Introduction

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Tragedy and Politics from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period

How does it feel to have a good talk to the audience after your dismemberment? Or at least your decollation? In John Adams's controversial opera *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), the eponymous tragic protagonist rises from his wheelchair having been shot dead by terrorists and sings a most beautiful aria.¹ Here, as in many cases, violence inspired art. It will surely not be long before somebody makes tragic capital (that is, by writing a play) from the beheadings by Islamic State of their captives in Syria and Iraq, broadcast to the world through gory videos, themselves a kind of Islamic fundamentalist 'terror art', and part of a 'theatrical' act of revenge. Abandoned to their fate, what else can these pitiful, abandoned victims do but attempt, as they do when we hear them speak, to see beyond their own approaching mortality with a Stoic sense of calm, when 'Justice against Fate complain', to use Andrew Marvell's phrase, as is also the case with the condemned rulers in the German *Trauerspiel* tradition.

We fear violent destruction, the ultimate crisis of our singular and communal identities, and for that very reason we are fascinated and sometimes invigorated by the art that represents it in drama. The Greeks were thinking about these matters before anyone else, in a way that could be shared in community theater. The progressive recovery of the Greek tragedians, notably the plays of Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus (fifth century BC), in the early modern period is one of the great stories of widespread cultural influence through the retrieval of ancient Greek texts, through their translation into Latin and modern vernaculars, and as recovered ancient precepts and examples exerted an expectation of ever more pure practice (especially with regard to the unities of time and action, and—as added by the literary critics—place) in the early modern world.²

Greek tragedy is a very refined acknowledgement that humans are not good at dealing with one another and at looking after themselves, that they

1 In real life, Leon Klinghoffer was fatally shot when members of the Palestinian Liberation Front hijacked the *Achille Lauro* (1985); John Adams's opera is based on a libretto by Alice Goodman.

2 See Timothy J. Reiss, 'Renaissance Theatre and the Theory of Tragedy', in Glyn P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume 3, The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 229–248.

are severely compromised by circumstances beyond human control. Tragedy documents the hate that people can have for each other, especially within families, between the generations, or between the sexes, when love turns to hate, and jealousy rules. An act of violence is perpetrated; revenge follows, then civil strife and turmoil. States will fail, dynasties will fall, and what shall redeem them? The topic has occasioned much distinguished reflection both within narrow dramatic considerations and more generally, as tragic form exerts more general sway over literary culture.³ Other tragedy shows people torn between loyalties, such as Antigone, who has a loyalty to the gods and the need to bury her brother Polyneices on the one hand, and a command from her uncle to leave this traitor unburied on the other. In this way people's relationships, their behavior and motives, and the relationship between man and supernatural powers beyond his control, both gods and fate, are the subject of Greek tragedy. In these respects, Greek tragedy is the first dramatic specimen in European history of the meeting of politics and aesthetics, since all these aspects also affect rulers and their community, the ruling class from which the characters of tragedy are taken, and who are members of the audience. They might learn about their own relationships and emotions from the tragedy, and—according to the Socratic ideal—adjust their behavior to their improved understanding.

Ancient tragedy was a form of civic redemption. If epic told of how a society came into being, tragedy exposed before the Greek city community the risk or the certainty of disruption, the social and personal unrest that plagued princes, and how their shortcomings would be overcome in the future. It was a form of civic religion, since it involved a communal acknowledgment of human failure or limitation (often in the face of the whims of the gods), including violation of moral prohibitions (i.e., sins), and a collective expiation of those shortcomings. Life can go on—until the next time.

Roman tragedy—the most famous ones written by or attributed to the philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC–AD 65)—incorporated much more violence as it explored the literal and symbolic dimensions of the tearing apart of bodies, either individuals or communities, acted on the stage. The perpetuation of culture through time, even if people were being imagined as mythic heroes, was only possible by confronting and acknowledging this evisceration. It was a way of having sacrifice, not as part of a religious ceremony, but as

3 See e.g., F.L. Lucas, *Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's 'Poetics'* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928); Timothy J. Reiss, *Tragedy and Truth: Studies in the Development of a Renaissance and Neoclassical Discourse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Paul Hammond, *The Strangeness of Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

part of a dramatically enacted narrative. Senecan tragedy was also an exploration of emotions (referring to civil unrest, mental agitation or strong feelings) or 'affects' (mental states or dispositions; appetites; passions). The traditional view that these emotions are shown in high-pitched states as examples of misbehavior, as instances of lack of Stoic calm, has been challenged, but even if that is not the case, the emotions in it run high, and so do acts of terror.

With the coming of Christianity tragedy had to be accommodated within theology. Conceptually speaking tragicomedies begin their life with the idea of *felix culpa*, the Fall of man, that is fortunate because mankind will ultimately be saved by Jesus. However, theater in general had to be defended against the criticism of the Church fathers and other theologians, who considered acting and pretending as a kind of lying, and loathed the licentiousness they saw attached to theater.⁴

Tragedy's eclipse during the Middle Ages seems to have been ended by thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italian imitations of ancient tragedy, especially the Senecan model, in the work of the Paduans Lovato de' Lovati (1240/41–1309), who discovered the *Codex Etruscus*, the earliest complete manuscript of Seneca's nine tragedies, and his pupil Albertino Mussato (1261–1329), who wrote in Latin the first tragedy after this discovery, addressing secular issues of threatening tyrants.⁵ Tragedy in Italian would follow by 1515 (Gian Giorgio Trissino's (1478–1550) *Sophonisba*), and this began an eventually European-wide period of increasingly strict imitations of Roman and, later on, Greek tragedies. We should be aware of the complaints made by humanist purists in the sixteenth century that tragedy was often hopelessly mixed up with farce and comedy, and where holy lives, not least that of Jesus, were articulated as tragic dramas and understood as such, although we would call them morality plays, where many had happy endings.

For a long period, Greek tragedy was not well-known, or was known predominantly in Latin translations, especially those by Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) and George Buchanan (1506–1582). In this early period, very few playwrights—the neo-Latin Scottish poet Buchanan being, again, the most promi-

4 See Donnalee Dox, *The Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought: Augustine to the Fourteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

5 See Henry A. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Gary R. Grund, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Humanist Tragedies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. vii–xliii, esp. pp. xv, xx–xxiv; Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Italy', in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 25–101, esp. pp. 26, 28–32 and 48.

nent—were actually inspired by Greek drama. A Greek Sophocles was published in 1502, Euripides (without *Electra*) in 1503, and Aeschylus (without *Choephoroe*) in 1518. Yet tragedy was understood in the Middle Ages, and ‘was known throughout the Middle Ages from Horace’s *Ars poetica*, Seneca’s plays, the Terentian commentaries of the fourth-century grammarians Aelius Donatus and Diomedes, and, from the thirteenth century, Hermann the German’s 1256 Latin translation of Averroes’ Arabic gloss on Aristotle.’⁶ Mussato knew the little used 1278 Latin translation of Aristotle by William of Moerbeke, but it appears to have had no impact on his tragedy. In this even earlier phase, tragedy was not always associated with a high literary style but instead may have been thought to embody a kind of literary roughness. Moreover it was regarded as a kind of logical argument as opposed to an art of performance. The arrival of Aristotle as the predominant theorist of tragedy comes much later, following a printed full Latin translation in 1498 and the first full Greek text in 1508, although it was only in 1548 that Francesco Robortello’s commentary began to place Aristotle’s treatise on tragedy in a critical mainstream. In an important new study Blair Hoxby argues that post-Aristotelian early modern tragedy, from which much early opera quite naturally developed, has been largely overlooked or fundamentally misunderstood by a post-Kantian understanding of tragedy understood as a conflict between the forces of necessity and the ultimately futile maintenance of freedom by tragic heroes.⁷

All of this recovery and hence restructuring of the understanding of tragedy would result in a rich period of experimentation with the genre as it was passed from Greek to Latin and then into several vernaculars. At the same time, and as part and parcel of the same process, scholar-critics disputed the nature of tragedy and its purported impact upon the audience members. There is no more important a contribution to this debate than the understanding that tragic action expelled negative passions in the audience by presenting to them a mirror of the operation of those passions in the excessive action of the tragedy, the Aristotelian ‘catharsis’. By the early seventeenth century a major reconstruction of attitudes had taken place. While not complete, this reconstruction—formed in the frames of Renaissance and humanist drama with their focus on the re-invention, reconstruction and imitation of the classical tradition—did present a platform upon which the often inherently political nature of baroque tragedy could form.

6 Reiss, ‘Renaissance Theatre and the Theory of Tragedy’, p. 232.

7 Blair Hoxby, *What was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Neo-Latin tragedy found a ready audience in universities and, after 1553, in the Jesuit gymnasia and academies. At the very least, and in different parts of Europe, ancient drama redirected by humanist enterprise became a foundation on which tragedy might be explored and in which contemporary questions might be reflected and debated. No less than in any other redeemed ancient genre, and more so than in many other cases, the educated community, and that is to say, the ruling elite, were not merely educated, but were given a potent tool with which to think about the relationship between morality, authority and power. That tragedy might have no right to represent the issue of martyrdom would certainly be debated within the Roman Catholic Church, but there were plenty of supporters for the view that it most certainly did. It was the Jesuits who explored the possibilities of acting out martyrdom to the full, including martyrdoms of princes and kings.⁸

The relationship of politics and aesthetics is a proper subject of much reflection in modern literary theory, but before the late seventeenth century there would have been no other awareness but that of a continuity between the two spheres, just as politics and religion were conjoined. Mussato was a poet, historian and statesman, as well as playwright, a member of his native Padua's council, and an ambassador for Padua in its negotiations with the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII; the literary and political career of Sir Thomas More, a major author and statesman of his time in early sixteenth-century England, is more well-known.⁹ Literature was one of the civil arts; men of letters were there to advise princes, and under humanist auspices, princes were encouraged ever more boldly to be learned and skilled in the arts themselves. Moreover, upholding a court culture contributed to a ruler's prestige, as exemplified in the Emperor Augustus's adviser and patron of the arts Gaius Maecenas (70–8 BC). As one of the key literary inheritances of antiquity and one of the ways in which Greek and Latin was learned, tragedy was an 'aesthetic' way of thinking about many things, and it was particularly suited to rumination upon public affairs.¹⁰

8 On the relationship between politics and aesthetics in neo-Latin literature in general, see Karl A.E. Enenkel, Marc Laureys and Christoph Pieper (eds.), *Discourses of Power: Ideology and Politics in Neo-Latin Literature* (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 2012).

9 Featuring recently in Hilary Mantel's famous novel *Wolf Hall* (2009); see also among many studies Greg Walker, *Writing under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

10 See on the role of drama in public debate, for instance, Jan Bloemendal, Peter G.F. Eversmann and Elsa Strietman (eds.), *Drama, Performance and Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); for the role of literature in the forming of public opinion, see Jan Bloemendal, Arjan C. van Dixhoorn and Elsa Strietman (eds.),

It is now a rather tired cliché from Sir Philip Sidney in English Renaissance studies, but still worth quoting again: tragedy makes ‘Kings fear to be Tyrants.’ Before Sidney however, it was also a commonplace.¹¹ As early as 1526 Swiss plays in the German language had defended republican values, instanced in Heinrich Bullinger’s *Lucretia*.¹² Before then, the *Codex Etruscus* itself contained excerpts from Isidore of Seville claiming that ‘tragedians sang of the crimes of wicked kings before an audience.’¹³

Rationale behind This Volume

The essays in this volume show manifold interconnections. They discuss the direct dealing within the drama of complicated and difficult political situations, as well as where the composition—and written, printed or performed dissemination—of the play might spell danger for playwright, printer or actors. This is the case with the contributions from such scholars as Korsten and Ospovat. Or the essays explore the crucial presence of religion within the political drama of the early modern period, such as the contributions from Knight, Norland, Parente, Hoxby and Sierhuis. Other essays relate the political to other branches of thought or another literary genre, for instance ethical philosophy, historical writing, legal thought and the idea of toleration, as found in the chapters by Vasiliauskas, Helmers and Leo. Many essays address the matter of dramatic form, and the significance of the migration of a dramatic form or play topic from one language and culture to another, and how in so doing plays transform their terms of engagement, from emotions to reason, and from exuberance to constraint. Among these are the essays by Biet, Lande, Korneeva, Helmers and Tjoelker. And some discuss the political use of the past in tragedy, such as the essays by Sierhuis and Parente.

This volume is divided into four sections. In the first, the issue of sovereignty is the primary focus, as related in some way or another to the Dutch playwright

Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), esp. Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn, ‘Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries’, *ibid.*, pp. 1–35.

- 11 Sir Philip Sidney, *Apology for Poetry* (1595), p. 23.
- 12 See Andries Raath and Shaun de Freitas, ‘Rebellion, Resistance, and a Swiss Brutus’, *The Historical Journal*, 48 (2005), 1–26; Horst Hartmann (ed.), *Heinrich Bullinger, Hans Sachs, Lucretia-Dramen* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1973).
- 13 Grund, ‘Introduction’, p. xv; see also the documentation compiled by Reiss, ‘Renaissance Theatre and the Theory of Tragedy’, pp. 234–236.

Joost van den Vondel. This section features the essays by Korsten, Leo and Sierhuis. Korsten deals with the relationship between (imperial) rule and torture; Leo treats the relationship between tragedy and law—and revenge in particular, which ultimately may call into question God's sovereignty; whereas Sierhuis explores the role of religion within drama and the political use of the medieval past in an attempt to restore the sovereignty of the Church.

The latter essay constitutes a transition to the second section, which explores the issue of religion, politics and drama. Norland's chapter discusses political martyr dramas written by English Jesuits in Rome, whereas Parente's essay analyses the use of history in neo-Latin drama to thematise the relationship between Church and state. Hoxby's article discusses several aspects of Bernardino Stefonio's *Flavia*, including the concept of Baroque in this play and its representing the tragic encounter of the human and the divine in the blood and body of Christ, regarding the play as a tragedy of tyranny and martyrdom.

The third section deals with tragedy and ethics in relation to politics. Vasiliauskas discusses the act of conscientiously doing wrong, called *akrasia*, which has political and ethical implications. Knight explores truth in drama and its value for educating the young. Korneeva's essay deals with the versatile Italian playwright Cicognini, his role in introducing Spanish drama in his own country, and the dramatic efficacy and moral resonance of his drama. Biet investigates the spectator's roles in drama, the tension between passions and reason and the ways this tension is handled.

The fourth section explores aspects of the mobility of drama. The section opens with the essay in which Lande analyses the ways in which Vondel's tragedies were received in the German lands and adapted for the German stage, and the political implications of this reception. Helmers's essay deals with the subject of Titus Andronicus, the different representations of his story in England and the Dutch Republic and the political issues involved. In her essay, Tjoelker explores other aspects of mobility: the poetical discussion of French plays by a German Jesuit who wrote in Latin. Ospovat shows how royal violence can be used as evidence that Russian tragedy originated in French drama, analysing Russia's first Russian-language classicist tragedy, written by the 'Russian Racine', Aleksandr Sumarokov.

Dramatic Aesthetics, Politics and Theology

As one of the most distinctive ancient genres, tragedy found its way inside many other kinds of discourse where it played an important role in generating a great variety of insights. In no sense was this an entirely secular matter. It was a

way in theology for certain biblical texts to be given shape: the amorphousness of prophecy was trained by its redefinition as tragedy: this actually happened to the Book of Revelation during the post-Reformation period.¹⁴ The rise of rationalist philosophy in the period has been seen as a large-scale attempt to overcome our inherited tragic perspective.¹⁵ The recent vogue for 'political theology', and the sourcing of one of its starting points to the rise of the early modern absolutist monarchy, suggests that in the early modern mindset authoritarian politics, religion and aesthetics came together in and around tragedy.¹⁶ This is in fact misleading: we have already seen the association of tragedy with anti-tyrannical politics in an earlier period in Italy. Moreover nearly all European rulers, even those who self-defined as 'absolute', were operating with local assemblies and acting according to, or trying (not always successfully) to circumvent, customs or written bodies of law that limited monarchical or imperial status.¹⁷ The drama itself might be seen as a kind of 'legal fiction', placing and empowering the audience or reader in complex judging positions, or indeed borrowing from the body of constitutional and in England, common law, in the elaboration of conceptions of dramatic causation.¹⁸ It has been recently argued that tragedy marks the transformation from the time of 'political theology' to that of a governmental rationality with the autonomous subject at its center.¹⁹ Political theology was by no means wholly matter for absolutists, and

- 14 See, e.g., David Pareus, *A commentary upon the divine revelation of the apostle and evangelist Iohn*, transl. Elias Arnold (Amsterdam: Printed by C.P., 1644).
- 15 Myriam Morvan, *Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza et la question de l'effacement du tragique* (Paris: Harmattan, 2013).
- 16 Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, transl. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985). For a different approach relating Schmittian political theology in his various writings to the idea of the *corpus mysticum*, and considering among other texts Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, see Jennifer R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), especially ch. 3.
- 17 See Cesare Cuttica and Glenn Burgess (eds.), *Monarchism and Absolutism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), pp. 4–5.
- 18 Romain Jobez, *Le théâtre baroque allemand et français: Le droit dans la littérature* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010); Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- 19 Romain Jobez, 'État d'exception: Karel Stuart/Carolus Stuardus', in Paul Vanden Berghe, Christian Biet et Karel Vanhaesebrouck (eds.), *Œdipe contemporain: Tragédie, tragique, politique* (Vic la Gardiole, France: Entretemps, 2007), pp. 155–187; cf. Dirk Wiemann, 'Spectacles of Astonishment: Tragedy and the Regicide in England and Germany, 1649–1663', in Gaby Mahlberg and Dirk Wiemann (eds.), *European Contexts for English Republicanism*

tragedy was not the only genre that related to ‘political theology.’²⁰ But there is no escaping the fact that rulers often feature as the leading protagonists in early tragic drama. There might be a survival from the mirror and fall of princes genres of the Middle Ages, the *Fürstenspiegel*, concerned to present ‘good’ or ‘bad’ rulers, but tragedy’s emphasis upon the difficult choices faced by the protagonists offered a more complicated texture. In an oblique way, where such indirectness was in fact helpful and even necessary, tragedy re-enacted events in recent history and enabled an audience to engage with something that might be defined as a social trauma. It could not be addressed in a psychologically satisfying way with reason: tragedy gave it other, meaningful dimensions. The attractiveness of tragedy in this respect might be measured by the degree to which it was cited or quoted in works of political theory.²¹ Arguments have been made—as Biet’s essay shows—that tragedy rehearsed, relived and perhaps expiated the violent events of the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598) and the Dutch Revolt (1568–1648), and was a crucial way in which the unresolved consequences of those momentous events lived on in later times. Korsten’s essay demonstrates how apt tragedy was at picking up the continued and modulating resonances of that violence, how subtle it could be at redirecting a broad range of associations in controversial discourse, music and visual art; it was a spectacularly successful tool for providing reflection upon painful wounds that live inside a society and that can be perpetuated in it, for instance through the use of torture as well as execution.

Renaissance tragedy is often considered as the cause of, or is strongly inflected by, shifts in political theory (e.g., Machiavelli), religious life (the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation), new philosophical currents (such as Stoicism, skepticism, melancholy, Spinozism), and law,²² but it is also the case that

(Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 33–48; Nigel Smith, ‘*Theatrum Mundi* and the Politics of Rebellion in Seventeenth Century Drama’, in Björn Quiring (ed.), *If Then the World a Theatre Present ...: Revisions of the Theatrum Mundi Metaphor in Early Modern England* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 1–22.

20 See further, Graham Hammill and Julia Reinhard Lupton (eds.), *Political Theology and Early Modernity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); Victoria Kahn, *The Future of Illusion: Political Theology and Early Modern Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

21 Obvious examples would be Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651) and Milton’s *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), *Eikonoklastes* (1649) and *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651); for a less celebrated example, see Sir Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis librarie* (1542), p. 43.

22 For drama and law in respect of Grotius, see Russ Leo’s essay. See also Henk Duits,

drama regulated its own territory in which contemporaries could assess through the mirror of theatrical fiction contemporary political predicaments.²³ Thus Peter Lake is able to view *Hamlet* as a drama about the crisis of confession in the late Elizabethan period, and before him David Norbrook was able to show Shakespeare's manipulation of Scottish history sources in order to suit the monarchical and dynastic vision of Kings James VI and I.²⁴ In the early sixteenth century tragedy was strongly associated with *conversos* authors, whose families had converted from Judaism or Islam, a decidedly difficult cultural, religious and political position in early modern Spain and Portugal.

As James A. Parente's essay reminds us, the plays of senior academics and administrators in the Spanish Netherlands, like Nicolaus Vernulaeus (1583–1649), were used as a direct means of instruction. Tragedy afforded a way of presenting ideal rulership, in both secular and sacred respects. In this regard, plays that might be seen at a Roman Catholic university seem a direct continuation from the kinds of instructive tragic drama with religious themes, not the least of them martyrdom, that were performed in the English Catholic academies on the continent, notably at Douai and Valladolid.²⁵ Tragedy was understood

Van Bartholomeusnacht tot Bataafse Opstand: Studies over de relatie tussen politiek en toneel in het midden van de zeventiende eeuw (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), Doctoral thesis Amsterdam, on theater and politics in four history plays: Lambert van den Bosch, *Carel de negende*, anders *Parysche bruiloft* (1645) and *Wilhem of gequetste vryheyt* (1662), Reyer Anslo, *Parysche bruiloft* (1646–1647, published 1649) and Joost van den Vondel, *Batavische gebroeders* (1663); and Bettina Noak, *Politische Auffassungen im niederländischen Drama des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Waxmann, 2002), Doctoral thesis Berlin, who discusses ten history plays, including Joachim Oudaen's controversial *Haagsche Broeder-moort of dolle blydschap* (written 1672–1673, published 1712) and demonstrates the close relationship between topical politics and politically oriented drama.

- 23 For one very recent advocate of this view, see Christopher Pye, *The Storm at Sea: Political Aesthetics in the Time of Shakespeare* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).
- 24 David Norbrook, 'Macbeth and the Politics of Historiography', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (eds.), *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 78–116; Peter Lake, forthcoming; older views, more interested in political ideas than specific contexts include Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010 [1984]).
- 25 See Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 173–174, and ch. 5 and 6 in general, Norland's essay in this volume and Howard B. Norland, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Britain', in Bloemendal and Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre*, pp. 471–544, esp. pp. 523–533.

as an especially valuable tool in the elaboration of a Roman Catholic, Habsburg political vision, synthesizing providential vision and historical contingency, and bridging 'the relationship between idealized political behavior informed by Christian moral-philosophical principles, and expedient political action attuned to the acquisition and maintenance of power and authority during the religious wars of the seventeenth century.'²⁶ If we accept this intention, it helps us redeem this drama from the inferior position it has held in relation to the vernacular dramas that lie around it. Moreover, Vernulaeus was doing nothing more than extending and elaborating on the tradition begun by the earlier revival in Italy of tragedy, where the intention was to 'to publicize the practical advice their works contained on morality, government, and the maintenance of civil harmony.'²⁷ Here, Vernulaeus's didactic emphasis upon the lessons of history as refracted through tragedy is notable: 'His historical tragedies do not simply commemorate an unjustly slain hero, or transmit moral lessons through the punishment of morally deviant rulers, but provide political instruction for future statesmen weighing practical and expedient choices in a morally complex world.'²⁸ His intentions were pointedly anti-Protestant, engaging in counter-histories, and aimed through Latinity at a pan-European, supra-national Catholic audience or readership.

To this degree tragedy must be understood as totally continuous with political theory, which it sometimes incorporated and indeed attempted to exceed, as Russ Leo argues in his analysis of Joost van den Vondel's adoption and adaptation of Grotian concepts.²⁹ The drama afforded a utility that was missing in fully annotated political treatises aimed at or dedicated to elite rulers. Vernulaeus was concerned to resurrect the ideal of the orator prince as Roman Catholic ideal over and against the opportunist of Machiavellian tradition. Prudence might be seen as his virtue, contra *occasione*. The role of the courtly adviser, realized in the figure of the *senex*, and so stressed by Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia* (1516), was crucial. In a confirmation of that role, Polonius was the adviser to a prince mocked by Shakespeare in *Hamlet* (ca. 1600). Whatever the generic evolution and interweaving that typifies baroque tragedy, that sense of tragedy existing in order to respond to the horrific consequences of

26 Parente in this volume, p. 157.

27 Ibid., p. 159.

28 Ibid., p. 161.

29 Russ Leo's contribution. On political theory and philosophy, especially in neo-Latin, see Erik de Bom, 'Political Philosophy' in Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal and Charles Fantazzi (eds.), *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 631–648.

immoral, unbounded political action is prevalent. The German baroque playwright Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664) liked princely authority but he abhorred tyrants, and against the backdrop of the Thirty Years' War, it is not hard to see why. Christophorus Kormart's equivocal view in his *Trauerspiel* of 1673 of the role of Queen Elizabeth in the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, offered by way of searching for the truth of history, is an unusual exception in the German tradition. This example suggests interesting questions with regard to a distinct language of political theory that could be contained within or articulated through tragedy. In groundbreaking new work that analyzes handwritten annotations of a political nature in English play books, including Shakespeare's tragedies, András Kiséry begins to explore this world in detail.³⁰

The Jesuits' ideals of apology and proselytization give their own huge corpus of tragedies a more forceful martyrological stance, and where early church history is used as source material to portray the ongoing struggle of the true church with heresy, and that of the Protestants in particular. To make tragedy work in this way, the theory of tragedy had to be altered, since originally it was thought that tragedy had no place for Christian martyrdom which was regarded as inconsistent with the universe of tragic drama. Of course in the classical tradition there are martyrs of sorts: in Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*, Hercules is, so to speak, martyred on the pyre on Mt. Oeta and deified, and Sophocles' Antigone may also be considered to be like a martyr. But as Blair Hoxby shows, Jesuit dramatists in Rome were impressive in their resourceful rearrangement of resources, and they developed a tradition of martyr tragedy that would carry considerable influence.³¹

Religion and religious difference is at the heart of much of the drama in this period. This should be no surprise after the Reformation. Older church history functioned alongside ancient mythology as a way of representing contemporary events. Thus Nicolas Caussin (1583–1651) in his Jesuit dramas *Theodoricus* and *Hermenigildus* (1620) used the early conflict between Trinitarians and Arians to reflect Catholic/Protestant difference.³² In the early modern world, of course, religion and politics go hand in hand. It may be hard for us to grasp this aspect as effective drama today but the representation of what was understood to be the working of providence or the manifestation of divine virtue in a person were common attributes. Jesuit drama justified itself against charges of

30 András Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment: Drama and Political Knowledge in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

31 Hoxby's essay, pp. 182–217.

32 Parente's essay, pp. 164–165.

the immorality of the stage by insisting that all plays should have a sacred subject matter and purpose. By contrast, it is a major purpose of Jan Vos's Senecan drama in the public theater of Amsterdam to expose the willful egotism as he saw it of Calvinism; a public church driven by dangerous extremism. In this respect he was placing the views of political actors and commentators like P.C. Hooft (1581–1647) and Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) on the public stage to show how 'religious excitability ... undermines the stability of the state.'³³

We should not think of tragedy as merely instructional or belonging to and circulating within governing elites. As Tatiana Korneeva shows us, a seventeenth-century Italian dramatist like Giacinto Andrea Cicognini (1606–1651) was always at the center of some source of high power. Equipped with his law degree, he served the Medici court and then the Venetians, operating from an academy that exercised governmental power. Yet these competences were put to use in an original theater that was popular and exploited the modish switch to musical drama. It is in this context that we see the staging of courtly relations and where monarchical power is successively renegotiated, over and against the negative example of the tyrant. We understand here that 'the swapping of roles between the king and his courtiers in Cicognini's play and the latter becoming genuine political actors has to be linked to a decisive event, the emergence of a radically new kind of public.'³⁴ In that respect the audience is named as a political agent in the work of the tragedy. We know little of the early audience responses to performed tragedies in the London theaters, but Dutch audiences did weep in the performances of Vondel plays, which brought home contemporary concerns even if the subject matter was remotely historical.³⁵ In other words, the performance of tragedy in this period witnesses not merely courtly politics but also the rise of 'middling sort' consciousness: that such an audience might not just have a public opinion but might also have a kind of agency.

Roman Catholic and Protestant Latin tragedy was educational in intent: if it was performed and not merely read, its place was the academy, with strictly controlled circumstances of performance. Puritans like Lawrence Humphrey (1527?–1590) would always argue that drama has but the shadow of an insight

33 Helmers's chapter in this volume, p. 361.

34 Korneeva's contribution, p. 290.

35 See also William Aglionby, *The Present State of the United Provinces of the Low-Countries* (1669), p. 257: 'The other Fair is that which us'd to be held in memory of the deliverance of *Leyden*, and was wont to last ten dayes; but it is now put down, and the Story only represented in a Tragedie, to which there is great flocking.'

into real truth.³⁶ In this view, not even the seriousness of tragedy deserves respect, a view that might seem extreme after earlier Protestant attempts to exploit theater, notably in the morality drama of John Foxe (1516/17–1587) and John Bale (1496–1563).³⁷ In the universities play performance was abhorred as an occasion of undergraduate disorderliness but not universally. Alongside this the Puritans had a certain suspicion that drama led to Roman Catholic preferences: it opened the door to the Jesuits. It is a surprise, as Sarah Knight remarks, that such outlooks existed, even in the context of a religious anti-tyrant play, in which some members of the Tudor dynasty appear in a positive light, and where instructive parallels with Greek as well as Latin drama were known to the proponents of the anti-theatrical debate. Conversely, it was precisely the power of drama to move, and to address political issues in the populace, and hence to create turbulence, that led to bans on drama performance in the Netherlands and in England. It is of signal significance that the historian, jurist and political theoretician Alberico Gentili, defended play performance in late sixteenth-century Oxford.³⁸

A tragedy might point to supernatural agency in this world (Ezzelino in Mussato's play was the spawn of the devil, according to his mother; Dr. Faustus made a contract with the devil) but the subject-matter of tragic drama most often is historical, whenever it takes place, and especially contemporary or very recent history, even though the drama itself maintains its generic integrity by not functioning like a work of history. Aristotle distinguished between poetry (i.e., tragedy) and history as genres, the former compassing what may happen, the latter what has happened; the former being 'more philosophical and a higher thing than history: since poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.'³⁹ If Aristotle was thinking of mythic or legendary subjects, he did not discount historical events as appropriate subject-matter: 'even if he chances to take a historical subject, he is none the less a poet; for there is no reason why some events that have actually happened should not conform to the law of the probable and possible, and in virtue of that quality in them he

36 See Knight's essay, pp. 239–259.

37 See John Bale, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, ed. by Peter Happé, 2 vols. (Woodbridge and Dover, NH: Boydell & Brewer, 1985–1986); John Foxe, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe the Martyrologist*, ed. by John Hazel Smith (Ithaca, Cornell University Press for the Renaissance Society of America, 1973); Daniel Blank, 'Performing Exile: John Foxe's *Christus Triumphans* at Magdalen College, Oxford,' *Renaissance Studies*, Special Issue: Latin Drama in Renaissance Europe (forthcoming September 2016).

38 The subject of further forthcoming work by Daniel Blank.

39 Aristotle, *Poetics*, IX, 1451b.

is their poet or maker.⁴⁰ The murder of heroes or anti-heroes is ripe subject-matter, even that of very recent figures like William the Silent.⁴¹ Vernulaeus was a strong supporter of Habsburg power, and so his plays detailing Bohemian revolts against the Holy Roman Emperor were scarcely veiled castigations of the Protestant princes, both Bohemian and Dutch, in their struggles with the Emperor at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). At this point in time, 1626, the defeated Frederick of Bohemia and of the Palatinate lived in exile in The Hague at the invitation of the Stadholder. As Helmer Helmers shows us, ten years later Jan Vos (ca. 1610–1667) was very pointedly readjusting Shakespeare's account of Roman history, or indeed making it more like the received historical account, in order to play up (in Dutch terms at least) republican as opposed to monarchical accounts of authority. The latter led only to the terror perpetrated by tyranny. It was here that the instance and imagery of rape became so crucial, long associated with Spanish tyranny, but also linking personhood, property, citizenship, diplomacy and war: 'because it allowed for the obfuscation or even elimination of the boundaries between the symbolic, the abstract, and the real.'⁴² Imagery of violated virgins is at the heart of Vos's and of Vondel's most famous plays (in *Gysbreght van Aemstel* the Abbess Klaeris, who tries to protect Bishop Gozewijn, is raped on top of his dead body), and replicated as visual imagery on Van Campen's Amsterdam City Hall.⁴³

Tragedy might rise to offer causal explanation of disasters, but also and famously exposed personal responses to tragic predicaments: how to deal with unpleasant circumstances of finality. Mussato's *Ecerinis* (1314) is little more than a witness to a diabolical tyrant, his murderous wrongdoing, his defeat and, as the play sees it, his justifiably violent end. The speeches are announcements of historical events, with a dusting of Senecan familial horror. Much more would come by way of explanation and circumstantial detail as the genre developed, involving the elaboration of cause through the deployment of forensic rhetoric, and the acceptance of responsibility by tragic protagonists, or an understanding of the temporary commitment to immoral action, as Emily Vasiliauskas shows.⁴⁴

40 Aristotle, *Poetics*, IX, 1451b.

41 The subject of tragedies by Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655), *Auriacus, sive Libertas saucia* (1602), Jacob Duym (1547–1612/16), *Het moordadich stuck van Balthasar Gerards, begaen aen den Doorluchtighen Prince van Oraigen*, 1584 (1606), and Gijsbrecht van Hogendorp, *Truer-spel van de moordt, begaen aen Wilhem (...)* (1616).

42 Helmers in this volume, p. 370.

43 See below, pp. 124–127, 361, 370.

44 Vasiliauskas's essay, pp. 221–238.

In this respect, did French neoclassical drama triumph in offering a 'purging' of barbaric tragic contents, and an eradication of violence from the stage, as well as the generic confusion of earlier tragedy, comedy and morality play? Apparently not so on the international stage as the genre began to be adopted in places it had not been hitherto, such as Russia. Here, under strict expectations to provide a drama that would celebrate the sovereignty of the Tsars, French neoclassical form was used as a vehicle to propagate the veracity of the regime. The violent history of Russian origins is retold in tragic terms and in German. As Kirill Ospovat writes:

Sumarokov's dramatic experiments were informed by an aesthetic which mapped visions of sovereignty onto the national historical lore, producing a dramatic idiom which could easily oscillate between historicist distance and topical allusion, narratives of progress and reenactments of the monarchy's primeval violence.⁴⁵

To use the native material was to be consistent with the Greeks and Romans, but to offer a drama involved a paradoxical risk that the absolutist ruler expected seditious dissent and had a secret police who regarded even political treatises justifying strong princely authority, such as by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), as potentially dangerous. Tragedy was demanded but it was potentially incriminating for its author. The fact is that in Russia the theater of state violence itself was just as gory as that which the tragic stage could present, as instanced in the infamous burning in Moscow in 1689 of the messianic Silesian poet Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651–1689).⁴⁶ No one could blame the Russians for seeing a complete continuity between drama and life in this respect. However, and in a quite contrary way, French drama did become the civilizing new genre for eighteenth-century German playwrights, even the Jesuits. Germany endured entirely different political circumstances to Russia after the Treaty of Westphalia. Before then the adoption of French models in the Amsterdam theater was connected with a rationalist pacifying of a more violent theater. Here Spinoza's philosophy was also apparently deployed in an attempt to produce plays that avoided the violent excesses of Senecan tragedy.⁴⁷ This was a piece of cultural reform led by the

45 This volume, pp. 401–402.

46 Walter Dietze, *Quirinus Kuhlmann, Ketzer und Poet: Versuch einer Monographischen Darstellung von Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1963).

47 See Roberto Bordoli, *Etica arte scienza tra Descartes e Spinoza: Lodewijk Meyer (1629–1681) e l'associazione Nil Volentibus Arduum* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2001).

merchant poet Andries Pels (1631–1681) who became director of the Amsterdam Schouwburg in 1680. Pels thought that the stage as it had been allowed to develop was a subversive force, damaging to the polity: he agreed that it should have been closed, as it was between 1672 and 1677.

The Low Countries as a Literary Staple Market⁴⁸

Among the topics that this volume contributes to is the knowledge of cultural migration of literature throughout Europe in the early modern period.⁴⁹ This was related to other forms of mobility: traders, diplomats, representatives of the church, scholars and students and other travelers crossed borders and advanced cultural mobility.⁵⁰ The Low Countries played an important role in this phenomenon. Their importance for the spread of literature is evident in this volume, too.⁵¹ Cultural interrelations were intense in the seventeenth

48 For this title, see Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt: Themes and Ideas* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991) *Utrecht Publications in General Comparative Literature*, 28 [transl. of *Nederlandse literatuur in de tijd van Rembrandt* (Utrecht: Bijleveld, 1994)], ch. vii 'Holland as a Literary and Cultural Staple Market', pp. 137–152.

49 On this topic, see Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (eds.) *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theatre* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2014), and id. (eds.), *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2008), *Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama* (cited by Kim Jautze, Leonor Álveres Francés and Frans R.E. Blom, 'Spaans theater in de Amsterdamse Schouwburg (1638–1672): Kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve analyse van de creatieve industrie van het vertalen', *De zeventiende eeuw* (forthcoming)). See also Anston Bosman, 'Mobility', in Henry S. Turner (ed.), *Early Modern Theatricality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 493–515.

50 See Henke's and Nicholson's introduction to their *Transnational Exchange*, pp. 6–8. For the cultural exchange between Holland and Poland, see Andrzej Borowski, *Iter Polono-Belgo-Ollandicum. Cultural and Literary Relationships between the Commonwealth of Poland and the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2007). On concepts for understanding cultural transfer in early modern drama, see Jan Bloemendal, 'Transfer and Integration of Latin and Vernacular Drama in the Early Modern Period: The Case of Everyman, Elckerlijc, Homulus and Hecastus', *Arcadia* 44 (2009), 274–288.

51 See in particular the contribution by Lande. See also among other publications, Henry W. Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries: His Reception and Influence, 1654–1980* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1983 [2009²]) and Henry W. Sullivan, Raúl A. Galoppe and Mahlon L. Stoutz (eds.), *La comedia española y el teatro europeo del siglo XVII* (London: Tamesis, 1999); we owe the latter reference to Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, 'Spaans theater'.

century, especially between the Low Countries, German lands and the Baltic countries.⁵² In Germany, Dutch was considered a dialect of German and Dutch literature played a part in the German one, partly because Dutch culture was ahead of the German one.⁵³ One of the other reasons for the prominent position of the Netherlands was the presence of many outstanding publishers who produced and sold Spanish books in Europe.⁵⁴ A third reason was the high degree of literacy among the citizens of urbanized Holland and the 'considerable command of foreign languages' of the Dutch, although not everybody will have known as many languages as the courtier and diplomat Sir Constantine Huygens (1596–1687), who could read, speak and write Dutch, German, French, English, Italian, Latin and Greek, and could read Spanish.⁵⁵ Only few Dutchmen had knowledge of and competence in Spanish and English.⁵⁶

Drama was a particularly mobile genre. One relevant phenomenon here was the physical traveling of players.⁵⁷ English drama was spread in the Netherlands through English itinerant troupes—strolling players—who traveled through the Low Countries, Germany, Scandinavia and the Czech regions, and thus disseminated English drama. Italian *commedia dell'arte* troupes visited other European countries and thus spread Italian theater.⁵⁸ It is known that a

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- 52 See Ferdinand van Ingen, *Do ut des: Holländisch-deutsche Wechselbeziehungen in der Literatur des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn: Presse- und Kulturabteilung der Kgl. Niederländische Botschaft, 1981). Also on dbnl.org.
 - 53 See Ulrich Bornemann, *Anlehnung und Abgrenzung: Untersuchungen zur Rezeption der niederländischen Literatur in der deutschen Dichterreform des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976); Leonard Forster, *Die Niederlande und die Anfänge der Barocklyrik in Deutschland* (Groningen: Wolters, 1967) Voordrachten gehouden voor de Gelderse Leergangen te Arnhem, 20; Arie-Jan Gelderblom: '22 februari 1667: Inwijding van de Hollandse Schouwburg in Stockholm: De Nederlandse literatuur buiten de Lage Landen', in M.A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen (ed.), *Nederlandse literatuur: Een geschiedenis* pp. 270–275.
 - 54 Guillaume van Gemert, 'Die Niederlande als Umschlagplatz spanischer Literatur des *Siglo de oro* für den Deutschen Sprachraum: Ein Aufriß', in *Tussen twee culturen: De Nederlanden en de Iberische wereld, 1550–1800* (Nijmegen: Instituut voor Nieuwe Geschiedenis 1988) Nijmeegse Publicaties over de Nieuwe Geschiedenis, 2, pp. 11–38.
 - 55 Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature*, pp. 137–140.
 - 56 *Ibid.*, p. 140.
 - 57 See, e.g., A.J. Hoenselaars, '23 april 1586: Engelse toneelspelers voeren in Utrecht *De werken van Hercules* op: Beroepsacteurs en rederijders', in Rob L. Erenstein (ed.), *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden: Tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), pp. 142–147.
 - 58 See, for instance, the introduction of Henke and Nicholson to their *Transnational Mobili-*

theater company under the direction of Jan Baptist van Fornenbergh (1624–1697) traveled through north-Germany, and in Sweden, with a Dutch-spoken repertoire.⁵⁹ After the 1740s German ‘Wanderbühnen’ seem to have taken over the place of Dutch itinerant companies.⁶⁰

Literature could also be transferred by the spread of texts. In particular sixteenth-century Latin literature from the Low Countries was known all over Europe. Latin plays such as Gulielmus Gnapheus’s *Acolastus* (1529) and Petrus Papaeus’s *Samarites* (1539) were staged in many cities in Europe, from Prague to London. Copies were sold on numerous places, in the original edition or in pirate editions.⁶¹ The popularity is confirmed by the commentaries which the French schoolmaster and theologian Gabriel Dupreau (1511–1588) and the Spanish Jesuit Alejo Venegas (1497/98–1562) wrote on *Acolastus* and *Samarites* respectively and which were published in 1554 and 1542.⁶² Dutch plays could be read in the German lands and eastward, as far as Riga. In this mobility drama was anything but fixed.⁶³ Texts could be adapted to their new contexts by producers and players, or by translators, since texts also were translated, particularly those in the vernaculars. The Low Countries’ main cities Amsterdam, Antwerp and Brussels had a kind of ‘theater network’,⁶⁴ in which Spanish drama took a prominent place. For instance, the translation by Willem Ogier (1618–1689) of *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a dream*) written by Pedro Calderón de la Barca

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- ties, pp. 1–19. For *commedia dell’arte* players in the Netherlands, see Rob L. Erenstein, ‘1576: Eerste commedia dell’arte voorstellingen in Antwerpen en Gent: Invloed en doorwerking van de *commedia dell’arte* tot 1800’, in Erenstein, *Een theatergeschiedenis*, pp. 126–133.
- 59 Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature*, p. 149; Gelderblom, ‘De opening van de Hollandse Schouwburg in Stockholm’; Herbert Junkers, *Niederländische Schauspieler und niederländisches Schauspiel im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert in Deutschland* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1936).
- 60 Gelderblom, ‘De opening van de Hollandse Schouwburg in Stockholm’, p. 275.
- 61 *Acolastus* was printed almost 50 times from its first publication to 1630; *Samarites* was staged five times, in Antwerp and in ‘s-Hertogenbosch in 1539, in Cologne in 1540 and in Basel where it was printed in the collection of biblical plays by Brylinger: *Comoediae ac tragoediae aliquot ex Novo et Vetere Testamento desumptae* (1541). The fifth edition is the one with a commentary by Vanegas (see the next note).
- 62 See Jan Bloemendal, ‘Un commentaire néolatin de la France sur une comédie biblique des Pays Bas: de l’édition par Gabriel Prateolus ou Dupreau en 1554 de l’*Acolastus* de Gulielmus Gnapheus ou De Volder de 1529’ (forthcoming) and Petrus Papaeus, *Samarites*, ed. by Daniel Nodes (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).
- 63 See Bosman, ‘Mobility’, p. 504.
- 64 See Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen: Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1560–1700* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), pp. 553–556.

(1600–1681) was a success on stage and in print, both in Brussels and Amsterdam.⁶⁵ Joannes Serwouters's (1623–1677) adaptation of a play by Luis Velez de Guevara (1579–1644), *Den grooten Tamerlan* (*The Great Tamerlan*, 1657) was a 'blockbuster' as well.⁶⁶ Another Spanish play, Guillen de Castro's (1569–1631) *El perfecto caballero* (*The Perfect Knight*, between 1610 and 1625) was translated by Antoon Frans (or Antonio-Francisco) Wouthers (1641–before 1676) as *Den volmaecten ridder*.⁶⁷ Wouthers also translated Calderón's *La devoción de la cruz* (*The Devotion of the Cross*, 1640) as *De devotie van Eusebius tot het H. kruys* (*Eusebius's Devotion to the Holy Cross*, 1665). In 1653 the Brussels printer, playwright and translator Claude de Grieck (1625–ca. 1670) staged an adaptation of Lope Félix de Vega Carpio's (1562–1635) *Amar sin saber à quien* (*Loving Without Knowing Whom*, 1635) as *Liefde sonder sien verweckt* (*Love Aroused Without Seeing*, 1653). Also Spanish drama could reach the Dutch stage through a French translation, as is the case with Calderón's *La dama duende* (*The Elf Lady*, 1629), printed in Amsterdam in the version by the Antwerp minor playwright Adriaen Peys (ca. 1650–ca. 1700) as *De nachtspookende joffer* (*The Nightly Haunting Miss*, 1670).⁶⁸

French theater was prominent too on the Low Countries' stage. Three years after its publication De Grieck adapted Pierre Corneille's *Héraclius* (1647) in Dutch as *Heraklius* (1650), which was staged four times in the Amsterdam Schouwburg in autumn 1652.⁶⁹ Three of twelve tragedies by Corneille saw their first publication in Amsterdam.⁷⁰ Jean de Rotrou's *La Bélisaire* (1647) was trans-

65 See Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 525 on the very successful staging of Schouwenbergh's adaptation of the play *Sigismundus, prince van Poolen* (*Sigismund, Prince of Poland*) in the Amsterdam Schouwburg; *ibid.*, pp. 452–453 on the company 'Vrije lief-hebbers der rijmerkonste' who before 1647 staged a faithful Dutch adaptation of the *La vida es sueño* in Brussels, printed by Joan Mommaert, which was staged in Hamburg in 1648 by a Dutch traveling theater company. On the Schouwenbergh adaptation, see also Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries*, pp. 31–67.

66 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 525; repr. of the play in *Den grooten Tamerlan* (1657) & *Mahomet en Irena* (1657): *Timoeridische en Turkse tragedies van Serwouters en Lubæus*, ed. by C.G. Brouwer (Amsterdam: D'Fluyte Rarob, 1992).

67 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 525.

68 Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland*, p. 554.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 553. See on the repertoire of the Schouwburg E. Oey-de Vita en M. Geesink, *Academie en Schouwburg. Amsterdams toneelrepertoire 1617–1665* (Amsterdam: Huis aan de drie grachten, 1983), and Anna S. de Haas, *Het repertoire van de Amsterdamse Schouwburg 1700–1772* (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2001).

70 *Ibid.*

lated into Dutch as *Den grooten Bellizarius* (1654). French comedies were also translated and staged. Thus, De Grieck's *Don Japhet van Armenien*, translated from Paul Scarron's *Don Japhet d'Arménie* (1653), was staged in Amsterdam in 1657.⁷¹

Dutch drama or drama translated into Dutch was known in several countries, but most of all in the German lands. Vondel's drama experienced a vast reception in those regions, as Lande shows.⁷² The dynamics between the Low Countries and Germany could be carried out through the Dutch and German languages, but in some cases Latin played an intermediary role.⁷³

Dramatic literature, comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy, was dispersed throughout Europe through the Netherlands.⁷⁴ Thus, the theater of Calderón, Lope de Vega and other Spanish dramatists was made known in other European

71 Ibid.

72 See also Guillaume van Gemert, 'Between disregard and Political Mobilization—Vondel as a Playwright in Contemporary European Context: England, France and the German Lands', in Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 171–198. On pp. 171–172 he observes that Vondel was well known in German Lands, but '[a]s regards the French- and English-speaking countries a similar acquaintance with Vondel cannot be perceived for the same time period.'

73 See Ümmü Yüksel, 'Daniel Heinsius als Leitfigur auf dem Wege zur deutschen Kulturnation im Spannungsfeld von Latein und Landessprachen', in Tom Deneire (ed.), *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014) Medieval and Renaissance Authors and Texts, 13, pp. 108–131 and Guillaume van Gemert, 'Zum dynamischen Wechselverhältnis von Latein und Landessprachen im deutschen Umgang mit niederländischen neulateinischen Autoren im Umfeld der Opitzschen Reform, am Beispiel von Hugo Grotius' *De veritate religionis Christianae*', in Deneire (ed.), *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular*, pp. 202–229.

74 See Johannes Bolte, 'Von Wanderkomödianten und Handwerkerspielen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts', *Sitzungsberichte der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 19 (1934), 445–487; H. Junkers, *Niederländische Schauspieler und niederländisches Schauspiel im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert in Deutschland* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1936); Jonas A. van Praag, *La comédie espagnole aux Pays-Bas au XVII^e et XVIII^e siècle* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1922); Julius Schwering, *Zur Geschichte des niederländische und spanischen Dramas in Deutschland: Neue Forschungen* (Münster: Coppenrath, 1895), cited by Van Gemert, 'Die Niederlande als Umschlagplatz', p. 33, n. 58, as well as Jan te Winkel, 'De invloed der Spaansche letterkunde op de Nederlandsche in de zeventiende eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 1 (1881), pp. 60–114; see Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, 'Spaans theater'. George W. Brandt and Wiebe Hoogendoorn, *German and Dutch Theatre, 1600–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), in spite of their title, treat both theater traditions separately.

countries.⁷⁵ The mediation of cultural transfer was facilitated by the printing of Spanish drama, by translating it or in staging it, or a combination of all three.⁷⁶ Particularly the Amsterdam Nederduytsche Akademie and the Amsterdam Schouwburg played a very important role in this process. The Amsterdam theater public was fond of the love stories, and stories of honor and revenge, and of impressive staging, scenery and costumes of Spanish theater.⁷⁷ Thus, the Low Countries, and in particular Brussels, Antwerp and Amsterdam, played an important role in this process of theatrical migration.

Politics and Aesthetics: The Philosophy of Jacques Rancière

The previous pages deal with politics and aesthetics in a more 'material', literary-historical, historical and juridical way. One may however also deal with politics and theater, or more broadly, politics and aesthetics, in a more philosophical manner. It is Jacques Rancière, who has most thoroughly discussed the relation between the two.⁷⁸ The main concept of his thoughts about the rela-

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- 75 See, for instance, Martin Franzbach, *Untersuchungen zum Theater Calderóns in der europäischen Literatur vor der Romantik* (Munich: Fink, 1974).
- 76 See Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, 'Spaans theater', *De zeventiende eeuw*. They cite Kim Jautze, 'K sal u tot hutspot kerven. De culturele industrie van het vertalen van Spaans en Engels toneel voor de Amsterdamse Schouwburg (1617–1672)', Master's thesis 2012, available at <http://dare.uva.nl/cgi/arno/show.cgi?fid=454864> and Leonor Álvarez Francés, *The Phoenix Glides on Dutch Wings. Lope de Vega's El amigo por fuerza in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, Master's Thesis 2013, see <http://dare.uva.nl/es/scriptie/452381>.
- 77 Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Het Nederlandse renaissancetoneel* (Utrecht: HES, 1991), p. 108. See now also Leonor Álvarez Francés, 'Fascination for the "Madritsche Apoll": Lope de Vega in Golden Age Amsterdam', in *Arte Nuevo* 1 (2014), pp. 1–15, available at http://doc.rero.ch/record/233043/files/Arte_nuevo_1_2014.pdf. Reference given by Jautze, Álvarez Francés and Blom, 'Spaans theater'.
- 78 See, among other publications, Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, transl. by Gabriel Rockhill (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004) [= *Le partage du sensible: Esthétique et Politique* (Paris: La Fabrique Editions, 2000)]; id., *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and transl. by Steven Corcoran (London and New York: Continuum, 2010); id., *Aesthetics and its discontents*, transl. by Steven Corcoran (Cambridge-Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009) [= *Malaise dans l'esthétique* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 2004)], Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (eds.), *Critical Dissensus: Reading Rancière* (A&C Black, 2011); Mark Robson (ed.), *Jacques Rancière: Aesthetics, Politics, Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005); Joseph J. Tanke, *Jacques Rancière: An Introduction* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011); Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts (eds.), *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009); Sean

tionship between politics and aesthetics is 'le partage du sensible', translated into English as 'the distribution of the sensible'. *Partage*, however, has both the meaning of 'distributing' or 'dividing' (of 'what can be perceived by the senses', le *sensible*), and of 'taking part' (in it). Through this concept the French philosopher gives an alternative explanation to Marxist ideas on culture (where culture embodies ideology that will mask the real social relations in society), as well as to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of culture as a means of *distinction*.⁷⁹

Rancière distinguishes between 'politique' as 'police' and 'politique' as 'political'. The '*politique* as police' order constitutes 'a set of implicit rules and conventions which determine the distribution of roles in a community and the forms of exclusion which operate within it'.⁸⁰ The order is based on the issue of who is included, i.e., taking part in culture, the aesthetic, and who is excluded. This social order intrinsically aims at maintaining the status quo, and is, therefore, anti-democratic. Opposing it, in the '*politique* as politics' order the excluded, 'the part which has no part', challenge this status quo.⁸¹ Since politics deals with the distribution of what can be apprehended by the senses, and aesthetics is distributing that 'sensible', aesthetics and politics are closely related.⁸² Rancière labels the struggle between 'politics' and 'police' with the term *dissensus* (disagreement about the *sensible* (what is perceivable)). The attractiveness of this scheme to French circumstances, where the *Académie Française* was formed in 1635 to regulate artistic production with the backing of the chief royal administrator, Cardinal Richelieu, is clear.⁸³

Sayers, Review of Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, in *Culture Machine* (2005) (<http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/rt/prINTERfriendly/190/171>).

79 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, transl. by Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984) [= *Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979)].

80 Sayers, review of Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*.

81 This, of course, differs from Jürgen Habermas's liberal perception of politics as 'a rational debate between diverse interests' (Sayers, review of Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*) in a public sphere. On other points of criticism of Habermas, see Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn, 'Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries'.

82 See, for instance, Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, p. 25: 'More precisely, then, the relationship between aesthetics and politics consists in the relationship between this aesthetics of politics and the 'politics of aesthetics'—in other words in the way in which the practices and forms of visibility of art themselves intervene in the distribution of the sensible and its reconfiguration.'

83 Among many works addressing this phenomenon, see Christian Jouhaud, *Les pouvoirs de la littérature: histoire d'un paradoxe* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), and now id., *Richelieu et l'écriture du pouvoir: autour de la journée des dupes* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015).

He assumes three regimes of art. First the ethical regime, that 'came into being in ancient Greece and is exemplified by Plato's writings on the distribution of images that would best serve the ethics of the community' and that was 'preoccupied with distinguishing true art—meaning art that is both true to its origin and to its telos of moral education—from artistic *simulacra* that distance the community from truth and the good life.'

Second comes the representative regime, that 'has its roots in Aristotle's *Poetics*, but only came into full fruition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' and that:

freed the arts from the moral imperatives of the ethical regime by identifying a unique domain of fiction with its own set of guiding principles: the hierarchical distribution of subject matter and genres, the principle of appropriateness by which action and modes of expression are adapted to the subject matter represented and the genre employed, and the elevation of speech-act over action and visual imagery.

Finally there is the aesthetic regime of art 'that has left its mark on the last two centuries of artistic production' and which 'by abolishing the hierarchical rules of representation ... has promoted the equality of subjects, the dissolution of genres, the indifference of style in relationship to content, and the power of writing and other "mute" things over the presence of speech' and in which art has become individual.⁸⁴

Rancière thus sees the new distribution of the sensible in Modernism, and his main example from literature is Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, whereas his main theoretical treatise is Friedrich Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (*Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795)).⁸⁵ Those who 'have not' have to be taught in order to be able 'to have', that is, to have access to the sensible. His view on politics and aesthetics is in this sense egalitarian.

The French philosopher developed his theory mainly for the modern and postmodern periods. He himself considers it applicable to the early modern period ('pre-1800').⁸⁶ Then, according to him, ethical and representative regimes prevailed. However, the illiteracy of most part of the inhabitants of

84 The lucid descriptions of these regimes are taken from Rockhill and Watts, *Jacques Rancière*, p. 9.

85 Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 23–24.

86 See Solange Guénoun and James H. Kavanagh, 'Jacques Rancière: Literature, Politics Aesthetics: Approaches to Democratic Disagreement', in *SubStance* 29-2 (2000), pp. 3–24, esp. p. 10.

Europe—and beyond—makes it unlikely that ‘those who have no part’ in ‘high’ culture would easily recognize, let alone grasp the opportunity to take part in that culture. Latin drama was written and staged for a relatively small group, although the Jesuits contributed to a kind of democratization of culture by offering free education, also for the poor. They also helped the understanding of spectators by compiling and selling ‘periochae’, program leaflets in the vernacular, which we now know were also distributed in Shakespeare’s theater.⁸⁷ A sophisticated baroque or classicist drama, be it in Latin or in the vernacular would, however, not have been accessible to a large audience of people ‘not taking part’. Moreover, the ‘ethical imperative’ which he saw in the earlier ‘ethical’ regime of culture, and from which the arts would have been ‘freed’ in the ‘representative’ regime, still applied to the arts, including drama.

That being said, a baroque and classicist drama undoubtedly will have had a political impact by the mere fact that it made a division between what was said and what was not said, and a division between who or what kind of persons were presented or not. It had more political impact by its presenting of lofty persons facing moral dilemmas or behaving badly or well as being a mirror for princes. In that sense, Sophocles’ *Antigone* is a political drama, as are Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Vernulaeus’s *Theodoricus*, Vondel’s *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, Cigognini’s *Don Gastone* and Sumarokov’s *Khorev*. Such tragedies are also political in Rancière’s sense in that they communicate these dilemmas and ideas to the non-ruling—even though they do not address the illiterate—and thus influence the status quo.⁸⁸

The *dissensus* or ‘dis-agreement’ Rancière sees between the opposing forces of ‘police’ and ‘politics’ can be seen in full at moments when the production of a drama is forbidden, as was the case in Vondel’s *Gysbreght*: the ministers of the Protestant Church opposed to it because a Catholic mass was brought on the stage, and notably on Christmas Eve 1637. The city magistrates first followed this opposition, but in January 1638 they allowed a performance. One could analyze this event in terms of ‘police’ (i.e. the ministers) protecting the status quo, whereas ‘aesthetics’ as ‘politics’ tried to change it, that is, make a case for toleration towards Roman Catholics. In such instances—but not only then—the publication in print or the performance on stage of a tragedy are ‘political’ acts by making choices, dividing the audience into who can

87 See Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch. 1.

88 On the relative openness of the English theater, see the reference to Lake’s work above, n. 24, and András Kiséry, “‘I lack advancement’: public rhetoric, private prudence, and the political agent in *Hamlet*, 1561–1609”, *English Literary History* 81 (2014), 29–60.

and cannot understand, and sharing information, opinions and emotions with regard to religion—closely related to politics in the early modern period—and right and wrong ways of ruling. We are back with the ‘popularity’ exploited by Queen Elizabeth in her dealings with her subjects, and reflected on the Elizabethan stage.

Baroque drama is also political in the Deleuzian sense that the ‘essence of the Baroque entails [...] realizing something in illusion itself, or of tying it to a spiritual *presence* that endows its spaces and fragments with a collective unity’ as quoted by Hoxby in his chapter.⁸⁹ Baroque drama—in particular tragedy—presents and represents kings, queens and rulers and realizes their rulership in an illusion, a fictional *présence*. Thus, one could say, by this illusion it can also prevent or advance in its representation Rancièrian ‘consensus’ or solve or widen ‘dissensus’ or even produce either of them within the grand system of the arts.⁹⁰ In this ‘grand illusion’ the concept of *akrasia* (‘the state of tending to act against one’s better judgment’), explored by Vasiliauskas in her chapter has its place, since *akrasia* can also influence *consensus* or *dissensus* by showing that people, including leaders, may act counter-intuitively. Elias’s concept of the civilizing process and the role of courtly culture therein⁹¹—a concept introduced by Korneeva in her essay—fits within this idea of politics and police tending to cause *dissensus*, a tension between the courtly culture of politics which has a civilizing tendency and the controlling power of police which strives to maintain the *status quo*. Korneeva associates this with the Habermasian concept of the ‘public sphere’. In a Habermasian ‘representative public sphere’, this courtly culture is acted out not ‘for’ but ‘before’ the people, freed of any moral implications, as Rancière sees it, also in a sense describing and analyzing ‘dissensus’.⁹²

89 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, transl. Tom Conley (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), p. 33. See Hoxby’s chapter, p. 200.

90 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 123, see Hoxby’s chapter.

91 Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols. (Basel: Haus zum Falken, 1939). English translation: *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, ed. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Mennel, transl. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

92 See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Mit einem Vorwort zur Neuauflage* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990). English translation: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, transl. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (repr. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). For a fundamental critique of

Baroque and Classicism

In this volume we discuss ‘baroque’ tragedy, even though we are aware of the discussions surrounding the term, some of which undermine its uncomplicated use.⁹³ We use it both as a stylistic concept, denoting a certain style of writing tragedy, and as a term for a period, indicating the period after the Renaissance. In time and in some aspects it coincides with classicism.⁹⁴

As for the history of the word ‘Baroque’: it is believed that its origin are in the term ‘barocco’ in a sixteenth-century Portuguese text, the Sephardic Jewish physician Garcia da Orta’s *Colloquios dos Simples e drogas da India* (1563), where it was used to describe a rough pearl or stone that has an irregular form.⁹⁵ It is also possible that it originated in Montaigne’s *Essais* I, 26, where the humanist used the word ‘barroco’ as one of two terms for the ancient scholastic logic ‘that render their disciples so dirty and ill-favored’ (‘qui rendent leurs supposts ainsi crotez et enfumés’).⁹⁶ The word, as well as the French and English ‘baroque’, also kept its technical meaning as ‘precious stone’ or ‘pearl’, until at the end

Habermas’s interpretation of the public sphere, see Bloemendal and van Dixhoorn, ‘Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries’, esp. pp. 11–31.

- 93 For this part of the introduction, we used Michel Conan’s excellent survey in his ‘The New Horizons of Baroque Garden Cultures’, in Michel Conan (ed.), *Baroque Garden Cultures: Emulation, Sublimation, Subversion* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), pp. 1–36, esp. pp. 3–15, René Wellek, ‘The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship’, in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5 (1946), 77–109, and Frans-Willem Korsten’s very useful chapter 6, ‘Barok en classicisme—*affect en vorm*’, in, id., *Lessen in literatuur* (Nijmegen: Van Tilt, 2002), pp. 135–157. See also Ingrid D. Rowland, ‘Baroque’, in Craig W. Kallendorf (ed.), *A Companion to the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 44–56. For recent discussions of the term and concept, see Christian Jouhaud, ‘The Notion of “Baroque”: Polemical Debate and Political Issues in France’, www.enbach.eu/en/essays/revisiting-baroque/jouhaud.aspx; Jobez, *Le théâtre baroque allemand et français*, pp. 7–29.
- 94 It is for this reason that Korsten, *l.c.*, discusses both terms together.
- 95 See Victor Lucien Tapié, *Baroque et classicisme* (Paris: Hachette; Pluriel, 1996), p. 55; Conan, ‘The New Horizons’, p. 5.
- 96 Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, *Les Essais* I, 26, ed. by Pierre Villey and rev. by Verdun-Louis Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), p. 161; see also Wellek, ‘The Concept of Baroque’, p. 77, who also mentions Luis Vives mocking the Sorbonne professors as ‘sophists in *baroco* and *baralipton*’ and explains *baroco* as ‘the name for the fourth mode of the second figure in the scholastic nomenclature of syllogism. It is a syllogism of the type: “Every P is M; some S are not M, hence some S are not P”’.

of the seventeenth century the term received a metaphorical sense of 'strange mind' or 'bizarre manner of speech'.

In the eighteenth century 'baroque' came into use in the visual arts, especially architecture, to denote a bizarre or even ridiculous style. The most famous representatives of this style were Francesco Borromini (1599–1667) and Guarino Guarini (1624–1683). It also became a term in the history of music, in which 'baroque music' was used for a kind of ingenious style, and which counted among its representatives the composers Claudio Monteverdi (1537–1643) and, above all, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750).

The first major study of baroque was written by Heinrich Wölfflin in 1888: *Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien*, 'showing in analytical fashion how this style distinguished itself from Renaissance style.'⁹⁷ As Conan writes: 'He proposed that while Renaissance artists had shown an interest in line, surface, closed form, hierarchical unity of composition, and an ideal clarity of expression, baroque artists had privileged color, volume, open form, dynamic integration of composition, and suggestion or a relative clarity of expression.'⁹⁸ Wölfflin was one of the first to apply the term not only to the visual arts, but also to literature and music.⁹⁹ It was Werner Weisbach who in 1921, in his study *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation*, interpreted the baroque as the artistic expression of the Counter-Reformation, and three years later in *Die Kunst des Barocks in Italien, Deutschland, Frankreich und Spanien* as the artistic style of parts of seventeenth-century Europe.¹⁰⁰ 'Baroque' became a concept for the style of an era that was either the achievement of the new religious susceptibility related to a Roman Catholic Reform movement, or an artistic degeneration from the Renaissance classicizing ideals.

A landmark in the study of baroque drama is Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1928), translated as *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*.¹⁰¹ In this *Habilitationsschrift* Benjamin discusses tragedies of German

97 Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien* (Munich: Theodor Ackermann, 1888). The characterization is from Conan, 'The New Horizons', p. 5.

98 Conan, 'The New Horizons', p. 5.

99 Wellek, 'The Concept of Baroque', p. 78.

100 Werner Weisbach, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1921) and id., *Die Kunst des Barocks in Italien, Deutschland, Frankreich und Spanien* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1924).

101 Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1963); id., *The Origin of German*

authors of the so-called 'Second Silesian School' such as Andreas Gryphius (or Greif, 1616–1664) and Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683). He distinguishes a typical 'German Baroque', which, however, he also discerns (in more figurative ways) in the playwrights Calderón and Shakespeare who are part of the afterlife of this 'German mourning-play'. He also distinguishes *Trauerspiel* with its origins in history, its earth-bound stress on this world from the more transcendental *Tragödie*, which originates in myth, acts out a rite of sacrifice and centers on *hamartia*, a human mistake. Whereas *Tragödie* features a tragic hero and is characterized by reticence, the protagonists of *Trauerspiel* are tyrants and martyrs, often embodied by one and the same character, and its signature is ostentation. This *Trauerspiel* was rooted in Lutheranism and the Counter-Reformation.¹⁰² Behind all 'mourning-play' protagonists is Christ, the ultimate king and martyr.

Recently Jane O. Newman has drawn new attention to this study, in her *Benjamin's Library* (2011).¹⁰³ She discusses Benjamin's work within the framework of the 'Interbellum' studies of the Baroque with their interest in the formation of the German 'nation' and of Benjamin's interest in philology. Helen Hills in her *Rethinking the Baroque* offers a reappraisal for the use of the concept of baroque in architecture and art history.¹⁰⁴ In his contribution to this volume, Joel B. Lande challenges the 'typical German' character of *Trauerspiel* by pointing at the fact that many of the *Trauerspiele* by Gryphius, Christophorus Kormart and Lohenstein were adaptations of other plays, especially from a Dutch context; Vondel's tragedies were used as 'templates', as Lande shows, for making *Trauerspiele*.¹⁰⁵ *Treurspel* was turned into *Trauerspiel*.

In 1935, Eugenio D'Ors in his *Del Barocco* used the term 'baroque' not as an indication of a period, but as an aspect that recurs in the entire history of art,

Tragic Drama, transl. by John Osborne (London and New York: Verso, 1998). See also George Steiner, 'Introduction' to the Osborne translation, pp. 7–24.

102 One need not wonder about the Lutheran characteristic, since Lutheranism was in its ritual forms and its attention for the emotional aspects of faith akin to Roman Catholicism.

103 Jane O. Newman, *Benjamin's Library: Modernity, Nation, and the Baroque* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). Helen Hills's *Rethinking the Baroque* (2011) also contains a chapter on Walter Benjamin's concept of the baroque: Helen Hills (ed.), *Rethinking the Baroque* (London: Ashgate, 2011), especially Andrew Benjamin: 'Benjamin and the Baroque: Posing the Question of Historical Time', *o.c.*, pp. 161–179.

104 Helen Hills (ed.), *Rethinking the Baroque* (London: Ashgate, 2011), especially the chapter by Andrew Benjamin: 'Benjamin and the Baroque: Posing the Question of Historical Time', *o.c.*, pp. 161–179.

105 See this volume, pp. 319–343.

with its main characteristics motion and passions.¹⁰⁶ It was a kind of tragic view of man in the vein of Friedrich Nietzsche's identification (in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1879)) of baroque style as a 'timeless phenomenon that periodically recurs.'¹⁰⁷ This was challenged many times, not least in a philosophical vein, by Gilles Deleuze, who stated: 'The baroque does not correspond to an essence, but rather to an operative function, to a feature. It keeps making folds ... [I]t bends again and again the folds, going to infinity, fold over fold, folding according to fold. The defining feature of the baroque is the passage to infinity of folding.'¹⁰⁸ These discussions are ongoing.

The term 'baroque', which has been out of fashion since the 1960s and 1970s, is once again of much interest. Witness, for instance, the study by Newman and the volume compiled by Hills, both already mentioned. This raises the question of what ideas or developments in our time have caused this revival. Is it that we live in a discarded world in search for a meaning of life, which can only be found in paradox and the extreme, as we see in the cruel beheadings by members of Islamic State? Is it that our world seems so dreadful that the atrocities of Baroque drama resemble them? Or is our reaction more like Calderón's: 'Life is merely a dream'? These are questions to be answered in another book, but they resonate in the essays in this collection.

We use the term 'baroque' for a rather indistinct period after the Renaissance, which began in Italy at the end of the sixteenth century and ended there in the eighteenth, whereas in France it was a stylistic period that flourished in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁹ English literature specialists tend to treat the term baroque with considerable suspicion: the label only sticks to seventeenth-century figures with strong Counter-Reformation connections, like the (finally but not initially) Roman Catholic poet Richard Crashaw (ca. 1613–1649).¹¹⁰ However, a counter-argument has been made, appealing to the art in several media of Roman Catholic figures such as Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665), long

106 Eugenio D'Ors, *Del Barocco* (Madrid 1935), translated into French as *Du Baroque* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935). It was criticized by Wellek in his 'The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship'.

107 Quoted after Jane O. Newman, *Benjamin's Library*, p. 25.

108 Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli, Leibnitz et le baroque* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1988), p. 5, quoted from Conan, 'The New Horizons', pp. 8–9.

109 On the several 'baroque' periods in Europe, see Jean-Pierre Cavaillé and Cécile Soudan (eds.), *Les dossiers du GRIHL, La notion de baroque, approche historiographique, 2–2012*, <http://dossiersgrihl.revues.org/5057>.

110 See e.g., Warren Austen, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957²).

active in Catholic Europe and the Mediterranean, and by taking account of the Catholic literature of the entire British Isles, notably in Ireland and Scotland.¹¹¹ In Russia, however, there was hardly any 'baroque' literature, although baroque plays were staged there. So as a period the Baroque is not cleanly or clearly defined. To complicate things even more, it often flourished at the same time as when classicist art and literature were fashionable, and in some cases the same author can be considered from renaissance, classicist and baroque viewpoints.

The main characteristics of baroque style are 'form' and 'affect'. The latter term is, as we have seen, no synonym for 'emotion' but indicates a relationship between the object of art, music or literature and its observer, listener or reader, and where that object 'affects' the recipient, and alters her or his state of mind. In that sense it is more than an 'effect'.¹¹² The 'theory of affects', a translation of the German 'Affektenlehre' is an aesthetic theory, especially relating to music, but easily applicable to other arts. The underlying idea is that passions and affects can be represented by their outward signs, in sound or image. One could say that the modern idea of 'emotions' points at inner feelings, and the baroque 'affects' the outward signs. The most elaborate work describing this phenomenon in music is Johann Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister* (1739).¹¹³ This 'Affektenlehre' is in part an elaboration of the theory of tem-

111 See Peter Davidson, *The Universal Baroque* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), ch. 1, 'British Baroque'; Joe Moshenska, *A Stain in the Blood: The Remarkable Voyage of Sir Kenelm Digby* (London: William Heinemann, 2016), pp. 47 and 53. See also Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination*, ch. 2, 'Catholic Poetics and the Protestant Canon'.

112 On the affects and their theory, see Brewster Rogerson, 'The Art of Painting the Passions', in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953), 68–94; Rainer Bayreuther, 2005. 'Theorie der musikalischen Affektivität in der Frühen Neuzeit', in Dörte Schmidt (ed.), *Musiktheoretisches Denken und kultureller Kontext* (Schliengen: Edition Argus, 2005) Forum Musikwissenschaft 1, pp. 69–92; Andrew Clark, 'Making Music Speak', in Keith M. Chapin and Andrew Clark (eds.), *Speaking of Music: Addressing the Sonorous* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 70–85; Burkhard Meyer-Sickendiek, *Affektpoetik: Eine Kulturgeschichte literarischer Emotionen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005). We thank Arie Eikelboom for help with this theory. See also Russ Leo, 'Affective Physics: Affectus in Spinoza's Ethica', in Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds.), *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture* (Farnham, England; Ashgate, 2013), pp. 33–49.

113 Johann Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister, Das ist Gründliche Anzeige aller derjenigen Sachen, die einer wissen, können, und vollkommen inne haben muß, der einer Capelle mit Ehren und Nutzen vorstehen will* (Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1739), facsimile reprint, edited by Margarete Reimann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954) Documenta musicologica 1. Rei-

peraments or *humores*. According to this theory, man's character and affects are defined by the combination and ratio of the four 'humors': yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm, making people choleric, melancholic, sanguine or phlegmatic. The 'theory of affects' is also closely connected to rhetoric that had as its goals 'docere, delectare, movere': arousing affects with the audience by showing these affects and thus making people receptive for teaching. It is because of this connection of affects and emotions that Seneca's dramas had such an appeal to many early modern playwrights: in his tragedies, the outward signs of affects are clearly indicated and often elaborated in the tradition of the Stoic theory of passions. In sum: the form of an artistic object aims to rouse affects, in order to bring about fascination, which binds the viewers, listeners or readers and entralls them. It does so by overwhelming forms and paradoxes (logically contradictory or absurd items that can be interpreted in a way that makes sense), as well as anachronisms (elements 'clashing' in time), antitheses and oxymora, and *chiaroscuro*.¹¹⁴ Seemingly incongruous elements operating simultaneously both intrigue and fascinate. The fantastic form is, then, an essential part of the meaning of an object of art.

This fascination is also evident in the use of dreams.¹¹⁵ In Calderón's moral and philosophical play *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a Dream*, 1636) also a pessimistic world-view is expressed:

¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.
 ¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,
 una sombra, una ficción,
 y el mayor bien es pequeño.
 ¡Que toda la vida es sueño,
 y los sueños, sueños son!

La vida es sueño, ll. 2182–2187¹¹⁶

(What is life? A frenzy.
 What is life? An illusion,
 a shadow, a fiction,

he, Druckschriften-Faksimiles 5; id., *Der vollkommene Capellmeister: A Revised Translation with Critical Commentary*, ed. by Ernest Charles Harriss (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981).

114 For anachronism, see also the contribution by Helmer Helmers in this volume.

115 See, for instance, Korsten, 'Barok en classicisme', pp. 141–142.

116 Quoted from the edition by Enrique Rodríguez Cepeda (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1999), p. 182.

and the greatest good is small.
 For all of life is a dream,
 and dreams, are merely dreams.)

The concept of the dream was catching, and many adaptations and translations of the play are known from this period, such as the Dutch adaptation of Calderón's play *Het Leven is maer Droom*, which was staged and its text printed by Jan Mommaert in Brussels in 1647. The paradoxical subtitle ran 'Bly-eindigh treur-spel' ('tragedy with a happy ending').¹¹⁷ The Italian playwright Giaconto Andrea Cicognini (1606–1649) adapted the play into a 'dramma per musica' (i.e., an opera), *La vita è un sogno* (1664).¹¹⁸ In this concept of the dream, melancholy, paradox and fascination found their zenith.

As has already been said, the subjects of baroque tragedy are taken from Biblical, classical, medieval and recent history, rather than from myth.¹¹⁹ A good example of medieval subject matter is Joost van den Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1638), in which medieval history—modeled after classical myth and poetry—is employed for a contemporaneous confessional agenda.¹²⁰ Many Jesuit Latin tragedies were also 'baroque' in their themes and the elaboration of those themes. They often take as their subject saints' lives. The saints suffer, often in cruel torments that arouse fascination, but are saved by their good deeds and their faith. The protagonists of baroque tragedy are lofty persons—kings, rulers, patriarchs or saints—and they can be martyrs, in particular the saints that died for their faith, but also kings and queens, as the tragedies representing the execution of Mary Stuart in 1587 or those covering the execution of King Charles I in 1649 show.¹²¹

117 *Het leven is maer droom: Bly-eyndigh trevr-spel, vertoont in de vvonderlycke Op-voedinghe van Sigismvndvs, prince van Polen, Door de Vrye Lief-hebbers ende der Rymer-Konste binnen Brussel. Met een bevallige Kluchte van de Gilde-broeders van Kockelbergh, daer op passende* (Brussels: Jan Mommaert, 1647). See also Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries*, esp. pp. 427–428 and 440–441 on the translations and adaptations of *La vida es sueño*.

118 *La vita è un sogno: Comedia* (Bologna: A. Custode, 1663); repr. as: *La vita è un sogno: Opera scenica* (Venice: Niccolò Pezzana, 1663). Mentioned in Tatiana Korneeva's contribution in this volume.

119 See above, p. 29.

120 See the contribution by Freya Sierhuis. There are striking parallels between the *Gysbreght van Aemstel* tragedy showing the destruction of Amsterdam and Virgil's *Aeneid*, book II, where Aeneas relates the destruction of Troy.

121 See Helmer J. Helmers, "'The Cry of the Royal Blood': Revenge Tragedy and the Stuart Cause in the Dutch Republic, 1649–1660", in Bloemendal, Van Dixhoorn and Strietman

The concept of baroque was readily employed in the Counter-Reformation movement.¹²² Whereas in Reformation movements reason and restraint lead the believers to God, the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation tried to win the souls of the faithful by means of affects that were aroused by art, both in religious paintings and in works of literature. The Jesuits were the champions of this Counter-Reformation strategy, and it is telling that their dramas were multi-media spectacles with such 'special effects' as fireworks, music and dance.¹²³ Thus, the baroque tragedies of the Jesuits aimed at influencing the senses with an engagement through profound emotional impact. However, Nienke Tjoelker makes us aware that eighteenth-century Jesuit theater also engaged with 'classicist' drama and shows that some Jesuit poetics pleaded for a combination of 'baroque' elements and 'classicist' rules, in order to further the audience's judgment, without leaving aside their taste for spectacle.

Elements that are related to baroque, such as (in the manner of Caravaggio and Rembrandt) *chiaroscuro* and a kind of indulgence in violence, were also at play in English neo-Latin drama. Sarah Knight discusses, for instance, the English Roman Catholic poet-playwright William Alabaster's *Roxana* in these terms. It is by exploiting these effects and affects that baroque drama exerts its 'police' influence in Rancièrian terms and tries to maintain the status quo, thus including or excluding people, or its 'political' influence to bring about a change of attitude and feeling in the audience and thus causes other inclusions and exclusions.

Classicism (to be distinguished from eighteenth-century 'neo-classicism') also pays special attention to form. This term too can be applied to a certain way of dealing with art, as well as to a period. However, just like baroque, not every European country experienced classicism at the same time, nor with the same intensity. For instance, in France classicism flourished during the

(eds.), *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries*, pp. 219–250, also in id., *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), ch. 6, pp. 172–197.

122 On the relationship between baroque and Counter-Reformation see also the contribution of Blair Hoxby in this volume.

123 Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer, 'Multimediales Theater: Ansätze zu einer Poetik der Synästhesie bei den Jesuiten', in Heinrich F. Plett (ed.), *Poetik der Renaissance* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1994), pp. 197–238; see also the chapters by Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, 'Neo-Latin Theatre in Italy' and 'Jesuit Neo-Latin Tragedy in France', Fidel Rädle, 'Jesuit Theatre in Germany, Austria and Switzerland' and Joaquín Pascual Barea, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Spain, Portugal and Latin America', in Bloemendal and Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 25–101; 415–469; 185–292; and 545–631 respectively.

seventeenth century, especially in the years between 1660 and 1680 whereas in the Low Countries it lasted from the 1660s to the 1770s. Classicism was the more readily adopted in Christian Europe because of the awareness that early Christianity was rooted in classical antiquity. In classicism, just as in baroque art and literature, the aim of the application of the form was to establish a relationship between the object of art and the beholder. Yet the form aims at a maximum of engagement and involvement in order to provide the audience members stimulating conditions for the exercise of judgment.

Key concepts of classicism—which derives its name from the renaissance of classical, especially Greek, literary theory—are *decorum*: ‘what is appropriate’; *vraisemblance*: ‘what is probable’; and *bienséance*: ‘what is decent and respectable’. In French classicist literary theory, Aristotle’s *Poetics* was important, seen through the lenses of Daniel Heinsius’s *De tragoediae constitutione* (1611 and 1642) and Gerardus Johannes Vossius’s *Poeticae institutiones* (1647).¹²⁴ However, Aristotle’s descriptive poetics with their unities of time and action were conceived as prescriptive poetics with unities of time, action and place, in a desire to optimize *decorum* and *vraisemblance*. In this way classicist authors used and expanded the classical ideals of order, clarity, proportion and good taste, in a balanced form with ‘noble’ characters, also in order to focus the spectators’ emotional concentration and thus influence them or the readers to be of sounder judgment. Whereas baroque art could bring the beholders to fascination, classicist art brought about discussion.¹²⁵ The subjects of classicist tragedies were usually taken from mythology and history, but far less so from the Bible, medieval, recent or oriental history. Classicism thereby pursued ideals of human form and behavior, unlike the ‘realism’ reflected alike in the painting of Rembrandt and the poetry and plays of Jan Vos.

In this volume Christian Biet shows that the borders between ‘baroque’ and ‘classicist’ tragedy are thin and permeable. One tends to identify baroque drama with the Roman ‘horror-playwright’ Seneca and classicist tragedy with the Greek ‘noble’ tragic poets Sophocles and Euripides, but cruelty or bloodshed that were on the early baroque stage were not absolutely forbidden in classicist theater. Biet also points to the classicist theater’s function of concentrating ‘affects.’ Frans-Willem Korsten also shows that formal ‘classicist’

124 See, for instance, Jean Rohou, *Le classicisme: 1660–1700* (Paris, Hachette, 1996); Harriet A. Stone, *The Classical Model: Literature and Knowledge in Seventeenth-century France* (Ithaca, etc.: Cornell University Press, 1996); Edith Kern, *The Influence of Heinsius and Vossius upon French Dramatic Theory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press: 1949) Johns Hopkins Studies in Romance Literatures and Languages, extra vol. 26.

125 Korsten, ‘Barok en classicisme’, p. 144.

requirements (unities of time and action, division in acts, alexandrine lines) could combine effectively with 'baroque' elements such as an excessive display of violence and the expression of extravagant feelings. Moreover, all kinds of plays were staged at the same time, plays and players traveled through Europe (for instance, the English 'strolling players' in northern Europe), and adaptations and translations of plays were produced in other regions and countries.¹²⁶ Both baroque and classicist tragedies could present rulers' tensions between, for example, ethical behavior and the interest of the state. Both types of drama could be immersed in court culture—commissioned by rulers or staged at courts—and at the same time affirm and criticize current regimes.

Classicist theater was also engaged in politics. The audience should experience from it the ambiguities of sovereignty—noble characters encountering murder and the force of passions—and thus form a sound judgment of the sources and causes of power, authority and legitimacy, either by admiration (Corneille) or compassion (Racine). Ambiguities can also be traced in tragedies by the Dutch playwrights Joost van den Vondel and Jan Vos, as Frans-Willem Korsten shows. Such 'baroque' ambiguities can be caused by a certain 'anachronism' in the conflation of, for instance, Roman antiquity and the Roman Catholic Church, or the comparison of the Dutch princess Amalia van Solms with the Roman princess Messalina, which could lead to a kind of productive dissonance. Nina Geerdink writes of this effect with regard to Vondel's representation of the execution of the Pensionary Van Oldenbarnevelt in 1618 through the ancient story of Palamedes: 'Allegory functions within the renaissance culture of coding and decoding on both a political and an aesthetical level, and *Palamedes* is a good case in point.'¹²⁷ This might be seen as a creative piece of anachronistic art.¹²⁸ As Russ Leo convincingly argues, Vondel's 'baroque' tragedies may also be linked to Hugo Grotius's legal philosophy. In that case, this baroque tragedy can be discussed in classicist terms too, because it also aims at a better understanding of the role of law and philosophy in art, not only at rousing fascination by showing high-pitched emotions.

126 See Korsten, 'Barok en classicisme', pp. 143–146 and the contribution by Joel Lande in this volume.

127 Nina Geerdink, 'Politics and Aesthetics—Decoding Allegory in *Palamedes* (1625)', in Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds.), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 225–248, esp. p. 225.

128 See Margreta de Grazia, 'Anachronism', in Brian Cummings and James Simpson (eds.), *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 13–32; Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

In another way Emily Vasiliauskas also challenges the distinction between baroque and classicist tragedy. She shows that in some plays *akrasia* ('acting against one's better judgment') may be at work, as it is in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1592). Strong affects would fit baroque tragedy, whereas the concept of *akrasia*, in which judgment plays an important role, would be more in line with classical tragedy.

Classicist drama can also be considered in Rancièrian terms. It will be more engaged with 'politics' than with 'police', in the sense that it opposes views, opinions and arguments in a more rational debate. As such, it would fit better in a Habermasian, social discourse than in a Rancièrian, philosophical discourse. However, it is also 'politic' in its choices, divisions, inclusions and exclusions, and the debates within it: all of these are a form of 'dis-agreement' (*dissensus*).

Politics and Aesthetics in Early Modern Drama

What the essays in this volume teach us is that we might regard tragedy as belonging to two phases. By the late sixteenth century European tragedy had found a formal consistency thanks to the ongoing work of the retrieval of classical models, and the refining of the understanding of tragic categories and attributes. Perhaps by 1600 or thereabouts English authors and the English stage stood out in offering the widest range of tragic drama that reflected antiquity and an independent and complementary vernacular development. While this drama was concerned with the traditional theme of exposing the evils of political tyranny, it was the following century that saw a broadening of this central message, so that tragic drama articulated much more sophisticated political themes, exploring sovereignty, and expressing on the one hand the need for obedience, and on the other the righteousness of rebellion and resistance. To embody these themes, it had at its disposal a much more evolved, various and no less contradictory repertoire of forms and devices, where tragedy was evidently more receptive to the incorporation of other discourses, political and religious, and the energies of other media at this time, such as music, architecture, painting and sculpture. It should be no surprise that the French administrators in the seventeenth century sought to shape tragedy as part of a more general cultural policy, or that the Amsterdam Schouwburg should have been part of such a lively republican literary scene of resistance to the Stadholder. You can admire a *Trauerspiel* for its representation of princely martyrdom, but there is every reason to be patient and listen to the other voices within its domain. The business of these plays was not merely prince-pleasing.

As such, tragedy was part of the public sphere in which political power and authority were discussed, supported or challenged, in which other issues that had a political character such as religion were thematized in often intricate ways, which can be considered from literary-historical or more philosophical angles (for instance, with Jacques Rancière, in terms of the democratization of art). This collection of essays aims at contributing to our understanding of these ways and of how they are exploited in tragedy, written in Latin or in one of the vernacular languages. Finally, although more by implication, we hope that the essays in this volume will contribute to considerations of the use of the concepts of baroque and classicism in literary history, in particular the history of drama and theater. Indeed, the detailed findings of each essay, where a number of longstanding assumptions are overturned, suggests that they can contribute fruitfully to the further investigation not only of formal categories such as baroque art including the intrinsic matter of plays and theater but also philosophical and social ones such as 'political theology.'

Further Reading

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