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THE "MOST HONEST AND MOST DEVOTED OF WOMEN": AN EARLY MODERN DEFENSE OF THE PROFESSIONAL ACTRESS

Perhaps the most neuralgic issue in the early modern debate between professional religion and professional theatre was the place of women. Clerical critics of the theatre consistently denounced the actress as the embodiment of all the corrupting influences inherent in the *commedia*. Seldom acknowledged, however, is that the energy fueling these rabid attacks on female performers oriented itself not only *ad extra* but also *ad intra*. At the same time that professional actresses were becoming more visible in various *piazze* and *stanze* throughout Italy and France, religiously inspired women were becoming more visible in the schools and hospitals sponsored by the reforming Roman Catholic Church. The *animus* of religious men toward the actress must be considered within a wider social context that also included a growing uneasiness with and hostility toward the more public activity of religious women intent on claiming their place in the apostolic mission of Roman Catholicism.

The Italian professional theatre of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, known subsequently as the *commedia dell'arte*, matured during the same period as early modern Catholicism. The activity of an emerging professional theatre crossed paths with the activity of a sporadically reforming church. Though theatrical itself, the Roman Catholic Church in the wake of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) generated an atmosphere of internal reform that also established favorable conditions for the renewal of antitheatrical prejudices. The more practical and pastoral aspects of Tridentine reform addressed the state of ecclesiastical offices and religious life with the express aim of rejuvenating Catholic faith and practice among lay populations. Not only did the professional theatre inadvertently compete with professional religion for a place at the cultural table, the *commedia*, as professional, itinerant, and gender-inclusive, also functioned as a physical countersign to the ideals of religious renewal.[1] Though the church did not advance a consistent or programmatic war against the theatre, particular religious professionals in particular circumstances did take issue with professional players.[2] Their arguments against the theatre, preached

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from pulpits and published in manuals, generated an atmosphere of religious antitheatricality within which professional players worked to advance the status of their craft.

The institutional Roman Catholic Church has been often criticized for its distribution of power, its construction of gender, and its judgments on human sexuality. Precisely because of the potency of such critique in the postmodern world, Roman Catholicism's historical relationship with the theatre is frequently stereotyped as "the same old story"—predictably hierarchical, misogynist, and controlling. This essay aims at moving beyond this line of business to consider the sometimes stormy but ultimately fruitful interaction between theatre and religion. Professional religion's issues with professional performance must be appreciated in the richer context of the church's efforts to join the early modern world, to consolidate an identity at a liminal moment in a very long history. Similarly, the *commedia*'s challenge to legitimize itself in this same early modern society necessarily involves a lively conversation with the Catholic Church, not only a powerful proprietor of cultural life in the places where the *commedia* flourished, but also an institution that early on demonstrated confidence (albeit in a negative key) in the power of professional performance to affect society.

Religious antitheatrical writing in the wake of the Council of Trent constructs the professional actress as a threat to early modern society, a move that is consistent with the church's growing unease with the public roles assumed by religious women. In the latter case, religious authority succeeds in restricting the sphere of women's activity, while in the former, the church's attacks prove impotent. The controversy, however, inspires the professional theatre to defend itself, to reflect on its very widespread activity and to argue for its rightful place in society. Of all the professionals in the first few generations of the *commedia*, none is as fascinating (and as little studied, especially in English-speaking circles) as Giovan Battista Andreini (1576–1654). (See portrait, front cover, engraved by Cesare Bassoni after a painting by Carlo Antonio Proccacini. In Andreini's *L'Adamo* [1613]. By permission of the British Library, shelfmark 84.e.2.) In his sometimes odd but always provocative plays, he explores the range of baroque theatrical possibilities. In his defenses of the stage—and in his persistent and eloquent defenses of the actress—he demonstrates an astute dedication to attaining for himself and his *arte* a respected place at the early modern table. Andreini's defense of the actress in his 1625 *La Ferza* figures the actress as a contemplative in action who performs a necessary social function, not unlike the controversial women of active religious congregations.[3] Placing this defense in the context of both antitheatrical criticism and Andreini's own *sacra rappresentazione*, *L'Adamo* (1613), should help us to open the windows of early modern theatre history and appreciate the fairly sophisticated conversation taking place between professional theatre and religious culture.

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Early Modern Catholicism and Religious Women

The ideal for women's religious life during the mid-Cinquecento remained the nun in her cloister, separated from the world and its work. In the years leading up to the Council of Trent, however, the walls of the monastic enclosure grew increasingly permeable. According to Domenico Sella,

> the strict rule of enclosure whereby no outsider was allowed to set foot in the cloister was often flouted and nuns entertained guests in their quarters; a frivolous social life was tolerated and could easily lead to immorality; leadership positions were often assigned on the basis of social rank rather than merit; and a convent's economic resources were used for the benefit of the nuns' families rather than of the convent itself.[4]

Since the Council of Trent sought to make the church and its representatives a more efficacious force in ordinary people's lives, encouraging and admonishing them to holiness, the participants aimed at addressing those disciplinary inconsistencies that might disedify the larger Catholic community.[5] In the end, a conciliar decree on religious life demanded two things with regard to women: first, that "'[u]nder pain of eternal damnation,' bishops will re-establish nuns' clausura [cloister] wherever it has fallen into abeyance, and see that it is rigorously maintained where it still holds;" second, that a woman neither be forced to enter religious life against her will nor be prevented from doing so should she desire it.[6]

Though the Tridentine decree did affirm a woman's freedom to choose either a religious or secular life, it did not extend that freedom to the convent; religious life for women—officially, at least—meant enclosure. Such a restrictive model, however, could not contain the religious enthusiasm that characterized the period following the Protestant Reform. Women's desire to participate actively in the apostolic mission of the church also expressed itself in the foundation of congregations like Angela Merici's (1474–1540) Ursulines who educated young Catholic women, Jeanne-François de Chantal's (1572–1641) Sisters of the Visitation who taught and nursed the sick, and Louise de Marillac's (1591–1660) Ladies of Charity (eventually the Sisters of Charity) who followed Vincent DePaul in nursing the poor. Mary Ward's (1585–1645) English Ladies proved one of the more striking, and short-lived, of these active communities.[7] Ward, a twenty-four year old Catholic Englishwoman established a school in Saint-Omer (France) for the education of young girls. She and her companions eventually returned to the England of James I as Catholic missionaries, living among the lay population, and strengthening the Catholic community. Though supported by a number of influential churchmen (e.g., the Bishop of Saint-Omer, the Jesuit Suarez, and even Pope Paul V), the increasing popularity of the institute provoked more and more hostility among male clergy. Having traveled to Rome to defend herself and her work before the papal curia,

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Ward eventually established houses in Italy and Bavaria, all of them marked by an apostolic focus that placed the women in the midst of public life and flouted the custom of cloister. Despite their enthusiasm, dedication, and popularity, the English Ladies were suppressed by papal decree in 1631. The reason for their suppression was twofold: first, the community functioned without *formal* approval by the pope and, more importantly, "the women had arrogated to themselves functions reserved to men" (i.e., they traveled freely, remained unbound by cloister, and engaged in apostolic activity "unsuitable to their sex and their capacity"). Clearly, as Elizabeth Rapley notes, the English Ladies (and the apostolic women like them) "had threatened the order of things."[8]

The Roman Church in transition initially supported the activity of those women who stretched the boundaries of conventional (and conventual) religious life. As a community of faith, the church benefited from the public witness of these women working in education, nursing, and other forms of social ministry. As an institution bent on conserving its identity through the maintenance of patriarchal order, however, the church began to bristle at women's increasing visibility and clearer voice in the apostolic sphere. In 1612, Angela Merici's Ursulines were forced into wearing a habit and into the cloister.[9] Beginning in 1616, the Sisters of the Visitation, initially conceived as a congregation in which prayer was joined with works of charity, were likewise forced into a monastic model of religious practice.[10] In the end, the clerical establishment succeeded in implementing the decree of Trent by enforcing the enclosure of religious women, thus removing them from public view and stifling their voices.

This fundamentally misogynistic attitude, hardly an invention of early modern Catholicism, contributed to the religious ambience of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Not surprisingly, male religious antitheatricalists of the period fixed their disapproving gaze on the highly visible actresses who, from the mid-sixteenth century on, performed with and, in several cases, assumed the management of *commedia* troupes. While there may have been some initial ambiguity in the church's feeling toward the apostolic activity of religious women, there was no such ambiguity in antitheatricalist feeling toward the professional actress: she was a religious antitype, unregulated, certainly uncloistered, probably unchaste, and disturbingly visible in the masculine marketplace.

The Professional Actress and Religious Antitheatricalism

Though religious antitheatricalists attacked professional players of all stripes, they reserved their greatest outrage for female performers. Ferdinando Taviani's revolutionary suggestion that the first Italian actresses may have come from the ranks of *oneste cortegiane*, honest or honorable courtesans whose skill in arts and letters was highly regarded and publicized, helps explain the tremendous animus with which antitheatricalists greeted the actress. According

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to Taviani's hypothesis, the atmosphere of reform following the Council of Trent, especially in Rome, prevented the learned courtesans from continuing their trade.[11] Practiced in poetry and rhetoric and oriented to physical display, these women eventually migrated to the world of professional performance and, ironically, became even more visible in the marketplace than they had been as courtesans.[12] Though not all actresses were former courtesans, they all participated in the courtesan's legacy, at least as far as religious antitheatricalists were concerned.[13] Their very existence competed with reformist efforts at Christianizing the public.

Scathing condemnations of the actress peppered the corpus of early modern antitheatrical writing. Critics read the presence of women in acting companies as concrete evidence of the utter wickedness and degeneracy of the entire theatrical profession. Into his 1611 educational aid entitled, *The Young Christian*, Father Cesare Franciotti (1557–1627) incorporated a short discourse on the evils of modern comedy by a Father Pietro Casani that provides a strikingly clear illustration of the antitheatrical animus toward the professional actress.[14] As far as Casani is concerned, modern comedies deal with little besides "adulteries, betrayals and diabolical inventions meant to destroy women of honor." Comic plots, incapable of causing laughter "without the ugliest words and execrable actions," aim at teaching the audience "to follow every dishonest intention." The theatre provides only "manifest wantonness," leading people straight "into lechery."[15] Casani lays the ultimate responsibility for these errors at the feet of the actress, concluding his reflections with a rabid attack on the female performer as a potent incarnation of evil: "If there were nothing else but the filthy display that these most lecherous women make of themselves, their actions, words and songs would be enough to infect the world."[16]

Casani does not hesitate to enlist the aid of the more misogynistic scripture texts that allege a woman's almost supernatural capacity to transmit evil.[17] The actress, though, represents an intensification of female evil because she puts her body on display for others to see, magnifying an already "wanton" and "shameless" nature. She adorns herself with the "trimmings of [a] whore" and speaks words so "full of internal flame" that "even the wisest men" are led into temptation.[18] The public availability of her body on the stage and her expertise with theatrical artifice ("that can ignite an unchaste flame even in the snow") make her extremely dangerous, especially to young men.[19] Casani's energetic attack on the actress highlights the critical role antitheatricalists assigned to women in their condemnations of the professional theatre. Though the clerical distrust of the "sexual" woman always hovers in the wings of antitheatrical critiques, religious hostility to actresses consistently highlights the danger presented by their visible and vocal presence in accessible, communal spaces. The fate of women (whether actresses or apostles) who unapologetically assert their place in the public domain by displaying their bodies and exercising their voices remains the same: condemnation.

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Giovan Battista Andreini's Defense of the Actress in *La Ferza* (1625)

Giovan Battista Andreini (1576–1654), the eldest son of perhaps the most famous *comici* of the Cinquecento, Francesco and Isabella Andreini, was the only one of nine siblings who dedicated himself to a career in the theatre (see portrait, front cover). With his wife Virginia Ramponi, he established himself as a successful actor, dramatist, and *capocomico* in the first part of the seventeenth century. Throughout his career Andreini wrote and published plays (secular and sacred), poems, prologues, and defenses of the theatrical profession. Andreini's longest reflection on the *arte*, *La Ferza*, meaning "whip" or "scourge," takes aim at the "accusations leveled against comedy" by antitheatrical critics.[20] Written and published in Paris in 1625, at the end of the Fedeli company's very successful French tour (and only six years before the suppression of Ward's English Ladies), *La Ferza* rehearses the familiar defenses of the stage popularized in the seventeenth century.[21]

La Ferza remains most well-known, however, for its explicit defense of women in the theatre. Andreini insists on distancing the professional actress from her antitheatrical characterization as a "satanic Protean" who through her craft leads people into sin, ruining families and communities.[22] In so doing, he also challenges very explicitly the church's official attitude toward women in the public sphere. Rather than acquiescing to the status quo, Andreini opens a door to entertaining new possibilities for considering the role of women on public stages. His effort in this regard is significant not only because he is safeguarding his real professional needs, but also because precisely as a member of the theatrical profession he offers a literate society an alternative way of seeing the professional woman.

By way of clarification, Andreini's defenses of the professional theatre hinge on distancing *comici* (like himself, his wife and their company) from *buffoni* (moutebanks, charlatans, etc.) For Andreini true *comici* profess a trade in which the physical and the spiritual, the body and the mind, the act and the word are inextricably joined in performance. The *comici*'s craft is infused with reason. The *buffoni*, on the other hand, trade only in physicality, in bodies disconnected from understanding, in performance that betrays no reason. And the telltale mark of reason for Andreini remains verbal eloquence. Significantly, the eloquence of the actress stands in direct opposition to the Catholic proscription against women's speaking in public (derived from an erroneous interpretation of the Pauline letters) and to Martin Luther's opinion that "it suits [women] much better to stammer or speak badly."[23]

Not surprisingly, Andreini appeals to the concrete realities of the actress' life in building the case for her professional dignity. First, and importantly given Andreini's preoccupation with the written and spoken word, the actress distinguishes herself by eloquence and knowledge:

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> And it is certainly a wondrous thing to see an actress (even one of low birth) now entirely earnest in the comedies, gush forth with loftiest conceits, marvelous sentences, discourses of every quality and material. So well-armed against her wise adversary in the *agon* of the stage, that with her eloquent conversing and soliloquizing, she makes you believe even more in the fame of the ancient Carmentas and Sapphos, women, rather rare and illustrious gifts of heaven.[24]

Notwithstanding Casani's suggestion that the actress' fiery voice leads one into temptation, Andreini insists that like all *comici*, actresses are learned, and their skillful vocal eloquence attests to their *virtù.*

"Not born for distaffs or reels of yarn, but indeed for books, pens, vigils and troubles," actresses have the potential "to be the most honest and most devoted of women."[25] The actress prepares for the public exercise of her profession with a mission-oriented asceticism. Drawing from what must be memories of his mother, Isabella, and perhaps even observations of his wife, Florinda, Andreini sketches the discipline of the actress who studies assiduously in preparation for her roles, who exorcises from her body any "lewdness of gesture," and who improves the quality of her acting by suiting action to word.[26] Her preparations lead her beyond the confines of her study and into the public world. After she performs to the great acclaim of her audience, an acclaim that honors her as well as her husband and children, the actress returns to her studies in a seemingly endless routine of preparation and performance.[27] It would seem that Andreini's actress necessarily straddles two worlds, a private world and a public world, each feeding the other. Not unlike the religious women of the active congregations, the actress engages in a work that ennobles her private life and moves her to greater "devotion." At the same time, the assiduousness of her more private study, reflection, and discipline, lends credibility to the public work.

For Andreini, an actress' devotion derives from her patient endurance of adversity for the sake of her profession. More than other women, female performers suffer the extreme hazards of constant travel, part and parcel of the *arte*. Few could endure such danger and hardship, witnessing the deaths of colleagues, family and friends, without growing in genuine devotion to God.[28] For her son Giovan Battista, Isabella Andreini defined the character of the devoted actress. Recalling her death in childbirth during her return to Italy from a French tour, Andreini explicitly highlights her domestic *virtù* as a mother and wife. She is the fruitful vine from which her husband and children draw life.[29] Clearly, Andreini attempts to make the case that the professional actress is not an essentially subversive social force when, like Isabella, she *also* performs the roles of wife and mother.[30]

In explicating the actresses' place in *both* the public and domestic spheres, Andreini prepares himself to make the bold claim (especially in the face of

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religious antitheatricalism) that women remain essential not only to the home, but also to the city *and* to the theatre. In Andreini's own words:

> . . . even as the philosopher says that the home cannot be perfect without a woman's company, and as the woman is half of the home, women are half of the city; so the theatre cannot be respected without the greater ornament of woman. And if she accounts for half the home and the city, woman is the entire theatre, since what could possibly be more lifeless than a comedy acted by all men? Don't you see that [in taking women from the stage] you take from us the verisimilar, the heart and soul of this [dramatic] poem, its every grace and affect, thus encumbering the theatre with this defect?[31]

If, as he suggests at the beginning of *La Ferza,* the *commedia* functions as a mirror that reflects human life and enlightens its audience, then the mirror must admit both men and women. A comedy that omits women reflects not life, but a lack of life, an unreal perversion of the nature of things.

In contrast to religious antitheatricalist depictions of the professional actress as a whore whose public body and voice threaten the health of Christian society, Andreini paints the figure of a studious, devout, self-disciplined woman dedicated to both professional and domestic values. Resembling to some extent an idealized Madonna, Andreini's image of the "virtuous" actress betrays more sophisticated brushwork when viewed in light of early modern religious history. The professional actress embodies the integration of the public and private, the professional and personal, the active and contemplative lives. In this she resembles the energetic religious women who, for a time at least, were given leave to work and to speak beyond the monastery walls. Andreini advances a way of seeing the early modern woman that forcefully rejects the attitudes expressed by those clerics who would soon insist on the suppression of Ward's English Ladies and their like. For Andreini a woman's "sex and capacity" is precisely the ground for her indispensable contribution to social life. Even more, this "contemplative in action," apart from guaranteeing verisimilitude and diversity in theatrical performance, functions as a symbol for the entire theatrical profession. For Andreini "[w]oman is the entirety of the theatre" because in her coalesce all the pertinent issues regarding the dignity and status of the *arte*.

While the formal defenses of the stage like *La Ferza* represent Andreini's attempts at liberating his profession from religious antitheatrical prejudice essentially by means of learned argument, his explicitly religious plays aim at effecting that liberation by formally theatrical means. *L'Adamo* (1613), *La Maddalena* (1617), and *La Maddalena lasciva e penitente* (1652) create worlds that compete with the world of antitheatricalists, worlds that advance alternative ways of seeing, hearing, and interpreting professional theatre's place in early modern society. They do not speak about antitheatrical anxiety regarding the actress; they stage it. They do not explain the difference between *comici* and *buffoni*; they enact it. They do not list principles for evaluating theatre; they

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perform them. Though published twelve years prior to *La Ferza*, *L'Adamo* provides us with a theatrical record of Andreini's evolving attitudes regarding the *arte*'s place in early modern society *and* the actress' place in that same *arte*.

Eve Plays her Part

Andreini first published *L'Adamo*[32] in Milan in 1613 (Fig. 1). More than any other of his plays, *L'Adamo* is responsible for Andreini's reputation lasting throughout the Seicento and beyond. There was a second printing of the play in 1617 (Milan), a third in 1641 (Perugia), and a fourth in 1685 (Modena). Andreini's *L'Adamo* even enjoyed success beyond the continent since the play was thought to be an inspiration for John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a hypothesis popularized by Voltaire in his 1727 "Essay on Epic Poetry." *L'Adamo* was published three more times in the eighteenth century and was translated into English by the eighteenth-century poet, William Cowper.[33]

Andreini classifies *L'Adamo* as a "*sacra rapresentatione*" and structures the action according to a classical five-act pattern. That Andreini would choose to describe *L'Adamo* as a *sacra rappresentazione* is striking because the form itself inspired antitheatrical hostility. During the later Cinquecento and earlier Seicento, religious antitheatricalists remained staunchly opposed to sacred drama because it indiscriminately mixed the sacred with the profane. Carlo Borromeo condemned not only secular representations but also sacred ones precisely because their original piety had been corrupted by secular theatrical elements (e.g., comic routines).[34] In the same vein, the Jesuit Juan de Pineda attacked the theatre for mingling the laudable and scurrilous, thereby attempting to peddle vice in the costume of virtue.[35] In composing a *sacra rappresentazione*, then, Andreini actively engages a recent theatrical past in which reform-minded pastors objected stridently to the blurred boundaries between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" theatricality. Louise George Clubb rightly observes that Andreini's *L'Adamo* "is no penitent repudiation of the stage" and suggests that the play "shows the importance assumed by sacred drama in the Catholic sphere."[36] Clubb's insight notwithstanding, Andreini's *L'Adamo* lives very much in the middle distance. Though it may certainly point toward baroque religious spectacles of the 1630s and 1640s,[37] it also provokes a potent memory of friction and prohibition; it recalls the hostility of antitheatrical religion to even religious theatre. Seen in this context, the play's importance resides in its demonstration of Andreini's growing expertise at engaging conflict and staging resolution.

As a baroque religious spectacle, *L'Adamo* could in itself be the subject of an extended study in theatrical artifice and theological presentation. More helpful for this discussion will be a reflection on the play's attempts at arguing for the usefulness of the professional theatre to early modern society. As a vehicle of enlightenment, *L'Adamo* encourages its audience to allow physical theatricality to be an avenue to spiritual understanding. In this process the play

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asserts the essential place of the actress in the professional theatre and, by extension, the essential place of women in public life. Within a sacramental religious culture like Catholicism, affirming the continuity between physical and spiritual is not particularly striking. Proposing that the professional theatre is valuable because it *effects* such an experience, extending participation in this work of enlightenment to women, and doing so in an age where religious officialdom balks at the public ministries of women, these are points that underscore Andreini's creative contribution to the explicit conversation between the professional theatre and early modern culture.

In his preface to the drama, Andreini insists that his purpose in writing *L'Adamo* is enlightenment. In the same way that God scattered the darkness of the dramatist's own mind in the process of composition, Andreini hopes that his theatrical efforts will illumine the minds of his audience, that they

> . . . who do not know, might come to know what the human person was, is and shall be, and from the base consideration of these earthly things, might raise their minds to the heavenly and divine [ones].[38]

The theatricalization of this most familiar of stories aims at claiming for the professional theatre a role in "educating" society, even in religious matters.[39] Andreini wonders why the painter should be permitted to represent with color and light God as an old man, or the Holy Spirit as a dove, or the angels as winged youths, while actors are not. For Andreini claiming the *arte*'s place in the world means asserting that it does what is necessary in a way that no other art can: It represents both man and woman; it makes accessible their internal struggles via voice, movement and "all [things] human;"[40] it allows God and Lucifer to walk again, if only fleetingly, on the stage of the earthly paradise. For Andreini the theatrical experience begins on the physical stage and finds its mark in the "Theatre of the Soul" when the heart moves to an experience of enlightened felicity.[41]

L'Adamo is filled with spectacle. Music, dance, elaborate costuming, and theatrical *apparati* all aim at externalizing internal realities and entertaining the audience. The play clearly tweaks antitheatrical critics with sumptuous displays of theatrical sensuality even as it reflects the conflict between professional religion and professional theatre. It pits the dynamic creativity of God the Father against the titillating seductions of Lucifer. On the surface of things, the drama of *L'Adamo is* literally what antitheatricalists claimed all theatre to be: a *negotium diaboli,* "a transaction of the devil."[42] Though apparently evil, Lucifer's *arte* is necessary and entertaining as it guarantees the drama itself; without the cohort of demons *L'Adamo* would be not a play but an oratorio in which angelic choirs sing theological verses to the greater glory of God. Andreini insists that the theatre must be judged more by its ends than by its means; hence, he rejects the antitheatrical fundamentalism that reacts only to initial appearances.

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Even twelve years before writing *La Ferza*, Andreini is clear that the theatre must represent reality (earthly or heavenly) if it is to be in any way meaningful. It follows that the representation of human reality demands the inclusion of women. The creation of humanity—male and female—is the first major action in *L'Adamo*, and Andreini dramatizes this part of the myth in a way that unambiguously affirms the nobility of both sexes. Though he uses Genesis 2 as his source for the dramatization, Andreini respects the sense of the simultaneous creation of man and woman as presented in Genesis 1. In *L'Adamo* the creation of Eve takes place almost immediately after the creation of Adam. The man, in fact, does nothing in this play without the woman. In collapsing the time between the creation of the two beings, Andreini refuses to imply that Eve is an afterthought meant only to placate a lonely Adam. On the contrary, God conceives Eve at the very beginning of things and presents her to Adam. In a revelatory redaction of the source, Andreini has God and *not* Adam name Eve. Clearly, as far as the playwright is concerned, Eve's identity originates not in Adam but in God.[43]

Theatrically, the union of Adam (played by a man) and Eve (played by a woman) reflects the reality in which the theatregoers live. The physical embraces between Adam and Eve, embraces urged by God, ring true and natural.[44] Even more, an actor and actress costumed in body stockings to simulate nakedness make possible a sexual titillation of the audience that would not have been as widespread without the presence of a real woman. Even in the prelapsarian Eden, Andreini is unwilling to allow prudishness to rob his work of verisimilitude. The eroticism generated by such a gender-inclusive professional performance needs to be evaluated not with the simplistic rhetoric of antitheatricalists, but with the sophisticated skills of discernment cultivated by the theatre itself, skills that allow one to understand the relationship of parts to the whole, of means to the end, of the physical to the spiritual, of the transitory to the permanent.

The dramatic centerpiece of *L'Adamo*'s first three acts is the human fall from grace. Throughout most of *L'Adamo*'s first two acts, that is, after the creation of humanity in paradise, Adam and Eve have little to do except name the animals and enjoy the splendid scenery; likewise the angels do scarcely more than sing God's praises. Of course, in these activities Andreini flexes his poetic and theological muscles by composing love duets for Adam and Eve,[45] by describing paradise in vivid word-pictures, and by demonstrating in verse his familiarity with the theological attributes of God. But these moments remain essentially undramatic; they are places where spectators may linger over the sounds of words, the virtuosity of performers, and the intricacy of concepts. The character of the drama changes drastically once Lucifer begins "acting" to work the destruction of humankind through an all-out assault on Eve, the only "real" woman in the play. Though other characters in *L'Adamo* appear *as* women and are probably played by women, their "womanhood" is, in fact, only skin-deep. Most specifically, the Serpent who puts on "the face of a maiden" and Flesh who

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appears in "the semblance of a beautiful maiden" create illusions of womanhood by which Andreini engages the familiar misogynistic attacks on real women.[46] The Serpent's tongue deceives even as its body seduces people into error; likewise Flesh flatters with words and allures with beauty to bring ruin to humanity. But these figures are not real women; they are *buffoni* whose actions must be evaluated in terms of their ends—the sowing of discord and the rupturing of divine-human relationship. For Andreini, the woman Eve is, along with Adam, the recipient of the attacks against human nature; she is not their origin.

Andreini takes great pains to clarify that Eve eats the forbidden fruit because she has been worn down by Lucifer's machinations. Throughout the course of the play, Andreini has Lucifer function as a kind of demonic *capocomico*, casting demons in various roles, animating the action by articulating objectives, and orchestrating the performance of *scenarii*. In Act 1, Scenes 4 through 6, Lucifer summons a variety of pagan-named demons from the abyss and casts them as the seven deadly sins, assigning them an objective and providing them with an audience—Eve. The performance of the demonic roles must weaken Eve and jeopardize the status of the earthly paradise. Melecan, for example, must act Pride with the aim of "mak[ing] Eve complain against God because she was not born before Man;" Lurcone must act Envy so as to "make [Eve] envious for not being able to raise herself above the man."[47] Eve remains the object of a concerted demonic effort to bring about ruin via performance.

In Act 2, Scene 6, Eve finds herself in proximity to the lying and dissembling Serpent who flatters and confuses her (Fig. 2). Eventually the Serpent's performance convinces Eve to taste the apple. In 3.1, fresh from her meeting with the Serpent, Eve seeks out Adam in another part of the garden. Adam is appropriately shocked when he discovers that Eve has eaten the forbidden fruit and, despite Eve's rational arguments, initially refuses to "disobey his Maker in obeying Woman"[48] (Fig. 3). Eve, however, appeals to Adam on an emotional and physical level, manipulating him with her tears. In the end, Eve's performance literally moves Adam to taste the forbidden apple.[49]

In dramatizing the myth of Eden, Andreini engages antitheatricalist anxieties surrounding not only the seductive power of sight, the over-stimulation of the other senses, and the literally vicious education offered by the theatre, but also the threatening presence of women.[50] Religious critics of the theatre were particularly virulent in their attacks on actresses because these professional women *publicly performed* vice.[51] The following excerpt from the Jesuit Francisco Arias makes clear how religious misogyny was transposed into an antitheatrical key:

> . . . [A]nother abuse of these times [is] that in these comedies women act among men. The sacred scriptures warn us that the sight of a comely

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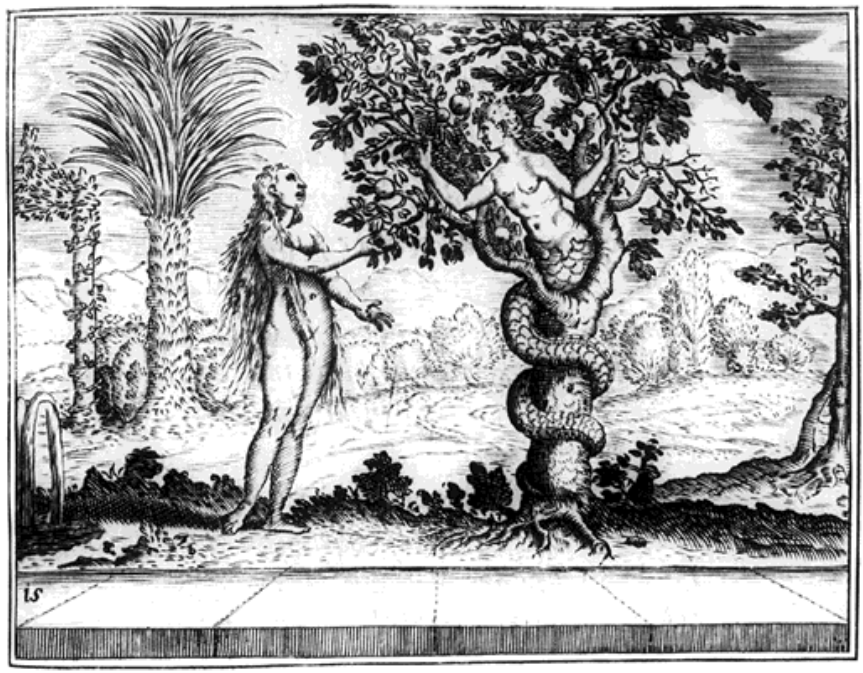

Figure 2.
Eve and the Serpent (act 2, scene 6).

> woman scandalizes and kills the hearts of many, that her pleasing discourse is like a fire that enflames hearts with dishonest love and a two-edged sword that wounds and murders the soul with death and eternal pain. This is why St. Augustine said that it is much more tolerable to hear the whistling of a basilisk than listen to the song of a woman. Though with its look the basilisk may kill the body, the woman, with her lascivious songs, makes one submit to wicked desires and thus murders the soul. Now, if to this are added the movements and gestures the women make while acting, all of which breathe and send forth inconstancy and dishonesty, what will happen to the weak hearts which look upon and hear [these women]? Will they not suffer the same fate as Holofernes who, from looking upon the gait of Judith, as the scripture says, was kept prisoner and slave of dishonest love, the cause of his temporal and eternal death?[52]

Andreini's Eve is not the stereotypical femme fatale; her intentions are simply not destructive. She, like Adam, is duped, not only by deceitful performances but also by her own naivete. After the fall, she laments, "I was a blind mole to good, and too susceptible to evil. I was an enemy to Adam and a rebel against God. And for daring to raise myself to the gates of Heaven, I have fallen to the depths of Hell."[53] Eve's experience as an audience and as a performer is limited; she neither sees nor acts well. In the rest of the play, Eve

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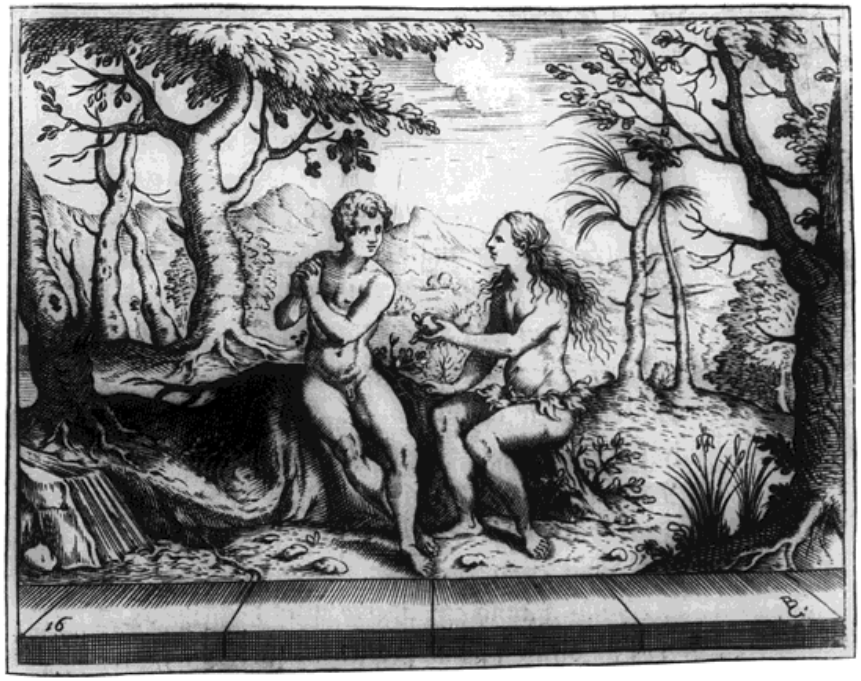

Figure 3.
Adam and Eve (act 3, scene 1).

and Adam learn to recognize the difference between good and bad performance. Thus Andreini demonstrates the professional theatre's ability to undertake reflection on real human experience.

For our purposes, Act 5 proves most pertinent as the majority of the act consists of two related morality plays in which Adam and Eve undergo temptation at the hands of Flesh and World. Clearly a foil to the real woman Eve, Flesh appears to Adam in the guise of a seductress"[54] (Fig. 4). The scene is obviously entertaining, involving as it does the sexual temptations of Flesh and Adam's feverish responses. Because Adam plays coy with Flesh, Lucifer enters the scene as a kind of facilitator in the process of seduction. He pretends that he is a heavenly Adam, a wisdom figure who tries to convince the earthly Adam to couple with Flesh. This two-on-one attack provides the opportunity for Andreini to stage a literal discernment of spirits.

Aware of the lopsided odds, Adam's guardian angel arrives on the boards to help Adam cope with the tempters. Though visible to the audience, the guardian angel remains invisible to both Adam and the demonic powers. Adam

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Figure 4.
Flesh and Adam (act 5, scene 1).

hears the angel, but does not see it; in fact, Adam apprehends the voice of his guardian in the interiority of his heart.[55] The angel functions as Adam's growing rational sense, his conscientious power of discernment, which allows him to understand that Flesh and Lucifer are acting, that their tears are not genuine but rather the "poisonous humors of Avernus."[56] At the prompting of his guardian, Adam invites Lucifer and Flesh to join with him in adoring "the Maker of Heaven and Earth," a suggestion that produces a very comic interaction between Adam and the demons.[57] In playing the scene Adam comes to understand that the actors before him are dissemblers.[58] Lucifer and Flesh are simply unable to conceal their disgust at praising God; their performances are superficial. They are nothing more than *buffoni,* bad actors incapable of sustaining the discipline of performance, whose work lacks *virtù* or efficacious power. Finally, Lucifer and Flesh abandon their costumes and return to their genuine demonic forms.[59]

Andreini then shifts his attention to dramatizing the contest between Eve and World. After a short scene in which World discourses on what human beings will eventually do to the earth and each other for the sake of riches, the demon spies Eve entering the scene. In an interesting juxtaposition of activity, the regally decked World beholds Eve as a *working* woman: "I perceive Eve

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Figure 5.
World and Eve (act 5, scene 5).

approaching, carrying on her delicate back many tall, leafy branches. Hidden in the shrubbery, I will discover what she plans to do."[60] In the scene immediately following, World and the audience discover that Eve is engaged in the task of building a home or "safe shelter"[61] (Fig. 5). Her concern is not seduction but useful work on behalf of the as yet still small human family. When confronted with the seductions of World, Eve remembers her previous experience with the Serpent and prays for divine assistance:

> Lord who created me, this being with a human face, rich with gold and laden with gems, speaks to me courteously; reveal him to me now. Lord, do not allow Eve or Man to fall precipitously once again into blind error. With a human face the alluring liar caused me to taste the forbidden apple. So now my heart fears another infernal deceit, since there is nothing else in the world except Man.[62]

World tempts Eve on the basis of appearances, again recalling both the antitheatricalist distrust of sight and Andreini's own discomfort with purely visual performance. In the place where Eve was building her refuge, World conjures a luxurious palace "with walls of silver and a roof of gold, with emerald

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pillars and doors of pearl hung on golden hinges."[63] In the face of these truly spectacular sights, Eve acknowledges both the temptation to indulgence and the desire to remain steadfast. Eve declares:

> I will not deny that my heart does feel the pricking of greatness, but if I turn my eye to the precept of my great Father, I will disdain and flee from your gifts. . . . This poor skin alone will be my mantle of gold adorned with gems. The cave will be my stately home and the troubled water with harsh herbs my beloved food and drink. No! No! I will not to the first bitter fall add likewise a second, marking a new route to the dangerous precipice.[64]

Eventually, Adam storms into the scene and urges Eve to resist World's temptation. On the one hand, Adam appears to function as Eve's help. Just as the guardian angel arrived to help Adam fend off the advances of Lucifer and Flesh, so Adam arrives to help Eve rebuff World. In this sense, Adam functions as a kind of heavenly ambassador to Eve. On the surface, the scene provides a foil to Eve's earlier performance as an infernal emissary to Adam (Act 3, Scene 1). On the other hand, however, this reading of the action is undercut by what has just preceded. Eve has *already* recognized and named her demons. She has, of her own accord, chosen the raiment of penitence. Andreini unmistakably points us to an appreciation of the enlightening effects of performances that make audiences, like Eve, more understanding and discerning. Further, Eve (unlike Flesh) is a *good* actress, purveying not only physical pleasures but rational and spiritual ones as well. Along with the rest of the theatrical company, she makes a process of enlightenment physically accessible to an audience who would otherwise be separated from these foundational events by a daunting distance of time and space.

The play ends on a consoling and optimistic note. Michael the Archangel promises Adam and Eve that they will *both* enjoy—equally it seems—God's favor in Paradise.[65] Andreini's Eve, a reflection not only of the theatrical audience but also of the professional actress, ends up a working woman who willingly endures the complications of human life and effectively straddles the distance between Eden and the real world. Though she can conjure images of the seductress, Eve is also on a par with Adam in her skill at devising poetic praises for God who "has rendered [her] an expert speaker on everything."[66] Eve actually learns from her unfortunate experience as an "audience" to Lucifer and as a primarily physical "actress" before Adam. She changes and grows (with considerably less whining than her consort); what Eve learns in her first home, Paradise, she performs in her more public encounters with the World. In the end she becomes more discerning, more skilled, more effectively eloquent in her performance of penitence, serving the play's spectators as a teacher and a model.

Reading Andreini's defense of the professional actress in the wider context of late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century religious history (a period in

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which the activity of women figures prominently) provides us with a more inclusive framework for evaluating the shifting status of the *arte* during this period. *La Ferza* finds Andreini making yet another case for his profession's value to seventeenth-century culture. Andreini's professional theatre enlightens, moving its audience from the physical to the spiritual with an immediacy unattainable by any of the other arts. It reflects and responds to society's growing instinct for verisimilitude, a verisimilitude that must find women *and* men playing on public stages. In suggesting that the efficacious exercise of the theatrical craft, by women as well as men, is the fruit of assiduous study and preparation, Andreini publicizes the actress as a model for the integration of public and private *virtù*. Even as early as *L'Adamo*, Andreini presents the oft-maligned character of Eve as a performer who grows in insight and sophistication precisely because she learns to interpret the texts of her own experience. At the same time, considering theatre history alongside religious history also allows us to situate the statements of antitheatricalists within a broader field of issues. We come to understand that the venom spewed at professional actresses by religious rigorists probably derived less from ecclesiastical obsession with unregulated sex and more from the effort to conserve traditional hierarchies of power and influence, which, in some measure at least, required the subjugation of women in public life and discourse. For religious antitheatricalists the actress was a potent symbol, albeit a negative one; hence, the attention paid her (like the attention paid Mary Ward) provides striking testimony to her growing influence in the marketplace. Most importantly, however, Andreini's efforts mark a significant moment in the interaction between the professional theatre and culture, a moment where the *arte* claims its voice and its place on the early modern stage.

Endnotes

1. Regarding the competitive rivalry between church and stage see Robert Henke, "Toward Reconstructing the Audiences of the *Commedia dell'arte*," *Essays in Theatre/Études Théâtrales* 15, 2 (May 1997): 214–215. See also Jonathan Marks, "The Charlatans of the Pont-Neuf," *Theatre Research International* 23, 2 (1998): 135. In my view religion's difficulties with the professional theatre derive just as much from practical and disciplinary concerns as theological and theoretical ones. For example, the renewed Catholic emphasis on the importance of preaching and the increased activity of traveling preachers placed clerics and *comici* in competition for audiences. The ordering of social, domestic, and ecclesiastical life rested on submission to paternal authority; authority in *commedia* troupes was often exercised by women (e.g., Diana Ponti's Desiosi) or married couples (e.g., Giovan Battista Andreini and Virginia Ramponi).

2. Ferdinando Taviani, *La Commedia dell'arte e la società barocca: La Fascinazione del teatro,* La Commedia dell'arte: Storia testi documenti, ed. Ferruccio Marotti, no. 1 (Rome: Mario Bulzoni, 1969), xlii–xliv. Religious professionals, as a matter of fact, could be staunch supporters of professional theatre. Consider, among others, Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga, a major patron of the *arte* even before his accession to the Mantuan dukedom, the Cardinal Harrach of Vienna, who invited Andreini and his Fedeli company to Austria in the late 1620s, and Cardinal Richelieu, to whom Andreini dedicated his *Teatro celeste*.

3. The phrase, *simul contemplativus in actione* derives from Ignatius of Loyola, the founder

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of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Essential to Jesuit spirituality, "contemplative in action" signals the order's insistence that the arena of prayer, contemplation, and encounter with the divine is not the monastery but the world of work. It is worth noting that the communities of women religious with an apostolic focus often modeled themselves on the Jesuits (especially Ward's English Ladies).

4. Domenico Sella, *Italy in the Seventeenth Century*, *Longman History of Italy*, ed. Denys Hay (New York: Longman, 1997), 119. Interestingly, all four of Giovan Battista Andreini's sisters became nuns.

5. On the Tridentine mission of "Christianization" see Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation*, trans. J. Moiser (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977).

6. Delumeau, *Catholicism*, 22.

7. Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 32–33. Rapley's discussion of the English Ladies is the source for these remarks (28–34). See also Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 249 on the English Ladies, and 238–239 on Merici and the Ursulines.

8. Rapley, 33. For another illuminating yet concise discussion of Mary Ward, the Ursulines and the state of women's religious life in the early modern period, see Lisa Fullam, "Juana, S.J.: The Past (and Future?) Status of Women in the Society of Jesus," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 31, 5 (1999): 5–14.

9. Anderson and Zinsser, 249.

10. On the early years of the Visitation experiment, see Rapley, 34–41. François de Sales, along with the baronne de Chanta, a founder of the Visitation congregation, proposed that the model for the congregation should be "the strong woman of the Bible." He writes in a 1609 letter to the baronne de Chantal, "'She sets her hand to important matters, her fingers grasp the spindle.' Meditate, lift up your soul to God . . . these are the important matters. But for all that, do not forget your spindle and your distaff: spin the thread of small virtues, humble yourself to do the works of charity." (De Sales quoted in Rapley, 36.) Cf. Andreini's use of the same weaving imagery in reference to the activity of the professional actress (quoted below from *La Ferza*).

11. See Ferdinando Taviani and Mirella Schino, *Il Segreto della commedia dell'arte*, 2d ed. (Florence: La Casa Usher, 1986; reprint, 1992), 335–337. Evidence of the first Italian professional actress, Lucrezia, appears in a 1564 Roman contract drawn up during the pontificate of Pius IV (Carlo Borromeo's uncle) who reigned 1559–1565 and who promulgated the decrees of Trent. Performance possibilities for women were limited in Rome, since they were not allowed to perform in ecclesiastical choirs, etc., so Lucrezia's place in a professional company remains noteworthy. During the pontificate of Pius V (1565–1572), austerity and harshness reached extreme proportions. Part of the reformist austerity included the confinement of prostitutes to particular areas of Rome and a decrease in theatrical performances.

12. See also Liza Henderson, "Acting Herself: Isabella Andreini and the Masks of a Renaissance Woman," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993, chapter 2. For more on the *cortegiane oneste* see Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976) and Lynne Lawner, *Lives of the Courtesans: Portraits of the Renaissance* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

13. For an important corrective to Taviani's hypothesis, now very widely accepted, see Virginia Scott, "Models for the Actress in Early Modern Italy and France," *Theatre Research International* 23, 2 (1998): 152–158.

14. See Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 165–166.

15. Franciotti, *Il giovane cristiano* in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 177. ". . . in biasimo delle comedie moderne . . ." ". . . adulterii, tradimenti et invenzioni diaboliche per sovvertire le donne di onore . . ." "senza bruttissime parole, et essecrabili azzioni . . ." " . . . conseguire ogni disonesto intento . . ." ". . . lascivie manifeste . . ." ". . . alla lascivia . . ." (N.B. All translations from the Italian are my own.)

16. Franciotti in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 177. "Se altro non vi fosse che la mostra sconcia che

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fanno di loro le donne per altro impudicissime, i gesti, le parole, i canti dell'istesse, basterebbono per infettare il mondo."

17. For example, he quotes the following from Ecclesiastes 7:26: "I found more bitter than death the woman who is a trap, whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters; one who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her" ("inveni amariorem morte mulierem, quae laqueus venatorum est, et sagena cor eius, vincula sunt manus illus, qui placet Deo effugiet illam, qui autem peccator est capietur ab illa"). Calling the practice of women acting with men an "abuse," Francisco Arias also rehearses the major misogynist prejudices deriving from the Christian scriptures and the writings of St. Augustine and identifies women as ambassadors of evil responsible for the downfall of humanity. Since the professional comedies give women a platform from which to speak and display themselves, contrary to the advice of the church fathers, they immediately become suspect. See Arias in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 130.

18. Franciotti in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 178. " . . . impudica e procace . . ." "ornamenti di meretrici . . ." ". . . piene di fiamma infernale . . ." ". . . ancora i più savi del mondo . . ."

19. Franciotti in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 178. ". . . possono far ardere d'impudica fiammo anco la neve . . ."

20. Giovan Battista Andreini, *La Ferza. Contra l'accuse date alla commedia* in F. Marotti and G. Romei, *La Commedia dell'arte e la società barocca: La Professione del teatro*, La Commedia dell'arte: Storia, testi, documenti (Rome: Bulzoni, 1991; reprint, 1994).

21. For example, that the *commedia* aims at pleasant instruction and that it depends upon theatrical artifice (and not contracts with the devil) for its illusory power.

22. See Marotti-Romei, 502–510. It is worth noting that the Bull of Suppression promulgated against Mary Ward's English Ladies in 1631 reflects the same sentiments publicized by antitheatrical critics. The English Ladies were condemned as "noxious weeds," as usurpers of the male prerogative to discharge the apostolic office within the church. This discharge of the apostolic office, of course, necessarily involved public presence and eloquent speech. See Rapley, 30. Andreini spends more time on the actress than he does on any other topic in *La Ferza*. His defense of the actress, here and elsewhere, functions as a summary of his defense of the theatre. I think it is important to note, however, that Andreini's defense of the actress begins from a male bourgeois moral perspective: if actresses *were* "infamous and dishonest whores" taken from stews and placed upon the stage as *comiche*, then he would likewise "blame, detest and abuse them" (" . . . infami e disoneste meretrici . . ." "le biasimo, destesto e villaneggio anch'io") (502). His defense rests on their *not* being threats to the moral and social order.

23. Anderson and Zinsser, vol. 1, 246.

24. Marotti-Romei, 503. "E certamente mirabil cosa è 'l veder una recitante (quantunque di bassi natali) or tutta seria nelle commedie diluviar profluvi d'altissimi concetti, sentenze mirabili, discorsi d'ogni qualità, d'ogni materia, e con l'avversario combattente saputo, nell'agone di scena così ben armigera, faconda dialogizare e sologizare, che ti fa creder maggiormente verace il grido delle Carmente e delle Saffo di que' prischi tempi, donne, anzi dono del cielo così pellegrino e preclaro."

25. Marotti-Romei, 504, 505. ". . . non si nate alle conocchie, a i naspi, ma sì bene a i libri, alle penne, alle vigilie ed alle noie . . ." (504) ". . . essere e più oneste e più divote . . ." (505). Compare Andreini's thought here with John Chrysostom's in a famous homily on "the kind of women who ought to be taken as wives" in which he argues that a woman's "inferior status" confines her to a restricted (i.e., domestic) sphere of activity. Chrysostom writes that "a woman is not able to hurl a spear or shoot an arrow, but she can grasp the distaff, weave at the loom; she correctly disposes of all such tasks that pertain to the household." Chrysostom quoted in Elizabeth A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church*, Message of the Fathers of the Church, ed. Thomas Halton, vol. 13 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1983), 36.

26. Marotti-Romei, 505. ". . . lubricità del gestire . . ."

27. See Marotti-Romei, 505–506.

28. See Marotti-Romei, 506–507. Andreini adds that in order to be prepared for "mortal

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accidents" ("gli accidenti mortali"), actors and actresses confess and receive communion frequently, both upon arriving at a particular place and upon departing for a new venue.

29. See Marotti-Romei, 508–509. Recall that at Isabella's death, Francesco Andreini's theatrical career came to an end.

30. See Bernadette Majorana, "Un 'gemino valor': mestiere e virtù dei comici dell'arte nel primo Seicento," *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 6 (1992): 187. On the relationship between public and private see also Maurizio Rebaudengo, *Giovan Battista Andreini: tra poetica e drammaturgia* (Torino: Rosenberg and Sellier, 1994), 68–69.

31. Marotti-Romei, 510. " . . . sì come il filosofo dice che la casa non può esser perfetta senza la conversazion della donna, e che sì come la donna è la metà della casa così le donne sono la metà della città, così il teatro non può esser riguardevole mancandovi l'ornamento maggiore ch'è la donna; e se la donna è la metà della casa e della città e qui la donna è del teatro il tutto, poiché qual più languida cosa puossi vedere che tutta d'uomini recitar una commedia? Non vedi che ci levi il verisimile, anima e cuore di questo poema, ed ogni grazia, ed ogni affetto, di questo diffetto il teatro ingombrando?"

32. Giovan Battista Andreini, *L'Adamo, sacra rapresentatione* (Milan: Bordoni, 1613). This edition of the play remains the source for the following discussion. See also Ettore Allodoli's edition of the 1613 version (Lanciano: Carabba, 1913) and William Cowper's eighteenth-century English translation, *Complete Works of William Cowper*, vol. 10 (London: Baldwin and Craddock, 1837).

33. For a résumé of the arguments regarding *L'Adamo* and *Paradise Lost*, see Bevilacqua, *GSLI* 23, 138–155, and Ettore Allodoli, "*L'Adamo* e il *Paradiso perduto*," introductory essay to *L'Adamo*, by Giovan Battista Andreini (Lanciano: Carabba, 1913), 5–12.

34. See Borromeo, *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, "De Actionibus et rapraesentationbus sacris" (1565) in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 10.

35. See Pineda in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 120.

36. Louise George Clubb, "Italian Renaissance Theatre," *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, ed. J. Russell Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 134.

37. For example, Rospigliosi's *Sant'Alessio* (1634) and Cardinal Pallavicino's tragedy *Ermengildo* (1644).

38. *L'Adamo*, preface, 2r. " . . . che non conoscono, sapessero, chi fù, chi sia, e chi sarà quest'huomo e dalla bassa considerazione di queste cose terrene, alzasser la mente alle celesti, e divine."

39. On the educational nature of Andreini's theatre see also Rebaudengo, 69.

40. *L'Adamo*, Preface, 4r. The entire passage reads: "Ma se al Pittore Poeta muto, e permesso con caratteri di colore l'esprimere l'antichità di Dio in persona d'huomo tutto canuto, e dimsotrare in bianca Colomba la purità dello Spirito, e figurare i divini messagi, che sono gli Angeli, in personal di gioveni alari; perche non è permesso al Poeta, Pittor parlante, portar nella Tela nel Theatro altro huomo, altra donna, ch'Adamo & Eva? & rappresentare quegli interni contrasti per mezo d'immagini, e voci, pur tutte humane?"

41. In the play itself this creative and transforming activity is embodied by God who descends to earth that he might "change earth into flesh, mud into man, man into a sovereign Lord, and a soul into a great Angel" (" . . . cangiar la terra in carne, il loto in huomo, / L'huomo in sovran Signore, / E'n grand'Angelo un'alma."). *L'Adamo*, Preface, 2r.

42. Interestingly, in the text of *L'Adamo* Andreini first uses the word "theatre" ("theatro") in a metaphor relating to hell. In their "entrance arias," Satan and Beelzebub bemoan their fallen state and the new creation of humanity. Beelzebub, in recalling how he and his companions have fallen into baseness from sublimity, describes their current state. They have "hands like eagle's talons, goat's feet, bat's wings, and finally [their] residence is a deep, unhappy and dark Tartarus, a theatre of anguish that turns its back on the rays of the horrid sun" ("Son d'aquila le man, di capra il piede, / L'ali di vipistrello, e al fin l'albergo / Un tartaro profondo, infausto, ed atro, / De l'angoscie theatro / Qual volge à rai del Sol horrido il tergo . . ."). *L'Adamo*, 15.

43. *L'Adamo*, 3–8.

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44. *L'Adamo*, 8.

45. Adam and Eve most often speak to one another as *innamorati*. Their flights of poetic fancy, then, are consistent with the business of the *commedia* lovers.

46. *L'Adamo*, 46, 109. " . . . di donzella il volto . . ." ". . . [sembianza] di vezzosa donzella . . ."

47. *L'Adamo*, 22. "Fate ch'Eva di Dio alto si dolga, Perche pria di quest'Huom nata non sia, / . . . e con tal voglia / Invida sia, per no poter alzarsi / Sovra de l'Huom . . . "

48. *L'Adamo*, 70. "E'n ubidire à Donna / Disubidisca al mio Fattore, à Dio."

49. Eve's looks finally put Adam over the edge; her appearance leads him to make the necessary compromises that result in his tasting the apple. "Mute, yes, but also eloquent are your looks, my love. Alas, whatever you ask you will certainly obtain; before your tongue speaks, my heart concedes" ("Muti sì ma eloquenti / Sono i tuoi sguardi amica; / Ohime quanto chiedete / Quanto quanto ottenete / Pria, che parli la lingua, e'l cor conceda"). *L'Adamo*, 73.

50. For a concise but complete overview of the theological, medical, ethical, and legal issues involving the status of women in Europe during this period, see Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A study in the fortunes of scholasticism and medical science in European intellectual life*, Cambridge Monographs on the History of Medicine, ed. Charles Webster and Charles Rosenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980; reprint, 1992).

51. See Maclean, 15–18 for a résumé of the relationship between sin and femaleness. In the main, the "specific female vices" included luxury (the excessive desire for ornamentation), vanity, pride, lechery, garrulity, and sensuality. All of these vices are actually magnified by the entire theatrical profession, and evidence of their magnification certainly appears in *L'Adamo*.

52. Arias in Taviani, *Fascinazione*, 130. ". . . [U]n altro abuso di questi tempi, che in queste comedie recitano le donne tra gl'uomini. Avisaci la sacra scrittura che la veduta della donna acconcia scandaleza et uccide i cuori di molti; che il suo ragionar piacevole è come il fuoco che accende i cuori all'amore disonesto, e che è come coltello di due tagli, che ferisce et amazza l'anima con morte di colpa e di pena eterna. Per la qual cosa disse S. Agostine che è cosa molto più tolerabile l'udire fischiare un basilisco che udire cantare una donna, perciochè il basilisco con la sua vista uccide il corpo, e la donna co' suoi canti lascivi, facendo consentrie a rei desiderii, uccide l'anima. Ora, se con questo si aggiungono i movimenti e i gesti che fanno recitando, che tutti spirano e mandano fuori leggerezze e disonestà, che effetti hanno a seguire ne' cuori deboli che le guardano e che le odono se non quello che succedette ad Oloferne dal guardare l'andare di Giudit, che come dice la scrittura rimase pregione e schiavo di disonesto amore che gli fu cagione della morte temporale et eterna?"

53. *L'Adamo*, 75. "Fui cieca talpa al bene, / Fui troppo occhiuta al male, / Fui d'Adamo nemica, / Fui contro Dio rubella; / E per osar d'alzarmi / A le porte del Cielo / A le soglie cadei del basso Inferno."

54. *L'Adamo*, 123. Flesh is described as possessing "beauty, grace, esteem, flattery, arts, and gestures" ("Beltà, grazia, valor, vezzi, arti, e gesti . . ."). These terms appear in antitheatricalist rhetoric to describe actresses. Andreini's textual glosses in Act 5, Scene 1 point the reader to the various theological passages that discuss the seductions of women (e.g., Ecclesiastes 7, 9; Romans 7; selections from fathers and doctors of the church). Again, these glosses supplement the action of Flesh, a performer in the guise of a woman, *not* Eve.

55. This makes great sense given the emphasis Andreini places on reasoned eloquence and aurality in determining the *virtù* of a performance. At one point in the scene, Adam suggests that Lucifer and Flesh may, in reality, be enemies. In response Lucifer says to Adam, "You are deprived of reason . . . " ("Di ragion privo sei . . .") (*L'Adamo*, 137). But in Andreini's universe, precisely the opposite is the case. Adam now has access to reason, not through bodily sight, but through the eloquent voice of the angel.

56. *L'Adamo*, 137. "Sono d'Averno velenosi humori"

57. *L'Adamo*, 138. " . . . il Fattor del Ciel, del Mondo." The comedy derives from the fact that such prayer would be heinous to those who hate Heaven. Yet, they attempt to go along with Adam's suggestion in order to accomplish his seduction.

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58. See *L'Adamo*, 140. "This is my fierce enemy, now I discern him well" ("Quest'è fiero nemico, ah ben lo scerno.").

59. Adam's lines indicate that there would have been a physical transformation on the stage: "Alas, what do I see? What horrendous form among those thick shrubs do the lying "heavenly citizen" and immodest lover take?" ("Lasso mè, che rimiro? / Che forma horrenda trà que' folti arbusti, / Prende il mentito cittadin celeste, / E l'impudica amante.") *L'Adamo*, 142.

60. *L'Adamo*, 148. "Eva scorgo venir, che 'l molle tergo / D'alti rami frondosi onusto porta; / Quello, che fare hor voglia / Quì scorgerò chiuso trà fronda, e fronda."

61. *L'Adamo*, 150. "Tetto sicuro"

62. *L'Adamo*, 151–152. "Signor, che mi creasti, / Questi, che ricco d'or, carco di gemme / Mi favella cortese in volto humano / Tù mi palesa homai; / Non consentir Signore, / Ch'Eva più, che più l'Huomo / Cada precipitoso in cieco errore. / Ahi, che pur volto humano / Mentitor lusinghiero, / Mi fè gustar del già vietato pomo, / Onde pur teme il coro / D'altro infernale inganno / Non v'essendo nel mondo altro che un'Huomo."

63. *L'Adamo*, 156. ". . . d'argento il muro, e 'l tetto d'oro, / Di smeraldo ogni poggio, / E sù cardini d'or porte di perle."

64. *L'Adamo*, 157. "Puntura di grandezza; ma s'io giro / L'occhio al precetto del gran Padre mio / Sdegnerò, fuggirò questi tuoi doni, / E sol povera pelle / Mi sarà manto d'or di gemme adorno; / L'antro magion superba, / La Negar non voglio che non senta il core / torbid'onda, e in un la ruvid'herba / Esca, e bevanda amata: / Nò, nò, non voglio al primo acerbo fallo / Mandar pari il secondo, e novo calle / Segnare alfin di precipicio estremo." Note that Eve is much better at this than Adam, especially since she can boast no visible otherworldly assistance. Note also that Eve is clearly a proto-Maddalena character whose penitence becomes the means of sanctification.

65. *L'Adamo*, 175.

66. *L'Adamo*, 41. "Favellatrice esperta / Ben ti rese del tutto il gran Fattore." Note that Andreini makes it very clear that this eloquence derives from no one but the Creator.

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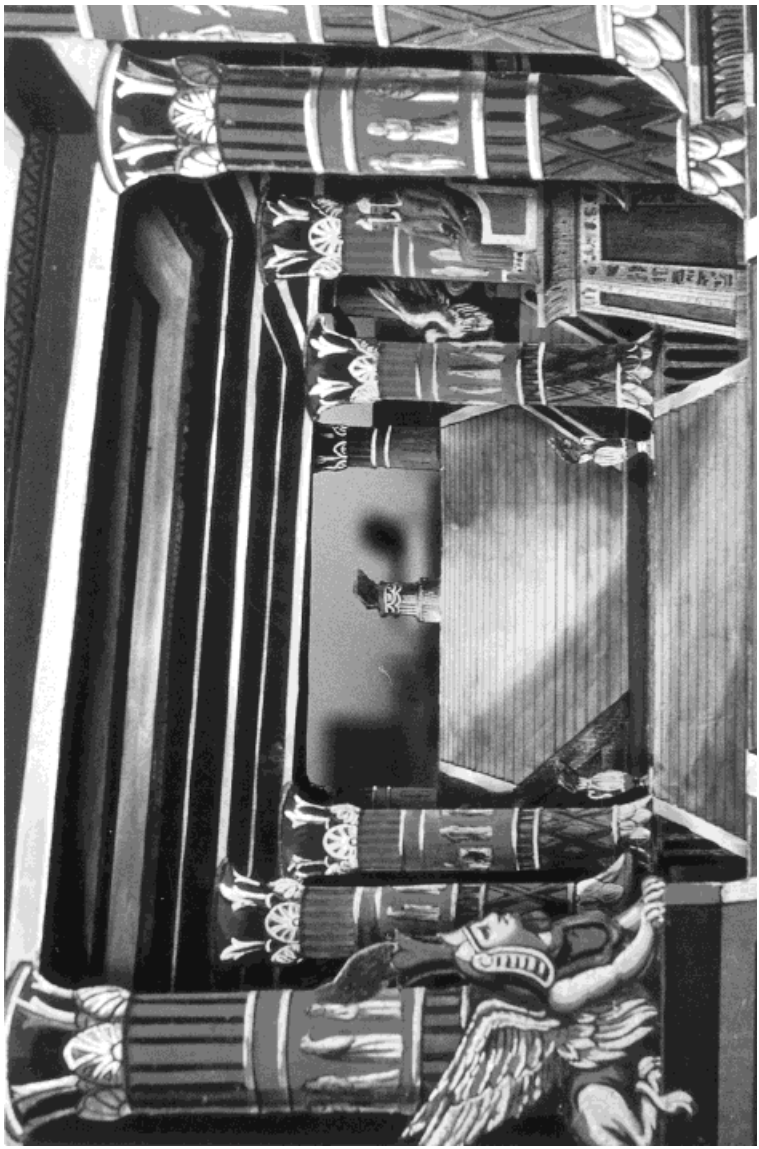

Figure 1.
Maquette for Act 1 setting for *Azaël the Prodigal*, Drury Lane, 1851. Theatre Museum, Blythe House Annex, London.

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