the words that inspire laughter are either 'sciocche, o ingiuriose, o amorose' (foolish, or insulting, or loving).[192] Here the playwright upholds Quintilian's theory that 'our mirth in never far removed from derision' that would find later support in the two most influential texts on laughter, Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* (1528) and Juan Luis Vives's *De Anima & Vita* (1538).[193] Both conclude that laughter is impulsive, born, as Quentin Skinner notes, of 'some inner movement of the soul'.[194] This movement is, in Machiavelli's opinion, unmistakably born from happiness and delight, although generally a contemptuous response to, as Wilson would put in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), 'the filthiness, the deformitee' of another's behaviour.[195] Exposure to 'il furore di uno innamorato' (the wrath of a lover), writes Machiavelli, is beneficial to all men, and the young in particular, as it imparts

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[191] Niccolò Machiavelli, 'La Clizia', in *La Mandragola, La Clizia, Belfagor*, ed. by Vittorio Osimo (Genoa, 1914), p. 104.
[192] Machiavelli, p. 105.
[193] Quoted in Quentin Skinner, 'Why Laughing Mattered in the Renaissance', *History of Political Thought*, 22.3 (Autumn 2001), 418-47 (p. 428).
[194] Ibid.
[195] Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetoricke* (London, 1553; STC (2nd ed.) / 25799), p. 74.

knowledge on how not to behave in love. This would seem to suggest that the *innamorati* were serious roles in keeping with earlier stock character divisions into *parti ridicole* and *parti grave*. However, there was little consensus on the matter in early regular comedy. On the one hand, Richard Andrews has offered the example of the literary affectations of Ruzante's lovers in *Vaccarria*, which are thrown into sharp relief by the vulgar Bergamasque of the country-clowns Truffo and Vezzo. On the other hand, there is no reason not to assume that the *innamorati* Zerbino and Furnia in Parabosco's *Hermafrodito* are anything other than serious roles.[196]

For other contemporary commentators, the propulsion to laugh revelled too much in the performance of wickedness or foolishness in others to be constructive. Lodovico Castelvetro would state in *Poetica d'Aristotele* that our propensity for laughter was tied to original sin, which has left us 'stuffed with vanity and pride'.[197] When we laugh at others, we find in their folly our own superiority, and in the act of laughing place ourselves above them. Castelvetro would find a supporter in Philip Sidney, who postulated that the value of poetry, the 'art of imitation', is in its ability to both teach and delight through (accurate) mimesis. Laughter, on the other hand, is inspired by a corrupted form of imitation and acts as 'a kind of contraritie' to delight. 'We laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly we cannot delight'.[198] Sutcliffe clearly shared this position as well. In comparing Persons to a Zanni, he erases the crafted, corrective performed idiocy of Whetstone's servant and instead presents a version of the comic servant that is integrally, irrevocably foolish. There is a precedent for this kind of repostulating Italian performers as 'a kind of contraritie' to delight. Stephen Gosson's attack on the 'Italian deuices' adopted by English playwrights is remarkably similar to Machiavelli's list of characters and vices. 'The foundation of comedy', he writes, is 'love, cosenedge, flatterie, bawderie, slye

[196] Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 190.
[197] Skinner, p. 433.
[198] Sidney, sig. I2r.

conneighance of whordome'; its purveyors, 'cookes, queanes, knaves, baudes, parasites, courtezannes, lecherouse olde men, amorous yong men.'[199] For Gosson, however, such displays did not function as social correctives. He took a Neo-Platonist view that 'great laughter breedeth a great change' when there is no temperance; when we 'laugh so extreemely', as we might at comedies, 'we shew our selues to be voide of reason, and wisedome'.[200] Defenders of the stage like Nashe adopted a similar stance to deflect criticism away from the English tradition. The *comici* were 'bawdy comedians', he argued, who would forgo 'no immodest speech, or vnchast action that may procure laughter'.[201]

Through Zanni in particular, this pursuit of laughter as the primary ends of performance was cast as something inherently strange. In his *Wits Miserie* (1596), a moralist satire on the deadly sins as they had taken root in England, Thomas Lodge would present Zanni as the embodiment of scurrility:

> Let this suffise for babling, for here marcheth forth *Scurilitie,* (as untoward a Devill as any of the rest) the first time he lookt out of Italy into England, it was in the habite of a Zani: This is an onely fellow for making faces, shewing lascivious gestures, singing like the Great Organ pipe in Poules, counterfaiting any deformitie you can devise, and perfect in the most unchristian abhominations of Priapisme: hée hath jeasts to set an edge on lust, and such bitter Jibes, as might drive a *Cato* to impatience; if hée sée an old man march in the stréet, hée returns him a *nichil habet;* by a light huswife he dare say, that she is as rotten as an openarse: hée that longs to know more of him let him read *Bouchets Serees,* and if hée find a leafe without a grosse ieast hée may burne the Book I warrant him. And if he require further insight into the filthy nature of this fiend, in Aretine in his mother *Nana, Rabelais* in his Legend of Ribaudrie, and *Bonaventure de Perriers* in his Novels, he shall be sure to loose his time, and no doubt, corrupt his soule.[202]

[199] Gosson, Stephen, *Playes confuted in fiue actions prouing that they are not to be suffred in a Christian common weale, by the waye both the cauils of Thomas Lodge, and the play of playes, written in their defence, and other obiections of players frendes, are truely set downe and directlye aunsweared* (London, 1582; STC (2nd ed.) / 12095), sigs. C5r-C5v.
[200] Gosson, sig. F3v.
[201] Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the devil* (London, 1592; STC 18372), sig. F4r.
[202] Thomas Lodge, *Wits miserie, and the worlds madnesse discovering the devils incarnat of this age* (London, 1596; STC (2nd ed.) / 16677), p. 88.

Frances K. Barasch has read this passage as a reference to the 'bawdy antics' recently adopted by the English Clown after some form of contact with the *compagni*.[203] However, Lodge's Zanni is not just the stock servant of the *commedia dell'arte* here, but a useful token that casts societal ills as a product of strange imports and increased cross-cultural interaction. After all, Zanni is not only a practitioner of immoderate and lewd gestures, jests, and jibes but the image of he who 'corrupt[s] his soul' through exposure to indecency. Should the reader wish to learn more of scurrility, he is not directed to the playhouse but to the imported, translated, and adapted works of several contemporary French and Italian authors who stoked controversy: Guillame Bouchet's *Serées* (1584, 1588, 1589), a Boccaccian collection of tales told over the course of several evenings, Bonaventure de Perier's *Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis* (1561), translated into English as *The Mirrour of Mirth* by Thomas Deloney in 1592; the infamously pornographic *Ragionamenti* of Pietro Aretino, printed by John Wolfe in three volumes between 1584 and 1588; and the carnivalesque Gargantua and Pantagruel novels of Francois Rabelais first printed in France between 1532 and 1564. Only one of these texts, the *Ragionamenti*, contains any reference to the mask, and Lodge's Zanni should instead be considered metaphorical. He plays on etymology here; Zanni is cast as the embodiment of scurrility, from the Latin *scurra* meaning 'fool, jester, or clown', to frame moral and cultural corruption as something strange, invasive, and antithetical to Englishness.[204]

[203] Francis K. Barasch, 'Harlequin/Harlotry in Henry IV, Part One', in *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare & His Contemporaries: Rewriting, Remaking, Refashioning*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1988), pp. 27-38 (p. 31).
[204] 'Scurrilous, adj.', OED, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/173937#eid23862832 [accessed 10 November 2020].

3.2.2 Imitatio

Zanni 'counterfaiting any deformitie' reveals mimicry as the means through which the servant pursued immoderate laughter in the minds of the English. This is not entirely misguided; contemporary *commedia dell'arte* iconography suggests that Zanni's slapstick mime clearly had a place in professional Italian performance. Figure 13 shows an engraving from the Recueil Fossard in which Arlecchino executes a perfect handstand whilst the rotund Zanni positioned in front of him can barely lift his legs off the ground. Of course, the *comici* and early *arte* theorists argued that these moments of acrobatic ridiculousness were consistent with the character of the *secondo* Zanni, and, as such, did not break the 'dicoro de la Bergamascha' (decorum of the Bergamasque).[205] Zanni's foolishness was just one attribute of a versatile character, and his acrobatic imitations just one performance practice utilised by highly trained performers. Garzoni paints a picture of this versatility in his commendation of the *buffone* double act Fortunato and Zan Fritata in *La piazza universale*:

> da vn canto della piazza tu vedi il nostro galante Fortunato insieme con Fritata cacciar carotte e trattener la brigata ogni sera dale vintidue fino alle vintiquattro ore di giorno, finger nouelle, trouare historie, formar dialoghi, far caleselle, cantare all'improuiso.[206]
>
> From one corner of the piazza you will see our galant Fortunato together with Fritata pull out their nonsense and entertain the crowd every night from ten o'clock to midnight, making up stories, inventing tales, creating dialogues, performing the "callesella", singing ex tempore.

Creativity abounds as the pair 'make up' stories, 'invent' tales, 'create' dialogues, 'perform' *caleselle* (voice-throwing across the piazza), and 'sing' improvised songs. They catered their performances to the whims of a transitory, fluid audience shopping in the marketplace, piecing together modular

[205] Bartolomeo Rossi, *Fiamella Pastorale* (Paris, 1585), sig. A4v.
[206] Quoted and translated in Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 118. See Garzoni, *La piazza universale* (Venice, 1585), p. 745.

theatregrams to craft an effective, flexible routine. A similarly impressive routine is found in Aretino's *Ragionamenti*, printed by John Wolfe in three volumes between 1584 and 1589. The bawd Nana (mentioned by Lodge above) fondly recalls an unnamed *buffone* launching into a complex routine in which he hid behind a door, imitating several characters to confuse and cuckold an old man.[207] When the exasperated and aggravated gentleman finally went to bed, the *buffone* reassumed his Zanni role and strolled off laughing with the Magnifico's wife.[208]



Figure 13. Harlequin and Zany Cornetto. Reprinted in Agne Beijer and Pierre Louis Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes qui ont été répresentées en France sous le règne du Henry III. Recueil, dit de Fossard, conservé au musée national de Stockholm* (Paris, 1928).

[207] Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 62.
[208] Ibid.

Implicit in these accounts of *buffone* performance is the need for a well-trained memory. Performers were well-versed in the mnemonic arts associated with classical oratory. Using *inventio*, the orator (or *buffone/comico*) searched the memory (or *memoria*, described in the foundational humanist text *Rhetorica ad Herennium* as 'the treasure-house of the ideas supplied by invention') for the most relevant arguments and frameworks (or plots and performance practices) for the disputation (or entertainment).[209] When engaging with Zanni at a distance from the performances of Italian entertainers, however, a process of transculturation occurred as the English wrote-over both the technical skill of the performers and the substance of the character. He was extricated from the oral cultural of the stage and his mimicry exaggerated, held up as the intellectually deficient antithesis of the classical literary method *imitatio*. Derived from Platonic and Aristotelian *mimesis*, the ways in which written language and visual arts communicated and represented the phenomenal world, *imitatio* was explained by both Cicero and Quintilian in *De oratore* and *Institutio Oratoria* respectively as a kind-of creative emulation.[210] An individual would closely study the works of authorities so as to acquire the generic style and methods, and then utilise this style and these methods to facilitate their own *ingenium*. Executed correctly, it was thus a transformative process, adapting the old to produce something new. Executed incorrectly, it was rhetorically framed as a failure of transformation, stealing from the old through rote regurgitation or mimicry.

Zanni was transformed by English pens into a 'deformed' creature, a 'kind of contraritie' to delight that Sidney categorised as a the antithesis of *imitatio*. An anomalous early reference to the Zanni

[209] Quoted in John O'Neill, 'Improvisation in La Entretenida: Tracing the Influence of Plautus and the Commedia Dell'arte on Cervantes', *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 36.1 (2016), 11–27 (p. 12).
[210] See G.W. Pigman III, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33.1 (1980), 1–32; Kenneth Gouwens, 'Erasmus, "Apes of Cicero", and Conceptual Building', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 71.4 (2010): 523–45.

from the 1560s suggests that the mask was connected to such uninspired literary mimicry from its earliest usage in English. Richard Edward's dramatic rendering of the Damon and Pythias myth was performed twice in the Christmas season of 1564-1565 by the Children of the Chapel, first to the Queen and then to the students at Lincoln's Inn. Throughout the play, the clown Jack delights in mocking and playing practical jokes on the simple collier, Grimme (based on a real-life collier who became a popular figure in the English folk tradition). After plying Grimme with wine so as to rob him unawares, Jack toasts their health:

> JACKE.
> By cocke and you shall have it, but I wyll beginne and that anon …
> It bit avow mon companion.
> GRIMME.
> Ihar vow pleadge pety Zawne,
> JACKE.
> Can you speake Frenche? here is a trimme colier by this day.
> GRIMME.
> What man? iche learned this when ich was a Souldier.[211]

Jack raises his glass with a toast in French, '*Je bois a vous, mon compagnon*' (I drink to you, my companion), to which Grimme replies '*J'ai vous pleige, petit Zawne*' (I pledge to you, little Zanni). The joke is that Grimme is a lowly collier and, of course, does not speak French. He learnt this toast as a sodden soldier, possibly in Flanders during the Habsburg-Valois War a few years earlier, aping his fellows with a provincial misinterpretation of the language. In copying without understanding, Grimme plays the 'pety' Zanni himself. How Edwards – a man who lived a fairly stationery life – came into contact with Zanni is unclear, as is whether audiences at Court would have been familiar enough with the movements of the Italian professional theatre six years before Buckhurst's Paris embassy to have

[211] Richard Edwards, *The excellent comedie of two the moste faithfullest freendes, Damon and Pithias Newly imprinted, as the same was shewed before the Queenes Maiestie, by the Children of her Graces Chappell* (London, 1571; STC (2nd ed.) / 7514), sigs. F2r-F2v.

appreciated the joke.[212] The Inns on the other hand, as Lorna Hutson notes, were 'centres of experiment in the composition and performance of new kinds of vernacular drama influenced by classical models' facilitated in part by similar experiments occurring on the continent that were introduced to an English reading public through the growing international print market.[213]

Whether exposed to the Zanni in print or on stage, Edward's usage of the mask as a representation of failed *imitatio* suggests an implicit strangeness that endures in later usage. In the first quarto of Ben Jonson's *Euery man in His Humor* (1601), the aspiring gallant Matheo, referred to as a 'Zanni' by Prospero, is made the butt of the joke when he pulls a bundle of verses from out of his hose and hands them to the pedant, Doctor Clement, to recite aloud. Clement reads out the opening quatrain of Samuel Daniels' celebrated sonnet sequence *Delia*, and, feigning surprise, asks Matheo 'Is this your owne inuention'?:

> *Mat.*
> No sir I translated that out of a booke, called *Delia.*
> *C.*
> Oh but I wold see some of your owne, some of your owne.
> *Mat.*
> Sir; heres the beginning of a sonnet I made to my mistresse.
> *Clem.*
> That that: who? to *Maddona Hesperida* is she your mistresse.
> *Pros.*
> It pleaseth him to call her so, sir.
> *Clem.*
> In Sommer time when *Phaebus* golden rayes.
> You translated this too? did you not?
> *Pros.*

[212] John R. Elliott, 'Edwards, Richard (1525–1566), Poet and Playwright', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8552>.
[213] The following Christmas season at Gray's Inn, for example, George Gascoigne would stage his translation of Ariosto's neoclassical comedy *I Suppositi* (first performed c.1518, printed 1524 in prose and 1551 in verse), introducing this foundational humanist text for general consumption. Shakespeare, of course, would later draw on Gascoigne's *Supposes* for *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590-1592). See Lorna Hutson, 'The Evidential Plot: Shakespeare and Gascoigne at Gray's Inn', in *The Intellectual and Cultural World of the Early Modern Inns of Court*, ed. by Jane Elizabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 245-63 (p. 245).

No this is inuention; he found it in a ballad.
Mat.
Fayth sir I had most of the conceite of it of a ballad indeede.[214]

The joke relies on the multiple applications and meanings of the term 'translation'. Matteo 'translated' the lines from Samuel Daniels' sonnet collection *Delia* in the broadest sense of the term – copying over or transferring the lines from one page onto another. He did not, however, 'translate' the text in the sense of an intellectually engaged act of mediation where a text is deconstructed and its spirit or essence reconstructed in new terms in a new context to new application. Matteo's simple act of imitating Daniels line-for-line is therefore an act of intellectual degeneracy, an inability to critically engage with and transform the substance of the poem. This is driven home in the second pun on conflicting definitions when Clement reads a hackneyed line about the summer sun. It is not translation, Prospero quips, but invention, although not in its rhetorical sense of the search for argument prior to composition but in the sense of a contrivance, a whimsical nothing. Matteo admits to having 'most of the conceite of it out of a ballad', and, as such, they are of no importance.'[215]

3.2.1 The English Ape

It is important to note that Matheo is not a servant, but a foolish gallant, apish in both his theft of verses and penchant for courtly affectations. The 'Englishman (Apelike) decketh himselfe with the deformed qualitie of euery forraine refuge', wrote William Rankins in his moralist satire *The English*

[214] Ben Jonson, *Euery man in his humor As it hath beene sundry times publickly acted by the right Honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants* (London, 1601; STC (2nd ed.) / 14766), sig. L4v.
[215] Ibid.

Ape (1588).[216] Jonson's malcontent, Macilente, in *Every Man Out of His Humor* (1600) holds affectation in similar contempt: the courtier is 'like a *Zani* to a Tumbler,' he scoffs, 'That tries trickes after him to make men laugh.'[217] Jonson elaborated further the following year in *Cynthias Revels* (1601), where he interweaved aspects of courtly performance with the routines of a tumbler and his Zanni. Alone in a chamber, the seasoned traveller Amorphus teaches the aspiring courtier Asotus how to exercise restraint in the facial expressions so as to be an effective 'Politique Creature'.[218] To prove his self-control, he then mimics the 'distinct face of euery your most noted *Species* of persons', including merchants, scholars, soldiers, lawyers, and courtiers.[219] Cupid, invisibly observing the whole affair in bemusement, asks his companion Mercury 'What he?' Mercury proceeds to describe the character of both men: Amorphus is your stereotypical traveller, 'One so made out of the mixture and shreds of formes, that himselfe is truely deformed', while:

> The other gallant is his *Zani,* & doth most of these tricks after him; sweats to imitate him in euery thing (to a haire) except a Beard, which is not yet extant: he doth learne to eat *Anchoues,* & *Caueare* because he loues 'hem, speakes as he speakes; lookes, walkes, goes so in Cloathes and fashion, is in al, as he were moulded of him. Marry (before they met) he had other very pretty sufficiencies, which yet he retaines some light Impression of: As frequenting a dauncing schoole, and grieuously torturing strangers, with inquisition after his grace in his Galliard; He buyes a fresh acquaintance at any rate; his Eye, and his Raiment confer much together as he goes in the street; He treads nicely, like a fellow that walkes vpon ropes, especially the first Sunday of his Silkstockings, and when he is most neate and new, you shal stripp him with commendations.[220]

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[216] William Rankins, *The English ape, the Italian imitation, the footesteppes of Fraunce* (London, 1588; STC (2nd ed.) / 20698.5), p. 13.
[217] Jonson, *The comicall satyre of euery man out of his humor* (London, 1600; STC (2nd ed.) / 14767), sig. L2v.
[218] Jonson, *The fountaine of selfe-loue. Or Cynthias reuels As it hath beene sundry times priuately acted in the Black-Friers by the Children of her Maiesties Chappell* (London, 1601; STC (2nd ed.) / 14773), sig. D4v.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid, sig. E1r. The revised version of the play in Jonson's 1616 folio of collected works adds 'maccaroni', 'bouoli', and 'fagioli' to the list of delicacies that Asotus trains himself to enjoy, suggesting Jonson's knowledge of the mask grew over the following years. See Jonson, 'Cynthias Revels', in *The workes of Beniamin Ionson* (London, 1616; STC (2nd ed.) / 14752), pp. 181-269 (p. 203).

This *buffone* double-act figures with Jonson's earlier comparison of the apish courtier in *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599) to a Zanni who 'tries tricks' after a tumbler, as well as other contemporary references to the immoderate, grotesque countenance of the servant mask.[221] Amorphus the tumbler performs (presumably) accurate representations of stereotypes associated with each occupation, and then is mimicked poorly by Asotus ('Ile practise 'hem all, if you please Sir').[222] After witnessing Asotus's ridiculous grimaces, Mercury equates his inability to countenance *sprezzatura* – the ease of manner described by Castiglione in *Il cortegiano* (1528) as a requirement of the perfect courtier – with the Zanni's inability to transform. He walks 'nicely', punning on the dual meaning of elegantly and sparingly, in the fashion of a tightrope walker so as not to wear out his stockings. Nor can he stop looking at his 'Raiment' as he walks in the streets, and any 'commendations' of his 'neat and new' clothing will 'stripp him' of his practiced courtly ease of manner as he struggles to hide his delight.[223] In each such instance, apish imitation and its associations with the threat posed by strangeness on English identity is transformed into the legible imitative incompetence of the Zanni.

The appetite for strange goods, then, had other unsettling implications. As the English attempted to forge an exclusively English culture, they had to reckon with the prospect that the inability to transform – the lack of capacity to create – may well be the principal marker of Englishness. To John Florio, this resistance to cultural transformation was a hallmark of Englishness. 'I see certain Gentlemen rather loons,' he responds, 'that begin to learn to speak Italian, French, and Spanish, and when they have learned two words of Spanish, three words of French, and four words of Italian, they think they have enough, they will study no more.'[224] To Florio, born in London to Italian parents, fluency in Italian enabled him to connect with his heritage and assume an Italian cultural identity,

[221] See Chapter Four, p. 213._
[222] Jonson, *The fountaine of selfe-loue*, sig. D4v.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Florio, *Florio his firste fruites*, sigs. N3r-N3v.

exemplified by his signing English language epistles with 'I', or 'Iohn', and Italian ones with 'G', or 'Giovanni'.[225] The English, however, were too barbarous, too parochial to transform. They simply aped, and in their aping revealed a natural ignorance.

3.2.2 Strange Transformations

Earlier in the *Euery man*, Matteo attempts to woo Hesperida with an elegy pilfered from Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, printed the same year that *Euery man* premiered at the Curtain. As he reads aloud to his beloved, her companions stifle their laughs. It is a perfect choice, says Guilliano, 'to mocke an Ape with all'.[226] Apes had long been a source of puzzling fascination due to their apparent similarity to man and their ability to perform tasks that suggested some form of cognitive reasoning. While classical authorities and humanist scholars recognised different primary means of distinction, European exposure to these animals (largely as commodities or as performers in an English context) cemented the notion that while apes could imitate gestures and movements, they (like all other beasts) possessed no soul and, accordingly, no creative, reasoning intellectual faculty.[227] Erasmus famously distinguished between those who exercised *imitatio* correctly as the 'sons of Cicero' and those who simply replicated the style of the classical orator as the 'apes of Cicero'.[228] Aretino's Nana would describe the unknown *buffone* of her tale as '*il fio di Giampolo*', the 'son of Zan Polo', drawing on Paolo Cortesi's expansion on Erasmus: while an ape 'mimics only the deformities and faults of the body', the *buffone*, as Polo's 'son', was able to 'reproduce the shape of his father's body', but still retain

[225] Ibid, sigs. A3r, A4r.
[226] Ibid, sig. H1r.
[227] See Nandini Das, '"Apes of Imitation": Imitation and Identity in Sir Thomas Roe's Embassy to India', in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. by Jyotsna Singh (London: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 114-128.
[228] Gouwens, p. 525.

'something of his own in this likeness, something natural, something different.'[229] Once again, however, by a process of transculturation facilitated by the Zanni's absence, the English wrote-over this skill, and the servant mask became inexplicably tied to apishness instead. In simply regurgitating Marlowe, Matheo behaves like an ape, mimicking without understanding or reason.

This touches on another troubling issue around apishness and man's dominion over the world. In his *The sevem deadly sinnes of London* (1606),Thomas Dekker provided a definition of 'apish' that presented an unsettling hierarchy:

> Man is Gods Ape, and an Ape is *Zani* to a man, doing over those trickes (especially if they be knavish) which hee sees done before him: so that *Apishnesse* is nothing but counterfetting or imitation.[230]

Man is made in God's likeness, and as such is an (imperfect) imitation of God, while an ape, a beast without soul and reason, 'zannies' man, copying him in debased and absurd ways. However, the issue was that no one could quite agree on what distinguished the human from the simian, and if men went about trying tricks after each other and behaving like apes, how could one be discerned from the other? Drawing on classical reflections on human-simian behaviour, contemporaries attempted to assuage this anxiety by identifying differentiating factors. Erasmus argued in *Ciceronianus* (1528) that humans were distinct from apes on the basis of the former's capacity for structured verbal communication.[231] Yet works of natural history like Edward Topsell's *Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* (1607) complicated attempts to formally differentiate. In reasoning whether Pigmies should be categorised as humans or not, Topsell (who had never left England) concluded that Pigmies have the cognitive function of apes because they have 'no perfect use of reason, no modesty, no honesty, nor

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[229] Ibid, p. 532.
[230] Thomas Dekker, *The seven deadly sinnes of London drawne in seven severall coaches, through the seven severall gates of the citie bringing the plague with them* (London, 1606; STC (2nd ed.) / 6522), p. 31.
[231] Quoted in Gouwens, p. 532.

Justice of government, and although they speake yet is their language imperfect; and above all they cannot bee men because they have no Religion, which (*Plato* saith truely) is propper to every man.'[232] Apes, then, have some kind of defective verbal communication system, yet this is not enough to be considered human. Rather, their lack of recourse to God marks them out as bestial. However, while concluding that Pigmies were simians rather than humans, Topsell categorises apes in his essay 'Of the Apes' not as beasts but as monstrous creatures. This 'monstrous hybridity', as Holly Dugan terms it, was apparent in their physicality.[233] Simultaneously familiar and ridiculous, their humanoid shapes, facial features, and ability to replicate human actions sat in stark contrast with their furry bodies, movements, and behaviour. This unsettling monstrousness was compounded by the experience of watching trained monkeys perform tricks, or exaggerated stories of apes with almost human like cognition. Jean E. Howard has shown how marvellous apes became a mainstay of popular culture, where they were often depicted performing tasks that required an almost human level of reasoning, such as delivering wine from taverns or playing chess.[234] Castiglione includes an episode in the second book of *Il cortegiano* in which a Portuguese Mariner gives an ape a 'great knocke on the heade' after she checkmates him. The ape, hoping to avoid another beating, refuses to play a second game.[235]

Zanni, too, sat on the precipice of human and beast, a perfect token of the potential monstrousness of man. In fact, this was part of the mythology built around the mask on stage and in the *opuscoli*, where Zanni was often depicted as having simian and bestial ancestry. The refined '*galante*' Fortunato insults his companion Zanni in the *Contrasto del Fortunao* for his inferior performance style

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[232] Edward Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes Describing the true and liuely figure of euery beast, with a discourse of their seuerall names, conditions, kindes, vertues (both naturall and medicinall) countries of their breed, their loue and hate to mankinde, and the wonderfull worke of God in their creation, preseruation, and destruction* (London, 1607; STC (2nd ed.) / 24123), p. 3.
[233] Holly Dugan, '"To Bark with Judgment": Playing Baboon in Early Modern London', *Shakespeare Studies*, 41 (2013), 77-93 (p. 78).
[234] Jean E. Howard, 'Bettrice's Monkey: Staging Exotica in Early Modern London Comedy', in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. by Jyotsna G. Singh (London: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 325-29 (p 328).
[235] Baldassare Castiglione, *The courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio diuided into foure bookes* (London, 1561; STC (2nd ed.) / 4778), sig. T2v.

through a barrage of bestial comparisons, playing on the well-established bestial ancestry.[236] He is the 'owl that the other birds play tricks on'; he was conceived by a cow and a pig; he has the beard of a goat or cat; and he is also proportioned like an ape with his arms hanging low by his knees.[237] The *buffone* would have drawn on their expertise in animal impressions when performing the Zanni. Garzoni would fondly recall a performance in the Piazza San Marco in which Zan della Vigna played opposite '*Maestro Mucchio*', who displayed '*I gesti di simia, gli atti da babuino*' (the gests of monkeys, the actions of baboons).[238]

The English, however, writing over this comic lineage and unconcerned with the comic potential such associations had for performance, found similarities in their comparable lack of restraint. Even the etymology of 'baboon' chimed with representations of Zanni as immoderate in gesture. From the French *babuin*, 'gaping figure', baboon was a portmanteau of the Middle French word *baboue*, 'to Grimmeace', and *babine*, 'to muzzle'.[239] It is reminiscent of Lodge's embodiment of scurrility - an 'onely fellow for making faces'. Zanni's priapism in *Wits Miserie* is paralleled in contemporary ideas around the rapacious and lascivious nature of beasts. Topsell wrote how one ape 'discerned men and women asunder, and above all loved the company of women and young maidens.'[240] His observations of the ape's phallus, which 'was greater than might match the quantity of his other parts' reflects this same preoccupation with animalistic sexuality.[241]

[236] Henke, *Performance and Literature*, p. 132.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid, p. 74.
[239] Dugan, p. 78.
[240] Topsell, p. 11.
[241] Ibid.

3.3 Intersecting Strangeness

Of course, these associations of failed *imitatio*, apish consumerism, and bestial proximity cannot be isolated, and George Chapman's city comedy *Sir Gyles Goosecap* (1607) provides an insight into how these different forms of strangeness intersected. The plain-speaking, cantankerous Sir Cutbert Rudesby deplores Fouleweather's idiocy for riding down Highgate Hill when a heavy frost lay on the ground rather than dismounting. 'Gods pretious Sir *Cutt*', Fouleweather responds, 'your Frenchman neuer lights I tell ye'.[242] Sir Gyles is quick to assure the company of his mettle: 'theres nere a paltrie English frost an them all shood make me light.'[243] Exasperated, Sir Cutbert chastises the pair for their affected, strange manners: 'Goe too you French Zanies you, you wil follow the french steps so long, till you be notable to set one Sound Steppe oth ground all the daies of your life.'[244] Once again, Zanni is used to refer to the apish imitations of strange fashions and customs. Earlier in the play, however, an episode involving an actual French servant, Bullaker, and two English servants, Jack and Will, results in a comic misunderstanding. Whilst gossiping in the street, Will and Jack spot Bullaker and mistake him for the 'great ape that was to be seene in Southwarke':

> Will
> Is this he? Gods my life what beastes were we, that we wood not see him all this while, never trust mee if hee looke not somewhat like a man, see how pretely hee holds the torche in one of his forefeete, wheres his keeper owe, is he broke loose?
> Jack
> Hast ever an Apple about thee (*Will*) weele take him up sure, we shall get a monstrous deale of mony with him.
> Wil.
> That we sh…ll yfath boy, and looke thou here, heres a red cheekt apple to take him up with.
> […]

[242] George Chapman, *Sir Gyles Goosecappe Knight A comedie presented by the Chil: of the Chappell* (London, 1606; STC (2nd ed.) / 12050), sig. D4v.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.

Ja.
Come *Jack,* come *Iacke,* come *Jacke.*
Bul.
I will come to your Sir, Ile *Jacke* ye a my worde, Ile *Jacke* ye.
Will
Gods me he speakes *Jacke,* O pray pardon vs Sir·
Bul.
Out ye *mopede monckies* can yee not knowe a man from a *Marmasett,* in theis Frenchified dayes of ours?[245]

Sartorial affectation is not the only basis for this confusion. Both clowns are fascinated by Bullaker's resemblance to a human. He looks 'somewhat like a man' and is bipedal, carrying a torch in his 'forefeete'. Will then puns on this unsettling hybridity: 'we will get a monstrous deal of mony' for capturing and exhibiting the monster. Yet strikingly, it is unclear whether their mistake is a xenophobic prank or a sincere case of misidentification. Bullaker, at least, seems to think they are in earnest, lamenting these 'Frenchified dayes' where men dress so extravagantly that one cannot distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit.

The exchange brings to mind Carlo Ginzburg's reflections on early modern cultural hybridity. He writes about the battles between 'exotic populations', naked humans and half-humans, inlaid on the foot of a gilded silver beaker made in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century. These scenes situate the object within the contexts of early imperial venture and developing notions of civility in relation to the mythical, almost prelapsarian 'noble savage'. Yet there is also something unsettling about the piece. 'Blurred animal species are usually disturbing', Ginzburg writes, a reminder of the porous line between man and beast that 'become[s] much more disturbing as soon as they seem to leave the sphere of imagination to enter the sphere of possibility.'[246] He ruminates specifically on Cortés's violent conquest of Mexico, but this anxiety – of something leaving the sphere of imagination to inhabit the

[245] Ibid, sig. A3r.
[246] Carlo Ginzburg, 'Memory and Distance: Learning from a Gilded Silver Vase (Antwerp, c. 1530)', *Diogenes (English Ed.)*, 51.1 (2004), 99–112 (p. 133).

sphere of possibility – perfectly encapsulates the Zanni found leaping between the literary and dramatic traditions of the Cinquecento and into the English imagination. He embodied the fears and anxieties of societal breakdown, of England's slavish consumption of strange goods, and of the apish nature of the English themselves. Such fears and anxieties were at once irrational – driven by a fear of change and a longing for an imagined past – and legitimate as England turned outwards into the world. Seeking to cast off its parochial reputation and implement its emergent imperial ambitions, the English were consequently faced with increased cross-cultural encounters, engendering transcultural experience that disrupted attempts to formulate a consistent idea of Englishness

3.4 Conclusion

As Zanni was appropriated into English discourse from disparate sources, he was transformed through a process of transculturation, his set characteristics inflected by an integral strangeness. The comic *lazzi*, *burle*, and *contrafarre* through which the servant mask would undermine the deceits of his master were reconfigured as a debased, immoral pursuit of laughter through mindless mimicry set against the creative, morally productive, and intellectually sincere works of English writers, dramatists, and performers. This resonates with the discussions of English print representations of the Italian professional theatre in the previous chapters, where the *commedia dell'arte* was considered less as an independent dramaturgy or form of performance practice in its own right and was instead incorporated into a general anti-Italianate discourse, intimating a pervasive anxiety over cultural porosity and consequent instability of Englishness. It is a testament to the striking versatility of this transcultural token, however, that as Zanni became emblematic of anti-intellectualism, the mask came to represent not the possibility of English transformation into something strange, but the natural and

integral strangeness of the English. He embodied the pervasive inferiority complex of the English, a reminder of their belated entrance into the European humanist community and onto the world stage.

With this in mind, Luke Hutton's repurposing of the Zanni/Pantalone dialogue in *The Divels Legend* into the exchange between a colloquial Zawny and the Author in *The Black Dogge of Newgate* is not as unusual as it first appears. Though he relates the activities of London villains in a topographically rich world of street names, prisons, colloquialisms and landmarks, he still conformed to contemporary usage. He is a servant with masters who revels in the performative: 'I could tell twentie such prankes as these are,' he tells Hutton, 'which these cunny-catching fellowes haue played'.[247] Although a 'plaine fellow', he can quote from Terence to affirm his commitment to whistleblowing: 'as the Comedian sayd: *Plenus rymarum sum*' (I am full of holes).[248] Yet Hutton's cony-catching pamphlet was not another venture into London's criminal underworld intended to titillate, amuse, and entertainment. His is an exposé, a relation of the realities of crime and punishment in a city and system where the prosecutors are as bad as the criminals and the guiltless pay the price. Placing these tales in the mouth of a stock character that had come to embody an immoderate, anti-intellectual strangeness has an obvious intended effect. If we laugh at the 'prankes' that Zawny shows us, we show our inhumanity.

[247] Hutton, sig. F2r.
[248] Ibid.

4 *Commedia* in Performance: Gesture

In his 1925 study of Italian influences on Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598), Oscar Campbell observed that only the few scripted *erudita* plays of Cinquecento Italian humanists that were translated into English during the period 'could have exerted any pervasive influence' on the English playwright.[1] Therefore, it must have been the *commedia dell'arte*, that form of semi-improvised masked comedy that 'flourished in nearly every capital and important city on the continent' in the latter half of the sixteenth century, that disseminated the theatrical and literary innovations of Italy into regional dramaturgies.[2] Its 'appeal was striking, picturesque, unique' and, most importantly, 'largely independent of language'.[3] The *comici* crafted a visual spectacle that 'once seen, would be held securely in the memory and all their comic devices cherished.'[4] In Paris, Madrid, Bavaria, Antwerp, Lyons, and London, they captured the imagination and proliferated neoclassical theatregrams through an embodied semiotics – a visual poetry of gesture that, as Siro Ferrone has suggested, 'was no less universal than the Latin used by men of letters', communicating character, action, emotion, and expectation to audiences from disparate cultures across far-flung regions in diverse languages.[5]

While the English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* has been shown thus far to have occurred largely at a distance from the performances of the *comici*, there was something about the physicality of the *arte* that piqued the interest of the contemporary English. In the first chapter, the *commedia dell'arte* crafted by Coryate was shown to play on contemporary anxieties around the sensory snares of travel. In the previous chapter, Zanni was shown to function as a transcultural token

[1] Oscar J. Campbell, '*Love's Labour's Lost* Restudied', in *Studies in Shakespeare, Milton and Donne* (New York: MacMillan, 1925), pp. 30-31.
[2] Ibid, p. 31.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Siro Ferrone, 'Journeys', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 67–75 (p. 72).

emblazoned with an immoderate and indecorous physicality that tied the mask to a troubling, multifaceted strangeness. This chapter will focus on the *commedia dell'arte* as it was performed on the English stage, and specifically the notion that the international success of the *comici* was predicated on a universal kinesics designed to clearly present meaning and intent when linguistic and cultural barriers obscured action. Act 2 Scene 1 of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* opens with an intriguing stage direction from which to begin such an enquiry:

> *Enter Baptista with his two daughters, Katerina & Bianca, Gremio a Pantelowne, Hortentio sister to Bianca. Lucen. Tranio, stand by.*[6]

The *Shrew* has often been cited as evidence of Shakespeare's in-depth knowledge of the Italian professional theatre, presenting, as Penny Gay notes, 'a large-scale naturalisation of *commedia dell'arte* character types and plot'.[7] Two Magnifici, a pedantic Dottore, two sets of *innamorati*, and two abused and abusive Zanni, one wily and cunning, the other foolish and hungry. The lovers wax Petrarchan, the *vecchi* plot marriage proposals, and the servants attempt to satisfy their master's will and their own voracious appetites. It is this stage direction, however, and the reference to Gremio as a Pantalone that provides the backbone for such a claim, suggesting the Shakespeare not only adopted and adapted well-worn neoclassical theatregrams, but staged aspects of the *commedia dell'arte*. The elderly and extraordinarily wealthy Gremio is not just *referred to* as Pantalone by another character, but, according to the play text, *is* a Pantalone. This immediately raises several questions. How would the player convey the essence of the mask – the spirit of the Magnifico – to an audience with little to

[6] William Shakespeare, 'The Taming of the Shrew', in *Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies Published according to the true originall copies* (London, 1623; STC (2nd ed.) / 22273), pp. 208-29 (p. 210).
[7] Penny Gay, *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies*, Cambridge Introductions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 23; Mace Perlman, 'Epilogue: Reading Shakespeare, reading the masks of the Italian commedia: fixed forms and the breath of life', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 225-238.

no interaction with the *vecchio* of the Italian professional stage? How did they learn the embodied language of Pantalone? And – the central research question of any study into the minutiae of early modern performance that tend to escape documentation – how can we recover something ephemeral and momentary that, as Miranda Fay Thomas notes, was 'written upon the air but remembered by the observer'?[8]

Finding evidence of historical performance practices poses a significance challenge to theatre historians. A form with so few textual remnants has its own unique challenges, although scholars of the *commedia dell'arte* have long found innovative ways of reimagining contemporary performance practices out of necessity.[9] Since the early years of carnival performance, the *comici* had their likenesses and routines carved, etched, and painted on wood, metal, and plaster. These visual records have formed part of the methodological backbone of research into the Italian professional theatre ever since Maurice Sand's *Masques et Bouffons* (1860), the 'first modern study on the theatre of the professional *comici*'. He brought together a series of colour prints of the *maschere* with a description of their character and role underneath. As might be expected from the son of George Sand, the depiction of the *commedia dell'arte* in the *Masques* belongs to the Romanticism of that century, and all the images included are liberal reinterpretations of earlier iconography that speak to a nostalgic revision of a theatrical golden age. Twentieth-century scholars, such as Pierre Louis Duchartre and Allardyce Nicoll, recognised the academic value of early prints as evidence in itself, although it was M.A. Katritzky's seminal 2002 study of *commedia*'s early modern visual records that first demonstrated the breadth and depth of information that can be gleaned about this elusive theatre from the surprisingly numerous

[8] Miranda Fay Thomas, *Shakespeare's Body Language: Shaming Gestures and Gender Politics on the Renaissance Stage*, Arden Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), p. 6.
[9] See in particular Emily Wilbourne, *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of the Commedia Dell'Arte* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia Dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Natalie Crohn Schmitt, *Performing Commedia Dell'Arte, 1570-1630* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 26-34.

surviving prints, painting, and murals found in sixteenth and seventeenth-century European archives.[10] More recently, scholars have utilised practice-as-research methods as a means of excavating how the *arte* influenced the theatre of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, examining how language, space, and scenography would have restricted and enabled performance. Dramaturgs and directors such as Mace Perlman and Artemis Preeshl have incorporated these innovative methods into their historical research on the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Anglo-Italian theatrical exchange, arguing for a more sustained interaction between the English and the Italian troupes than the written records otherwise suggest.[11]

There are, of course, pitfalls to relying on these kinds of methods and sources in a study of a historical, regional cultural imagination. The only extant image found in England during the period is the French-produced woodcut found on the frontispiece of *The Divels Legend*; the earliest extant images produced in England by an Englishman are found in the sketchbook of Inigo Jones for the anti-masque of William Davenant's 1638 court masque *Britannia Triumphans*.[12] Can it then be assumed that the gestures memorialised in these snapshots of performance would have been interpreted and understood by the English in the same way as they were by the French, Germans, and Italians? The reliance on practice-as-research raises similar issues. To suggest that a transnational historical gesture is recoverable through practice-as-research methods is to suggest that gesture is universal, intuitive, and transhistorical, rather than semiotic and inflected by social and cultural norms.[13]

The objective of this chapter is to uncover how the English performed the physically inflected *commedia dell'arte* as a cohesive, coherent dramaturgy, and whether this kinesics is situated and syncretic

[10] M.A. Katritzky, *The Art of Commedia: A Study in the Commedia Dell'Arte 1560-1620 with Special Reference to the Visual Records* (New York: Rodopi, 2006).
[11] Perlman, 'Epilogue', pp. 225-230; Artemis Preeshl, *Shakespeare and Commedia Dell'Arte: Play by Play* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).
[12] Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols (London : Berkeley: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1973), i, p. 683.
[13] This will be discussed below.

or part of a wider, transnational language that facilitated the success of the *comici* in France, Spain, and the Low Countries. As such, it begins by interrogating the notion of a historical universal embodied semiotics that not only communicated meaning when language became an obstacle to comprehension but left its mark on the Italianate characters of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The idea of gesture as akin to the Latin of European humanism will then be revisited in order to explore how both Italian and English theatre practitioners attempted to legitimise their respective crafts by constructing a precedent for their performance techniques in classical oratory. However, whilst a reliance on Ciceronian and Quintilianic gestural patterns may have accounted for similarities in contemporary acting, this chapter will show how the English presented the *commedia dell'arte* on stage as a theatre of immoderate and unbridled physicality. Turning then to the few surviving representations of English *maschere* in performance, it will explore how English players created their own language of *commedia dell'arte*. Looking to the cultural plurality of London, it will then consider the dynamics of kinesics, and the significance of location to interpretation – as Noland notes, both 'the place where the gesture is executed and the support upon which the gesture is inscribed'.[14] Identifying the space of performance as key to 'determining the way in which the gesture signifies', this chapter will consider the performance of the *maschere* on the English stage as the product of several migratory forces working in tandem. At the messy convergence of cultures in the city, a character-specific embodied semiotics was devised from the collective experience of the audience, playwright, and players.

[14] Carrie Noland, 'Introduction', in *Migrations of Gesture*, ed. by Carrie Noland (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), ix-xx (x).

4.1 A Universal Language of Gesture

Campbell's reflections on the *commedia dell'arte* above show that an extra-verbal, transnational theatrical language has long been seen as the key to the early success of the *commedia dell'arte* abroad. Michele Bottini has recently reiterated this position in relation to Tristano Martinelli's French-Italian mask: 'we must remember that in the birthplace of Arlecchino', he writes, 'verbal communication was most likely more of an obstacle than an adequate mode of expression'.[15] With the scarcity of written records of early *arte* performance, iconography has been a useful source for scholars to reimagine what the *commedia dell'arte* may have looked like on stage.[16] Several of the 124 'Recueil Fossard' prints, for example, produced by Ambrosio Brambilla and Ambrose I Francken during the mid-1580s, capitalised on Martinelli's reputation for dexterity. Figure 13 in Chapter Three portrays Arlecchino in Martinelli's costume with the second Zanni, wearing the traditional garb of the Bergamasque porter, both attempting to do a handstand. Martinelli extends fully into the air, his muscular frame accentuated, whilst the rotund *facchino* can barely kick off from the ground. There is the possibility of a slapstick collision of Arlecchino's head and Zanni's shoe on the horizon, or a scatological *burle* with Zanni bent over just in front of Arlecchino's tilted faced (fig. 13). A number of the other plates depict Arlecchino with an almost unnatural curve to his posture, always ready to perform an act of subtle dissimulation or distance himself from encroaching danger, whether it is by picking the pocket of an unwary shepherd or aristocratic woman (figs. 14 & 15), beating Pantalone to the punch by wooing Colombina over his head (fig. 16), or showing his reluctance to join hands with the pregnant Franceschina at his master's bidding (fig. 17). The way Arlecchino positions his body in these prints draws the eye to

[15] Michele Bottini, 'You Must Have Heard of Harlequin', in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 55-62 (p. 59).
[16] Katritzky, 'The Recueil Fossard 1928-88: A Review and Three Reconstructions', in *The Commedia Dell'arte from the Renaissance to Dario Fo. The Italian Origins of European Theatre*, ed. by Christopher Cairns (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), pp. 99–116.

where he is placing his hands. In figure 18, he sits at a table with another servant, drawing his attention away from the dough he is kneading by extending his arm out into the air and gesturing toward something invisible. All the while, his other hand sneaks under the arm of the servant to pilfer some food from a bowl. In figure 19, the courtesan 'Francisquina' sits on his lap on the floor. Pantalone stares from behind the arras as Arlecchino's curved back draws the eye to the outstretched arm as his hand disappears up Franceschina's dress. From this well-practiced hand, we learn something about his character. He is an unscrupulous thief, a schemer, a sexually voracious glutton. His unnatural positioning conjures memories of his demonic antecedents and his infernal escapades; figure 14 is particularly striking in this regard. He seems to have been copy and pasted into a pastoral scene, his presence an amusing though jarring contrast to the well-proportioned shepherd and nymph.



Figure 14. Harlequin, a Shepherd, and a Nymph. Reprinted in Beijer and Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes.*



Figure 15. Captain Cocodrillo, Harlequin, and La Donna Lucia. Reprinted in Beijer and Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes*.



Figure 16. Ensemble of *maschere*. Reprinted in Beijer and Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes*.



Figure 17. Harlequin, Pantalone, and Franceschina. Reprinted in Beijer and Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes*.



Figure 18. Arlecchino and a young boy. Reprinted in Beijer and Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes*.



Figure 19. Pantalone, Harlequin, and Franceschina. Reprinted in Beijer and Duchartre, *Recueil de plusieurs fragments des premières comédies italiennes*.

Of course, snapshots of routines emphasise indicative motions – what is *about* to happen – rather than the sequencing or the journey of the body from one gesture or pose into another. As such, extant iconography may highlight the importance of gesture to performance, but it reveals very little about how the *comici* constructed a universal kinesics. Innovative practice-as research methods, on the other hand, have provided historians with a way of reimagining these ephemeral moments, and the practicalities, limitations, and opportunities that certain playing spaces and certain actions or practices afforded performers.[17] In *commedia dell'arte* studies, workshops organised by practitioners have been used to evidence the influence of the Italian professional theatre on the playing style that emerged in England the towards the end of the sixteenth century. If I were to list several words we might associated with the old, lecherous, miserable Pantalone, for example, how would they take shape in

[17] Stephen Purcell has written on this methodological trend in 'Practice-as-Research and Original Practices.', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35.3 (2017), 425-44.

our mind's eye? Would we all envisage the same accompanying physical action? How, for example, would we express 'miserly'? Perhaps by stooping our backs, hugging our forearms close to our chests, hands by our faces, fingers extending and contracting, claw-like, grasping at the air. It feels almost as if our response to these words is intuitive, organic, and, by extension, universal. Finding the foundation of a stock character in this instinctive way forms the basis of much *commedia dell'arte* performance theory today. *CommediaWorks*, for example, led by director and theatre coach Didi Hopkins, has provided workshops for the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre following a pedagogical model that identifies the spirit of each *maschera* in particular body parts. For Dottore, it is his protruding stomach that he purposefully pushes out, with his arms behind him or on his sides. With back arched inwards he either looks up towards the heavens or down towards the ground, in feigned or actual concentration, oblivious to world around him. For Zanni, it is his nose, pulling him towards the smell of food and the satisfaction of his stomach. For Capitano, his knees are bent and point outwards, a groin thrust with every step. 'It doesn't start in the brain with language and text,' says Hopkins, 'it starts in the body by experiencing something. And when you commit one hundred percent to the shape and the energy, you begin to get the essence of the character you're playing.'[18] This sense, feeling, and rhythm constitutes a kind-of trans-historical and transcultural embodied knowledge. 'Pantalone, Scrooge, Fagin, Mr Burns. What happens when you start with an impulse in the body, and the body leads? You get a sense, you get a feeling, you get a rhythm.'[19]

Recently, Artemis Preeshl has used similar practice-based methods to illustrate how *commedia dell'arte* 'techniques can bring new life and fresh insights when applied to Shakespeare's plays in performance.'[20] The study opens with a chapter on historical context that collates a great deal of

[18] Deborah May, *Commedia Dell'Arte: Character Shape* (National Theatre, 2011) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJEwuurzDe4>.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Preeshl, p. 1.

archival and textual evidence unearthed by theatre and cultural historians relating to Anglo-Italian theatrical exchange. From this, Preeshl identifies the pervasive presence of an 'Italian style' on the works of sixteenth and seventeenth-century English dramatists that explains why – for a director and performer – Shakespeare's characters feel so indebted to the *maschere*.[21]

This transhistorical, transcultural approach to embodied communications chimes with the early modern notion that the '*naturall Language of the Hand* … had the happinesse to escape the curse at the confusion of Babel' in a rudimentary form.[22] As such, gesture was imperfect, but it did constitute a king of transcultural, translingual communication system, something that contemporary performance practitioners recognised. Flaminio Scala acknowledged the dramatic possibilities of a transcendent non-verbal language in the prologue to his full-length play *Il finto marito* (1618):

> perché ogni minimo gesto a tempo e affettuoso, farà più effetto che tutta la filosofia d'Aristotile o quanta retorica seppone Demostene e Cicerone. E che sia il vero che gl'affetti si muovono più agevolmente da' gesti che dalle parole, ciascuno che ha intelletto.[23]
>
> because the smallest timely and passionate gesture will have more effect than all the philosophy of Aristotle, or the rhetoric of Demosthenes and Cicero. And it is true that the gestures move the passions more easily than words, each of which has its own intellect.

Whilst each word is tethered to the signified ('intellect'), gesture cuts across linguistic boundaries, moving the passions of different peoples in different places across different languages. This universality was, as David Bevington has noted, directly related to the idea that 'gesture and emotion were generated by fixed physiological processes'.[24] Certain responses to events – 'a shaking of the

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[21] Ibid, p. 16.
[22] John Bulwer, *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand. Composed of the speaking motions, and discoursing gestures thereof. Whereunto is added Chironomia: or, the art of manuall rhetoricke. Consisting of the naturall expressions, digested by art in the hand, as the chiefest instrument of eloquence* (London, 1644; Wing / B5466), p. 7.
[23] Quoted in Laura Falavolti et al, *Commedie dei comici dell'arte*, Classici italiani (Unione tipografico-editrice torinese) (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1982), p. 31.
[24] David Bevington, *Action in Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 68.

hands and lips, paleness, or redness, or swelling of the face, glaring of the eyes, stammering of the tongue, stamping with the feet, unsteady motions of the whole body, rash actions' – were all standard physical manifestations of anger caused by humoral imbalance.[25] An old man's role would be performed on the London stage with the same hunch and stoop as Pantalone to depict how the spine compresses over time. Repetitive strenuous activity leads to muscle growth, so when impersonating an English soldier or the Napolese/Spanish Capitano, we puff out our chests to make ourselves as big as possible.

There are a number of issues involving transfer and interpretation that problematise the notion of a universal kinesics of the *commedia dell'arte*. Even if emotions elicit the same physiological responses from all humans, the way they manifest and are then interpreted is culturally determined. Neither a crooked back, swollen chest, nor any of the physiological responses to anger together or in isolation can be described as conventional. A hunch or expanded chest could suggest injury, and any of the symptoms of rage could also be symptoms of fear or love. In performance, the interpretation of fixed physiological processes is thereby governed by manifold contexts, from inter-dramatic events leading up to the gestural act, to the physiological idiosyncrasies that exist at a societal level.[26] Miranda Fay Thomas has recently stressed this in her study of 'shaming' gestures in early modern performance. 'Far from being universal,' she writes, '[gesture] is instead highly specific to the tensions in the performance of social relationships'.[27] Gender, sexuality, and other socio-political experiential frameworks thereby shape and complicate the notion of a conventional kinesics.

[25] Ibid, p. 69.
[26] Kinesics in performance, and hand gestures in particular, have received a great deal of attention in Shakespeare studies over the past five years. Fay Thomas; Farah Karim-Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage: Gesture, Touch, and the Spectacle of Dismemberment* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); Farah Karim-Cooper, 'Shakespearian Gesture: Narrative and Iconography', *Shakespeare Survey*, ed. by Peter Holland, 68 (2015), 118–30; John Wesley, 'Original Gesture: Hand Eloquence on the Early Modern Stage', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35.1 (2017), 65-96.
[27] Thomas, p. 22.

The importance of these frameworks was not completely foreign to early modern theorists. John Bulwer expressed reservations about the notion of a transhistorical, transcultural kinesics in his gestural handbook, *Chirologia* (1644). The humanist education in gesture based on the classical oratorical treatises of Cicero and Quintilian is limited:

> we are not to tread in their steps so far, as to revoke the whole Art of their obsolete Rhetorique, since it is not very apparent, what Action the Ancients used: and if it were known, the whole and perfect discipline, cannot be observed so properly now, since the times and dispositions of men, now differ, and Oratorian Action must varie according to the diversitie of people and Nations.[28]

Bulwer suggest here that even if Cicero and Quintilian had comprehensively codified gesture in written language, the environmental factors that framed interpretation have since changed. People of different nations are diverse in character, countenance, and culture, and therefore it cannot then be assumed that all communicate through their bodies in the same way, or that their actions hold the same meaning in different places. To assume as much elides disparate communication systems and asserts that the ideas, motivations, and experiences that drive each individual's interpretation of the world are transhistorical. We need only look to how the stock characters were continually reshaped and repurposed to fit the changing world around them to see how this was never the case. Arlecchino and Pantalone provide useful examples. Figure 8 shows Zanni approaching Arlecchino from behind intent on stabbing him in the back. Someone beyond the frame has approached, and Arlecchino, with legs slightly bowed, leans forward, sweeping his hat downwards off of his head in a low bow, his arms hanging ready to nip into pockets, gesture distractingly, or grope a courtesan. His nose protrudes further into the space in front than any other appendage, a reminder that the Arlecchino of the Recueil Fossard is not yet the sly and cunning mask of Harlequin of later seventeenth-century *commedia dell'arte*, but the hungry, stupid, daring Zanni. Over the following centuries, however, his popularity

[28] Bulwer, p. 132.

transformed him into the *primo* Zanni. Suddenly, he stood tall and straight, poised with his shoulders back and his bodyweight centred (fig. 20). With different characteristics and different motivations, then, came a different register of non-verbal communication. Pantalone would undergo a similarly drastic, if short-lived, change over the following centuries. Starting life as a carnivalesque tripartite of social vices (lust, avarice, and pride), the *arte* theorist Pier Maria Cecchini presented Pantalone in his 1628 thesis on performance *Frutti delle moderne comedie* as 'sempre parte graue, ma vien però mescolata frà le ridicoli per la lingua, & vestimento' ('always a serious part, although mixed with ridiculousness in language and clothing').[29] The actor should take some license when performing a *lazzi* with Zanni, but the part should always be played with gravity, because Pantalone is first and foremost a man of superior status, one who persuades, commands, and advises. The grave merchant was then further removed from his lecherous origins with the mid-eighteenth-century revisions of Carlo Goldoni, who stresses the gravity of Pantalone as an 'ideal middle-class tradesman'.[30] He behaves in a manner befitting Italy's rising middle-class citizenry, solving rather than causing the narrative conflict.

[29] Pier Maria Cecchini, *Frutti delle moderne comedie, et auisi a chi le recita. Di Piermaria Cecchini nobile ferrarese trà comici detto Frittellino. Dedicati al sereniss. gran duca di Toscana Ferdinando secondo* (Padua, 1528), sig. C1r.
[30] See Jeremy Lopez, 'Imagining the Actor's Body on the Early Modem Stage', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 20 (2007), 187–203; Franklin J. Hildy and Matthew R. Wilson, 'Staging and Staging Practices in Early Commedia Dell'Arte', in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. by Ollie Crick and Judith Chaffee (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 229-37.



Figure 20. Harlequin in Maurice Sand 1823-1889, *Masques et bouffons (comédie italiene). Texte et dessin par Maurice Sand*, 2 vols (France: France: M.Lévy, 1860, 1860), i, p. 67.

The inordinate stress placed on gesture by performance theorists like Scala should not be taken at face value. He belonged to a generation of *comici* who fought to distinguish themselves from the marketplace *cialatani* and carnival entertainers by asserting themselves as professionals within a humanist tradition. He understood gesture to be an evocative generic force for delivering the essence of the mask; language, on the other hand, was what made *commedia* an actor's theatre, with each *comico* collecting speech acts within their *zibaldone* and recording them in memory. The importance of gesture

was therefore stressed for the same reason he promotes an avid use of dialect and colloquialism over formal, literary Tuscan: to show that performance always supersedes the written text. However, in practice, all elements of performance were geared to novelty or experimentation. Language and speech patterns, and an ability to perform skits involving elaborate wordplay in obscure dialects was clearly a key aspect of Italian professional theatre. In a late seventeenth-century thesis on the art of acting, Andrea Perucci stressed that it is the 'diversity of languages' that 'gives great pleasure in comedy'.[31] It was certainly of utmost importance to the Genoese merchant Giovan Battista Spinola mentioned in Chapter One, who wrote to Scala in December 1605 requesting he come urgently to Genoa for a seasonal entertainment. If otherwise employed, Spinola writes, send a *comico* capable of playing a 'parte ridicolosa' who knows 'qualche linguaggio nuovo che non sia toscano, napoletano, fiorentino nè veneziano' (some new language that is not Tuscan, Neapolitan, Florentine nor Venetian).[32] Comasco, a western Lombardy dialect spoken in Como, would be find if needs be ('comasco potrebbe andare bene').[33]

Certain *maschere* were more reliant on language and wordplay than others. Born from the pedant tradition of the humanist *erudita*, the Dottore known as Gratiano was a foolish academic with more confidence in his intelligence than warranted. He spouted Latinisms, made impossible latinized conjugations, and moved throughout the play lost in his own world, a world of monsters, gods, and heroes from classical antiquity. The popularity of Dottore was not only due to his mock-Bolognese dialect, occasional malapropism, or incorrect Latinization or reference (potentially lost on a popular audience), but in the unadulterated barrage of complete nonsense that he would frequently spew, with each word being pushed to its dialectical limits to find some scurrilous pun. It was a roaring success

[31] Cited in Crohn Schmitt, p. 27.
[32] 'Giovan Battista Spinola a Flaminio Scala: «Habbiamo risoluto questo Carnovale»', 25 December 1605, Mantova, Archivio di Stato - Archivio Gonzage, C-5413.
[33] Ibid.

with the crowd, and a 'Gratianesque' language was codification in print, in pamphlet dictionaries, prose and verse compositions.[34]

Dottore's use of Latin would have given the character wider ultramontane appeal, although it is worth noting that those speaking the vernacular were not necessarily more reliant on gesture. Emily Wilbourne has recently shown in her work on early Italian opera that vocalisation and speech patterns played an integral role in communicating action and character in early *commedia dell'arte* performance. Wilbourne has unearthed a paragraph written by the composer Vincenzo Galilei, father of Galileo, written in 1581 that advises musicians to attend Italian professional performance and, if they can contain their laughter, listen to the sounds of the *maschere*.[35] Each mask had an identifiable speaking voice that was packed with variations in 'pitch (high or low), volume of sound, accents, gestures, speed, slowness of articulation'.[36] These varied according to regional and national identity, age, sex, health, education, occupation, and social status. From this 'they could take the musical expression of any idea that comes to mind'.[37]

Wilbourne's observations give historical weight to the extra-verbal semiotics of *commedia dell'arte* recently theorised by the historian and translator Claude Duneton as *l'art du Grammelot*.[38] Grammelot is composed of dialectical sounds, phonemes, made-up foreign words, onomatopoeic inventions, and gestures added to the language as the *compagni* enter new cultural and linguistic zones. It provided a kind of flexible *lingua franca* that aided a type of theatre heavily reliant on dialect to achieve success throughout Italy and beyond the Alps. My own experience of Grammelot during a practice-as-research workshop organised by Serena Laiena of the University of Cambridge in Autumn 2019 was revelatory in thinking about how a form traverses borders and boundaries. The director and

[34] Scala and Andrews, xxii.
[35] Wilbourne, p. 1.
[36] Ibid, pp. 26, 152.
[37] Ibid, p. 1.
[38] Claude Duneton, 'L'art du Grammelot', *Le Figaro* (April 2006).

theatre coach, Ludovico Nolfi, repeatedly stressed to the multi-national, multi-lingual participants that the gestures, movements, and grammelot of their own Zanni, Magnifico, Pantalone, and Dottore should draw on their own cultural heritage and their own experience. It was revelatory in terms of thinking about how a form might transcend borders, but also a highly amusing insight into how such transcendence relied on collective perceptions of 'national' cultures (an English Zanni sniffing out food exclaimed 'chips'; an Italian, 'pizza'). It was not an integral universalism that led to ascendancy of this form, then, but its flexibility – the way in which it was and still is easily appropriated into new cultures and made relevant with situated (and often stereotypical) words, gestures, and even clothing. In other words, the transculturality of the *commedia dell'arte* was not in its encapsulating the spirit of an age, but in its recognition of difference, and its willingness to adapt.

4.2 A Classical Precedent

This is not to say that the kinesics of these parallel secular performance traditions were not intertwined by their place within a wider neoclassical cultural movement. From the early days of the secular theatre in Italy and England, practitioners and playwrights would attempt to legitimise their craft by aligning their activities with the principles of classical oratory. Cicero's recognition of language as something embodied ('*Est enim actio quasi sermo corporis*', he notes in *De oratore*, 'Action is truly the body's speech') was central to the development of a humanist rhetoric, although he provided little in the way of detailed instruction from which to construct a functional pedagogy.[39] After the rediscovery of Quintilian's more thorough account of gesture in the *Institutio Oratore*, however, *actio* was acknowledged

[39] Marcus Fabian Quintillian and Donald A. Russell, *The Orator's Education: Books 11-12*, v (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), v, p. 91.

as the fifth and most important canon of classical rhetoric.[40] This ancillary communicative semiotics was crucial for the good and proper delivery of persuasive speech – '*pronuntiatio corporis*', or bodily enunciation.[41] Quintilian's more elaborate system of oratorical principles provided early modern students with a more precise model of *actio* to be performed in tandem with speech, voice modulation, and eye contact for a comprehensive, potent, and temperate delivery of a particular argument. Humanist learning centres across Europe found the performance of classical works by Roman and Greek playwrights like Plautus, Terence, and Menander the most effective way of acquiring and perfecting the 'proper pronunciation, clarity of enunciation, vocal emphasis and control, respect for rhythm and pitch, and the accompanying 'action' of facial expression and bodily stance and gesture'.[42]

This conformity with the principles of Ciceronian and Quintilianic rhetoric meant that there were undoubtedly some stark similarities in the kinesics of the Italian and English professional theatres. Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet advised the travelling players at Elsinore with some Cicero encountered at university:

> Nor do not saw the air
> too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently;
> for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say,
> the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget
> a temperance that may give it smoothness.[43]

He echoes Cicero's pronouncement that the 'hands should not be too lively, accompanying the words with the fingers, but not imitating them', a point later stressed by Quintilian with a more precise description of correct movement: a 'common gesture, in which the middle finger is placed against the

[40] Jon Hall, 'Cicero and Quintilian on the Oratorical Use of Hand Gestures', *The Classical Quarterly*, 54.1 (May 2004), 143-60 (p. 148).
[41] Ibid.
[42] John H. Ashington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time: The Art of Stage Playing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 40.
[43] William Shakespeare, *The tragicall historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* (London, 1604; STC (2nd ed.) / 22276), sig. G3v.

thumb and the other three extended … is suited to the openings of speeches; the hand is carried forward a short distance with a gentle movement to the left and right, while the head and shoulders follow the hand's direction'.[44] Pier Maria Cecchini would echo these same sentiments in the *Frutti*, lamenting that many *comici* are guilty of 'sciocca affettatione' (foolish affectations) that undercut the correct balance of speech and body, like rolling the eyes, waving the arms, and losing composure.[45] Good acting was all a careful balancing act, an equilibrium of gesture and speech acts; the former is 'lo spirito, che informa il corpo del fauellare, che auuiua le mebre de gl'ordinarii concetti', he would write, 'the spirit that informs the body of speech, that enlivens the limbs of ordinary ideas'.[46] The body should behave like a 'bracciere', or escort, to sustain speech, rather than deliberately tripping it over like a Bergomask *facchino*.[47] Tomaso Garzoni would note the same in his 1586 tract *L'Hospidale de' pazzi incurabili* when recalling the chameleon skills of a contemporary *comico*:

> Ne' tempi nostril ha gratia molto grande in simulare il pazzo un certo Garbinello, il quale, si come in rappresentare un villan Padoano, un Magnifico, & un Gratiano ha pochi pari, così in quest' altra dissimulatione eccede tutti, perche chi lo uede & ascolta, lo stima Senz'altro à gli atti, ai gesti, alle parole.[48]
>
> In our daies one *Garbinello* hath a notable grace in playing of the foole, who as in representing a poore Padoan countrey man, a Magnifico, or some doddipoule Doctor *Gratian* he hath no fellow; so in this other kind of dissimulation, exceedeth he all others, for whosoever heareth or seeth him, by actions, gestures, and words.

[44] See Hall, p. 148.
[45] Cecchini, p. 16.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Tomaso Garzoni, *L'Hospidale de' pazzi incurabili* (Ferrara, 1586), p. 38. Translated by Nashe in *The hospitall of incurable fooles: erected in English* (London, 1600; STC (2nd ed.) / 11634), p. 74.

Garbinello, who probably modelled his persona on the leading man Ruzante in Beolco's *La piovana* (1532), was so adept at *actio* that he could perform three *maschere* – Zanni, Magnifico, and Dottore – with 'notable grace' in actions, gestures, and words.

Though extant reports of English performance number only a handful, they often celebrate more reputable entertainers for their ability to adopt a personage through *actio*. In a manuscript housed at the Harleian Library, Lord Keeper John Puckering fondly recalls a performance in which the great leading man of the Lord Admiral's Men, Edward Alleyn, 'so captivated the town, and so monopolized the favour of his audience by those agreeable varieties he could so readily command, in his voice, countenance, and gesture; and so judiciously adapt to the characters he played, as even to animate the most lifeless compositions'.[49] Ben Jonson would later distil these sentiments into a pithy epigram: **'**As others speak, but only thou dost act.'[50] The activities of the Italian performers, on the other hand, are better documented and provide a more detailed account of the particularities of *actio*. During the wedding festivities of the Grand Duke of Medici and Christine de Lorraine in 1589, Guiseppe Pavoni marvelled at Isabella Andreini's performance of a '*pazzia*', or mad scene, where the *innamorata* is driven temporarily mad by a cruel twist of fate (often at the instigation of her father) that lands her lover exiled, imprisoned, or presumed dead:

> Isabella come pazza se n'andava scorrendo per la Cittade, fermando or questo, & ora quello, e parlando ora in Spagnuolo, ora in Greco, ora in Italiano, & molti altri linguaggi, ma tutti fuor di proposito: & tra le altre cose si mise à parlar Francese, & à cantar certe canzonette pure alla Francese, che diedoro tanto diletto alla Sereniss. Sposa, che maggiore non si potria esprimere. Si mise poi ad imitare li linguaggi di tutti li suoi Comici, come del Pantalone, del Gratiano, del

[49] Quoted in Francis Waldon, *The Biographical Mirrour, Comprising A Series Of Ancient And Modern English Portraits, Of Eminent And Distinguished Persons* (London: S&E Harding, 1795), p. 6.

[50] Ben Jonson, 'Lxxxix. To Edward Allen', in *The workes of Beniamin Ionson* (London, 1616; STC (2nd ed.) / 14752), p. 793.

> Zanni … tanto natural mente, & con tanti dispropositi, che non e possibile il poter con lingua narrare il valore, & la virtu di questa Donna.[51]
>
> Isabella like a mad creature roamed the city scene, stopping one passerby, then another, speaking now in Spanish, now in Greek, now in Italian and in many other languages, but always irrationally; and among other things she began to speak French and to sing French songs, which gave the most inexpressible pleasure to the bride, Her Most Serene Highness. Then Isabella fell to imitating the manner of speech of all her fellow actors, of Pantalone, of Gratiano, of Zanni … all so naturally and with such hilarious absurdities that it is impossible for tongue to tell the matchless worth and power of this woman.

The early seventeenth-century anonymous moralist tract *Discorso Contra Il Carnevale Dove Si Tratta Delle Maschere Et Balli Et Si Dimostra* stresses the need for 'ordine, continenza, prudenza, sobrieta' (order, continence, prudence, sobriety) at masks and dances, and is particularly concerned with containing the '*pazzia*'.[52] Though typically translated as 'mad scene', madness can be thought of in this case as a general (and morally destructive) lack of self-control in situations that call for social decorum.[53] The same applies to Andreini's *'pazza'* in Pavoni's account. Andreini signals her madness with a loss of control in speech, voice, and gesture. She slips between different languages 'fuor di proposito' (out of order; irrationally) and imitates her fellow *maschere*. When she is eventually given a potion that brings her to her senses, she demonstrates 'con elegante, & dotto stile' ('with elegant and learned style') that she is once again sane.[54] Natalie Crohn Schmitt's impressive analysis of the frontispiece image on Corsini manuscript scenario 'La Pazzia di Doralice' (fig. 21) shows how the loss of reasoning at the onset of a *pazzia* might be signalled as Pavoni suggests by a break from gestural decorum. The *innamorata*'s flailing arms in this image, illustrated with cartoonish movement lines around her hands,

[51] Quoted and translated in Louise George Clubb, *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 263-64.
[52] Quoted in Peter Burke, 'The Language of Gesture in Early Modern Italy', in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance*, Cultural History of the Senses, ed. by Herman Roodenburg (London: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, Plc., 2014), pp. 71-83 (p. 76).
[53] Ibid.
[54] Clubb, p. 263.

indicate that she is mad as, according to Quintilian, modesty and timidity are suggested by a slight curvature of the hand and short, gentle movements of the arm and shoulders.[55] A return to her 'primo essere' (her senses, original state) is then signalled by a return to a more orderly physical disposition.



Figure 21. Frontispiece 'La pazzia di Doralice'. *Raccolta di scenari più scelti d'istrioni divisi in due volume.* Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana. Reproduced from Natalie Crohn Schmitt, *Performing Commedia Dell'Arte, 1570-1630* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), p. 41.

[55] Crohn Schmitt, p. 40.

Relinquishing control in such a carefully crafted manner reflected contemporary concerns in both English and Italian discourse on acting and gesture. The idea that the body was a site of potentially subversive spontaneity in desperate need of governance was a point of increasing concern for the Church over the course of the sixteenth century. In 1527, the Bishop of Verona, Gian Matteo Giberti, issued his Constitutions for the Diocese of Verona advising that the clergy behave gravely '*in gestu, incessu, et habitu corporis*' ('in their gestures, their walk and their bodily style').[56] Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, extended the same advice to the laity of his Diocese as well, calling for 'decorum, dignity and moderation' in the face of endemic 'laughing, shouting, dancing, and tumultuous behaviour'.[57] Such counsel became more stringently enforced throughout Italy during the Tridentine years as Church leaders set about addressing grievances at moral excess. The emergence of a new form of improvised theatre with women playing women was of particular concern for those appointed to the Counter-Reformation commission to determine the Church's position on secular art and iconography. In February 1578, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti wrote to Borromeo of the difficulties in censoring a form that favoured oral composition. The *comici*:

> always add words or remarks that are not set down, for they write out nothing beyond the summary or argument, and the rest is all done extempore, and the difficulty is to condemn them for this.[58]

This was by no means a novel attack on a novel theatre. Paleotti drew on a long history of anti-theatricalism in the Church that associated performers with the obscene extemporising of pagan

[56] Ibid. See also, Barbara Furlotti, 'The performance of displaying: Gesture, behaviour and art in early modern Italy', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 27.1 (2014), 1-13.
[57] Quoted in Burke, p. 76.
[58] Quoted in Lea, i, p. 314.

itinerant *histriones* and the *mimi* of antiquity.[59] However, casting women in all female roles gave new life to old charges, particularly in relation to the corrupting nature of gesture:

> Moreover they use the most lascivious and indecent gestures that are not indicated, they introduce women of the town and quite shamelessly they will suddenly devise such things as it would never occur to one to forbid.[60]

The Church had issued restrictive measure after restrictive measure to regulate the activities of the *comici* ever since the first professional troupes emerged in the 1540s.[61] Moralists and fervent clergy like Paleotti – who found the *comici* a particularly galling bugbear – took to print to condemn professional performance and pursue harsher provisions on their activities. Censorship, as he lamented in this letter to Borromeo, has only limited reach when every day the *attrice* turned spectators to dwell on sinful thoughts through their lude gestures. Ultimately, however, few shared his fervour, and the standing of many performers amongst civic and aristocratic authorities was simply too great for the Church to impose any lasting restrictions.[62] Niccolò Barbieri recalled in his *La supplica* (1637) how fellow *comico* Adriano Valerini actually persuaded Borromeo to approve his company's *scenari* in 1583.

In England, where the Crown extended dominion over the Church, restrictions on the activities of the players were driven more by political pragmatism than hysteria over the potential moral corruption of lascivious gestures. From 1594, professional acting in the City was made a duopoly by Act of the Privy Council, with only the Lord Admiral's and Lord Chamberlain's men permitted to perform within the City limits. It was the role of the Master of the Revels to pre-empt any potentially subversive speeches and actions, and excise or adapt the offending passages in the copy submitted to

[59] Bernadette Majorana, 'Commedia Dell'Arte and the Church', in *Commedia Dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 133-48 (p. 134).
[60] Quoted in Stefan Hulfeld, 'Notebooks, Prologues, and Scenarios', in *Commedia dell'Arte in Context*, ed. by Christopher B. Balme et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 46-55 (p. 52).
[61] Majorana, p. 134.
[62] Ibid.

his office prior to performance. Of course, whether the players actually paid much heed to the censor's more stringent edits is unknown, and it is worth noting that several high-profile incidents landed playwrights and players in front of the Privy Council in the Star Chamber on suspicion of sedition after the performance.[63]

Like the Italians, the lack of material traces left by gestures was a cause for concern amongst moralists, who, as observed in Chapter One, castigated the 'shamelesse gestures' of performers in in their spirited print condemnations of playing.[64] Their attacks on the physicality of playmaking became so commonplace that Henry Chettle, printer of playbooks and occasional dramatist, would satirise them in *Kind-harts dreame* (1593): 'Is it not lamentable,' he writes, 'that a man should spende his two pence on [players] in an after-noone … and in liuely gesture see trecherie set out, with which euery man now adaies vseth to intrap his brother.'[65] Meanwhile, playmakers and their champions presented drama as a societal corrective. For Thomas Heywood and his contemporaries, the benefit of playgoing lay in the power of visual stimuli to inspire the subject to action:

> A Description is only a shadow received by the eare but not perceived by the eye: so lively portrature is meerely a forme seene by the eye, but can neither shew action, passion, motion, or any other gesture, to moove the spirits of the beholder to admiration: but to see a souldier shap'd like a souldier, walke, speake, act like a souldier: to see a *Hector* all besmered in blood, trampling upon the bulkes of Kinges … To see as I have seene, *Hercules* in his owne shape hunting the Boare, knocking downe the Bull, taming the Hart, fighting with Hydra murdering *Gerion,* slaughtring *Diomed,* wounding the *Stimphalides,* killing the Centaurs, pashing

[63] Notable occasions include Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe's lost play *The Isle of Dogs*, staged at the Swan on Bankside in 1597, deemed a 'slanderous matter' by the Privy Council. While Nashe fled to Great Yarmouth, Jonson and two players were imprisoned at Marshalsea. In 1624, the Council brought a case against Thomas Middleton for his slanderous portrayal of King James and the Spanish Ambassador, Count Gondomar in *A Game at Chess*. Middleton was acquitted after showing evidence of the Master of the Revel's approval. See Thomas Cogswell, 'Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: "A Game at Chess" in Context', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 47.4 (1984), 273–88.
[64] Philip Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses contayning a discouerie, or briefe summarie of such notable vices and imperfections, as now raigne in many Christian countreyes of the worlde* (London, 1583; STC 23376), sig. L6v
[65] Henry Chettle, *Kind-harts dreame Conteining fiue apparitions, vvith their inuectiues against abuses raigning* (London, 1593; STC (2nd ed.) / 5123), sig. C2v.

> the Lion, squeezing the Dragon, dragging *Cerberus* in Chaynes, and lastly, on his high Pyramides writing *Nilultra,* Oh these were sights to make an *Alexander.*[66]

He echoes earlier defences of playmaking in which England's neoclassical comedies are conveniently brushed aside and its tragedies presented as civic-minded exercises typically listed at the box office. In *Pierce Penilesse*, Nashe writes that static descriptions of bravery, 'lain long buried in rusty brass and worm-eaten books' and chronicles, were limited in comparison to stage plays in their ability to inspire a unifying sense of Englishness.[67] Reanimating soldiers on stage, however, presenting them viscerally in the flesh costumed, walking, speaking, and performing acts of outstanding courage and virtue, stimulated spectators to action in accordance with contemporary theories about the power of external stimuli to alter the physiology. By invoking a classical golden age of Hector and Hercules, defenders of secular performance like Heywood envisaged a new civic role for the playhouses. They were the 'high Pyramides' where the achievements of an English golden age could be memorialised, and the playwrights architects, making 'an *Alexander*' of an Englishman.

To shore up their claims that secular performance was (or had the potential to be) an education in bodily control, both the *comici* and the London players attempted to deflect hostility away from their own developing dramaturgies onto what they saw as more worthy subjects of derision. In Italy, Paleotti's high profile and vitriolic persecution may have had limited and short-lived consequences for the *comici*, but those less reputable performers fared worse. For their own part, the *comici* often corroborated in their persecution.[68] Despite the fluidity of contemporary professional theatre, many felt genuine indignation at the elision of their cultivated craft with the marketplace tricks of the *buffone* and mountebanks, as in Venice, where the licensing body that granted or denied permission to perform within the City was called the *Soprintendenze sui comici e ciarlatani* (Commission on Comedians

[66] Thomas Heywood, *An Apologie for Actors* (London, 1613; STC (2nd ed.) / 13309), sigs. B3r-B3v.
[67] Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the devil* (London, 1592; STC 18372), sig. F3r.
[68] Majorana, p. 134.

and Charlatans).[69] That said, a cutthroat commercialism definitely played a part; around 1600, Isabella Andreini complained to the Governor of Milan, Don Pedro Enriquez, of 'questi che montano il banco in piazza pubbica fanno commedie, anzi guastano commedie' ('those who mount benches in the public piazza perform comedies and thus ruin them').[70] 'Parimento la supplico', she does on, 'a fare scrivere al sig. Podestà che non consenti che le facciano' ('I beseech you to write to the Duke asking him not to allow [the mountebanks] to perform comedies').[71] Even if the pedlars could not hold a candle to the grand touring companies of the *commedia dell'arte*, it seems they were still unwelcome competition in a saturated market.

Attempts made by the English to deflect attention were tied to the general strategy of framing secular drama as an exercise in nation-building and, accordingly, it was the theatrical activities of strangers that provided the necessary scapegoat. Heywood was unusual amongst his cohort in commending the merits of the *commedia dell'arte*, an actor's theatre of 'Doctors, Zawnyes, Pantaloones, Harlakeenes, in which the *French,* but especially the *Italians*, haue beene excellent'.[72] Yet in drawing theatrical traditions along national lines (and aligning a generally poorly regarded theatre practice with France *and* Italy), his *Apologie* resonates with contemporary condemnations of strange performance practices. More direct hostility towards the *commedia dell'arte* tended to take aim at its perceived immoderate physicality. Nashe ignored the pan-European contexts of neoclassical secular theatre in drawing a comparison 'twixt our players and the players beyond the seas'.[73] The *comici* are merely 'squirting bawdy comedians', he wrote, 'squirting' here meaning to move 'swiftly or quickly; to dart or frisk'.[74] Two decades after the 'famous Francatipp' Harlicken' appeared in Nashe's anti-Marprelate

[69] Katritzky, *Women, Medicine and Theatre, 1500-1750: Literary Mountebanks and Performing Quacks* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), p. 217.
[70] Roberto Tessari, *La Commedia Dell'Arte. La Maschera e I 'ombra* (Milan: Mursia, 1981), p. 63.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Heywood, sig. E2v.
[73] Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse*, sig. F4r
[74] 'Squirt, v.', OED, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/188468? [accessed 7 January 2021].

tract, John Day, George Wilkins, and Samuel Rowley would stage an interaction between the *maschera* and the recently deceased clown, William Kempe, in *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers* (1607). The play capitalised on a spate of pamphlets relating the buccaneering adventures of Anthony, Thomas, and Robert Shirley. The plot follows the brothers as they convert Safavid noblewomen, save trading partners from heathen usurpers, and enact England's emergent imperial vision. In the midst of the fast-paced and disjointed action, Kempe meets Anthony Shirley in Rome during a tour of the continent.[75] The two embrace and briefly converse about 'recent' events and scandals in London (all contemporaneous to Anthony's actual visit to Rome in 1601) before a servant enters announcing the arrival of an '*Italian Harlaken* come to offer a play to your Lord-ship.'[76] Delighted at the prospect, Anthony enlists Kempe to 'play a part with them'.[77] 'I am somewhat hard of study', replies the Clown, 'but if they will invent any extemporall meriment, ile put out the small sacke of witte I ha' left, in venture with them.'[78]

No doubt an improvised battle of wits and slapstick comedy would have been an exciting prospect to an early modern audience. However, the promised extemporal spectacle never materialises. Anthony whispers something in Kempe's ear to which the audience is not privy, and Kempe turns to the Harlequin. 'Now Signior, how many are you in companie?' he asks. 'None but my wife and my selfe sir', the Harlequin responds.[79] Thus the game begins, and the English Clown shoots off a series of misogynistic jests at the expense of the *attrice*:

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[75] An entry in the diary of William Smith of Abingdon's diary dated 2 September 1602 suggests that Kempe met with the famed adventurer Anthony Shirley when travelling in Rome:

> Kemp, mimus quidam, qui peregrinationem quondam in Germaniam et Italiam instituerat, post moltos errores, et infortunia si, reversus: multa refert de Anthonio Sherley, equite aurato, quem Romae (legatum Persicum agentem) convenerat.

Quoted in Lea, i, p. 350.

[76] John Day, Samuel Rowley, and George Wilkins, *The trauailes of the three English brothers Sir Thomas Shirley Sir Anthony [Shirley] Mr. Robert [Shirley]. As it is now play'd by her Maiesties Seruants* (London, 1607; STC (2nd ed.) / 6417), sig. F4r.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

Kemp.
Now Signior, how many are you in companie?
Harl.
None but my wife and my selfe sir.
Kemp.
Your wife, why hearke you, wil your wife do tricks in publike.
Harl.
My wife can play.
Kemp.
The honest woman, I make no question, but how if we cast a whores part or a courtesan.
Harl.
Oh my wife is excellent at that, she's practisd it ever since I married her, tis her onely practise.
Kemp.
But by your leave, and she were my wife, I had rather keepe her out of practise a great deale.

The back and forth continues until Anthony interjects:

Yet since 'tis the custome of the countrie,
Prithe make one, conclude upon the project:
We neither looke for Schollership nor Arte.
But harmlesse mirth, for thats thy usuall part.[80]

The tightly structured dialogue deliberately leaves little space for the insertion of the unrecorded 'elastic gags' that Richard Andrews finds interspersed throughout the *scenari*. While Harlequin takes Anthony's 'project' to mean the performance of an extemporised scenario, Kempe has been instructed to humiliate the mask through verbal wordplay. When Harlequin begins to cast the play around a proposed theme – the cuckolding of an 'Old Pantaloune' by an '*Amorado*', Kempe responds to each suggestion with a barrage of puns while repeatedly alluding to the 'custome' of the country.[81] This was

[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

a striking departure from the William Kempe remembered as the target of Hamlet's attack on those who speak 'more than is set downe for them'.[82] In death, his indecorous orality is forgiven and forgotten as he is yoked by the literary supremacy of the script. A similarly subdued Kempe is found in the university drama, *The Return from Parnassus*, first performed by the students at St John's College, Cambridge in 1602 but printed the year prior to *The Travailes*. In one scene, the Clown appears alongside a fictionalised Richard Burbage to instruct the students in *actio*. Kempe recalls how 'I was once at a Comedie in Cambridge, and there I saw a parasite make faces and mouths of all sorts'.[83] Compare this to the reproachful depiction of Arlecchino in Day's *The Isle of Gulls* (1606): 'I can compare my lord and his friend' says the Page to Lysander and Demetrius, 'to nothing in the world so fitly as to a couple of water buckets, for whilst hope winds the one vp, dispaire plunges the other downe, whilst I like a Harlakene in an Italian comedy, stand making faces at both their follies.'[84] The similarities between the extemporal antics of the English and Italian traditions once drawn by Nashe were therefore erased in these posthumous representations. *The Travailes* shows the Clown's triumph over the immoderately physical envoy of the *commedia dell'arte* as the victory of an English literary theatrical tradition over the degenerate, uncurbed physicality and orality of their Italian counterparts.

4.3 Performing *Commedia dell'Arte* Gesture on the English Stage

Predictably, the tightly scripted dialogue between Kempe and the Harlequin in *The Travailes* gives no indication as to how the latter was performed (although it can be assumed from the Page's description

[82] Shakespeare, *The tragicall historie of Hamlet*, sig. G4r.
[83] *The returne from Pernassus: or The scourge of simony Publiquely acted by the students in Saint Iohns Colledge in Cambridge* (London, 1606; STC (2nd ed.) / 19309), sig. G3r.
[84] John Day, *The ile of guls As it hath been often playd in the blacke Fryars, by the Children of the Reuels* (London, 1606; STC (2nd ed.) / 6413), sig. C4v.

of the mask in the *Isle of Gulls* that the player stood there 'making faces'). The explicit demonstration of English cultural supremacy, however, provides a useful context for how the immoderate performances of the Italian *comici* may have been contrasted with those of the civic-minded English. Though there are frustratingly few occasions on which the English staged the *commedia dell'arte*, fortunately two of these rare extant representations illuminate the different ways in which players and playwrights established a kinesics of *commedia dell'arte* on stage. The first concerns a scene in John Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* (first performed 1598; printed 1602) in which the eponymous young lovers break into an impassioned Italian dialogue that deliberately and temporarily imitates the i*nnamorati* in its erratic emotional intensity. The second concerns the more sustained depiction of the Pantalone mask in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (first performed c.1592; printed 1623) mentioned in the introduction.

4.3.1 Performing the *Innamorati*

In the *Frutti*, Cecchini categorised the *innamorati*, or two-sets of young lovers, as *parti grave*. They speak in the more literary *moscheta* and, as observed earlier with Andreini, their youthful, unbridled passions performed through carefully crafted breaks from decorum. Their exchanges, as Kathleen Lea has observed, were tightly structured dialogues assembled from *concetti* (conceits), 'brief speeches containing some witty paradox or comparison.'[85] 'It falls to the lady to catch the idea of the conceit,' she notes, 'and return it in graceful dialogue.'[86] The dialogues of 'mutual disdain' between two

[85] Lea, i, pp. 105-6.
[86] Ibid.

conflicted lovers, indebted to the patterns of antithesis and repetition in classical stichomythia, might resemble the following:

> *She.* I say I detest you
> *He.* I say I abhor you
> *She.* and that I cannot endure the sight of you any more.
> *He.* and that I cannot bear to be with you any more.
> *She.* Do you not know, these bonds…
> *He.* Do you not know, these shackles…
> *She.* which you called gold
> *He.* which you said were of diamond
> *She.* are proved false.
> *He.* were only of glass.
> *She.* They were gilded fetters.
> *He.* They were counterfeit stones.[87]

And so on and so forth. A similar pattern of contrasting or complementary elaboration is found throughout the lovers' exchanges, whether angry, despairing, or amorous. Andrew Grewar identifies the use of several such dialogic theatregrams in the exchanges between Shakespearean lovers. Though Benedict and Beatrice are 'far more witty', he writes, 'much of the time they are engaged in a similarly constructed, if more elaborate, dialogue of reciprocal scorn where each picks up and plays with a word or image used by the other.'[88] A more straightforward and less aggressive example of this kind of exchange takes place between Berowne and Katharine in *Love's Labour's Lost* (first printed 1596). 'You must not be so quick', says Berowne; '*T*is long of you, that spur me with such questions', Katharine responds. 'Your wit's too hot: it speeds too fast, 'twill tire', he replies; 'Not till it leave the rider in the mire', she quips back.[89] The development of the conceit revolves around the word 'spur' as both

[87] Ibid, p. 109.
[88] Grewar, Andrew, 'The Clowning Zanies: Shakespeare and the Commedia Dell'Arte', *Shakespeare in South Africa*, 3 (1989), 9–32 (p. 23).
[89] William Shakespeare, *A pleasant conceited comedie called, Loues labors lost As it vvas presented before her Highnes this last Christmas* (London, 1598; STC (2nd ed.) / 22294), sigs. C1v-C2r.

inciting action and pricking a horse to gain speed, with all erotic aspirations dashed when Katherine bucks Berowne as he tries to ride her.

These Italianate exchanges became so commonplace in English drama that John Marston caricatured their usage in his genre-parody *Antonio and Mellida*. Marston was clearly familiar with the Italian language and Italian models, possibly through connections inherited from his Italian great grandfather, the physician Baldassare Guarsi. His tragicomedy *The Malcontent* (1604) is heavily indebted to Guarini's *Il pastor fido* (which, as mentioned in Chapter One, was imported in bulk by Giacomo Castelvetro for his English friends) and he appears to have had more than a passing familiarity with the *commedia dell'arte*. Lea argues that the 'blatantly Italianate' characters and themes of *The Malcontent* 'might have stepped out of the Commedia dell'Arte', and in 1604, he named his eponymous Dutch Courtesan after the *maschera*, Franceschina.[90] In *Antonio and Mellida*, Marston stages the *innamorati* in a peculiar scene that offers an insightful glimpse of how the English staged the *commedia dell'arte* in the period. The eponymous lovers, separated by the machinations of Mellida's tyrannical father, are finally reunited in the fourth act when they both enter on stage in disguise. Lamenting their loss, the scene crescendos into an Italian language exchange in the moment of recognition:

Ant.	Ant.
O heauen, that I should heare such blasphemie.	O heauen, that I should heare such blasphemie.
Boy, rogue, thou liest, and	Boy, rogue, thou liest, and
Spauento dell mio core dolce Mellida,	Frighten my heart, sweet Mellida,
Di graua morte restore vero dolce Mellida,	From grievous death, true, sweet Mellida is restored,
Celesta saluatrice sovrana Mellida	The celestial, saviour, sovereign Mellida
Del mio sperar; trofeo vero Mellida.	Of my hope; Uncorrupted monument, Mellida.
Mel.	Mel.
Diletta & soaue anima mia Antonio,	My dear and gentle soul, Antonio,
Godeuole belezza cortese Antonio.	Beauty that may be enjoyed, gracious Antonio.

[90] Lea, ii, p. 420; John Marston, *The Dutch courtezan As it vvas playd in the Blacke-Friars, by the Children of her Maiesties Reuels* (London, 1605; STC (2nd ed.) / 17475).

Signior mio & virginal amore bell'Antonio Gusto delli mei sensi, car' Antonio.	My Lord and virginal love, beautiful Antonio, Taste of my senses, dear Antonio.
Ant. O suamisce il cor in vn soaue baccio,	Ant. O the heart fades in a gentle kiss
Mel. Murono i sensi nel desiato dessio:	Mel. The senses die from long-held desire:
Ant. Nel Cielo puo lesser belta pia chiara.	Ant. Can fairness be more illustrious in the heavens?
Mel. Nel mondo pol esser belta pia chiara?	Mel. Can fairness be more illustrious in the universe?
Ant. Dammi vn baccio da quella bocca beata, Bassiammi, coglier l' aura odorata Che in sua neggia in quello dolce labra.	Ant. Give me a kiss from that blessed mouth, Let me catch the fragrant breeze That has its seat on those sweet lips.
Mel. Dammi pimpero del tuo gradit' amore Che beame, con sempiterno honore, Cosi, cosi mi converra mor.[91]	Mel. Give me the empire of thy love's favour That blesses me with everlasting honour, Thus, thus, I shall die.

The couple indulge in the kind of wordplay associated with the neoclassical lovers. The epistrophe in the first section bring each line into a more intense crescendo with each 'Mellida' or 'Antonio'. 'Nel Cielo', says Antonio, in the hyperbolic fashion expected of a young man in love, 'puo lesser belta pia chiara'. Mellida then responds with the standard one-upmanship: 'Nel mondo pol esser belta pia chiara'. Though imperfect, Marston's Italian is not the xenophobic interpretation of the phonemes and intonation of a strange language often performed on the English stage in the period, and this has implications on how the performance of this exchange. Those who learned languages from alien schoolmasters or manuals may have revelled in the opportunity to test their listening comprehension,

[91] John Marston, *The history of Antonio and Mellida. The first part. As it hath beene sundry times acted, by the children of Paules* (London, 1602; STC (2nd ed.) / 17473), sig. G3v.

but for most, it was the player's gestures that would have made the essence of this exchange intelligible. 'Nel cielo' may be conveyed by a wide-armed signal to the literal 'heavens' of the outdoor stage; 'Nel mondo' by a contrary gesture to the earth around them. Certain repetitive conjugations ('Dammi'/give me) and nouns ('baccio'/kiss, and 'bocca'/mouth) can be signified by a motion of the hand(s) towards the body or the lips of either party. The necessity of exaggerating the gestures to convey the meaning of their Italian language dialogue makes this passage a clever piece of theatrical satire. In a play that incorporates and exaggerates all manner of Italianate structures and motifs to satirise their prevalence in both English comedy and Revenge tragedy, the young lovers are momentarily transformed into the *innamorati* to satirise the formulaic and stale dialogic and verbal structures of the lovers' exchange.

4.3.2 Performing the Pantalone

The transformation is of course only temporary. Gremio's entrance on stage as '*a Pantelowne*' in *The Taming of the Shrew*, on the other hand, indicates a sustained depiction of a *commedia dell'arte* mask, and therefore offers a whole new set of theatrical possibilities and interpretive challenges. Whether interpolated into the stage plot, a rough draft, a later performance, or in the printer's house, '*Enter Gremio, a Pantelowne*' suggests a pre-existing knowledge of what such a role encompassed. This is not the first time a Pantalone appeared on stage. The earliest reference to the mask in English is found in the backstage plot of a lost play entitled *Dead Man's Fortune* (fig. 22). Dated from between 1590 and 1594, this theatrical document would hang in the tiring house during performance to remind players of entrances and exits as the play went on.[92] As Evelyn Tribble has noted, plots function as the 'map,

[92] W.W. Greg and E.K Chambers place an upper limit of May 1591 on the basis that a collaboration between Burbage and Alleyne was unlikely to survive the argument between the Lord Admiral's Men and James Burbage that cost the former the use of the latter's Theatre. Scott McMillin, on the other hand, posits a later date of 1594, which corresponds with a

in which the architecture of the information is displayed, reduced to its most important component parts'.[93] W.W. Greg's reconstruction of the plot details a neoclassical romance interspersed with pastoral motifs. Two young men, Laertes and Eschines, outmanoeuvre the fathers of their beloveds, Alleyane and Statyra, as they attempt to marry off their daughters to the wicked Carynus and Prelior. Devious plots are overheard, disguises are thrown together, food is laced with powerful sleeping draughts, and villainous courtiers are driven mad through magic. Eventually, fairies save the day, and the lovers and fathers are reconciled.[94] Greg omits Pantalone's comic subplot from his synopsis as there are too few references from which to draw any useful information. However, it is noteworthy for this study that 'Panteloun' is used as both a name and a descriptor. Reading that '*a* Panteloun enters' [my emphasis] therefore ascribes the role some significance, which in turn suggests that the player would have known to behave in a certain way when they came on stage to convey the essence of the mask. The question, then, is what makes a Pantalone?

Descriptions of Gremio throughout the play give him all the trappings usually associated with the *vecchio*. 'He is old', Tranio states bluntly, 'A proper stripling' mocks Grumio; 'thy love doth freeze', jibes Tranio, hinting at the old man's impotence. He is also an exceedingly rich merchant, able to offer up an 'Argosy in Marseilles' harbour as surety to Baptista for Bianca's hand.[95] Of course, being rich, old, and therefore probably impotent does not automatically make one a Pantalone. Jaques visually evocative description of man's progress from infancy to decrepitation in *As You Like It* (performed c.1599) suggests that visual cues like gesture and costume played an integral role. He finds an exemplar for old age in 'the leane and slipper'd Pantaloone,/With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side,/His

brief stint in which the Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men can be found collaborating at Newington Butts. See W.W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouse*: *stage plots, actor's parts, prompt books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 95; and Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), ii, p. 387-95.

[93] Evelyn Tribble, 'Distributing Cognition in the Globe', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56.2 (2005), 135-55 (p. 147).

[94] Ibid.

[95] Shakespeare, 'The Taming of the Shrew', p. 217

youthfull hose well sau'd, a world too wide,/For his shrunke shanke').[96] Teresa J. Faherty has suggested that this 'passage reveals a subtle and detailed knowledge of the look and sound of commedia … The sheer conventionality of this particular speech, moreover, implies the Elizabethan audience's familiarity with the commedia types.'[97] The materiality of Pantalone – his slippers, spectacles, and pouch – certainly appears to have been familiar to the English for some time. To Frances Barasch, it draws to mind Gabriel Harvey's poem 'Speculum Tuscanismi', an attack on Italianate English courtiers that compares their affected mannerism to an Italian Magnifico:

> Since *Galateo* came in, and *Tuscanisme* gan usurpe,
> Vanitie above all: Villanie next her, Statelynes Empresse.
> No man, but Minion, Stowte, Lowte, Plaine, swayne, quoth a Lording:
> No wordes but valorous, no workes but woomanish onely.
> For life Magnificoes, not a beck but glorious in shew,
> In deede most frivolous, not a looke but Tuscanish alwayes.
> His *cringing side necke, Eyes glauncing, Fisnamie smirking*
> With *forefinger kisse*, and brave *embrace to the footewarde.*
> Largebelled Kodpeasd Dublet, unkodpeased halfe hose,
> Straite to the dock, like a shirte, and close to the britch, like a diueling.
> A little Apish Hatte, cowched fast to the pate, like an Oyster,
> French Camarick Ruffes, deepe with a witnesse, starched to the purpose.[98]

Harvey is deliberately evoking the imagery of the Magnifico/Pantalone mask to mock the theatricality of aspiring courtiers.[99] The socially coded body - the 'largebelled Kodspeasd Dublet' and 'little Apish Hatte' – coupled with exaggerated gestures and movement - 'cringing' neck, 'smirking' face, '*forefinger kisse*', and an absurdly low bow '*to the footewarde*' – all suggest Harvey is painting a picture of the

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[96] William Shakespeare, 'As You Like It', in *Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies Published according to the true originall copies* (London, 1623; STC (2nd ed.) / 22273), pp. 185-207 (p. 194).
[97] Teresa J. Faherty, 'Othello Dell'arte: The Presence of Commedia in Shakespeare's Tragedy', *Theatre Journal*, 43.2 (1991), 179-94 (p. 181).
[98] Edmund Spenser, *Three proper, and wittie, familiar letters: lately passed betweene two vniuersitie men: touching the earthquake in Aprill last, and our English refourmed versifying With the preface of a wellwiller to them both* (London, 1580; STC 23095), p. 36.
[99] Francis K. Barasch, 'Shakespeare and Commedia Dell'arte: An Intertextual Approach', *Shakespeare Yearbook*, 10 (1999): 374–400 (p. 379).

Magnifico of contemporary Italian professional theatre that had recently come to England. The issue with this conclusion is that it assumes that the explicit theatricality of Harvey's Tuscanised courtier is necessarily an allusion to the Italian secular stage rather than a critique of the affected and highly choreographed nature of courtly performance in general. The poem begins by informing the reader that 'Since Galateo came in … Vanitie above all', a reference to the conduct manual *Il Galateo*, written by Giovanni della Casa in 1558 and translated into English by Robert Peterson in 1576. Like Castiglione before him, Della Casa wrote of courtly behaviour as a carefully curated balancing act that had clear antecedents in Ciceronian and Quintilianic oratory:

> There is another plesau~te kind of co~municatio~: & y^{t} is whe~ y^{e} pleasure & grace doth not co~sist in one merrie co~ceite alone, but in lo~g & co~tinued talke: which would be well disposed, wel uttered, & very wel set forth, to shew y^{e} maners, y^{e} fashio~s, y^{e} gestures & behaviours of the~ we speke, of so properly & lively.[100]

Harvey's courtier, like all aspiring courtiers, subscribed to the same classically grounded theory of performance as Cecchini, Scala, Garzoni and Heywood: 'pleasure & grace' comes from the balanced articulation of 'y^{e} maners, y^{e} fashio~s, y^{e} gestures & behaviours'. Though intended as a criticism of English adoption of Italianate fashions in its broadest sense, Harvey's Tuscanised gentleman, in making 'not a beck but glorious in shew', fails to achieve *sprezzatura* he so roundly mocks. It calls to mind Fabritio Caroso's criticism of courtiers in his *Nobilità di dame* (1600), a dancing manual and general guide on the 'Conduct required of Gentlemen and Ladies at a Ball and Elsewhere': 'unnecessary, empty and precious courtesies are scarce-hidden flatteries; too many reverences (by sliding their feet, kissing their hands or doffing their bonnets while bowing and scraping before their

[100] Giovanni della Casa, *Galateo of Maister John Della Casa, Archebishop of Beneventa. Or rather, A treatise of the ma[n]ners and behaviours* (London, 1576; STC 4738), p. 71.

favourite ladies) lose just much [favour in the eyes of others] as they think to gain for their blandishments only displease and bore them.'[101]

The visceral physicality of Harvey's Tuscan Mirror, then, ridicules the avid consumer of conduct manuals rather than a dedicated spectator of Italian performances at court. At some point over the following decade, however, the evocative attributes of the affected Italianate courtier took on new significance as the *commedia dell'arte* gained wider recognition. By the time Robert Greene wrote *The Defence of conny catching* (1592), Magnifico carried associations of the *vecchio*. The affected tailor 'Monsier *Magnifico*' in 'A pleasant tale of a Taylor' is mocked for his profligate clothing: 'his ordinary dublets were cut in the sommer upon a wrought shirt, and his cloake faced with velvet, his stockinges of the purest granado silke, with a French pained hoase of the richest billiment lace, a beaver hatte turft with, so quaintly as if he had been some Espagnolo trickt up to goe court some quaint curtesine'.[102] The 'Espagnolo' is a clear reference to the Capitano, who, although a neoclassical staple, is frequently found courting Franceschina in the *scenari*. In the same year, Harvey would compare Thomas Nashe to a Magnifico in *Pierce Superogation* (1592) with a description that parallels the socially coded visual cues found in Jaques speech: 'Oh what a *Magnifico* would he be, were his purse as heavie, as his head is light, and his hart franke?'[103]

[101] Fabritio Caroso, *Courtly Dance of the Renaissance: A New Translation and Edition of the Nobilità Di Dame*, ed. & trans. by Julia Sutton (Mineola: Dover, 1995), pp. 139-40.
[102] Robert Greene, *The defence of conny catching. Or A confutation of those two iniurious pamphlets* (London, 1592; STC 5656), sig. E1r.
[103] Ibid.

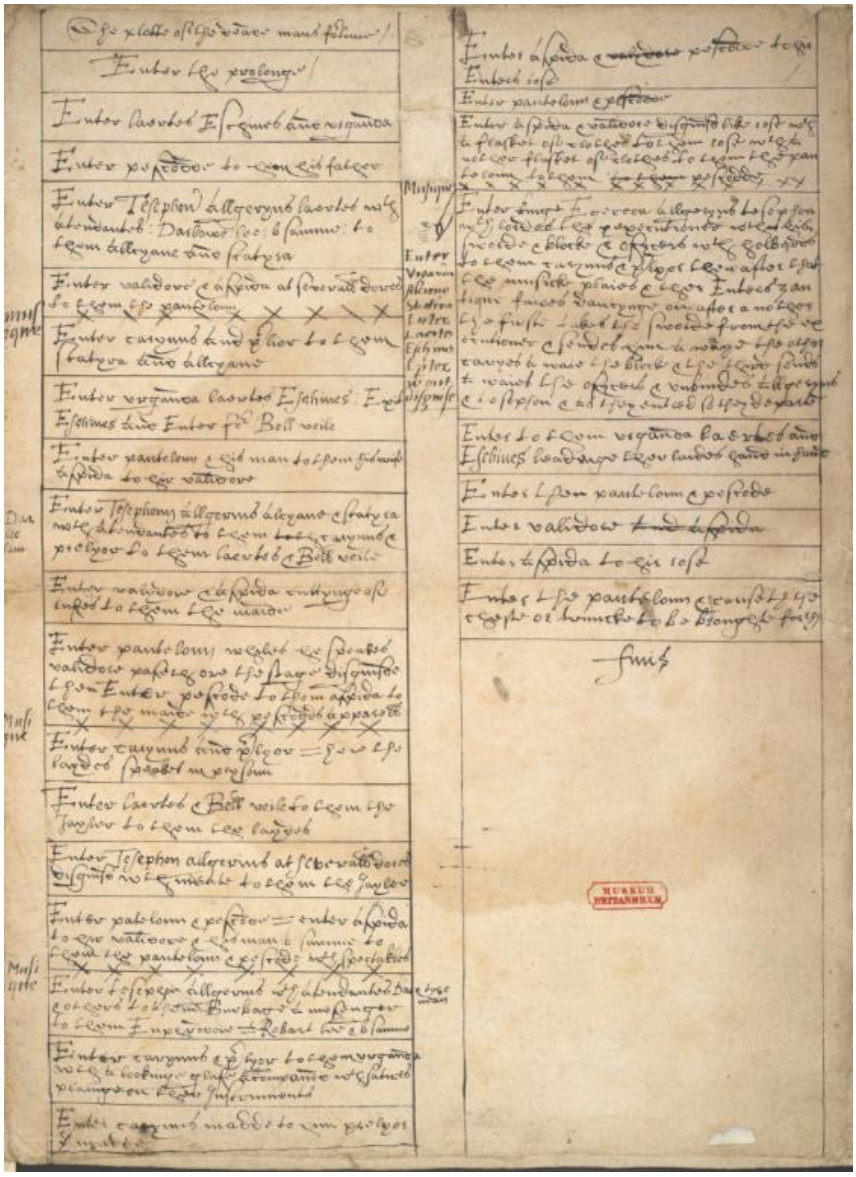


Figure 22. Backstage Plot of Dead Man's Fortune (1590-4?). Add MS 10449. ff. 1r-v.

It is important to stress, however, that while the attributes of the courtier were entwined with the *vecchi*, not all Magnifici were Pantalone. Designation depended on context, as can be observed by tracing the afterlife of the woodcuts acquired by Gosson for *The Divels Legend*. When Thomas Gosson died in 1598, his copyrights and materials transferred to his son Henry, who continued in his father's trade of publishing and selling printed ballads, plays, and other cheap print from the shops by London

Bridge and on Pater Noster Row. Later in his career, Henry worked increasingly closely with the pre-eminent ballad printed John Trundle.[104] Over ten years from 1618, Trundle and the younger Gosson jointly entered several titles in the Stationer's Register, including *A merry neuu catch of all Trades* (1621), a bawdy broadside ballad about stereotypical Londoners. The sheet is headed with two woodcuts: a stock image of a tradesman (fig. 23) and the Pantalone half of the *Le Cakephachisme* frontispiece image (fig. 24).



Figure 23. Broom-seller woodcut on the frontispiece of *A merry neuu catch of all Trades*.

[104] Gerald D. Johnson, 'John Trundle and the Book-Trade 1603-1626', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), 177–99, passim.



Figure 24. Pantalone woodcut on the frontispiece of *A Merry New catch of all Trades* (London, 1621; STC 1789:21).

Those woodcuts demand attention because such a saturated market, every aspect of the early modern ballad's text and paratext was geared towards financial viability. The oral, optical, and auricular all converge in the ballad for a particular kind of public consumption that compels multisensory engagement with the material. However, as indicated by the printer's epistle in an English translation of a book of devotional iconography by the French Jesuit Louis Richeome, this did not necessarily mean that the relationship between text and image had to be explicit:

> If there is anything in the engraved pictures that does not correspond to the speaking pictures, the reader will compensate for what the picture lacks, if he wishes, correcting the pictures with the words of the text.[105]

[105] Carl Goldstein, *Print Culture in Early Modern France: Abraham Bosse and the Purposes of Print*, Cambridge Core (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 124.

The fact remained that for publishers and printers of cheap ephemera, there was little incentive to incur additional expenses by producing new woodcuts for pamphlets or ballads when an older stock image would suffice. Reutilising woodblocks for topical publications was a fundamental principle of the book trade across Europe; as Roger Chartier notes in relation to the *canards* that littered the streets of late sixteenth-century Paris, 'a monstrous serpent in Cuba could easily be transformed into a dragon flying through the Paris sky'.[106] Proximity mattered, but the reader would interpret the visual cues in the 'engraved' image according to whatever best fit the text. It is the title line 'Doctour Pantaloun, and Zanie his pupil' written in large font above the woodcut on *The Divels Legend* that determines how the image interpreted by the viewer.[107] The one with the engorged codpiece, slippers, and purse must be the rich, old, and important Magnifico, and the other his Zanni servant. The same process applies to *A merry neuu catch*. The picture of a man in ragged clothes holding brushes in each hand shouting 'BVY. BROOME. BVY' clearly relates to the line 'The broome-man cryes' in the eighth stanza. There is nothing so explicit in the Pantalone image, but the bulging codpiece, gartered hose, and ornate slippers of what is otherwise quite clearly an old man with a lined face can be attributed to the courtier who 'woes' in the second stanza. This principle also applies to dramatic performance. Gremio's clothes, age, physicality, and wealth do not make him a Pantalone on their own. The Italian setting of the play and his ridiculous, unsuccessful pursuit of a much younger women help guide this interpretation. It is then cemented by Lucentio, who, disguised as a pedant, reveals his identity and intentions to Bianca between lines of Latin: 'I am Lucentio, *hic est,* sonne vnto Vincentio of Pisa, *Sigeriatellus,* disguised thus to get your loue, *hic steterat,* and that Lucentio that comes a wooing, *priami,* is my man Tranio, *regia,* bearing my port, *celsa senis* that we might beguile the old Pantalowne.'[108]

[106] Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 168.
[107] Juvenall Borget (pseud.), *The divels legend. or: a learned cachephochysme* (London, 1595; STC 3388), frontispiece.
[108] Shakespeare, 'The Taming of the Shrew', p. 218.

4.3.2.1 Walking like a Stranger

Some of the ways in which one interpretation was encouraged over another by the players in performance are less visible in the extant play text. Later in the play, during a bidding war for Bianca's hand between Gremio and Tranio (disguised as Lucentio), the latter promises a sum beyond the young man's means. He sets about desperately searching for someone to disguise himself as Lucentio's father in order to confirm the existence of the extravagant dowry to Baptista. In a stroke of unrivalled luck, Tranio spots a man coming towards Padua over a hill who is the perfect candidate: 'a Marcantant or a pedant, I know not what, but formal in apparel,/In gait and countenance surely like a Father'.[109] This reference to the two *vecchi*, Pantalone the merchant and Dottore the university lecturer, suggests that there was something particular about the walk and countenance of the old men of the *commedia dell'arte* would have resonated with an English audience.

One of the subtler differences between *The Taming of the Shrew* (first printed in the 1623 folio) and the earlier *The Taming of a Shrew* (first printed in 1594) is the latter's preoccupation with walking. In the transposition of the action from Athens to Padua (a hot bed of Italian theatrical invention), walking takes on significance as a carefully crafted outward expression of a new type of courtly civility. For Castiglione, a noble, purposeful gait was one driven by a 'wel made', muscular leg with the obvious capacity for physical exertion. For Della Casa, it was imperative that one must not 'stampe their feete' so as to avoid making too much noise; nor should they walk 'splaye footd', nor 'quiuer' in the leg; to lift 'vp the fete' too high is to imitate a spayed horse, and to 'set their hands to their sides, and iet vp & downe like a Pecock' is boisterous and provocative.[110] Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversazione* (1574, translated into English by George Pettie in 1581), reiterates earlier humanist distinctions between

[109] Ibid, pp. 222-23.
[110] Thomas Hoby and Baldassare Castiglione, *The courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio diuided into foure bookes* (London, 1561; STC (2nd ed.) / 4778), pp. 112-13.

masculine and feminine gaits: a son is criticised for affecting a 'slowe and mincing pace' and a daughter for going 'out lustilye like a man'.[111] It is unbecoming, he argues for 'a woman to resemble a man, or a man a woman' as a man must walk 'vprightlye' whilst 'the bewty, gestures, and countenances of a woman, ought to be such, y^{t} most men may like of them'.[112] This must be a constant priority, Guazzo stresses, 'for a man careth not to possesse y^{t} thing, which no mā coueteth to haue.'[113] This particular discourse lies behind Petrucchio commanding Katherine to 'let me see thee walk'.[114] 'Did ever Dian so become a grove', he sneers at her indignation, 'As Kate this chamber with her princely gate?'[115]

Walking was not only indicative of different modes of civility, but a marker of cultural and regional difference. When Baptista asks the newly arrived Tranio 'My gentle sir, you seem to walk like a stranger', he gives voice to the idea that national identity and temperament manifested in distinct gestures, gaits, and countenances.[116] Descriptions of these movements and manners were commonplace in contemporary travel writing; Jerome Turler (1575) dedicated a chapter of *The Travailer* to detailing how the 'foure principal Nations of Europe … differ sundrye wayes one from another, as, in gesture, gate, voyce, singinge, talke, meanynge, humanytie, conversation, love, hatred, affaires, warfare, and other things'.[117] The Germans strut like a 'cock' and gesture like a 'ruffian', the French walk with a 'soft gate' lightly at a 'moderate pace' to the world, and the Spanish have an altogether 'commendable' gait, manner, and gesture.[118] While some such assignations were simply bodily extensions of broader stereotypes, others retained a semblance of truth. For the Italians, known to walk slowly with a 'grave' expression, walking in public was an elaborate act of social and political

[111] Stefano Guazzo, *The ciuile conuersation of M. Steeuen Guazzo written first in Italian, and nowe translated out of French by George Pettie, deuided into foure bookes* (London, 1581; STC (2nd ed.) / 12422), p. 40.
[112] Ibid, p. 6.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Shakespeare, p. 216.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid, p. 215.
[117] Jerome Turler, *The traveiler of Ierome Turler deuided into two bookes. The first conteining a notable discourse of the maner, and order of traueiling oversea, or into straunge and forrein countreys* London, 1575; STC 24336), p. 39.
[118] Ibid, p. 40.

performativity constructed around the Ciceronian notions of citizenship found in conduct manuals by Castiglione, Jacopo Sansovino, and Teobaldo Manucci.[119] In crowded spaces, Patricians were expected 'to distinguish themselves through their pace or gait', walking upright with a 'slow bearing' of the body as a sign of civic virtue.[120] At the Broglio, the courtyard outside the Doge's Palace in Venice, interactions between Patricians and merchants involved a strict gestural routine that Thomas Coryate recorded with typical attention to detail:

> when two acquaintances meete and talke together at the walking times of the day . . . they give a mutuall kisse when they depart from each other. . . Likewise when they meete onely and not talke, they give a low congie to each other by very civill and courteous gestures, as by bending of their bodies, and clapping their right hand upon their breastes, without uncovering of their heads, which sometimes they use, but very seldome.[121]

Even events that would have elicited a genuine emotional response were highly orchestrated affairs. On the eve of the Doge's election in 1618, the English ambassador to Venice, Sir Henry Wotton, noted how an unsuccessful candidate was seen 'to tread softly, to walk stoopingly, and to raise himself from benches with laborious and painful gesture, as arguments of no lasting man' at the Piazza San Marco.[122]

Coryate and Wotton's decision to relay these seemingly innocuous gestures was not simply a dutiful commitment to the genre and form of travel account and diplomatic relation. Rather, the English considered walking to be a peculiar pastime of the Italians. The era of the flaneur was still some 200 years off in England, and to walk without purpose or destination in early modern London

[119] Filippo de Vivo, 'Walking in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Mobilizing the Early Modern City', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 19.1 (2016), 115–41 (p. 131).
[120] Ibid.
[121] Coryate, p. 243.
[122] Sir Henry Wotton and Logan Pearsall Smith, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, 2 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1907), ii, p. 136.

strayed dangerously close to breaking vagrancy laws. Yet in their day-to-day traversing of the city – from work to church, tavern, market, and playhouse – the English would have seen Italians walking. As mentioned in Chapter One, there was a small but visible community of merchants and financiers from the peninsula residing in the capital during the period. They lived and thrived in the eastern Wards, close to the commercial district around Lombard Street, the warehouses close to the Port, the Merchant Stranger's Post on Fenchurch Street, and the argosies docking at Billingsgate Quay. Though the records are scant, these men and their quotidian spatial practices were etched into the collective spatialised imaging of the city. When surveying the parish of St Dunstan in the East for the November 1571 Returns of Strangers, the Ordinator recorded the Venetian-born factor Page Carlyn as residing at the quay 'by the Venecian shipps'.[123] Other references reveal both the comparative luxury in which the Italians lived, and the respect (or at least recognition) their status afforded them from their fellow parishioners. Magnates like Gabriel Balangero, a Florentine cloth exporter and financier, is repeatedly referred to in the church warden accounts for the parish of St Mary Woolnoth as 'Mr Gabriel', and his servants repeatedly referenced as working within 'Mr Gabriel's House'. Benedict Spinola, the Genoese financier, merchant, and favourite of both Elizabeth and Leicester, maintained amongst an extensive property portfolio both a large mansion house in St Gabriel Fenchurch, a parish that had been popular amongst the Genoese diaspora since the reign of Richard II, and an estate in Shoreditch, a stone's throw from the Theatre, known locally as 'Spinola's Pleasure'.[124]

Playwrights were attuned to the everyday experiences of their audiences, and Shakespeare capitalise on the City's collective memory to breathe life into the Padua of the play. When relaying his plan to wed Bianca, Hortensio explains to Petrucchio that 'Her father is Baptista Minola,/An affable

[123] RAL, ii, p. 132.
[124] John Stow, *A survay of London Contayning the originall, antiquity, increase, moderne estate, and description of that citie, written in the yeare 1598* (London, 1598; STC 23341), p. 97; see also, John Bennell, 'Spinola, Benedict (1519/20–1580), Merchant', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/52156>.

and courteous gentleman'.[125] However, in accordance to the old Magnifico's wishes, someone must first marry his other daughter 'Katharina Minola,/Renown'd in Padua for her scolding tongue.'[126] Petrucchio then speaks for the audience: 'I know her father, though I know not her'.[127] When Benedict Spinola died from plague in 1581, his nephew Baptista Spinola took over the company. Little is known of the younger Genoese national, though he clearly inherited his Uncle's influence and privileges at court, as well as his reputation amongst his fellow residents. Yet Shakespeare and the players gleaned more from the city around them than puns and thinly veiled allusions. While gestures – individualised and transitory – are difficult to reclaim, the kind of collective, repetitive activity that would occur in certain spaces, enacted by nation-specific groups, left signs of difference that playwrights and players could exploit.

When Baptista invites Petrucchio to 'walk a little in the orchard,/And then to dinner', it may have reminded spectators of Spinola's Pleasure and other Italian-owned gardens and estates that they would have passed by on their journey's north from the City to watch a play.[128] The Hospital of Bethlehem – located on the main thoroughfare in Bishopsgate connecting the City to the playhouses in the northern suburbs – leased much of its surrounding lands and tenements to the Italian merchants. To the west of the hospital adjoining Moorfields was a garden leased by the Florentine Cavaliero family, importers of wine and exporters of wool.[129] To the south-east was a garden managed by the Bolognese shoemaker and bowling alley proprietor, Piero Maria, *alias* Peter Favell. A 1556 patent to sell wine 'by retail or in gross' extended by the Crown to one 'Peter Maria … the keeper of a garden belonging to the Italian merchants' suggests that the Italian merchants – who had not been presented with space privileged by law like the Steelyard of the Hansard merchants by Billingsgate Quay – used

[125] Shakespeare, 'The Taming of the Shrew', p. 213.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid, p. 215.
[129] See 'Chavallarie v Royse', 1558, TNA, London, C 3/42/81.

this space for both business and pleasure.[130] It was clearly a well-known spot – the Moorfields section of the Copperplate map of London, the name used to refer to the three extant engraved copper plates of a 1550s survey of the City that was probably presented to the cartophile and short-lived King of England, Philip II of Spain – contains an Italian-language inscription amidst the English language culture just south of Bedlam that reads '*Giardin di Piero*'.[131]

More visible spatial practices occurred on the streets and in the markets. On visiting London in the summer of 1561, the Venetian traveller Alessandro Magno would note how the English would watch the Italian merchants 'suspiciously, but … say nothing' as they walked to mass at the house of the Spanish or French Ambassador.[132] After the service, they would 'gather at the crossroads which is called the four corners; and here they make their bargains'.[133] The activities that these Italians performed every Sunday at the intersection of Lombard Street, Fenchurch Street, and Gratious Street left their mark on the cityscape; on the Copperplate map of the City's eastern wards, the words '4 Canti', or 'four corners', has been engraved over the junction.[134] Every morning and evening, Magno watched on as the Italians would physically change the topography of Lombard Street, the City's commercial centre, so that it created a *piazza*-like space suitable for business:

> The Italian merchants gather in the morning, and in the evenings at nine o'clock, in a street which is closed off at one end with chairs so that neither horses nor carts can enter.[135]

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[130] 'License to Peter Maria', 28 November 1556, CPR, iii, p. 506.
[131] 'The Copperplate Map of London', c. 1559, The Museum of London, 62.75. Peter was still in business around the time the *Shrew* was first performed. In 1591, the Dalmatian Paulo Gondola complained to a friend in Florence that his colleague, Tomaso Vanni, no longer sought the type of night-time adventure for which Gondola had become infamous both at home and in London. Instead, 'va piu che mai al suo Piero dell Gardino, et se homo lo vol trovar bisogna che vadi la o in casa dell'Elefante' (he goes more than ever to his Piero of the Garden, and if I want to find him, I have to go to the Elephant). Excerpts from Gondola's letters are printed in S. Gargàno, *Scapigliature Italiana a Londra Sotto Elisabetta e Giacomo I* (Venice: Pandolfini, 1928), p. 45.
[132] Alessandro Magno, Caroline Barron, Christopher Coleman, and Claire Gobbi, 'The London Journal of Alessandro Magno', *The London Journal* 9.2 (1983), 137–56 (p. 142).
[133] Magno et al, p. 144.
[134] 'The Copperplate Map of London', c. 1559, The Museum of London, 85.471. Magno also referred to this space as the 'quattro canti' in his journal, suggesting wider usage. See '[Travel Diary of Alessandro Magno] Account of his journeys to Cyprus, Egypt, Spain', 1557-1565, FSL, Washington D.C., V.a.259, fol.173r.
[135] Magno et al, p. 144.

Lombard Street had been referred to by the native-English as the 'Merchant's Walk' since the fifteenth century, providing an early example of this very Italian spatial practice.[136] When the Royal Exchange was erected at Cornhill to rival the great marketplaces at Venice and Antwerp, this theatre of difference became more of a spectacle. During his travels to London in 1576, the Frenchman L. Grenade observed how: 'Each nation has its own quarter, so that those who have business with them can find them more easily. The English occupy about half of the Exchange, and the French have their particular station too, as do the Flemish, the Walloons, the Italians, and the Spanish. However, they are all at liberty to go hither and thither through the Exchange according to their needs'.[137] Writing around the same time that the *Shrew* was first performed, John Eliot paints a similar picture of the nation-specific activity occurring in the courtyard:

> Where shall I find you about twelve a clocke?' 'I will be below in the Change, either walking among the Italians, or truking with the French, or pratling amongst our English, or carousing with the Flemings at the Cardinal's Hat.[138]

In staging a *vecchio*, the player would have undoubtedly drawn on a shared cultural knowledge to aid the spectator in their interpretation. When impersonating the physicality of an old Magnifico, the City's resident Italian merchants would have provided the perfect source. At the *Quattro Canti*, on Lombard Street, behind the stone walls in the suburban gardens, in the piazza of the Royal Exchange – here actors like Burbage and Alleyn would have found models for their *actio*, a countenance and gait

136 Quoted in Rawdon Brown, 'Preface', CSPV, i, cxxiii.
137 Quoted in Jean E. Howard, *Theatre of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 33.
138 John Eliot, *Ortho-epia Gallica Eliots fruits for the French: enterlaced vvith a double nevv inuention, vvhich teacheth to speake truely, speedily and volubly the French-tongue* (London, 1593; STC (2nd ed.) / 7574), p. 26.

that spectators would have recognised when Gremio entered on stage as 'a *Pantelowne*' or imagined when they heard news of 'a Marcantant or a pedant' who walks like a father.

This has striking implications on the implicit transculturality of the *commedia dell'arte* on the English stage. A situated, embodied reading of Pantalone might suggest a representation of the mask that is situated in and unique to the urban experience of capital. Yet the 'complex mixedness' of a culturally plural contact zone like London constituted an urban landscape comparable to Paris, Madrid, Florence, or Venice. Despite the lack of direct exposure to the *commedia dell'arte*, the transcultural experiences that these metropolitan centres engendered occasioned resonances and parallels between the worlds and characters found on disparate regional stages. The Magnifico that was first performed in the topsy-turvy revelry of carnival was sculpted by the *buffone* skilled in *contrafarre* (character sketches) to resemble the merchants who walked the city streets with their fellows. Yet trade and opportunity had also brought these transient men to cities across Europe, where they formed colonies and facilitated the new, metropolitan modes of living that secular theatre interrogated. A Pantalone on the English stage, then, modelled on the magnates found walking in the Exchange or on Lombard Street, would have looked remarkably similar to a Pantalone at *stanzone* in Florence, the *corrales* in Madrid, or the Hôtel in Paris.

4.4 Conclusion

Focusing on the explicit physicality of the *commedia dell'arte* in the English imagination during the period, this chapter has both highlighted the problems with constructing a universal, transhistorical embodied language that connects the *comici* with regional representations of the *commedia dell'arte*; and provided a new, local scheme of interpretation to engage with how the *maschere* were performed on

the English stage. There were certain similarities in English and Italian performance practices during the period resulting from a pan-European humanist curriculum that advocated specific gestural patterns in accordance with the principles of classical oratory. However, English representations of the *commedia dell'arte* painted the form as a gesturally immoderate, and therefore immoral, type of drama in opposition to the English, civic secular tradition that had emerged simultaneously in London. This is especially apparent in the dialogue exchange between Kempe and Harlequin in *The Trauails of the Three English Brothers*. The former – a recently deceased clown and celebrated extemporiser – is employed by the playwrights to forcibly yoke the latter to the 'representational' style of acting that placed primacy with the playwright over the player, the script over improvisation, and England over its strange neighbours.

The implicit challenges to recovering gesture in performance has been addressed by thinking about the demands that language and context placed on the body in two very different representations of the *commedia dell'arte* on stage. The first, found in Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, a genre parody that mocks the prevalence of Italianate theatregrams in contemporary English drama, uses a momentary lapse into the Italian language to place greater emphasis on gesture and movement to communicate feeling and meaning. The young, impassioned lovers shift from one emotional extreme to the other, communicating their despair and elation via a lack of gestural control that English playwrights and writers deliberately represented an explicitly Italian mode of performing. Presenting a *maschera* as a character in a play like *The Taming of the Shrew* prompts different methodological engagement. As early descriptions of Pantalone suggest, there was clearly an emphasis placed on visual signifiers – slippers, glasses, pouch, and stoop. Yet no single sign or combination explicitly signified Pantalone, and it has been shown that the surviving iconography of the *commedia dell'arte* in England did not carry specific visual cues that explicitly signified the Pantalone. Rather audience interpretation relied on context and, importantly, vocalising the connection.

This chapter has also further highlighted how the cultural plurality of urban life and the transcultural experiences this engendered leads to an inadvertent verisimilitude in how the English and the Italians performed the *maschera* that originates in the spirit of expansion and innovation that defines this period. To interrogate the world in fiction, playwrights and players found material and inspiration in the everyday. When Pantalone was first brought to the stage in Italy as representative of the ruling classes, he was sculpted from the *comici*'s observations of the merchant elite, their countenance, manners, and gait. The interconnectedness of the early modern period meant that these transient merchants, who went forth into the world and set up trading posts in northern European urban centres, served as models for regional theatre practitioners who, driven by the same innovative spirit as their Italian counterparts, found in these strangers a way of breathing life into their on-stage worlds that fit within their audience's horizon of experience.

5 *Commedia* in Performance: Making Material Memories

This final chapter shifts focus from the ephemeral to the material, from how the English reimagined the *commedia dell'arte* on stage as a drama of exaggerated gesturing, to how memories of the Italian professional theatre were interwoven within the materials of stagecraft. Gesture and props are not mutually exclusive, as Andrew Sofer has demonstrated in his influential study on *The Stage Life of Props*. Until animated by the human touch, properties are passive objects, 'stable signifier[s]'.[1] A 'hat or sword remains an article of costume until an actor removes or adjusts it.'[2] The way in which a prop is moved and manipulated is meaningful and determines the spectator's horizon of interpretation, by which is meant as the conceivable experience-based cognitive responses of an audience as individuals or as a collective to specific scenographic compositions consisting of carefully arranged stimuli such as props, gestures, or language. It is embedded with layer upon layer of cultural association informed not only by its presentation in literature and drama over time, but by the social and cultural realities of its usage outside the playing space. How it is moved, who moves it, whereto and when, is all significant, and this significance is carried from prop to prop, hand to hand, play to play, and book to book. Each new usage and each subsequent animation then layers new meanings and new associations into these porous objects, modifying existing significations much in the same way that the *commedia dell'arte* existed in a constant state of flux as it migrated between urban centres on foot, in print, and by word of mouth.

This chapter will observe how this dynamic is exemplified by a handkerchief dropped from a window onto the stage of the Globe in 1605. Act II scene 2 of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* begins with the titular Venetian fox taking to a trestle stage in the Piazza San Marco disguised as the mountebank

[1] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 12.
[2] Ibid.

Scoto of Mantua, an Italian who had famously entertained Elizabeth at Whitehall in 1579. He is joined by his servant Nano, dressed as the popular real-life Venetian street entertainer 'Zan Fritata', admired by Garzoni in *La piazza universal*.[3] As a crowd begins to gather, Scoto launches into a lengthy oration denouncing the quack cures of licensed physicians and the near-miraculous benefits of his own '*Oglio del Scoto*'.[4] The excessive asking price is incrementally reduced from eight crowns to sixpence as the monologue continues. When he has warned the crowd that they should 'expect no lower price', Volpone/Scoto encourages them to 'tosse your handkerchiefes, chearefully, chearefully' as was the customary mode of exchange between pedlar and spectator.[5] For his own amusement, the English merchant Peregrine encourages his newfound companion Sir Politick Would-be, a ridiculous Italianate Englishman, to step forward. He is too late, however: 'Oh see! The windore has prevented you', says Peregrine as a handkerchief is dropped from the balcony.[6] Celia, who enters at a window above at some point during the oration, drops her handkerchief into Scoto's outstretched hand. He presses it to his lips: 'Lady, I kisse your bounty'.[7] In return for her 'timely grace' he wraps within the cloth a powder given to Venus by Apollo to keep her 'perpetually yong, clear'd her wrincles, firm'd her gummes, fill'd her skinne, colour'd her hayre'.[8] At this moment, Corvino, who has been watching the spectacle unfold offstage, enters and beats Volpone away:

> Bloud of the deuill, and my shame! come downe, here;
> Come downe: No house but mine to make your *Scene?*
> *Signior Flaminio,* will you downe, Sir? downe?
> What is my wife your *Franciscina?* Sir?
> No windores on the whole *Piazza,* here,
> To make your properties, but mine? but mine?

[3] Scoto is discussed at greater length below. Ben Jonson, *Ben: Ionson his Volpone or The Foxe* (London, 1607; STC (2nd ed.) / 14783), sigs. E3r-E3v.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

Hart! ere to morrow, I shall be new christen'd,
And cald the *Pantalone di Besogniosi,*
About the towne.[9]

Given that the English dramatic engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* observed thus far has consisted of fragmentary references to extemporising performers and the *maschere*, Corvino's description is a surprisingly accurate and detailed reconstruction of a *scenario*. He identifies the use of a written plot or '*Scene*' around which the *comici* improvise; the frequent use of a streetscape with houses for entrances and exits; the use of windows as 'properties' from which women commonly interact with other characters; the masks of Franceschina, the courtesan or serving woman, Pantalone *di Besigniosi*, the ironically 'destitute' old cuckold, and Flaminio, the *innamorato*. Corvino rages and swears oaths like the neoclassical *bravura* and decries a common theme in contemporary Italian literature and drama: a shut-away woman contravenes the role of a dutiful wife and begins an affair from above with a younger, more virile man below. It is therefore unsurprising that scholars continually engage with this scene as a yardstick for English knowledge of the form at this point in time. In an early work on the *commedia dell'arte* in English drama, Winifred Smith wrote that 'the closing action, the lady in the balcony, the lover disguised, the jealous husband, the beatings, above all the names … suggest that Jonson had heard and was here reproducing part of an improvised farce.'[10] More recently, Eric Nicholson has observed how the episode suggests not only 'Jonson's diligent research habits, but it also bespeaks awareness of Italian *maschere* and stage practises among Jonson's Globe Theatre and Oxford and Cambridge university audiences, as well as among his King's Men actors'.[11] This scene could therefore be the manifestation of knowledge accumulated over time as news, texts, and performers percolated

[9] Ibid.
[10] Winifred Smith, *The Commedia Dell'Arte: A Study in Italian Popular Comedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), p. 194.
[11] Eric Nicholson, 'Commedia Dell'Arte in Early Modern English Drama', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Anglo-Italian Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 358-75 (p. 365).

across the channel. It might even be attributable to the return of a professional Italian troupe to English soil after an almost twenty-five-year absence. On 29 August 1602, a company headed by the *capocomico* 'Flaminio Curtesse' (Cortese), who had worked alongside the renowned French impresario Valleran Le Conte in Paris since at least 1600, performed with 'certain other Italian comedians' before the Queen at Oatlands Palace in Surrey.[12] It is unclear how long Cortese and his troupe were in England, what ports they travelled to and from, where they stopped en route, or what they performed while they were there. It is possible that they came via London; while no record survives, it is possible that they stopped there to perform. The well-connected Jonson would certainly have heard news of their arrival – perhaps even having the chance to see them play. Corvino's reference to '*Flaminio*' as the *innamorati* is an intriguing detail in this regard. It may indicate that Cortese's visit was a source of information on performance practices for Jonson; it may even be a reference deliberately interpolated to stir a memory of the *arte* in the minds of the audience and, as such, is a residual trace of the impact of Cortese's visit on the wider imagination.

The piazza scene is, as this chapter will explore, certainly conscious of the role of memory in playmaking. The drama that Jonson creates through *Volpone* is cognisant of how certain words, speeches, gestures, and scenery trigger certain interpretations based on the individual and collective experiences of the audience. The audience was not passive in this process – the importance of mnemonics in humanist education, as well as the more general cultural acknowledgement of the importance of memory arts, meant that early modern spectators well understood the cognitive

[12] W.R. Streitberger, 'Appendix I: Calendar of Court Records and Spectacles', in *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 239-93 (p. 290). Cortese was clearly associated with the Italian player Jules Rize who was given letters patent by Henri IV to perform '*commedie, pastorali, e altri spettacoli*' during Lent 1600 with Le Conte, Saullo Donati, and Savinien Bony. In May that year, Rize would act as mediator in a case brought against Cortese by Louise Brou, who sought damages after Cortese's 'copulation charnelle' with her daughter. See 'Associazione tra Valleran Le Conte e Jules Rize', 25 February 1600, Archives Nationales – Minutier Central des Notaires de Paris, A-339; and 'Cessione de parte di Louise Brou e Jules Rize', 10 May 1605, Archives Nationales – Minutier Central des Notaires de Paris, A-342.

demands of playgoing.[13] Yet the memetic processes involved in playgoing, and the interpretations and expectations drawn by spectators, are manipulated and exploited by the playwright to create innovative theatre. With this in mind, it should not be taken for granted that this scene necessarily resonated with Globe audiences as an explicit patchwork of *commedia dell'arte* performance practices, or reflected a common knowledge of the structure and contents of the *scenari*. Nothing in the composition of the piazza scene that both audience and Corvino witness was the exclusive theatrical property of the *comici*. A mountebank performing with his Zanni in the Piazza San Marco, a woman in a window, a handkerchief dropped from the balcony above – by the time *Volpone* premiered at the Globe in 1606, each was richly layered with manifold associations and significances. This chapter argues that it is only when Corvino arrives and declares it so, that this scene becomes *commedia dell'arte*. He draws comparisons, lists dramatic precepts, and then provides the evidence: 'You were an *Actor*,' he bellows, 'with your handkerchief'.[14]

The value of this scene does not lie solely in what it can tell us about transmission and the conditions of exposure, but in what it says about the creation of a dynamic, syncretic *commedia dell'arte* at home. Having observed how the *commedia dell'arte* was translated, appropriated, and staged, this chapter will consider how the form was remembered – how it was layered into the materials of performance, expanding the horizon of interpretation available to an audience whilst being simultaneously modified by the existing significance. To do so, it will imitate Corvino's cognitive process, breaking the down the scene into constituent parts – mountebank, window, and handkerchief – to consider how they would have resonated with an early modern English audience. Then, it will consider the cultural and social uses and connotations of the handkerchief in the early modern period

[13] Recent studies on memory and cognition in the early modern playhouse include Sophie Duncan, *Shakespeare's Props: Memory and Cognition*, Routledge Studies in Shakespeare (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019); Evelyn Tribble, *Cognition in the Globe: Attention and Memory in Shakespeare's Theatre* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Lina Perkins Wilder, *Shakespeare's Memory Theatre: Recollection, Properties, and Character* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[14] Ibid, sig. E4r.

so as to better understand Jonson's decision to interweave *commedia dell'arte* into the fabric of this particular prop. It will then reflect further on memory, and how this scene is interpreted by Corvino because of the frame of reference available to him as a Venetian *bravura*. Finally, it will think more on the role of *commedia dell'arte* on the English stage, and how this particular layer of cultural association would become a trans-theatrical memetic device that would come to interrogate strangeness and the plurality of the urban experience on the Jacobean stage. Accordingly, while the preceding chapters have been predominantly synchronic, this chapter is loosely diachronic, tracing how the Italian professional theatre retained a dynamic, diverse, and porous form even as it began to solidify as a coherent dramaturgy in the English imagination.

5.1 The Mountebank

While the ridiculous Italianate gentleman Sir Politick Would-be educates the canny English merchant Peregrine on the particulars of Venice, they hear news of that famous mountebank Scoto of Mantua, who is right now performing at the Piazza San Marco. An audience at the Globe in 1605 would have responded to such news with the same excitement as Sir Pol. Little is known of the life and work of Scoto, or his brief visit to the English court sometime between 1576 and 1579. However, the Italian entertainer had a long afterlife in the English imagination, not as a performer in the same line as the professional *comici* of the *commedia dell'arte*, but as a perennial pedlar of deceit and heterodoxy. It has been observed in Chapter Three how the English imagined the mountebank as largely separate from the intersecting performance traditions of Cinquecento Italy despite the overlapping performance practices. This is in large part due to the absence of the mountebank from English soil. The English garnered information from imported texts like Garzoni's *La piazza universale*, one of the many Italian

volumes pillaged by Jonson to create his topographically rich Venetian setting. Garzoni, friend to the *comici* of the *commedia dell'arte*, would draw a clear distinction between the mountebanks and other marketplace performers, or '*formati di spettacoli*', and the '*comici eccelenti*', in his text. Scoto had taken root in the English imagination as a conjurer and token of the occult.[15] In a print attack on fraudulent prognostications, Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, recalled how 'Scoto the Italian was able to play by Legier du main before the Queene'. Fifteen years after the Italian's departure, Thomas Nashe described Cornelius Agrippa in *The Unfortunate Traveller* as the greatest 'conjurer in Christendome.'[16] Even '*Scoto* that did the jugling trickes here before the Quéene,' he writes 'never came néere him one quarter in magicke reputation'.[17] Scoto would eventually become a byword for legerdemains and juggling; when elaborating on the devil's contract with '*Magicians*' in *Daemonologie* (1597), James I of Scotland found the 'yet living' Scoto adequate proof of the kinds of 'juglarie trickes' that Satan taught unscrupulous scholars.[18]

Any potential connection between Scoto the Italian's performance and the plays of the *commedia dell'arte* would have been undermined by the self-conscious artificiality of the Venice in this scene. The prospect of seeing Scoto perform would mean the realisation of an inherited cultural memory. However, Sir Pol is quick to pour cold water on audience expectations with a reminder that the actualisation of this memory is impossible – after all, the audience knows that this is an actor playing Volpone playing Scoto, and that this is London, and not Venice. 'Ile proudly promise,' Sir Pol

[15] The exact date of the visit is unknown. A letter from Dr Dale to Burghley dated March 1576 mentions that 'one Scoto an Italian that playeth such knackes as Feates doth upon the Cardes who commeth to showe the Queenes Ma^tie^ sum of his toyes.' In February 1579, Lord Cobham would mention 'Scoto the Italyane, who have been in England'. Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia Dell'Arte, 1560-1620, with Special Reference to the English Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934), ii, p. 360.
[16] Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, *A defensatiue against the poyson of supposed prophesies not hitherto confuted by the penne of any man* (London, 1583; STC (2nd ed.) / 13858), sig. Y2v.
[17] Thomas Nashe, *The unfortunate traveller. Or, The life of Jacke Wilton* (London, 1594; STC (2nd ed.) / 18380), sig. F3r.
[18] James I, King of Scotland, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue, divided into three bookes* (Edinburgh, 1597; STC (2nd ed.) / 14364), p. 22.

says to Peregrine, 'you shall behold/Another man, then has beene phan'sied, to you.'[19] Volpone/Scoto's oration on a trestle stage was not an education in Italian performance practices, but rather cemented pre-existing associations **that** Peregrine voices after Scoto/Volpone delivers the first part of his oration. 'Is not his language rare?', marvels Sir Pol. 'But alchemy', Peregrine responds, 'I never heard the like – or Broughton's books.' He refers here to the Hebraist, theologian, and controversialist Hugh Broughton**,** a favourite target of Jonson's, who would mock his empirical, occultist approach to biblical exegesis again in *The Alchemist* (1610).[20] Despite Sir Pol's protestations to the contrary, the audience too 'have heard, [mountebanks] are most lewd impostors', and they too have come to associate them (correctly in this case) with deceit and deception.[21] Peregrine functions as an agent for the audience in this scene, a spectator like them but with a foot in the action. A newly arrived merchant embodying the Ulyssean credentials of the ideal traveller, he simultaneously gives voice to and enforces the horizon of interpretation available to the English audience.

5.2 Women at Windows

As the real and fictional spectators revel in Volpone/Scoto's rhetorical gymnastics and Nano/Zan Fritata's musical accompaniment, Celia enters at a window above thereby signalling a whole new set of possibilities and expectations.[22] Women at windows on the early modern stage has been the subject of substantial and varied scholarship since Jane Tylus's work on the historical and theatrical

[19] Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. D4r.
[20] Jonson, *The alchemist* (London, 1612; STC (2nd ed.) / 14755), sig. E2v.
[21] Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. D4r.
[22] Neither the early quarto nor Jonson's 1616 collected works specify when, though most modern editions tend to place a stage direction at some point prior to Volpone/Scoto's request for handkerchiefs (presumably so Celia knows to drop hers down). Jonson, *Volpone*, sigs. D3v-E3r; Jonson, 'Volpone', in *The workes of Beniamin Ionson* (London, 1616; STC (2nd ed.) / 14752), pp. 449-524 (pp. 467-72).

significances of this space on the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian professional stage. The introduction of unmarried women as characters in *erudita* comedies around the 1550s, she observes, followed soon after by the first instances of these roles being performed by women, corresponds with the window gaining new importance in the composition of scenes. Walking the vast expanse of the stage – and by extension, walking the streets – had both real and fictional implication for the chastity and safety of a character and the *attrice*. Windows, however, or any accessible spaces built into the scenery, offered 'secure places' that gave the *attrice* 'visibility and safety, as she negotiated the boundary between public and private spaces'.[23] This would have a residual impact on the professional theatre of the *commedia dell'arte*, and in her study of Scala's print *scenari*, Tylus has found that over half of the action involving the *attrice* occurs at windows, and the majority of the other times they appear on stage they are accompanied or obscured behind a mask.[24] Yet the delineation of the stage into gendered spaces did not constrain the theatrical activities of the *attrice* or limit the agency of the character. Rather, the *commedia dell'arte* adapted to the new demands of this arrangement. 'The theatre of windows', Tylus writes, introduced 'female spectatorship onto the stage in such a way as to allow the woman to transform traditional passivity into manipulative action', providing a functional space for the *attrice* to direct, redirect, and undermine the drama played out on the stage below.[25]

Women exercising agency from above spoke to a transcultural spatial anxiety, and windows were a commonplace locus of consequential action in across European literature and drama. Generally speaking, masculinity and femininity were rhetorically organised around outside and inside spaces. The former was indicative of man's involvement in public civic affairs whilst the latter was suggestive of private domestic economies in which women were primarily responsible (if not necessarily in charge).

[23] Jane Tylus, 'Women at the Windows: "Commedia Dell'arte" and Theatrical Practice in Early Modern Italy', *Theatre Journal*, 49.3 (1997), 323–42 (p. 324).
[24] Ibid, p. 325
[25] Ibid, p. 337.

This idealised architectural articulation of patriarchy and its division of social, political, and devotional labour between sexes was limited by the realities of everyday life and work, but it provided a functional framework for writers and dramatists to interrogate masculine anxieties around sex and status and feminine struggles with natural deviancy. In every functioning building there was at least one threshold – a window, doorway, balcony or courtyard that was neither inside nor outside. Here at the discontinuity, on the brink of domestic and public, the ideal communion between man and woman breaks down. Here, tensions could be spun into narrative conflict.

The window was a space in which women could be spied on, wooed, and ensnared. They are voyeuristic and reduce the subject to an object framed for the intrusive male gaze in prose and drama; in Robert Greene's *Planetomachia*, Rodento catches a sight of Lady Pasilla stood talking with her cousin by a window in the Palace of Valdrako. He is immediately captivated: 'amased at the sight of such a heavenly creature, [Rodento] stood a long while astonished at her excellent beautie.'[26] She soon catches sight of him and slams the casements shut. In George Wilkin's *The Miserie of enforced marriage* (1607), the window is shown to be even more intrusive in London's increasingly cramped streetscape as new, overhanging stories were erected on top of existing buildings to accommodate the expanding urban population. Butler promises Wentley a room that looks into another tenement across the street. There he can observe up-close 'Wenches bona robes, blessed beauties, without colour or counterfet'.[27] Of course, not all intrusions at the window were unwelcome. This in-between space was essential for courting young lovers. In John Cooke's *Greene's Tu Quoque*, Gerald hires musicians to stand below Gartred's window and 'giue to each Instrument a tongue,/To breathe sweete musicke in the eares of

[26] Robert Greene, *Planetomachia: or the first parte of the generall opposition of the seven planets* (London, 1585; STC / 546:04), sig. C1v.
[27] George Wilkins, *The miseries of inforst mariage As it is now playd by his Maiesties Seruants* (London, 1607; STC (2nd ed.) / 25635), sig. G2v.

her/To whom I send it as a messenger.' Hearing their song, Gartred enters '*aloft*' and the pair exchange affectionate words.

Not all noises of the urban soundscapes were welcome suitable for the ears of a young woman. Reformers often cited Matthew 6:22-23 in their condemnations of Romish idolatry; the eyes are the 'windows to the soul', so what is seen must be regulated.[28] Women in particular must be shielded, their comparative lack of fortitude an inheritance from the Fall. Shakespeare plays on the somatic inducement to sin penetrating the house in *The Merchant of Venice*. As he prepares to dine with Antonio, Shylock, fearing the affusion of the heathen Christian *carnavale* crossing the threshold and corrupting his daughter during his absence, calls for the house to be shut up:

> lock vp my doores, and when you heare the drumme and the vile squealing of the wry-neckt Fiffe clamber not you vp to the casements then Nor thrust your head into the publique streete To gaze on Christian fooles with varnisht faces: But stop my houses eares, I meane my casements, let not the sound of shallow fopprie enter my sober house.[29]

Overlooking a Venetian street or canal, the windows into Shylock's house are the ears through which Jessica is wooed by a heathen and carried off into the night. Women are not necessarily passive agents, however, but like the *attrice* utilise the window to impinge on the masculine domain of the street and exercise power over their own sexuality. Not only are they spied, wooed, and ensnared at windows, but they spy, woo, and ensnare in kind. In Anthony Munday's play *Fedele and Fortunio* (1584), adapted from Luigi Pasqualigo's *erudita* comedy *Il Fedele* (1576), Vittoria fools the *innamorato* into believing his love has betrayed him by throwing a damning letter from a window in disguise.[30] Corvino threatens

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[28] John Cooke, *Greenes Tu quoque, or, The cittie gallant As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Queenes Maiesties seruants* (London, 1614; STC (2nd ed.) / 5673), sig. F1r.
[29] William Shakespeare, *The most excellent historie of the merchant of Venice VVith the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Iewe* (London, 1600; STC (2nd ed.) / 22296), sig. D1r.
[30] Anthony Munday, *[Fedele and Fortunio] [The deceites in love: excellently discoursed in a very pleasaunt and fine conceited comoedie, of two Italian gentlemen. Translated out of Italian, and set downe according as it hath beene presented before the Queenes moste excellent Majestie]* (London, 1585: STC (2nd ed.) / 19447), sig. B4r.

to have the 'bawdy light dammed up' after the piazza scene, recognising the window as both a facilitator of temptation and a space in which female agency can be performed:

> Death of mine honour, with the citties *Foole?*
> A jugling, tooth-drawing, prating *Montebanke?*
> And, at a publique windore? where whil'st hee,
> With his strain'd action, and his dole of faces,
> To his *drug-Lecture* drawes your itching eares,
> A crewe of old, un-mari'd, noted lechers,
> Stood leering up, like *Satyres;* and you smile,
> Most graciously? and fanne your favours forth,
> To give your hote *Spectators* satisfaction?[31]

Though Celia's 'itching ears' are drawn to the somatic temptations of the mountebank's 'prating', she is not passive in this exchange. Flattered, she encourages the audience (now her audience) with 'meaningful' gestures – she smiles, and 'fanne[s]' her 'favours forth'. 'Get you a citterne', he mocks, comparing her to the famed courtesans who would sit in windows and play on the lute to attract clients. These figures were of particular fascination to the English, who found the high status afforded many in Venetian society, encapsulated perceptions of the city's glamour and dangerous allure. For those who knew the language, they could read all about their cunning practices in Aretino's *Ragionamenti*, printed in three volumes by John Wolfe between 1584 and 1587, and find them leaning out of windows ensnaring clients with their feminine guiles. Others were familiarised with their practice through the moralising of English prose writers, where they are often depicted sat in a window ready to entice unwary travellers with Homeric devices. In Greene's prose pamphlet, *Groats-worth of witte*, Lamilia, 'like a cunning angler', positions herself in the window so that she may be spied by Lucanio, takes 'a lute in her hand that shee might the rather allure, shee soung this sonnet with a

[31] Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. E4r.

delicious voyce'.[32] Robert Henry warns of their practices in *A pleasant discourse of six gallant marchants of Devonshire* (1600). Two English merchants 'chanced to passe by the house of a most rare and bewtifull Curtizan: who espying these strangers, seated her in a window opposite with the stréet, playing on her Lute'.[33] They are drawn in and eventually robbed of their money. Reports by travellers, designed to illustrate their resolve, were naturally condemnatory; Coryate, who warns prospective visitors to 'furnish thyself with a double armor, the one for thine eyes, the other for thine ears' to avoid their traps, recounts their demeanour, dress, and practices at length after meeting with one, a visitation he defends as strictly evangelical in nature, an attempt to turn her towards God.[34]

The *attrice* were closely associated with the courtesan in early modern Italy, in part because the original *attrice* belonged to the *oneste meretrici*, or courtesan class, that were expelled from Rome during the Tridentine reforms.[35] Whether all or just some were sex workers has been contested, but the agency they exercised over their bodies and the spaces that they occupied to practice their crafts drew misogynistic comparisons from critics. 'The women are often prostitutes who ask for money for their services', wrote the Jesuit Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza. 'In the theatre, [the actors] describe the love of the characters that they represent, this love between man and woman becoming burning darts; in the same theatre, [the actors] hug, shake hands, kiss, and touch each other.'[36] It has already been observed in Chapter One how the courtesan and the *attrice* were elided within the imagination where mountebanks and *comici* were seen as distinct entities. Nashe would define the *commedia dell'arte* as the

[32] Robert Greene, *Greenes, groats-worth of witte, bought with a million of repentance* (London, 1592; STC / 838:10), sig. C1r.
[33] Robert Henry, *Haigh for Devonshire A pleasant discourse of sixe gallant marchants of Devonshire.* (London, 1600; STC (2nd ed.) / 21081), sig. K2r.
[34] Thomas Coryate, *Coryats crudities hastily gobled vp in five moneths trauells in France, Sauoy, Italy, Rhetia co[m]monly called the Grisons country, Heluetia aliàs Switzerland, some parts of high Germany, and the Netherlands* (London, 1611; STC 5808), p. 273.
[35] Ferdinando Taviani, *Il segreto della commedia dell'arte* (Florence: La Casa Usher, 1982), p. 335. Virginia Scott later argued that while some *attrice* may have been courtesans, it was certainly not definitive. See Scott, '"La Virtu El La Volupte": Models for the Actress in Early Modern Italy and France.(The Commedia Dell'arte)', *Theatre Research International*, 23.2 (1998), 152-59.
[36] Quoted in Nicla Riverso, 'Fighting Eve: Women on the Stage in Early Modern Italy', *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 37.2 (2016), 23–47 (p. 26).

immoderate and lascivious antics of the tripart 'Pantaloon, a zany, and a whore', whilst Franceschina was used to refer to sex workers or morally compromised women by the end of the sixteenth century. As shown in Chapter One, by the time Coryate printed his *Crudities* in 1608, the connection needed no further elaboration. His description of the performance at a Venetian playhouse is cut short when, entranced by the gestures of the *attrice* on stage, he turns his attention to the courtesans in the crowd.

In this instance, does Celia, framed in a window facing a Venetian piazza where a mountebank delivers his oration to a crowd, elicit the same cognitive response from a mnemonically trained audience as Corvino? Neither the Quarto nor Folio play text tells us at what point in time Celia enters at the window. Of course, stage directions were often not printed, but its absence has intriguing implications on the mechanics of performance all the same. Do the audience give Celia any attention when they are attentively listening to the rhetorical gymnastics of the mountebank, something they had *heard of* but probably never heard? Before drawing conclusions, it is important to remember – as Corvino notes – that windows are 'properties'. Whilst it was possibly left to the spectator's imagination in some plays, both the Revels Accounts and the diary of the impresario, Philip Henslowe, refer specifically to 'chamber windows' in their itineraries of props.[37] What this entails is unclear (perhaps a wooden frame with fitted casements to be swung forth and slammed shut?), though it clearly suggests that certain windows were afforded certain significance. Yet like any other prop, the way in which a window is animated triggers certain cognitive responses, and whilst a woman appearing on stage framed by a window might suggest an illicit sexuality, it is not the only possibility. Tylus notes how Scala 'exploits the window as an explicitly theatrical space in its own right, either in order to frame the actress as a spectator of a performance, or to stage a spectacle in itself.'[38] In *Volpone*, the two converge

[37] Between 1578 to 1673, Leslie Thomson has found sixty plays in which action occurs at a window, concluding that, as is to be expected, the overriding use of this theatrical space is most commonly either to observe or woo. See 'Window Scenes in Renaissance Plays: A Survey and Some Conclusions', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 5 (1991), 225–43 (p. 228).
[38] Tylus, p. 335.

the moment Celia drops her handkerchief. Up until this point, the mountebank performance appears to operate in the round with Celia another spectator in the audience. When the handkerchief is dropped, however, she becomes an active participant in the spectacle. Therefore, the prop initiates a process of theatrical 'becoming'; the window is animated, becoming a 'spectacle in itself', and Celia becomes an *attrice*. 'You were an *Actor*,' Corvino bellows, 'with your handkerchief'.

5.3 The Handkerchief

The significance that Corvino places on this piece of cloth would suggest that it was a commonplace item on the Italian professional stage. However, handkerchiefs are referenced just twice in Flaminio Scala's collection of written plots printed in *Il teatro* (1611).[39] On only one of these occasions do they fall from a window. So why, then, does the handkerchief hold particular significance for Corvino as indicative of the *commedia dell'arte*? In an age preoccupied with the ability of cloth and clothing to fashion subjecthood, handkerchiefs had come to inhabit a particular place in the performance of female civility, piety, and chastity. They were at once functional and deeply symbolic, and deeply symbolic in their functionality. Like the window, this functionality, symbolism, and materiality was also integrally transcultural, and spoke to anxieties about gendered space and the performance of sexuality. A lot could come from a handkerchief, as seen in *Othello*, and the way in which this particular

[39] Flaminio Scala and Richard Andrews, *The Commedia Dell'Arte of Flaminio Scala: A Translation and Analysis of 30 Scenarios* (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, 2008). There is evidence within the text which suggests that handkerchiefs generally played a more theatrically oriented role in *commedia*. Out of the fifty *scenari* in Scala's collection, for example, twenty-eight contain a reference to a character weeping or crying. In these instances, a handkerchief might be the most theatrically effective way of performing these emotional outbursts to a large crowd (potentially gathered in a loud and busy outdoor space), or when a character like Pedrolino and Arlecchino, their faces obscured by a half-mask, breaks down in tears.

prop was animated would have triggered certain memories and signalled particular expectations from the audience for the playwright and player to manipulate.

Though the kerchief, used to wipe sweat from the forehead, had a long history in England by the sixteenth century, the vogue for handkerchiefs, and their cultural and social indicative uses in performances of civility, was a relatively young phenomenon in England. In Italy, the *fazzoletto*, *sudaro*, or *pannetto* can be found itemised in Italian dowries from the late thirteenth century onwards; in 1488, Marco Parenti presented Catarina Strozzi thirty plain and one embroidered handkerchief prior to their wedding.[40] The dowry of Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Montefeltre listed twenty braccia of cloth to make handkerchiefs.[41] The same dynastic projects that brought the *commedia dell'arte* to France also brought the handkerchief when Catherine de' Medici married Henri II in 1533 and soon after popularised the *mouchoir* at court. Ever the conduit for English exposure to renaissance intellectual and material culture, they soon crossed the channel to supply a burgeoning market for luxury consumer goods.

The most common material for handkerchiefs in late Tudor England was cambric, a fine plain-weave cloth originating from Cambrai in Flanders. At a time when England only produced coarse linen, finer cloth was almost always imported from the continent. The surviving Port of London Rate Books for the year 1567/8 reveal one Mary Peterson importing '9 pcs' on the *John of Antwerp* for the astounding sum of £18.[42] Whether this was to be reworked and sold on or was to be tailored for personal use is unknown, but such imports were not uncommon amongst the English gentry. The account books of Margaret Spencer, granddaughter to the 2nd Duke Somerset, contain a number of entries regarding satin, taffeta, tiffany, sarsenet, and double tiffany from Italian and Spain, and cambric

[40] Bella Mirabella, *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 2.
[41] Ibid.
[42] '503. *John* of Antwerp (10) Jacob Joryson; Antwerp, 6 May 1568', in *The Port and Trade of Early Elizabethan London: Documents*, ed. by Brian Dietz (London: London Record Society, 1972), p. 81.

from Northern France or Flanders. She is sure to specify the origin of her purchases, including ready-made commodities like 'handkerchefs' [*sic*], 'falling bands', 'cuffs', and 'pearls', all of which she lists as Italian.[43] With the mass migration of Flemish, Walloon, and French religious refugees to England throughout the late 1560s and 1570s, such luxury items were beginning to be produced locally by migrants in London and Norwich. These items were not only layered with strangeness but formed part of a strange commercial economy within London that brought novel goods into circulation. Once monopolised by the importers of the Fuggers company, cloth like 'fustian [of] naples] was by 1568 being woven and prepared in the workshops of Dutch residents like Stays Tyrrye.[44]

It was not only the raw materials of the handkerchief that were layered with strangeness, but also the ornamental work and designs. In 1609, William Biddulph reports how there are two burses in Constantinople, the *Old Bezestan* and the *New Bezestan*, that are similar to the Royal Exchange. Here, like at Cornhill, you can find great quantities of 'velvets, silks, and sattins, and waste-coats ready made of all sorts of silke, finely quilted and curiously wrought, with curious handkerchiefs of exquisite work'.[45] Even when worked by English hands, handkerchiefs were still entangled with strangeness. Handkerchiefs also make up a significant number of New Year's gifts to Elizabeth from her gentlewomen. Threaded with 'venice golde' or 'venice silver', a fine thread wrapped in gold or silver leaf imported from Italy and the Low Countries, these fine pieces of linen were embroidered with 'blackwork' or 'Spanysh worke' popularised in England by Katherine of Aragon.[46]

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[43] Quoted in Edith Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power in Early Modern England: A Feminist Literary History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 81.
[44] RAL, ii, p. 54.
[45] William Biddulph, *The trauels of certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bythinia, Thracia, and to the Blacke Sea And into Syria, Cilicia, Pisidia, Mesopotamia, Damascus, Canaan, Galile, Samaria, Iudea, Palestina, Ierusalem, Iericho, and to the Red Sea: and to sundry other places* (London, STC (2nd ed.) / 3051), p. 27.
[46] Quoted in Jane A Lawson, *The Elizabethan New Year's Gift Exchanges, 1559-1603*, Records of Social and Economic History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 62, 127, 160, 180.

Their ubiquity and everyday functionality also resonated across cultural lines.[47] They cleaned tables, foreheads, mouths, and noses; they were dipped in ointments, perfumes, and, at executions, blood. They wrapped money, food, and gifts; they were given *as* gifts. This disparity in use is reflected in the disparity of cost. This depended on the material used, its quality, the type of embroidery and stitching, the perfumes and casings it was bathed and stored in, and, of course, the supplier and consumer. In London, a handkerchief could be purchased from a hawker in the streets for between 1d and 1s 4d.[48] At the other end of the scale, Henri IV is purported to have gifted his mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées a handkerchief worth nine hundred francs, or roughly £970, or £233 16s.[49] Handkerchiefs were frequently listed in the itineraries of burgled items among larger, heavier, and seemingly more valuable items like 'numbered money', horse, saddles, gold thread and buttons, cloaks, keys, spurs, and other iron work in the Middlesex Rolls cases.[50] Even though the handkerchief stolen from the house of Thomas Wilkinson by Francis Wyythe and James Morten in August 1562 was worth half the sum of the second least valuable item listed, it was still considered worth taking, presumably because of its potential worth.[51]

Despite disparity in function and cost, handkerchiefs were exchanged between people from across the social and economic spectrum as tokens of remembrance. Jane Ryngeley sent Lord Lisle a handkerchief 'as a token' via his wife Lady Lisle; in 1535 Thomas More sent a handkerchief to 'his good daughter Cicily' via her older sister Margaret.[52] In May 1580, Francis, Duke of Anjou and

[47] The relationship of the handkerchief to the 'napkin' is ambiguous. The latter tends to be used more often in than the former in the current sense of a cloth for wiping away food residues, yet on several occasions the same item is referred to as both a handkerchief and a napkin within the same play.
[48] Katherine Morris Lester, *An Illustrated History of Those Frills and Furbelows of Fashion Which Have Come to Be Known as: Accessories of Dress* (Illinois: The Manual arts press, 1940), p. 429.
[49] Ibid.
[50] See 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1550', 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1558', 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1562', 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1583', and 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1603', MCR, i, pp. 2-7.
[51] 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1562', Ibid.
[52] 'R. O. JANE RYNGELEY to LADY LISLE', 11 June 1535, LPH, viii, p. 348; 'Sir Thos. More to Margaret Roper' 5 July 1535, LPH, viii, p. .391.

Alençon, then courting the Queen, wrote to Elizabeth to thank her for a handkerchief she had sent.[53] In 1566, the chorographer John Stow would note how the City's young women would present small handkerchiefs with tassels 'in the Frenche fashion' to their preferred suitors.[54] The significance of such gestures in the period lies in the importance of cloth in fashioning subjectivity in the period. Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones have shown how clothing was not subordinated to the self in the way it is now understood, but rather had the 'ability to "pick up" subjects, to mold and shape them both physically and socially, to constitute subjects through their power as material memories'.[55]

The significance of the handkerchief as a memory token was related to both its proximity to the body and its mobility. As a tactile object that folds around the contours of the hands and body as it was touched and fingered, the intimacy imbedded in the handkerchief was intensified by the intimacy of its primary use: wiping away bodily excretions. The fluids of the body impregnate and stain the material, which then acts as a vehicle of selfhood. What made these gestures significant is also tied to what made them such evocative props on the stage. In tragedies, the blood from a murdered friend, parent, or lover that has seeped into and stained the fabric becomes a visible token of revenge. In Thomas Kyd's genre defining *The Spanish Tragedy*, when Horatio is slain in battle, his friend and comrade Hieronimo 'weeping dipped/Within the river of his bleeding wounds' the handkerchief and carries it as a reminder of the vengeance he is obliged to carry out.[56] Queen Margaret dips a handkerchief in slain Rutland's blood to later taunt his father in Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI* (1595). 'Look, York', he jeers, 'I stain'd this napkin with the blood … from the bosom of the boy/And if thine eyes can water for his death,/I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.'[57] Evidence is produced

[53] 'The Duke of Anjou to the Queen', 17 May 1580, CMS, ii, p. 323.
[54] Quoted in Mirabella, Embellishing Herself with a Cloth: The Contradictory Life of the Handkerchief', pp. 59–82.
[55] Peter Stallybrass and Anne Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2.
[56] Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish tragedie containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo* (London, 1592; STC (2nd ed.) / 15086), sig. K4v.
[57] William Shakespeare, *The true tragedie of Richard Duke of York and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt* (London, 1595; STC (2nd ed.) / 21006), sig. B1v.

of Rutland's death, and his father can grieve over his body. Shakespeare would again play on this tragic trope in *As You Like It* (first performed c.1599). In Act 4, Oliver enters with a bloody handkerchief and tidings of Orlando. An increasingly distraught Rosalind finally swoons in relief after his exasperatingly drawn-out tale reveals that the blood belongs to a lion, not Orlando.

In general, however, comedies and romances used handkerchiefs to interrogate more troubling consequences of the elision of the body with cloth. Bella Mirabella has observed the often-contradictory uses and symbolisms of the handkerchief in the period:

> it is important to consider that the handkerchief was engaged in an elaborate social performance with multiple dimensions, playing a role as an object in the material culture of textiles and fashion, a token in a visual economy to be read and interpreted, a go-between in a system of exchange, a unit of fashion language … an indicator of class, status, identity, and gender, and an ornament crucial to decorous behavior.[58]

The tensions that arise from this ubiquity and versatility are exemplified in the increasingly prominent role that handkerchiefs played in the performance of feminine civility. This is best illustrated by an incident that occurred at Hampton Court in 1564 in which the Earl of Norfolk became enraged at the Earl of Leicester after the latter snatched a handkerchief from Queen Elizabeth to wipe the sweat from his brow after a game of tennis. Elizabeth, routinely depicted as a vestal virgin in control of her secretions, had her handkerchief – a material extension of her body and symbol of her purity – caked in the sweat of a man known to be actively seeking her hand in marriage.[59] Will Fisher has shown how this incident shows how the handkerchief's 'increasing social importance' is underscored by the patriarchal notion that women are 'leaky vessels'.[60] They were routinely shown to be more 'watery' than men in physiological, proverbial, and iconographical discourse, a wateriness that Gail Plaster has

[58] Mirabella, p. 61.
[59] Will Fisher, 'Handkerchiefs and Early Modern Ideologies of Gender', *Shakespeare Studies*, 28 (2000), 199–207 (p. 201).
[60] Ibid, p. 200.

shown to hold largely pejorative connotations. The 'female body's moisture, secretions, and productions' are 'shameful tokens of uncontrol'.[61] As the handkerchief became absorbed into late sixteenth-century performances of female civility, women were expected to navigate between the functional receptacle for bodily fluids and the symbol of feminine virtues. This was especially important due to the emphasis placed on cleanliness as a moral and civil virtue. In *De civilitate morun* (1530), Erasmus stresses that 'it is good maner to drie the fylthe of the nose with thy handkercher', and more important to turn away as you do so if 'more honest persones be presen.'[62] Della Casa called for discreteness when blowing your nose: 'use not to open thy handkercheif, to glare uppon thy snot, as if you hadst pearles and Rubies fallen from thy braynes: for these be slovenly parts, ynough to cause men, not so much not to love us, as if they did love us, to unlove us againe.'[63]

This inconsistency is a source of amusement for Angelo in George Chapman's *May-Day* (1612). When informing Franceschina of Lorenzo's desire, he ridicules the handkerchief – an object used to clear away unsightly bodily excretions – as a token between lovers:

> *Lorenzo, Lorenzo,* a gentleman of much antiquitie, and one that for his love hath burn'd hundreds of hearts to powder; yet now it fals out, that his tree of life is scorch't and blasted with the flames of thy beauty, readie to wither eternally, unlesse it be speedily comforted with the sweete drops of thy nose.[64]

Angelo's flippant disregard of the tokens of affection is typical of those scornful of love and lovers. However, the porosity of the handkerchief had troubling consequences for women on stage and in

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[61] Ibid, p. 201.
[62] Erasmus Desiderius, *De civilitate morun [sic] puerilium per Des. Erasmum Roterodamum, libellus nunc primum & conditus & aeditus.* (London, 1532; STC (2nd ed.) / 10467), sig. A4v.
[63] Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo of Maister Iohn Della Casa, Archebishop of Beneuenta. Or rather, A treatise of the ma[n]ners and behauiours, it behoueth a man to vse and eschewe, in his familiar conuersation A worke very necessary & profitable for all gentlemen, or other. First written in the Italian tongue, and now done into English by Robert Peterson, of Lincolnes Inne Gentleman* (London, 1576; STC (2nd ed.) / 4738), p. 8.
[64] George Chapman, *May-day A witty comedie, divers times acted at the Blacke Fryers* (London, 1611; STC (2nd ed.) / 4980), p. 27.

print. Susan Frye has drawn attention to how women across the social spectrum were involved in cloth production. Among wealthier families, gifting expensive items also functioned as a means of distributing wealth. In 1558, Lady Anne Cobham bequeathed her daughter Elisabeth Parr, Marchioness of Northampton 'two of my best wrought handkerchiefs'.[65] Poorer women and servants repaired, hemmed and embroidered family garments and cloth work. Household income could also be supplemented by carding, spinning, and dying cloth for sale. These were chaste activities – domestic toil with spiritual and economic benefits that kept women within the household and away from windows. Yet, as Frye notes, despite their involvement in the commercial and spiritual economies of cloth production, preparation, and ornamentation, women's labour is often overlooked. Instead, 'early modern drama simultaneously acknowledges and tends to eroticize and truncate women's powerful connections with and through cloth.'[66] Their bodies are elided with the product of their labour and they become commoditised – something to be bought, sold, given, taken, and cast away. She uses the example of Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, in which gallant Hammon observes Rose sewing through an open shop window. This voyeuristic scene in which a man watches 'unseene to her' the deeply eroticised act of sewing results in an exchange between the two that sees Hammon try to purchase her hand in place of her cloth.[67] 'How sell you, then, this hand?' he asks.[68] 'My hands are not to be sold,' Jane responds.[69] Hammon becomes impatient: 'Nay, faith, I come to buy'.[70] The same process of displacement is seen in *Othello*, where the handkerchief is first introduced as a functional item which Desdemona uses to bind her husband's head before becoming the 'Occular proofe' of her

[65] 'Will of Lady Anne Cobham', 7 October 1558, CMS, i, p. 147.
[66] Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 163; See also Frye, 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Cymbeline*', in *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England*, ed. by Peter Erickson and Hulse Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 160-90.
[67] Thomas Dekker, *The shomakers holiday. Or The gentle craft With the humorous life of Simon Eyre, shoomaker, and Lord Mayor of London* (London, 1600; STC (2nd ed.) / 6523), sig. F3v.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

infidelity.[71] In *Volpone*, the handkerchief is only mentioned in this scene, though its centrality to the construction of Celia's narrative is echoed in a similar process of displacement that occurs after she is taken to Volpone's chamber later in the action. The powder that Scoto offers Celia – that 'in youth it perpetually preserves, in age restores complexion', is to be administered by handkerchief as was typical with tinctures and ointments. When she is taken by Corvino to 'revive' Volpone through intercourse, her body becomes a vehicle for administering physic to the expiring Volpone. He jumps up from the couch – 'Why art thou 'mazed, to see me thus revived?/ Rather applaud thy beauty's miracle'.[72] Celia becomes the cloth that administers the beauty to restore Volpone to health.

In this instance, Corvino oversees the materialisation of Celia's body as he has agreed to let Volpone rape her if Volpone writes him into his will as the sole benefactor of his estate. His furious outburst in the piazza scene, however, is in response to what he perceives as Celia materialising her own selfhood and exercising agency over her own sexuality. This anxiety is played out in Day Six of Scala's *Il teatro*, where the handkerchief becomes a clever material pun on Pantalone's impotence and cuckolding. Pantalone waits in the street whilst his wife, Isabella, cuckolds him with Orazio inside the house. She emerges dripping with sweat, and Pantalone, believing her to have been straining in the bathroom starts to sponge her affectionately with his handkerchief.[73] In doing so, he unwittingly wipes away the evidence of his shame and imbues his handkerchief with the bodily excretions from his loved one's infidelity. To Pantalone, the handkerchief is a love token in the making, soaked in the sweat of his spouse, when really, he creates a material reminder of his own cuckolding, an emblem of his stock traits. The same anxiety around an exchange of fluids underscores Corvino's self-recognition as the '*Pantalone di Besogniosi*'. By willingly relinquishing a handkerchief, Celia permits Scoto to touch her body.

[71] William Shakespeare, 'The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice', in *Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies Published according to the true originall copies* (London, 1623; STC (2nd ed.) / 22273), pp. 310-39 (p. 325).
[72] Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. H1v.
[73] Scala and Andrews, 'Day Six: The Jealous Old Man', p. 35.

When Scoto 'most sweetly, kissed the receipt', he kisses Celia. The handkerchief, a powerful memory token, becomes the site in which their infidelity is both emblazoned and performed.

The anxiety around this object is directly related to its mobility. A woman dropping a handkerchief, a potent material stand-in for the female body, makes her body alienable, something to be possessed, given away, and transferred between men. On the one occasion a handkerchief drops from a balcony in a Scala *scenari*, it forms part of a non-verbal propositioning. In Day Thirty-One, Isabella drops hers from a window after seeing a handsome Capitano out walking in the street below:

> Isabella at her window, sees the Capitano and drops her handkerchief. Capitano picks it up. Isabella comes out; Capitano tries to give he handkerchief back; she says she does not want it, and offers him some others. Capitano gives her a ring, and she accepts it. Capitano asks her if she is married. Isabella, sighing, says yes; *at that point* Pedrolino enters, she sees him, and goes indoors.[74]

Oblivious to the implications, Capitano misses his cue to enter the house and Isabella must instead come down to the street. He continues to misread her intentions, until Isabella, in her frustration, undermines the subtlety of the exchange by offering several handkerchiefs at once. Capitano finally catches on and gifts her a ring of his own. They most likely exchange a series of sexual puns before he finally checks her marital status. Her hopes dashed, she runs back inside when she sees her servant approaching. Yet alienable objects are often a source of crisis. In Cymbeline, Posthumus declares Innogen's ring as 'dear as my finger; 'tis part of it.'[75] The value of the ring as a materialisation of social bonds might give the ring equal significance to the flesh, but it is not actually attached to the body, and when his bracelet is returned to him as proof of Innogen's infidelity, he soon parts ways with it and conspires to have her murdered. The same tension is presented in *The Merchant of Venice* when

[74] Scala and Andrews, 'Day 31: The Tutor', p. 183.
[75] William Shakespeare, 'Cymbeline, King of Britaine', in *Mr. VWilliam Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies Published according to the true originall copies*, pp. 369-98 (p. 372).

Gratiano's claims that a ring is 'Your wife's first gift;/A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger/And so riveted with faith upon your flesh'. Yet it is only 'riveted' by mutual oaths of fidelity, oaths that are then broken when pressures are placed on other social bonds like honour and friendship. Dropped objects had particularly fruitful possibilities. Shakespeare recognised the dramatic potential of a dropped handkerchief in *Othello*. In the source material, Cinthio's *De gli hecatommithi* (1566), the ensign 'le levò da cintola il pannicello così accortamente, ch'ela punto non se ne auide, & de lei, tutto ellegro, si diparti' (carefully took the cloth from her girdle so that she did not notice, then cheerfully took his leave).[76] Shakespeare, however, has Desdemona drop the handkerchief by mistake, where it is picked up and eventually used as 'Occular proofe' of her supposed infidelity. It gives the play an unsettling moralising tone – Iago had many times asked Emilia to steal it, yet Desdemona 'let it drop by negligence' to the same end.[77]

Like many of Shakespeare's plays, scholars have found parallels between *Othello* and the Italian professional theatre. Teresa Flaherty has found that its 'improvisational modes, in conjunction with the stylization of the major characters, plot developments, and texture of the language, would have enforced an illusion of the play as a performance of Italian commedia dell' arte'.[78] Mirabella, on the other hand, has found parallels in the 'clowns, comic episodes and skits; exotic cures, charms and spells' with the mountebank performances.'[79] She places particular emphasis on the indicative meaning of the handkerchief. 'The handkerchief was the essential means of exchange for the selling, buying, transferring of property, and the procuring of a cure that was central to any mountebank entertainment.'[80] The Swiss traveller Thomas Platter noted how women in the mountebank's company

[76] Giovanni Battista Giraldi (Cinthio), *De Gli Hecatommithi* (Moldovi, 1585), p. 321.
[77] Shakespeare, 'Othello', p. 324.
[78] Teresa J. Faherty, 'Othello dell'Arte: The Presence of Commedia in Shakespeare's Tragedy', *Theatre Journal*, 43.2 (1991), 179-94.
[79] Bella Mirabella, '"A Wording Poet": Othello among the Mountebanks', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 24 (2011), 150-75 (p. 151).
[80] Ibid.

would return handkerchiefs with 'little notes to give the time and place of a rendezvous', something the Mirabella finds Corvino reference during his angry tirade.[81] 'You were an *Actor*', he bellows, 'with your handkerchief':

> Which he, most sweetly, kist in the receipt
> And might no doubt return it, with a letter,
> And point to the place where you might meet: your sister's
> Your mother's, or your aunt's might serve the turn.[82]

Yet this does not necessarily indicate widespread familiarity with the practices of the mountebank. While Mirabella claims that 'Shakespeare's audience, familiar with seeing the handkerchief in the mountebank performances, would have been privy to an "ocular" lexicon of meaning', this thesis has shown that the mountebank's presence in the English imagination was by and large textual, and that the English did not consider the mountebank's performance as related to the activities of the *comici dell'arte*.[83] The handkerchief's significance can instead be thought of as predominantly derived from textual sources such as the *novelle*. The bawd Nana in Aretino's *Ragionamenti* teaches her daughter the power of a dropped glove during her education in the arts of the courtesan.[84] To drive a trusting lover to jealousy (and then procure gifts and money in recompense for his rages), ask a trusted friend to write you a love letter. Then 'Fold it skilfully and slip it into a glove which thou wilt drop somewhere, inadvertently … As soon as he picks up the glove, he will feel the note, and on feeling it, will take it … he will no sooner begin to read than he will commence to make wry-faces'.[85] In Henry Chettle's

[81] Quoted in Ibid.
[82] Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. G4v.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Both parts of the *Ragionamenti* were first reproduced in Italian in England in 1583 and proved so popular that three more editions were in print before the end of the year.
[85] Pietro Aretino, *The Ragionamenti, or Dialogues of the Divine Pietro Aretino, Literally translated into English. With a reproduction of the author's portrait engraved by Mark Antony Raimondi from the picture of Titian*, trans. by Alcide Bonneau, 4 vols (Paris: Isidore Liseux, 1889), iv, p. 46.

romance *A Forest of Fancy*, a young wife hangs two handkerchiefs from a window while her husband is away on business to indicate to a prospective young lover that she is receptive to his amorous advances. In this instance, the handkerchief is a literal surrogate for her own presence – a material extension of the body that when placed at a window signals infidelity. Despite Corvino centring the *attrice*'s performance around the dropped handkerchief, Pedrolino spins a convoluted intrigue around Capitano's ring rather than Isabella's handkerchief in Day Six. Day Thirty-One, in which the handkerchief plays a pronounced role in Pantalone's cuckolding, is not a typical *commedia dell'arte* plot but a genre parody that, as Richard Andrews notes, deals with a plotline that is more akin to early *erudita* comedies and *novelle*.[86] Not only does it take place in the country, it is also only one of three plots that contains an act of adultery which, despite the association of the *attrice* with infidelity, was rarely performed on the Italian professional stage (in this case, the crime is mitigated by the revelation that Pantalone's and Isabella's marriage was never consummated due to his impotence). The denouement consists of an unusually long passage in which the servant Buratino relates the Argument as a warning to Pantalone of all-consuming jealousy. Pantalone realises he is the cuckolded husband of the story and in his shame permits Isabella to marry Orazio. Typically, during the revelation, the reader is spared a summary of the information that they have been privy to the whole time with some variation of 'as is found in the main argument'.[87] Buratino's closing speech reads as a novella, perhaps playing on the earlier section in which Gratiano recounts a story from Bocaccio's *Decameron* that follows the same plot.

With the piazza scene in *Volpone*, it is important to keep in mind that Celia relinquishing her handkerchief fulfils a theatrical expectation. Volpone/Scoto calls to the crowd for handkerchiefs, and the crowd then responds. Celia is otherwise passive in this exchange, and while Corvino accuses her

[86] Scala and Andrews, 'Day Six: The Jealous Old Man', p. 38.
[87] Ibid, p. 40

of lascivious gesturing, her subsequent chaste remonstrances of Volpone's advances provide a sense of how this interaction was performed. Rather than focusing on Celia, we should instead consider what this scene says about Corvino. As Sofer notes, the layers of association that props carry with them shape how an audience receive a character. They do 'not just identify, they characterize', he writes.[88] Erika Fischer-Lichte expands on the prop's role as signifier in relation to character type: 'The prop functions as a sign that generates meaning with regard to the subject [character] … [A] prop can thus point to both the general type or character of the stage figure, and to its social status, individual traits, feelings, attitudes, value judgments and view of the world.'[89] In *Volpone*, the handkerchief characterises Celia to Corvino as an *attrice* and courtesan, but it also characterises Corvino to the audience as a Venetian *bravura*. Before he interrupts the performance, he is first a spectator. Watching unseen from the stage or the pit, the spectacle unfolding before him encourages the same cognitive process of remembrance expected from other audience members. Yet where Peregrine articulates the horizon of interpretation available to the London audience, Corvino's interpretation of the scene before him is pieced together from an entirely different experiential plane. As Sophie Duncan has recently noted, Aristotelian theory of recollection posits that memory is stimulated 'by either the order and arrangement of a dataset, or some sort of similitude or association between ideas'.[90] For Corvino the arrangement of the dataset invokes memories of the *scenari* because he is, after all, a Venetian, the countryman of Pantalone and Zanni. He exists within a deeply Venetian play, alive with the topography of the *Serenissima* and deeply conscious of its Italianate sources. No other play set in the Italian peninsula during the period goes to such lengths to depict the topographical and cultural richness of the Veneto. It reads like a tourist guide to the numerous landmarks, sites, and domains

[88] Sofer, p. 1.
[89] Quoted in Kyna Hamill, 'A Cannonade of Weapons: Signs of Transgression in the Early Commedia Dell'arte', ed. by J.K. Curry, *Theatre Symposium*, 18 (2010), 36–47.
[90] Duncan, p. 80.

mentioned in *Volpone* are the more familiar Grand Canal, the *duomo* and *piazza san marco* and the porticos to the *procuratìa* that surround it; the port, the *arsenale*, the *rialto* and the goldsmith's shop that line the waterway either side of the bridge; the *hospidale incurabili* where the 'mad' and destitute were committed; the *piscaria* fish market on the *molo*; the *san spirito* monastery; the islands of Lazaretto and Zante; and even a trading post at Aleppo (one of four Venetian factories, or *cottimi*, the other three located in Damascus, Constantinople, and the parish of St Botolph Billingsgate, London). To the audience, Corvino exemplifies the role of the stereotypically irascible Venetian who keeps his wife under lock and key. 'I am a Dutchman, I', he shouts at Celia, 'For, if you thought me an Italian,/You would be damn'd, ere you did this, you whore!'[91]

5.4 New Layers of Association

Even though Corvino's conclusions are framed by his (imagined) experience, such interpretation would have made sense to an early modern audience whose knowledge of a form had progressed incrementally over the decades through print, word-of-mouth, and intermittent exposure to performance. Yet just as important to how the English came to imagine the *commedia dell'arte* as a coherent dramaturgy were plays like *Volpone* and what they assigned significance to. Jenny Sager has argued that certain spectacles or visual cues (a woman in a window, or a handkerchief dropped from a balcony) are placed or performed in certain places and in combination with other props, gestures, language, and actions on stage in a way so that the audience 'remember these images & contemplate the more complex concepts that lay behind them.'[92] These objects are not only part of an internal

[91] Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. E4v.
[92] Jenny Sager, *The Aesthetics of Spectacle in Early Modern Drama and Modern Cinema: Robert Greene's Theatre of Attractions* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 26.

economy of interpretation but resonate with the narrative and thematic significance they held in earlier dramas, literature, and iconography. This is the basis of theatrical 'ghosting', first articulated by Martin Carlson in relation to Edward Alleyn's performance as Doctor Faustus, which must have carried with it shades of his earlier 'over-reacher' Tamburlaine:

> In semiotic terms, we might say that a signifier, already bonded to a signified in the creation of a stage sign, is moved in a different context to be attached to a different signified, but when that new bonding takes place, the receiver's memory of the previous bonding remains, contaminating, or "ghosting" the new sign.[93]

The spectator's reception to, and expectations of Faustus's words, gestures, and motives are already framed by their prior experience of Tamburlaine. This type of audience engagement is acknowledged by playwrights and players, and the ghosts of prior characters, objects, and performances found in other printed play texts often reveal a comic energy that underscores the trans-theatrical process of memory making in the playhouse. In Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610), the playwright adds to a throng of contemporary dramatic allusions to Thomas Kyd's genre-defining *The Spanish Tragedy* (1582-1592) by having the character Face persuade the gull Drugger to dress 'in a Spanish sute' in order to obtain Widow Dol's hand in marriage.[94] 'Hieronymo's old hat and cloak will serve', he says, 'I'll tell you more when you bring them'.[95] Later in the play, Drugger appears dressed in the Spanish suit: 'Here's your Hieronymo's cloake, and hat'.[96] Scholarship on this exchange tends to focus on the internal economy of commercial theatre, in which rich, iconic items of clothing would circulate readily amongst less memorable items between companies, players, and plays.[97] It also speaks of how belief can only be

[93] Quoted in Sofer, p. 131.
[94] Ben Jonson, *The alchemist*, sig. K4v.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid, sig. M2v.
[97] See Jean MacIntyre, *Costumes and Scripts in the Elizabethan Theatres* (Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1992), p. 308-309; Peter Stallybrass, 'Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity of the Renaissance Stage', in *Subject and Object in*

suspended so far with a mnemonically attuned audience, trained to think of the theatre as a space for remembering and to interpret the materiality of stagecraft in accordance to a spectrum of prior experience. As Sofer notes, the impact of a prop is determined both by the 'gestures of the individual actor who handles the object, and by the horizon of interpretation available to historically situated spectators at a given time'.[98] For playwrights, players, and spectators, a property is an artefact, and the way in which that artefact is presented and animated strikes up conversation between past and present to new ends.

When Corvino verbalises this cognitive process, a layer of cultural resonance is threaded into this particular scenographic composition and the spectator's horizon of interpretation is expanded. The handkerchief, which takes on significance in the play because of the cultural resonances of how it is animated, becomes a trans-theatrical memetic device that when dropped by a woman from a window, triggers memories of the *commedia dell'arte*. Even though the next record of a handkerchief dropped by a woman at a window falls into a cramped City backstreet rather than a bustling 'nook' of the Piazza San Marco, the audience have the same expectations. In Lording Barry's 1608 play for the Children of the King's Revels, *Ram Alley*, Taffeta, the widow of a Mercer, peers out from her window with her maid Adriana at the handsome Boutcher below. They desperately try to catch his attention before he leaves:

Adriana:	Shall I cough or sneeze?
Taffeta:	No. I ha't – stand aside.
	Aye me, my handkercher! Adriana! Fabia!
Adriana:	Mistress?
Taffeta:	Run, run, I have let my handkercher fall!
	[Exit ADRIANA *above.]*
	Gentlemen, shall I entreat a courtesy?

Renaissance Culture, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 289-320.

[98] Sofer, p. 61.

Boutcher: Within my power your beauty shall command. What courtesy is't?
Taffeta: To stoop and take up my handkercher.
Boutcher: Your desire is performed.[99]

Amongst the prose fictions and romances that Barry draws from in *Ram Alley*, he appears to have written the play with the recently printed *Volpone* close at hand. Both advertise 'Conceits so new' rather than the standard 'jests, stolne from each table'.[100] Barry scorns the 'loathsome stage disease' of railing against other writers, rather than 'satirising' their works, just as Jonson, who mixes 'profit with your pleasure' denies the false charge that 'All he writes is railing'.[101] Perhaps most explicitly, Barry orders his play around the same modification of the Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action found in the prologue to *Volpone* that substitutes the latter – the notion that the action of a play needs to be inextricably entwined – for 'person', both the Italian idea that comic characters should be lower or middle class and Jonson's own emphasis on character consistency. These 'humours' find clear counterparts in the *maschere*; Sir Oliver Smallshanks is old, impotent, lecherous, and unsuccessfully competes with his son for the hand of a younger woman. He gestures with 'winks', 'becks', 'fingers, smiles, and other quirks' in a manner that clearly draws on Harvey and Nashe's earlier depictions of Magnifico.[102] Upon hearing Taffeta's intention to marry his father, William rages at the ridiculous 'fellow that has no inside, but prates/By rote, as players and parrots use to do'.[103] He is of no substance, a stock figure with stock speeches. He even 'step[s] behind the hangings' in Widow Taffeta's chambers to determine whether his son intends to be his challenger in love.[104] While the *bravura* was a neoclassical staple, Captain Face has clear affinities with Francesco Andreini's mask Capitano Spavento found in

[99] Lording Barry, *Ram-Alley: or merrie-trickes A comedy divers times here-to-fore acted by the Children of the Kings Revels* (London, 1611; STC (2nd ed.) / 1502), sig. B4r.
[100] Barry, sig. A2r; Jonson, sig. B1r.
[101] Barry, Ibid; Jonson, Ibid.
[102] Ibid, sig. C1v.
[103] Ibid, sig. F4r.
[104] Ibid, sig. F3v.

his *Le bravura del Capitano Spavento* printed the same year in French.[105] Considering this scene in the context of the *commedia dell'arte* antics that dominate the rest of the action, the affinity to Corvino's interruption is visible in Boutcher's metatheatrical pun. He performs Taffeta's 'desire' by submitting to her request to 'stoop and take' Taffeta's handkerchief off the ground after she, like an '*Actor*', performs her desire by dropping the handkerchief from the window.

The way in which the *commedia dell'arte* – presented by Jonson in *Volpone* as something embedded within the Venetian spatial imagination – is traced onto the cityscape of a comedy that tirelessly and clumsily lists off London topographical landmarks in order to situate the play within both the city and the genre has important implications for how the English engaged with and consciously appropriated from Italian professional during the period. Named for the alleyway a few yards to the northwest of the Whitefriars playhouse where it was performed, Ram Alley was an infamous 'abode of libertinism and roguery', an association that Barry leans into in his sketch of the quotidian life of the inhabitants and their London.[106] Here the unscrupulous lawyer Throat resides, not far from Lady Somerfield in St John's Street. Constantia enters the action further afield in Hosier Lane by Smithfield, and a plan is hatched by the lawyer and his crew to kidnap her at the Mitre tavern on Fleet Street. 'Let the coach stay at Shoe Lane end,' schemes Throat, 'Be ready – Let the boot stand open, and when she's in/Hurry towards Saint Gyles in the Field.'[107] Picking up the scent, her rescuers navigate walkable routes through the city: 'Let's first along Shoe Lane,' says William, 'Then straight up

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[105] Francesco Andreini, *Le bravura del Capitano Spavento* (Paris, 1608). Florio had acquired a copy by the time he printed his second Italian-English dictionary *Queen Anna's Worlde of Wordes* in 1613. See John Florio, *Queen Anna's new world of words, or dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues* (London, 1611; STC (2nd ed.) / 11099), unpaginated.

[106] Thomas Middleton paints a damning picture of its sodden frequenters in his *Platos Cap Cast at the year* (London, 1604; STC (2nd ed.) / 19975), sig. B1r:

> 'The revolution of this present year 1604 takes his beginning at what time the sun enters into the first minute of Aries, when many a scold shall be found in Ram Alley, whose tongues will never lin jangling until the sun enter into another sign, as the Miter or rather some boozing tap-house, where they must all drink themselves friends again till they are able to speak no more than a drowned rat.'

[107] Barry, sig. D4v.

Holborn'.[108] 'Upon my life,' says his brother Thomas, 'They went in by the Greyhound, and so struck Into Bridewell.'[109]

Yet despite depicting very different locales, both articulate the cultural plurality of a new urban experience available in London. Brian Parker has found in the 'authentic Venetian detail' not only an accurate representation of contemporary Venetian decadence, but an extension of Jonson's 'feelings for a new urban experience of London'.[110] Where some aspects of this experience 'might still be obscured' in a London setting, they were magnified in the 'European metropolitan community *par excellence*' and therefore better interrogated. Parker does not explicitly mention encroaching strangeness as the principal driver of a new urban experience, but it is the implicit instigator of the 'precariousness in identity' that he finds manifesting following a 'breakdown in a sense of social and religious community'.[111] This strangeness is of course part of the Venetian fabric as the world's marketplace which Jonson's friend Coryate called 'the most resplendent mirrour of Europe'.[112] It is also worth noting how the attention that Jonson continually draws to the artifice and textuality of the spectacle serves as a reminder of the cultural plurality at the heart of the urban existence and the types of transcultural experience this engenders. It is, after all, textual to the point of self-parody. In preparation for his stay in Venice, Sir Politick Would-be read Gasparo Contarini's *De magistratibus et republica venetorum* (1543), recently translated as *The historie of Venice* (1599) by Lewes Lewkenor. His wife, Lady Would-be, is even more explicit (and debauched) in her perusal of Italian authors in search of cultural refinement. In a bid to halt her incessant chatting, Volpone quotes the 'Poet' Sophocles advice that the highest 'female grace is silence':

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[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid, sig. E2r.
[110] Brian Parker, 'Jonson's Venice', in *Theatre of the English and Italian Renaissance*, ed. by J.R. Mulryne (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), pp. 95–112 (p. 108).
[111] Ibid.
[112] Thomas Coryate, p. 243.

> Which o' your Poets? Petrarch? Or Tasso? Or Dante?
> Guerrini? Ariosto? Aretine? Cieco d'Adria? I have read them all.[113]

She even carries Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* on her person:

> All our English writers,
> I mean such as are happy in th'Italian,
> Will deign to steal out of this author mainly,
> Almost as much as from Montagnie.[114]

Of course, the world of *Volpone* is equally reliant on these imports, patched together from a compendium of Italian texts imported and translated by printers and booksellers catering to the appetite for continental intellectual and cultural refinement. Jonson no doubt called on the expertise of his friend Florio for help in fleshing out the play with cultural nuance and accuracy.[115] It may be possible, for example, that when Volpone/Scoto turns to Nano and asks 'Zan Fritada, pray thee sing a verse, extempore', Jonson is drawing on the three extant *opere* authored by the renowned Venetian street entertainer Joan Fritada printed in Venice.[116] It is, however, far more likely that he found Fritata's name in a copy of Garzoni's *La piazza universale* borrowed from his friend, John Florio. Even his *commedia dell'arte* – that evasive, ephemeral form – is deeply textual. When Volpone miraculously springs forth from his deathbed upon being left alone with Celia, his rejuvenated state reminds him

[113] Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. G2r.
[114] Ibid.
[115] The degree to which Jonson relied on the physical and intellectual labours of migrant workers in creating his textually informed memory of Venice on-stage is attested by an inscription on the inside cover of a 1607 quarto of the play held by the British Library. Gifted by the playwright to his friend John Florio, the linguist, lexicographer, translator of Montaigne, and premier advocate of the Italian language and culture in Elizabethan England. 'To his Loving Father, & worthy Friend Mr John Florio', it reads, 'The ayde of his Muses'. Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (London, 1604), C.12.e.17.
[116] For more on Zanni pamphlets, see Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia Dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 106-36.

of a dramatic performance staged in Venice before Henri III in May 1574. 'I am now as fresh,' Volpone sings:

> As hot, as high, and in as jovial plight,
> As when, in that so celebrated scene
> At recitation of our comedy
> For entertainment of the great Valois
> I acted young Antinous.[117]

On his way from Poland to claim the French throne in Paris, the future King Henri of France briefly sojourned in Venice, where he was greeted with a triumphal procession and showered with gifts and entertainments for the duration of his visit. According to the accounts, this included several performances by 'li *Comici*'. The troupe were not native Venetians but comprised of several members of *i Gelosi*, including the Bolognese Simone da Bologna and the Paduans Vittoria Pissimi and Giulio Pasquati. This detail was not included in Lewkenor's *historie*, most likely the source of Jonson's knowledge in this instance, and the playwright has Volpone take the leading role of Antinous. Organised by the old patrons of the City, rather than imported from Paris, the *commedia dell'arte* is integrated into the cultural fabric of Venice as another textual layer appropriated from the foreign language books and translations that were becoming an increasingly sizeable percentage of print output in London during the period.

Of course, the transculturality of this new urban experience was also embedded in the materials of stagecraft. Strangeness was layered into the raw cloths, cut, embroidery, stitching, and ornament of the handkerchief. It is literally a site of transcultural negotiations, a reminder of the act of remembering carried in the belt, hatband, pocket, apron, purse, or perfumed bag of nearly every punter in the playhouse that strangeness was not simply a possibility of the urban experience but inseparable and

[117] Jonson, sig. H2r.

integral to the fabric of everyday life in the city. In *Ram Alley*, this materiality is less tacitly implied. The key to economic prosperity is not the adoption of the kinds-of isolationist policies that found a voice in the xenophobic characterisation of strangers in other contemporary plays, but rather controlling or gaining access to burgeoning international markets. The action of the play revolves around three potential suitors who identify the fulfilment of their greed or the relief of their financial woes in Taffeta, the wealthy widow of a London Mercer. Unlike Desdemona, Jane, or Celia, whose bodies are reduced to commodities that become sites of contention and/or violence, Widow Taffeta's value is writ large in her name from the beginning. It is striking, however, that her national identity is not discussed considering the strangeness of her namesake, a colourful thin silk that had until recently been imported either from Italy, France, the Low Countries, or the Levant where it originated. This kind of production and consumption was now an integral part of London's economy and city life.

As new cultural memories are layered into a prop, the constitution of that existing significances and memories is altered. Frances K. Barasch has found affinities between *Hamlet* and the *lazzi* of the *comici* in France that go beyond the incidental use of neoclassical theatregrams. The murder of a pontificating father ('accounted a good actor' in his university days) as he spies on a young man and woman from behind an arras bears an uncanny resemblance to a print in the Recueil Fossard depicting Franceschina sat on Arlecchino's lap while Pantalone stares on hidden behind a drawn curtain (fig. 19). Barasch finds another example of the concealed Father/lover theatregram in Thomas Heywood's 1605 play *The second parte of if you know not me, you know nobodie* to show how the English were literate in the theatrical language of the *comici*.[118] When the haberdasher Hobson launches into a fit of rage over his ineffectual, lazy, and perpetually absent apprentices:

[118] Frances K. Barasch, 'Hamlet versus Commedia Dell'Arte', in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literary Theories*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 105-18 (p. 108).

> Where be these varlets, bones a me, at Taverne?
> Knaves, villaines, spend goods, foote my Customers
> Must either serve themselves, or packe unserv'd.
> Now they peepe like Italian pantelownes
> Behind an Arras, but ile start you knaves,
> I have a shooing-horne to draw on your liquor.[119]

Performed the same year that the second quarto of *Hamlet* was printed, it is intriguing to think of how this scene would have kindled not just memories (real or imagined) of *commedia dell'arte* performance by Italian troupes, but of Polonius's sudden and startling murder. There is clearly an opportunity for slapstick humour here. The apprentices, Hobson suspects, are hiding, their faces appearing with exaggerated motions from behind a curtained playing space. Reminiscent of the slaughter of an old conniving father behind an arras, he beats wildly at the arras with a shoehorn. In doing so, the player not only draws a connection between the Pantalone and the curtain, but between Polonius and Pantalone. An act that would have originally been a shocking inversion of audience expectations has since layered the prop with new significance and altered the memory of *commedia dell'arte*.

5.5 Conclusion

The potential of the piazza scene in *Volpone* for understanding how the English staged *commedia dell'arte* in the period goes beyond indicating English familiarity with certain characters, content, and scenographic compositions. Rather, it presents an opportunity for scholars of cross-cultural encounter to interrogate how contemporary English playwrights created a new, situated, and syncretic *commedia dell'arte*. This chapter has taken the audience's horizon of interpretation as its focus, and the ways in

[119] Thomas Heywood, *The second part of, If you know not me, you know no bodie* (London, 1606; STC / 1488:07), sig. A4v.

which playwrights and players exploited the memories, associations, and significances layered into the materials of stagecraft. The piazza scene was constructed from particularly potent memetic cues – Scoto the mountebank, an inherited cultural memory; a woman at a window, a space of transcultural anxiety; and a handkerchief, a memory token that had become increasingly central to displays of feminine civility and increasingly inseparable from the bodies they tokenised. When Corvino bursts on stage, however, and gives voice to the cognitive process of Venetian spectator, the audience's process of remembering is interrupted, and the handkerchief – a prop that held no particular significance in the *arte* beyond its transcultural function as an extension of the feminine body – is layered with new associations.

Memories of the *commedia dell'arte* were then carried by these transtheatrical props into new plays and playhouses, where they were subsequently altered. As Hobson's thrashing about with a shoehorn suggests, the memory of *commedia dell'arte* this particular stage property held had been altered by the old *vecchio* Polonius's death – a shocking deviation from its comic origins. The same can be observed in *Ram Alley*. The *commedia dell'arte* that Jonson creates or reimagines following a visit by Flaminio Cortese's troupe in 1602 layered the dropped handkerchief with new associations. Here a falling handkerchief is both alluded to as a *commedia dell'arte* trope whilst simultaneously functioning as a material representation of a new, transcultural mode of urban living interrogated by *Volpone*.

6 Conclusion

The *commedia dell'arte* – not simply a theatre on the move but a theatre defined by its mobility – did not survive its migration intact. If the form existed simply as a 'quorum of its characteristics', as Kathleen Lea once argued, these characteristics were flexible and versatile, easily reconfigured to the demands of new cultures and languages. This flexibility and mobility made the *comici* a prolific transnational vehicle of the European renaissance, connecting disparate regional cultures by introducing insular traditions to the neoclassical innovations and theatregrams of the Cinquecento. Yet the ways in which these regional cultures engaged with the *commedia dell'arte* and their innovative gifts was marked by the cultural dynamics of the spaces in which they occurred. In asking how the English imagined the *commedia dell'arte* in the period 1571-1611, this thesis has revealed not only the conditions that facilitated contact and exchange, but the concerns and anxieties that motivated English writers and dramatists to engage with the form in a specific way.

Without sustained exposure to the performance of Italian troupes, English writers and playwrights imagined a *commedia dell'arte* that was deeply situated, syncretic, and for the most part uninformed by the practices of the absent *comici*. A transnational methodology that traces the migration of a coherent form across boundaries places inordinate stress on theatrical exchange, overlooking how English engagement with the form functioned across multiple mediums as a wider cultural phenomenon. Whether a memorandum of household costs, a diplomatic relation, or a print travelogue, the documents that record these moments of exposure are not neutral sources. Repeatedly in the chapters of this thesis, I have shown how all prioritise certain elements and all are recorded for different reasons. The experiences they reflect are varied, and the ways in which these experiences are interpreted and repackaged speaks as much to the cultural conversations happening at home as to the realities of the observed performance. The reports of *commedia dell'arte* found in travelogues that are

often used to account for the English knowledge of the form were shown in Chapter One to be preoccupied with form and genre, to have been engaging in debates around porosity and the integrity of an exclusively English culture. The particularities of performance that both Moryson and Coryate detailed in their accounts were not novel insights into the mechanics of an elusive type of theatre, but choice representations of established conventions that betray individual motivations. While one was concerned with asserting his Ulyssean credentials and the supremacy of English culture, the other exploited contemporary associations of corruption to playfully depict close shaves with the Italianisation that threatened to undermine Englishness.

Treating these texts simply as evidence of England's place within a transnational network of theatrical exchange loses sight of not only their selective representations of the form, but the plurality of exposure as well. Key to the picture of English engagement with the *commedia dell'arte* that this study has uncovered is the observation that the *commedia dell'arte* did not enter the English imagination in one go as a coherent, cohesive dramaturgy. Rather, English interaction with the form was a protracted knowledge exchange comprised of diffuse, piecemeal instances of translations and appropriation of its constituent parts. Some of these parts would take on a transcultural significance as they travelled in print or by word of mouth, becoming tokens that embodied shared anxieties over geopolitical affairs and fears of the instability of identities in the face of increased cross-cultural exchange. Nashe's Harlequin, for example, was tied to a political upheaval of the French Wars of Religion. A servant of the Valois who leant himself to the manifold stories of corruption and deceit pouring from the Parisian presses, the Harlequin would retain this satirical significance as it was translated into an English cultural framework.

Of course, this particular interaction offers just one isolated example of translation from a specific cultural and political context. Other interactions with the *commedia dell'arte* were far more diffuse engagements with Italian literary and dramatic culture as a whole. Analysing contemporary

usage of other constituent parts in Chapter Three revealed a process of appropriation through which the *commedia dell'arte* took on new significance. The Zanni, a servant mask drawn from a pool of stock imagery in Cinquecento literary and dramatic culture, was 'naturalised' into the English cultural lexicon through a process of transculturation. English writers and dramatists wrote over the skill of performers and the versatility of the mask repurposed the mask's associations, creating a token inscribed with new, situated meanings that articulated English anxieties over encroaching strangeness and the porosity of identity.

The *commedia dell'arte* that was then presented as a coherent, cohesive strange performance practice on the English stage did not resemble the performance practices of the *comici* on the continent. Even the embodied semiotics through which the *comici* communicated character, action, and motivation when moving through different linguistic and cultural spaces was highly situated when it was appropriated by English players. It was shown in Chapter Four that while the English acknowledged the importance of kinesics and movement to the theatre of the itinerant *comici* in their reproductions of the form, this physicality was exaggerated to present the *arte* as indecorous, immoderate, and antithetical to their own English secular tradition. Marston transformed his eponymous young lovers in *Antonio and Mellida innamorati* so as to chastise his contemporaries for the preponderance of Italianate conventions in their contemporary plays. Other *maschere*, like Pantalone, were composite characters, pieced together from the cultural manifestations of similar figures in print and onstage. Strikingly, however, Pantalone was not simply an exaggerated depiction of immoderation, but rather reflected the cultural plurality of contemporary London. The player drew on the collective spatialised memory of the city – triggering memories of the Italian Magnifici who paced its streets, gardens, and markets – in the same way that the *buffone* and *comici* sculpted Pantalone from the gentleman and merchants who walked the piazzas in Italy's urban centres.

When the *commedia dell'arte* started to emerge on the stage as a cohesive dramaturgy, its boundaries and characteristics were not clearly demarcated. As the misconceptions that have arisen around the form's history and characteristics suggest, it was a porous, dynamic form that was continually fluctuating and taking on new associations as it was appropriated and adapted to new ends. The playhouse provided an unprecedented space in which playwrights, players, and spectators could take part in dynamic processes of cultural production. As Chapter Five has shown, these processes exploited and relied on audience memory, in particular their ability to identify and connect layers of association within a word, an action, or a prop. In the piazza scene of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, a prop that had no particular resonance within the continental *arte* was layered with new significance after a spectator vocalised the cognitive processes involved in playmaking. This prop then carried this significance into new dramas and playing spaces, becoming a transtheatrical memetic device that when activated within a particular scenographic composition, triggered memories of the *commedia dell'arte*. Each subsequent animation of a prop in this manner would then inscribe the object with new significance and alter the fabric of the *commedia dell'arte* in turn.

The main contribution of this study is the provision of a new methodological approach drawing on transcultural theory that examines regional cultural encounters as uniquely inflected by the cultural dynamics of the spaces in which they occurred and the concerns of the writers, readers, playwrights, players. Rather than approaching this encounter as manifestly theatrical, the works of writers of disparate forms, modes, and genres should be placed in conversation with each other. This reveals a comprehensive picture of the wider negotiations that characterised this cultural encounter – the dynamic processes of translation, appropriation, and adaptation motivated by contemporary anxieties about identity, and the increasingly blurred distinctions between difference and belonging.

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