

## The Actator Found as First Micronaut, from *Auto de la Pasión* to Cervantine Metatheater

### El actador como primer micronauta, desde el *Auto de la Pasión* al metateatro cervantino

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#### ABSTRACT

This essay examines the “actator,” who is found in early modern Spanish theatre to be the original example of the micronaut. First, the definition of the actator will be explored, in both directions, from spectator to actator and from actor to actator, with additional information about the channel of communication between actor and spectator, and the intermediary space thereby formed, with attention paid to the glass, or fourth, wall. Second, a detailed analysis of the multiple examples of the actator in Alonso del Campo’s medieval play *Auto de la Pasión* will be given, studying both actors and spectators through the examination of the deployment of the dramatic devices, such as the monologue, in all of its sub-categories and functions. Research findings by Carmen Torroja Menéndez, María Rivas Palá, Hans-Jürgen Diller, and Cynthia Bourgeault will be referenced. Then, a cursory examination of the renaissance-baroque metatheatre of Miguel de Cervantes, specifically in the entremés «El retablo de las maravillas» and the comedia *Pedro de Urdemalas*, will offer additional examples of the early actator, including the most ambitious of all, Pedro de Urdemalas himself. Here, the investigative work by Thomas Austin O’Connor and Jean Canavaggio will be included. Finally, all of this is expected to substantiate and prove that the first micronaut is actually the actator, as found in early modern theatre of Spain.

**KEY WORDS:** actor, spectator, actator, micronaut, metatheater, dramatic device.

#### RESUMEN

Este ensayo examina el “actador,” que se encuentra en el teatro español temprano como el ejemplo original del micronauta. En primer lugar, se explorará la definición del actador, en los dos sentidos, de espectador a actador y de actor a actador, con información adicional sobre el canal de comunicación entre el actor y el espectador, y el espacio intermedio que se forma, con atención a la cuarta pared, o pared de cristales. En segundo lugar, se hará un análisis pormenorizado de los múltiples ejemplos del actador en la obra medieval *Auto de la Pasión* de Alonso del Campo, estudiando tanto a los actores como a los espectadores a través del examen del despliegue de los recursos dramáticos, por ejemplo el monólogo, en todas las sub-categorías y funciones. Se hará referencia a los resultados de las investigaciones de Carmen Torroja Menéndez, María Rivas Palá, Hans-Jürgen Diller y Cynthia Bourgeault. A continuación, un rápido recorrido por el metateatro renacentista-barroco de Miguel de Cervantes, concretamente en el entremés «El retablo de las maravillas» y en la comedia *Pedro de Urdemalas*, ofrecerá ejemplos adicionales del primer actador, incluido el más ambicioso de todos, el propio Pedro de Urdemalas. Aquí se incluirá el trabajo investigativo de Thomas Austin O’Connor y Jean Canavaggio. Finalmente, se espera que todo esto corrobore y demuestre que el primer micronauta es en realidad el actador, tal como se encuentra en el teatro temprano de España.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** actor, espectador, actador, micronauta, metateatro, recurso dramático.

In order to understand the micronaut in contemporary literature, drama, film, video, and internet, we must turn back several centuries, to study the micronaut's ancestor or predecessor, the actator. When one considers the earliest theatre in Spain, one thinks of the churces and liturgical dramas, and in each instance of medieval performance, there are both actors and spectators. Literally, there would be no reason for putting on a play, if there were no spectators. Because both groups (actors and spectators) are co-dependent, and survive, exist, and thrive because of each other, there must be a missing link, and that link is the "actator." The actator floats between both groups, and is not actually a person, but rather, an amalgam of the two: an actor plus spectator becomes an actator. In this essay, the origin of the actator will be explored, through detailed analysis of the medieval *Auto de la Pasión*, and then a cursory examination of the renaissance-baroque metatheatre of Cervantes, specifically through the deployment of dramatic devices, all thus substantiating that the first micronaut is actually the actator, as found in early modern theatre of Spain.

To begin, an actator is a hybrid figure, partially an actor and partially a spectator, and the actator embodies the specific purpose of both entities. Although I coined the neologism "actator" nearly two decades ago, as I explain in a recent article, "The theoretical underpinning of the actator is based upon the fluctuating actor-spectator relationship, as it expands and contracts, whether originating in the spectator in the real world who then partially becomes an actor, by inserting themselves into the dramatic world, or originating in the actor in the dramatic world who temporarily becomes a spectator by inserting himself into the real world," (Frye, 147). The spectator with an active imagination is able to truly believe in what he or she is witnessing on stage. Effectively, this active spectator believes that he or she has become part of the play, an actor him or herself. However, this spectator-turned-actor is still partially a spectator, so the accurate title is actator. Similarly, there is the actor, who actually becomes a spectator during a metatheatrical scene or while listening to another actor's monologue. However, this actor-turned-spectator is still partially an actor, and again, the accurate title is actator. In both cases, the actor-turned-actator and the spectator-turned-actator, they retain part of their origin, and thus are now hybrid figures, with one foot in each world, the real world and the dramatic world. Sometimes the actator is acting and at other times, the actator is spectating, or observing. Many drama specialists, and even some actors and spectators themselves, believe that there is a purportedly "glass wall" dividing the actors from the spectators. Also known as the "fourth wall," both words refer to the idea of an imaginary division between the spectators in the audience from the actors on stage. Traditionally, most assume that the spectators can "see through" this glass, or fourth, wall to the stage, and that the actors pretend that they cannot see through it to the audience. However, there are other drama theorists (such as Manfred Pfister, Keir Elam, Michael Issacharoff, Anne Ubersfeld, Jean Alter, and Marco Di Marinis), as well as some actors and spectators, that deeply explore and analyze the actor-spectator relationship and find that direct communication between these two groups is in fact possible and in many instances, quite active, and that in fact, there is no glass or fourth wall. It is the actator who proves the nonexistence of any type of wall separating the actors and spectators.

The actator effectively shatters any purported glass, or fourth, wall, between the audience and stage usually through the deployment of the dramatic devices, amongst them, soliloquies, monologues, asides, and metatheatrical situations. The effect that the functions of these devices have is such that the actors and spectators are coerced into

one another's worlds, turning both actors and spectators into actators. In some situations, it is more subtle and almost unconscious, but in other cases, it is obvious and deliberate. The actator has always existed, but has often been overlooked or ignored. In order to find the actator, one must look in the intermediary space between the dramatic world and the real world, which is created and sustained by the dramatic devices. The dramatic devices are the critical elements in launching and maintaining an express channel of communication between actor and spectator, which in turn allows this intermediary space to exist: "It is the confluence of dramatic devices, such as soliloquies, monologues, asides, and metatheatrical situations, and their impact on both the actors and spectators, basically coercing or forcing them into one another's worlds, turning them into actators" (Frye, 148). I have meticulously analyzed the use and function of each type of dramatic device in many theatre pieces of the medieval, renaissance, and baroque periods. As early as the twelfth century, dramatic devices are engaged in the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* and the objective to inaugurate communication between the actor and spectator is readily apparent, for example, in Herod's soliloquies and the three kings' monologues and asides. In renaissance drama, dramatic devices become more heavily relied upon, to build an even stronger actor-spectator relationship, such as with increased frequency of asides and soliloquies, for example, in Juan del Encina's *Églogas*. Finally, in the baroque era, dramatic devices become crucial components in the structure of nearly every *comedia*, and they have amplified in both occurrence and complication.

With the term "actator" defined, it is time to dive, like a micronaut!, into the analysis of the actator in early modern Spanish theatre. To begin, we will examine the *Auto de la Pasión*, by Alonso del Campo. In the 1977 edition of the *Auto de la Pasión*, Carmen Torroja Menéndez and María Rivas Palá claim the date of the work to be no earlier than 1486 and no later than 1499 (97). Incorporated into this 599-verse drama are a number of dramatic devices, and particularly noteworthy are the monologues and soliloquies, delivered by several main characters, who also become actators. Furthermore, the play contains possibly the first dramatic prologue (in essence, a monologue itself) in Peninsular theater. For example, in the anonymous *Auto de los Reyes Magos* and in Gómez Manrique's *Representación del Nacimiento de Nuestro Señor*, there is no semblance of a dramatic prologue. In all other known works of a dramatic nature, such as Rodrigo de Cota's *Diálogo entre el Amor y un viejo*, there are no prological speeches. In *Auto de la Pasión*, the first scene is titled «La oración en el huerto» by the editors, and it is spoken by Nuestro Señor, although he remains unnamed until verse 79. The *Auto de la Pasión* opens as follows, in the form of a monologue:

Amigos míos, aquí esperad  
mientras entro a orar al huerto,  
que mi ánima es triste hasta la muerte  
que yo e de pasar muy fuerte,  
e mi cuerpo está gimiendo  
y mi coraçon desfalleciendo.  
Velad conmigo, mis amigos,  
no me seays desconosçidos. (1-8)

In order to examine the prologue of the *Auto de la Pasión* more thoroughly, it must first be classified: it is both an informative monologue and one which encourages the

participation of the spectators through the use of direct address. They learn that Jesus is about to enter the garden in order to pray and that he is experiencing pain and sorrow. Jesus also beseeches that they stay with him and keep vigil. In terms of the written text, the question that must be asked is: whom is Jesus addressing? The spectators or the disciples (the other characters/actors)? In the first verse he calls to his friends, and if he is alone in the performance area, then it is seemingly directed to the spectators. Even if the actors playing the disciples are in the performance area with him, the spectators could still assume that Jesus's words are being directed to them. After he delivers this address, the following direction appears: "*Aquí se apartará y hincará las rodillas y diga al Padre.*" It is possible that from the beginning of a performance of the play, other actors/characters are present with him in the performance area. Nonetheless, the spectators may still feel that he is addressing them, particularly if the actor faces the audience while delivering the speech, thereby morphing the spectators into actors themselves, or rather, actators. In this case, the spectators feel that they are now part of the dramatic world, essentially actors themselves, and yet they are still spectating, so truly, they are actators. This is a key, and very early, example of the medieval micronaut.

There is an additional manner of interpreting the dramatic monologue that opens the *Auto de la Pasión*. As Diller explains in "Theatrical Pragmatics: The Actor-Audience Relationship from the Mystery Cycles to the Early Tudor Comedies," it was more difficult to establish the dramatic world in medieval theater and maintain it than it is in modern drama. First, there were no separate theaters for the performances; furthermore, there were no curtains to disconnect the dramatic action from the world of the spectators. During medieval performances, the spoken word was crucial for the spectator's capacity to forget about the real world because there was very little scenery or lights to assist in establishing the dramatic world (156-57). Diller defines the three types of relationships between the dramatic world and the actual world. The "straddling" prologue occurs when characters seemingly belong to both of the worlds (158), as does the actator. In the "framing" classification, the actor obviously belongs to the real world, but he is addressing the spectators at the opening of the play, often to explain the plot and to beseech them to behave during the performance (158). In the "homiletic" type of relationship:

the character, as distinct from the speech, does not as unambiguously belong to the dramatic world as in the case of the 'straddling' type. The Word, the Flesh and the Devil, God and the Vices and Virtues belong to medieval man's ordinary world as much as they do to the dramatic world of the plays. And what such figures say is often to be understood as literally true in the ordinary world as well. The only element of fiction is that the speaker *is* Reason or God or whatever. (158-59)

Thus, in the "homiletic" prologue of the *Auto de la Pasión*, Jesus (and the actor playing his character) belongs to the real world and what he says on stage is factual in the world of the spectators as well. The actor is of course representing Jesus, but the words are true, and seemingly, this points to Jesus being an actator himself, with a foot in each world now, dramatic and real. The prological monologue seeks to remind the audience that what they are witnessing is the exact same action that occurred centuries earlier, before Jesus's crucifixion. In essence, Jesus informs the audience that he wants every person to become his follower, whether actor or spectator.

With the prological monologue of the *Auto de la Pasión* already offering

multiple examples of the actator (the actor playing Jesus and all of the spectators willing to be roped into the dramatic world, which is blurring with the real world because of the topic of the monologue), the discourse itself must be examined. Carmen Torroja Menéndez and María Rivas Palá explain that the first scene of the *Auto de la Pasión*, until the angel enters, “sigue fielmente el texto evangélico, tomando incluso frases completas casi al pie de la letra” (99). However, John’s Gospel narrative does not mention the “Agony in the Garden” scene at all, but the other three evangelical texts do. The words of the prologue are based upon those found only in the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark: “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me,’” (Matt. 26.36-38). Alonso del Campo appropriates the words from the Bible and transforms their configuration into an entirely spoken form. While directly addressing the listeners, who are both spectators (really now actators, believing themselves to be part of the play) and other characters (who have become actators because they are spectators listening to Jesus’s monologue), Jesus speaks nearly the same exact words as in the Gospel. The written impressions of his state of being from the Bible are amplified in the verbal monologue. Any spectator presumably well-versed in the New Testament would have recognized the words, or at least have been familiar with the scene itself.

Immediately after this opening monologue, Jesus moves away from the disciples and he prays alone to his Father. According to Cynthia Bourgeault, prayer is one of the four vehicles by which a liturgical drama builds tension and energy: “[prayers] frequently take on a larger than life quality, pointing beyond the limits of the theatrical artifice.... these and other such instances transport the play -for their duration at least- directly into the sphere of worship” (147). The prayer which Jesus delivers is in the form of a monologue: although no one on stage is visibly listening to him, he is directly addressing God, who according to Christian doctrine, is everywhere at all times, and the spectators (really now actators) who are present, too. Thus, in the performance context, the prayer is technically soliloquial, since Jesus is alone, but in content it is monological, with God listening (as well as the actators):

Padre mío piadoso,  
oye la mi oración  
y dale, Señor, rreposo  
aqel dolor temeroso  
que cerqa mi corazón;  
hazme, Señor, consolado  
que tengo fatiga fuerte  
que me siento muy turbado  
que me tiene atribulado  
el angustia de la muerte. (9-18)

Jesus is beseeching God to comfort him, and the detailed description of his emotional and mental state in this portion of his prayer creates an internal monologue. It allows the spectators to become cognizant of the interior state of being of the character Jesus, recognizing and identifying with him, thereby solidifying their status as actators. For medieval spectators, when the Crucifixion had taken place nearly 1400 years earlier,

and for today's spectators, more than 600 years past the medieval era, the importance of seeing, and believing in, an immediate connection with Jesus cannot be overemphasized.

After praying for the first time, Jesus delivers a second monologue, this time to his disciples, the other characters. They have been sleeping and Jesus awakens them saying:

Nunca podistes velar  
vna sola ora comigo,  
amigos, quered orar  
y bien despiertos estar  
por que sienta yo lo que digo;  
vn escándalo avrés fuerte,  
por ende estad contemplanado  
y vuestro seso despierte,  
que la ora de mi muerte  
sabed que se va açerqando. (39-48)

In this combined informative and actional monologue, Jesus rouses his disciples with powerful words and beseeches them to stay alert and to pray. The final words of the passage mark the first time that Jesus reveals to the disciples and the spectators that his death is imminent. All spectators who have become emotionally involved in the dramatic action are now officially part of the play, as actators, and it begs the question for our contemporary era: at the processions for Holy Week, all across Spain and other countries, and at the reading of the Passion at Catholic Masses everywhere around the globe, are the spectators really only observing, or are they becoming one with the dramatic action? If so, they are actators, or in today's world, micronauts: through video, film, internet, or any contemporary medium.

When Jesus finishes his second prayer to God, he sees his disciplines sleeping again. Rather than awakening them, he commences his third, and final, monological prayer:

Padre, si as ordenado  
que de todo en todo muera,  
que se cunpla tu mandado  
pues ser por ti rremediado  
el linaje vmano espera. (59-63)

This informative monologue is also directed to the spectators because although they are familiar with the story of the Passion, it is here that Jesus states that the human race will be redeemed, and as actators, the spectators will believe Jesus is speaking to them. For the direct addressee God, it is an actional monologue because Jesus says that it shall be the Father that saves mankind. In each of the Gospels, Jesus repeats nearly the exact same words, or else it is stated that he does. Therefore, Alonso del Campo utilized poetic license to elaborate on those words and to expand upon what Jesus may have spoken in that particular state of mind, in order to break the fourth, or glass, wall, and rope the spectators into the play. Active spectatorship is enhanced participation in the dramatic action, and that is what leads directly to spectators essentially becoming

actators, thereby also expanding the intermediary space between the real and dramatic worlds.

Immediately following the final prayer of Jesus, an Angel appears and speaks with him. In the 30-verse monological address, the Angel informs Jesus that the Father never responded to his prayers because there was no way to remedy Jesus's plight. The Angel reminds him that he was sent into the world to redeem the human race, and this message serves as a reminder to the actators, too: as spectators in the audience, they are the human race, and they will be saved, too. Furthermore, Jesus is told that he will suffer even more and then the story of his Passion is foretold. Jesus and the spectators are told of the future development of the action of the play. This serves to heighten the dramatic tension and emotional energy in the *Auto de la Pasión*, thereby further capturing the spectators, to pull them into the dramatic world as actators. The Angel states:

Primero serás prendido  
de los que oviste enseñado,  
de los cuales escopido  
as de ser y escarneçido  
y cruelmente ofensado  
de los judaycos varones,  
sofrirás a sin rrazón  
mill cuentos de sinrazones,  
por que ynfinitas pasiones  
consiste en tu Pasión. (84-93)

This portion of the monologue is both descriptive and actional. The Angel amplifies the information offered immediately before this passage, by stating who will accuse Jesus, why he will suffer, and the purpose which his death will serve. By hearing this information in advance, the spectators will not have to focus their attention on following the development of the plot, but rather, they will be able to weave through the characters' words and their emotional states (as some of the world's first micronauts), thereby stepping further into the dramatic world as actators.

The fourth scene of the *Auto de la Pasión* consists entirely of an 89-verse monological discourse delivered by Peter. Above the opening words is written: "*Sant Pedro [y] el Pilato*" (168), and then the speech begins:

¡Ay cuytado pecador!  
¿qué haré, desanparado?  
pues negué tan buen Señor  
mucho me syento culpado;  
¿quándo seré perdonado  
deste pecado tan fuerte?  
pues que le tratan la muerte  
que muera cruçificado.  
¡Ay dolor! (221-29)

This portion of the speech is monological because as Peter laments, Pilate is present in

the performance area as well, and as the monologue progresses, the actor portraying Pilate becomes an actator (as a spectator of Peter's microperformance of the monologue). Regarding the presence of Pilate, Torroja Menéndez and Rivas Palá state: "Podríamos pensar que se trata de un error si no fuera porque la mención de Pilatos se repite al comienzo de la escena quinta, el planto de San Juan, que tiene muchos puntos en común con el de San Pedro, donde tampoco habla Pilatos," (100). Peter's monologue is an uninterrupted flow of private thoughts which he expresses externally: he grieves aloud for having denied Jesus. This internal monologue reveals his emotions of guilt and remorse to the spectators, who as actators or micronauts, feel connected to Peter and part of the dramatic action, perhaps even feel like Peter's accomplices or confidantes.

Jesus's crucifixion is not performed on stage. Immediately following Pilate's sentencing of Jesus, the dramatic action leaps ahead to a scene between Mary and John, who delivers the following monologue:

Leuantad vos dende, Señora,  
e andad luego conmigo,  
que non sabedes vos agora  
el mal que vos es venido,  
el vuestro Hijo mucho amado  
los judíos le prendieron  
e anlo tanto atormentado  
fasta en † [cruz] lo poner,  
e llagáronlo a tan fuerte  
que non vos lo puedo contar,  
e fasta le dar la muerte  
allá en el monte Calvar. (510-21)

John's monologue is commentative for the spectators and informative for Mary, who becomes an actator while listening. The actor playing the role of Mary momentarily becomes a spectator for the duration of the monologue, and hence, the accurate term is actator. The spectators already know that Jesus is to be crucified, so John's discourse serves to add to the mounting dramatic tension. It is informative for Mary, however, because this is the first time that she learns of the torment which her son is presently enduring.

After Mary responds to John, he commences another monologue, and this one is commentative for all of the listeners. John elaborates on the situation first by offering his own reflections:

Qué mal recab<a>do posystes  
en vuestro Hijo, Señora.  
¡O qué gran crueldad<ad>, Señora!  
rastros claros halarés  
por el qual mi alma llora,  
que su sangre es guyadora  
y por ella os giarés,  
por que tanta le an sacado



los que oy le atormentaron,  
 que por doquier que ha pasado  
 todo el suelo está vañado  
 fasta donde lo pararon. (530-41)

The descriptions that John offers are “qué gran crueldad” (532) and how his soul cries for Jesus. John’s monologue is also actional for Mary: he tells her how she can find the location where Jesus has been taken, by following the path of his blood. This portion of the monologue is also descriptive, as in the verses “por que tanta le an sacado / los que oy le atormentaron,” (537-38). John’s words to Mary regarding the crucifixion of her son and the gruesome depiction of the blood of Jesus bathing the ground and forming a trail is not in the Gospel narrative, and thus, for the spectators, it is of noteworthy import; for the more active spectators, willing to participate in the emotional aspect of the play, they are actators, grieving along with Mary and John.

The last scene of the *Auto de la Pasión* consists of Mary’s lament. There are no indications as to whether there are any other characters with her, and thus her speech may be considered a soliloquy by context. However, in the second stanza, she will address her son Jesus, who has died, and therefore it is a monologue in content. Mary’s discourse opens as follows:

Amigas las que paristes  
 ved mi cuita desigual,  
 las que maridos perdistes  
 que amastes y quesistes  
 llorad conmigo mi mal;  
 mirad sy mi mal es fuerte,  
 mirad qué dicha la mía,  
 mirad qué captiva suerte,  
 que le están dando la muerte  
 a vn Hijo que yo tenía. (542-51)

In the opening lines of her monologue, Mary appeals to the spectators to share her grief and sorrows, and any spectator who had lost a loved one, particularly a child, would surely commiserate, and all could empathize with her in the loss of Jesus. Essentially, all spectators might be actators by this point in the play. Mary externalizes the extreme sentiments that she is feeling: her anguish, sorrow and misery. The internal monologue reaches its emotional height in the following verses, meant to rope the spectators into the actions and emotions of the play and its characters:

¡O sagrada hermosura  
 que así se pudo perder!  
 ¡O dolorosa tristura!  
 ¡O madre tan syn ventura  
 que tal as podido ver!  
 ¡O muerte que no me entierra  
 pues que della tengo hambre!

¡O cuerpo lleno de guerra!  
 ¡O boca llena de tierra!  
 ¡O ojos llenos de sangre! (582-91)

Mary's vocalized expressions shift their focus from Jesus to herself in verse 585. She is experiencing such intolerable distress that death seems to be the only solution, but even that has not yet arrived to comfort her. In the final three verses, Mary returns to her lament of the loss of her son. The words she speaks encompass the entire life of Jesus: he came to earth so that the human race could be saved; he fought against non-believers constantly, and was crucified by them; before he died, at the Last Supper he gave the disciples his body and blood for their own mouths; and at last, he closed his eyes and died. If this final remembrance of the Savior does not get through emotionally to a spectator, to bring him or her into the play as an actator, nothing else will.

The *Auto de la Pasión* closes with what Torroja Menéndez and Rivas Palá call the "Fragmento suelto" (180), which is delivered by Mary. The editors also explain: "Son ocho versos muy irregulares en boca de la Virgen que llora la muerte que va a recibir su Hijo, a diferencia de la escena octava en que parece haber muerto ya el Señor" (p. 102). In this monologue addressed to her son, Mary cries out:

¡O yjo mío!  
 ¡O mi dulce amor!  
 ¿quál rrazón sufre  
 que vaes vos a morir  
 y quede yo byua?;  
 por Dios vos rruego, señores,  
 que me matés por no byua  
 con tan grande dolor. (593-99)

In the Gospel narrative, Mary does not express her affliction at such great length. In this final speech, which may be considered the epilogue of the *Auto de la Pasión*, Mary does externalize her feelings of intense anguish. In this prayer to him, she wishes to die alongside her son because she does not believe that she can live through this agony. This is a final appeal to the spectators to share her pain and to be profoundly affected by the Passion of Jesus. This discourse serves an epilogical function, that of offering a formal conclusion to the play, albeit a sorrowful one.

It is apparent that in the *Auto de la Pasión*, Alonso del Campo develops the use and function of dramatic devices, as seen in their slowly increasing complexity. First, there is a monological prologue which can be interpreted as directly addressing the spectators. Secondly, there are numerous monologues that are extensive and growing more complex in nature, as compared with those in the slightly earlier *Auto de los Reyes Magos* and *Auto de la huida a Egipto*. Additionally, this is the first time that the notion of prayer as a monological soliloquy is brought to the foreground, thereby creating a new category of the soliloquy and another option for drawing spectators into the dramatic world as actators. Finally, there is a brief epilogical monologue that, like the prological sequence, balances the play, and together they distinctly mark the opening and closing of the dramatic world for the spectators.

As we move past medieval dramatic texts, let's begin with the género chico, or the short dramatic texts of renaissance and baroque theatre, while continuing to examine the early examples of actators, the precursor of the micronauts. There are églogas by Juan del Encina, pasos by Lope de Rueda, and loas, jácaras, y mojigangas by other secondary writers. Many critics consider Juan del Encina to be the "Father of Spanish Theater," and perhaps that is the case, particularly since he is among the first well-known Spanish playwright. We still hear his églogas today, set to classical music pieces for concerts. In part, to develop his format for the entremés, Cervantes turned to several texts by him, particularly the last few églogas. Juan del Encina's dramatic texts contain various examples of dramatic devices, all pointing to the intention to drag the spectators into the dramatic world as actators. For example, his *Égloga primera* was written in honor of the Duque and Duquesa de Alba, and it was quite modern in its invention, incorporating the two real people into the play by name. Not only were they spectators at the premiere of this play, but they are also actators, because they form part of the dramatic world. In *Égloga primera*, all of the other characters are pastor-bobos, or as Manuel Diago classifies them, "un tipo burlesco básico," (54). The first shepherd Juan enters and speaks directly to the Duque and Duquesa de Alba, as well as to all of the spectators, thereby shattering the glass wall and rendering them all actators. An analysis of Juan's language demonstrates his lowly station in life (he speaks sayagués, the pastoral dialect from the Salamanca region), and like the future gracioso in most comedias, it is often their words and idiomatic expressions that evoke laughter from the audience, allowing them to feel part of the dramatic world. It had been postulated and is now accepted by most critics that this shepherd's role was first played by Juan del Encina himself, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano asserts: "His manipulation of the rustic is complex: he identifies himself with the shepherd's inferior position in the social hierarchy, but as the creator of a comic figure whose speech and manners are held up for ridicule before an aristocratic audience he simultaneously distances himself from the character," (146).

Juan del Encina's later dramatic texts, such as *Égloga décimocuarta* or *Égloga de Plácida y Vitoriano*, contain further evidence of the rapidly developing theory of the role of the actator. The *Égloga de Plácida y Vitoriano* opens with a prologue delivered by the cestero Gil, in which he welcomes the spectators, promises to entertain them, and then summarizes the play's plot. From the first opening lines of the play, the audience is pulled into the dramatic world. Later in the baroque comedias, the gracioso always entertains the spectators, occasionally offers information about the plot or recaps the dramatic action, and in some texts, the gracioso opens the dramatic action with a prological sequence. Immediately following Gil's prologue, Plácida enters and commences a 167-verse soliloquy. Until the conclusion of the discourse, it is primarily a revelatory soliloquy in which Plácida expresses her sorrows and misfortune aloud. Her emotional outburst reaches its pinnacle in the following stanza:

¡Sin remedio son mis males!  
 Sólo Dios curarlos puede,  
 porque son tantos y tales,  
 que de crudos y mortales  
 no ay remedio que les quede,  
 ni ventura;  
 sino sólo sepultura,  
 que en partir se me concede. (233-40)

The audience, and particularly the female spectators, can relate quite clearly to Plácida's state of mind, and they become actators, having been effectively drawn into the play. Shortly thereafter, Plácida's discourse becomes an actional soliloquy in which she states her intention to leave, and then she concludes:

Yo me vo. Quedaos a Dios,  
palacios de mi consuelo;  
de aquel amor de los dos  
dad testimonio entre nos,  
no tengáys ningún recelo.  
¡Los clamores  
de mis penas y dolores  
suenen tierra, mar y cielo! (249-56)

In the preceding verses of the soliloquy, Plácida convinced herself that to depart was her only option, and this portion of the actional soliloquy describes the action itself to the spectators. The entire soliloquy is important to the structure of the play because it sets the tone of the play and explains in detail Plácida's emotional state to the spectators, allowing them feel like her accomplices and intimate friends. Immediately after delivering this speech, Plácida does in fact leave.

Vitoriano then enters and commences his own soliloquial discourse, in which he initially bemoans the departure of Plácida, as any male spectator in the audience would do if his beloved abandoned him, and then Vitoriano decides to seek advice from a friend. Again, the spectators turned actators respond to this type of action, obtaining solace and comfort. In the actional portion of the soliloquy that follows his vocalization of internal feelings of distress and sorrow, Vitoriano declares:

Ora me determino  
a Suplicio yr a llamar,  
y éste es el mejor camino.  
Siempre me fue buen vezino,  
dél me quiero [concejar]  
que es discreto,  
amigo leal, secreto,  
que él me puede consolar. (313-20)

In this actional portion of the soliloquy, not only does Vitoriano inform the spectators of his decision to visit his friend Suplicio, but he gives additional details such as the route that he is following and the background of his friendship with Suplicio. Geographical details, such as mentioning the roads, broaden the dramatic space in the minds of the spectators, permitting them to feel that they are present there, too.

More specifically, just like the future *graciosos* of the *comedia*, Gil reappears at a moment of extremely high dramatic tension for the spectators: Vitoriano was about to be unfaithful to Plácida but then realized that she was his true love. However, at the same time, it is discovered that she has disappeared, and the spectators/actators are as desperate as Vitoriano. To relieve their tension, Gil and another shepherd offer a comic

interlude (much like the forthcoming pasos by Lope de Rueda): they fiercely play dice, Gil loses, and he has to give one of his prized baskets to Pascual. While being entertained in the dramatic world, the spectators – now actators – are momentarily relieved of their concern for both Plácida and Vitoriano. In the following scene, Vitoriano implores all of the listeners, which includes Suplicio and the spectators, never to forsake their love for someone, or else they will suffer like him. Furthermore, this entire segment of three monologues, which shows Vitoriano's deep, undying feelings for Plácida, will underscore the sadness when Vitoriano later finds her dead. Having heard Vitoriano express his emotions earlier, perhaps the actators will have more pity for him.

One of the more complex soliloquies in the *égloga* is Plácida's 94-verse revelatory, commentative, and actional soliloquy. It opens as a revelatory discourse because she discloses her emotions to the spectators: "Soledad penosa, triste, / más que aprovechas me dañas" (1216-17). She bemoans her loss of Vitoriano's love and she compares her situation to those of other famous figures, including Medea and Dido (1275-76). The descriptive passages of the soliloquy form the commentative portion of the discourse. Plácida vocalizes her internal feelings and the spectators, really now actators who consider themselves to be her allies, have the opportunity to hear her in depth, and painful, self-description. As the soliloquy develops, Plácida makes the decision to commit suicide. Before she stabs herself to death, she encourages herself to perform the act by exclaiming:

No te turbes mi embaraces,  
recobra, Plácida, fuerças;  
cumple que te despedaces  
y con la muerte te abrases;  
deste camino no tuerças.  
Mano blanca,  
sey muy liberal y franca,  
en [herir] que ya te esfuerças. (1296-1303).

In the actional part of the soliloquy, Plácida chooses words of persuasion and convinces herself to go through with the suicide. Furthermore, by speaking aloud, she allows the spectators the opportunity to hear the interior motivations of someone in such a desperate emotional state. This discourse permits the audience to understand why, in her own reasons, she will commit suicide. Literally, as actators, they have the opportunity to swim like micronauts in Plácida's psyche. The lengthy soliloquy that reveals her heart-wrenching emotions, her desperate feelings, and the ultimate decision to kill herself heightens the dramatic tension inherent in the moment of the stabbing. The words spoken prior to her death have already awoken the spectators' sympathy and sadness.

The scene following Plácida's soliloquy is that in which Vitoriano and Suplicio search for Plácida. During this scene, Vitoriano delivers a lengthy (101 verses), descriptive monologue that is written in the form of an echo, in that the first word of the following line repeats the final syllable(s) of the preceding line, thus creating an echo-like sound. His discourse reaches its emotional apogee in the following passage:

¡Yo

no sé para qué me guardo!  
 Ardo  
 de suerte que me refrió;  
 frío  
 que me abrasa yo consiento;  
 siento  
 los *contrarios* que me *aquexan*;  
 quexan  
 de la muerte que me acabe. (1403-12)

The echoing of the previous word in each line lends a wistful quality to the monologue. The sound underscores the yearning lurking behind Vitoriano's words, a desire for his love, Plácida. On another note, the echo monologue can be interpreted as an attempt to simulate how Vitoriano's words would sound if indeed he were in the mountains, rather than on a stage. This of course adds to the "reality" of the dramatic space for the spectators/actators.

Immediately thereafter, Suplicio and Vitoriano come across Plácida's deceased body. Vitoriano cries out:

¡Desdichado, yo soy muerto,  
 si buena suerte no adiestra!  
 ¡O, maldita mi ventura!  
 Cierto es ella; ¡muerta está!  
 ¡Oy entro en la sepultura  
 lo menos de mi tristura!  
 Para más mal, basta ya.  
 Mi dolor  
 ya no puede ser mayor.  
 ¡Ay, que el alma se me va! (1442-51)

This is the first of only two internal monologues in the entire *égloga*. (The second is delivered by Vitoriano as well.) The monologue gives Vitoriano a vehicle in which to vocalize the inner emotions that he is presently experiencing, and he believes that he is in the most tremendous pain conceivable. His words are meant to evoke sympathy from the spectators, and they allow the spectators to enter his mind and to witness firsthand how someone reacts to finding their beloved deceased. Since the audience has already been pulled into the dramatic world as actators, they feel incredibly close to Vitoriano, too. Shortly after delivering his internal monologue, Vitoriano realizes that death is his only option, and this gives the spectators insight into the next development of the plot of the play.

As Vitoriano's discourse continues, the parody of the prayers and psalms is sustained throughout the speech. Furthermore, there are instances in which he adapts the words of Christ:

Mis entrañas  
 sienten *congoxas* estrañas,  
 mis huessos son *conturbados*.

Et anima mea está  
 muy turbada y aflegida;  
 nadie consuelo le da,  
 que dessea salir ya  
 y dexar aquesta vida. (1742-49)

In the commentative portion of the monologue, Vitoriano explains how his loss of love affected him:

Laboravi en mi gemido  
 y mis lágrimas bañaron  
 mi lecho, que no he dormido  
 después que triste, perdido,  
 mis amores me dexaron. (1769-73)

These words underscore both Plácida's and his own previous sufferings as displayed in the *égloga*. The spectators are now treated to an in-depth narration of how an irreclaimable love can destroy someone's life. Vitoriano's lengthy discourse concludes as a direct address to his deceased love, Plácida, in the form of an actional monologue in which he explains his intention of killing himself so that he can be with her. Of course, the actional monologue also informs the spectators of Vitoriano's plans, and thus, the privilege of being part of the dramatic world as actators is proven to be stressful and heartbreaking sometimes, such as here.

Written from the mid 1490s to approximately 1514 (probable publication date of his *Égloga de Plácida y Vitoriano*), Juan del Encina's pastor-bobo characters in the *Églogas* precede the asinine, comical characters found in Lope de Rueda's *Pasos*. A paso is a brief comic sketch usually depicting a ridiculous or grotesque situation, with mostly lower class characters. Lope de Rueda wrote many pasos, which were used mainly to entertain the audience between acts or scenes of a full-length play. According to Listerman, "the interludes were an integral part of the total performance. If they were successful insofar as they amused and entertained the audience, they served to defuse any boredom or indeed antagonistic reactions that might have been raised by the more serious or ponderous main action," (24). As a dramatic device themselves, the pasos allow dramatic time to elapse between the scenes or acts of a play. Another function of the pasos is to relieve critical dramatic tension.

In his introduction to a collection of the *Pasos*, José Manuel Blecua explains: "La acción de estas pequeñas escenas es muy elemental, y queda siempre o casi siempre reducida a una broma que gastan a un bobo o criadillo.... Otras veces se escenifica un cuentecillo, como en «Las aceitunas», o un sucedido real, como en «El convidado»," (15). Like Encina's pastor-bobos from the past and the future, baroque graciosos, the rustic, foolish characters in Lope de Rueda's pasos always find themselves serving a master; they are perpetually hungry and in search of food; they never have any money; they tell scores of jokes, ranging from sexual to scatological; they play tricks on each other and on the other characters; and they often find themselves at the expense of others' jokes. The pasos are quickly paced, with much lively dialogue, cacophonous sound effects, tricks, squabbles, fights, and preposterous accidents. For example, in «Los criados», Luquitas and Alameda secretly gorge at a bakery, forget to do their master's errand, return home, but only to have missed lunch there (in addition to being punished for the uncompleted errand). In «Pagar y no pagar», Samadel steals money from the simpleton Cebadón, who later beats up Samadel and, with the help of his

master, gets back his money (which of course was a pitifully small amount, anyway!). These situations are examples of the typical humiliating mishaps and silly pratfalls that will happen to the baroque *graciosos*. Lope de Rueda was surprisingly versatile in the theatrical world: he had impressive managerial skills in directing theatrical companies, in addition to being a dramatist, actor, and choreographer.

In many of the *pasos*, Lope de Rueda makes exquisite use of the dramatic aside. In the collection titled *El deleitoso* (1567), the first *paso* is «Los criados» and it contains two series of dialogical asides. The servants have come home late and their master Salcedo inquires as to what caused their delay. The servants speak in asides:

ALAMEDA. (¿Cómo me dijistes de ante, Luquillas?)

LUQUITAS. (Que había gran prisa en las cebollas y el queso.)

ALAMEDA. (¿Cuáles cebollas ni queso? Yo no vi tal.)

LUQUITAS. (Dilo tú así, porque no nos riña más.)

ALAMEDA. (¡Ah! ¿Por eso es? Pues tú ten cuenta que, si me errare, de tirarme de la halda.) (68)

The conversation itself forms one entire aside. The character Salcedo cannot hear it, but the spectators can: the discourse underscores exactly how much of a buffoon Alameda is. Luquitas had already explained what Alameda should tell the master, but Alameda forgot. Moments later, when Alameda is asked by Salcedo about the delay, he still can not get the story right about the onions and cheese. By now, the audience is in an uproar, laughing at the stupidity of the servant. The dialogical aside enhances the actor-spectator relationship in that the audience is connected to the servants because they have heard every shred of speech, whereas the master has not.

Mainly, however, critics point to Lope de Rueda and his *paso* as the principal origin of Cervantes's *entremés*. Certainly, Lope de Rueda built upon the somewhat earlier foundation of Juan del Encina, adding more characterization, more farce, and in short, simply greater buffoons, as well as more fully developed situations of actor-spectator communication, leading to additional instances of actatorship. Similarly, Cervantes constructed the format for his *entremeses* by amplifying and intensifying the salient features of Lope de Rueda's *pasos*. Not only are the *entremeses* even more farcical, they are incredibly stinging for their social critique and cultural bite, and the use of metatheater by Cervantes is far more complex and advanced. In «El juez de los divorcios,» for example, we see a litany of archetypal characters of society parade by: the dirty old man, the overweight soldier, and the stupid surgeon, and there are several layers of spectatorship amongst the characters/actors, in addition to the “real” spectators themselves: the judge and other members of the court are spectators, watching and listening to the disgruntled couples' complaints. In «El retablo de las maravillas,» Cervantes's most famous *entremés*, the exaggerated animation of the “spectators” (who are actually the other characters in the play) called for in the embedded stage directions during the *retablo* itself, push the comical aspect of the earlier *paso* to its limits, as well as the idea of metatheater and spectator participation. Whereas Lope de Rueda did not generally comment on social values of the time, in this *entremés*, Cervantes certainly does, not only to point out the obsession with *limpieza de la sangre* and legitimacy of heirs, but also to indicate the hypocrisy thereof by forcing everyone to prevaricate, all throughout the metatheatrical situation.

In the compendium of dramatic texts written by Cervantes, nearly every play includes a metatheatrical situation, and the characters participate either willingly or simply unknowingly, and thus become actators. In some cases, the characters



themselves design and construct the metatheatrical circumstance during the plays, whereas in other instances, the metatheatrical situation develops as a result of the dramatic action. Some of the metatheatrical situations are of short duration, lasting only a few verses, while others are constructed early on and endure until the conclusion, thereby forming the framework of the plays. There are several cases of role-playing and both multiple and mistaken identities. Also, there is literally a play-within-the-play. In terms of the spectators, metatheater has several functions in the Cervantine plays. First, in some situations, it gives the spectators information unknown to other characters. Second, metatheater is used to reveal secret identities. Third, metatheater greatly increases the dramatic tension for the spectators. Finally, the metatheatrical situations in their totality develop the communicative link between the actors and spectators, thus displaying metatheater's most important function in Cervantes's plays, that of mediating and nearly forcing the spectators to become actators. Without the use of metatheater, the Cervantine dramatic texts would not function so brilliantly, and the actors would not become actators, nor would the spectators become actators, either. Herein lays the genius of Cervantes, the blurring of the boundaries between the real world and the dramatic world, even moreso than the medieval and renaissance playwrights who preceded him.

In «El retablo de las maravillas,» two con-people, Chirinos and Chanfalla, arrive in town and convince the governor and his people to allow them to put on a puppet show. It is actually a magic show, one that can be seen only by those who have no Jewish ancestry and who are not bastards/illegitimate. Therefore, the governor and his advisors agree to let them put on the show, so that they can reveal and expose who the secret Jewish people (*conversos falsos*) and the bastards are in town. All of the noblepeople come to see the puppet show, and they all claim to see what is impossible to be seen, but the stage is totally bare. Only the voice of the Master of Ceremonies (the crooked puppeteers together) suggest what should be seen: Sampson hugging the columns of the temple; large rats nipping at the girls' feet, causing the young noblewoman Castrada to scream to her friend to hold up her skirts; water from the River Jordan falling on their heads, promising them eternal youth and beauty; a ferocious lion comes out growling, but really, there is absolutely nothing at all on stage. However, the noblepeople all say that they can see everything, lest they be found out to be Jewish or illegitimate. The sharp social satire ends in complete pandemonium, with a lowly army man (a rough quartermaster) entering and calling them all fools. Social hypocrisy and prejudice are unveiled, and governmental authority is subverted because of its ignorance and ineptitude, just like in Hans Christian Anderson's "The Emperor's New Clothes." The story can also be interpreted on another level, according to Eugenio Asensio, that of a parable of human gullibility and naïveté. What happens to the spectators, who are watching a performance of «El retablo de las maravillas»? By watching the play-within-the-play, following the comments by Chirinos and Chanfallas about seeing on stage what does not exist, and perhaps being afraid of their own flaws ever being exposed, the spectators are roped into the play itself, as actators. They find themselves shouting out just like the noblepeople, trying to possibly hide their secrets. In addition to the overarching metatheatrical situation, there are several asides, for example, shouted out by the Gobernador, where he admits to himself (and the spectators/actators) that he cannot see what is purportedly "on stage," but he is afraid to reveal this to the town. Inherently, it is the abundance of dramatic devices which rope the audience into the dramatic world, and since the structure of the play is metatheatrical, this group of actators even enters the play within the play!

Cervantes knew exactly what the parameters and intent of metatheater is,

although the term was not invented until centuries later. Ironically, his contemporary, William Shakespeare, gave us the most famous example of metatheater, in *Hamlet*, when Hamlet invites the actors Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to the palace, to put on a play. However, in my opinion, what Cervantes does in «El retablo de las maravillas» is far more sophisticated. He creates several concrete layers of spectatorship. First is the spectators in the audience, the first level of spectatorship. They have paid the money to see the play, and then two characters come out and put on a play. The other characters, who are watching this play-within-a-play, are second level spectators. Then, the two characters putting on the play watch their “magic” work, by observing the “spectators” (who are actually the other characters, now actators) so they become a third level of spectator. In «El retablo de las maravillas» and his other entremeses, Cervantes developed the short comical theatrical pieces of early modern Spanish drama even further and brought them to their maximum height and success. In so doing, he furthermore offered future playwrights exquisite examples of what can be done to manipulate the spectators and nearly force them into the dramatic world.

Likewise, the full-length comedia *Pedro de Urdemalas* exemplifies even more what Cervantes was capable of with his genius. He clearly understood what metatheater was and he amplified it in all kinds of directions: role-playing, meta-imitation, multiple subject positions, erroneous identities, and of course, play-within-a-play, which we have just seen in «El retablo de las maravillas». The comedia *Pedro de Urdemalas* becomes a virtual compendium of all that metatheater can be. Because the possibilities are limitless, particularly in light of the completely closure-free conclusion and the infinitely expanding dramatic future of the play, *Pedro de Urdemalas* is Cervantes’s greatest triumph. It is an episodic mixture of pastoral, gypsy, and picaresque motifs, and it contains some scintillating scenes with outstanding dialogue. Briefly, what happens in the play is that the main character, a pícaro named Pedro de Urdemalas, falls in love with a young gypsy Belica, so he joins her band of gypsies. His fortune is told by a seer, who tells him that he will be king, so he is happy and excited. He imagines every detail of his future glory. However, the seer made a mistake, it is actually the young Belica who is truly noble, of royal blood. Poor Pedro is frustrated because he cannot marry her now. Throughout the remainder of the play, he adopts many different identities: town proclaimer, hermit, ecclesiastic, and finally, he finds his way out of frustration. Ultimately, and in an inimitable example of metatheater, he decides to become an actor, because after all, actors can play the role of pope, king, emperor, or anything, so the road to glory will always be open to him. Pedro leaves the stage, thereby leaving the spectators in this house of mirrors created by metatheater. Cervantes blasts apart the comedia as literary genre with *Pedro de Urdemalas*, and no subsequent playwright can incorporate metatheater so brilliantly and completely into a comedia, and if Thomas O’Connor is correct, and the Spanish comedia is metatheater, then *Pedro de Urdemalas* is the ultimate example of comedia, in fact, actually a meta-comedia. In this play, Cervantes merges seamlessly the dramatic world with the real world, by shattering the glass wall separating the actors from the spectators, as the actors become spectators on a secondary level as actators, and he has extended the dramatic future into eternity: this character, Pedro de Urdemalas, can live on forever, beyond our own lives, giving the spectators, many of whom have morphed into actators, the same hope. It may be Jean Canavaggio who best states it: “*Pedro de Urdemalas* offers us the subtlest variation of this fascinating theme: having become an actor at the end of the play, Pedro exits from the real stage to go act on an imaginary stage; and the real play ends as the imaginary show is about to begin,” (274). I have often thought that this play serves metaphorically for Cervantes’s life, including his ending: even though earthly life is over, a new one is

about to begin.

Perhaps, ultimately, that is the purpose of the actator and the micronaut: each of us loses ourselves in the microcosmic circles of our daily lives, weaving in and out and amongst countless forms of communication (personal, professional, and creative), all needing our attention, thought, and imagination, either passively or actively. Whether it is the continual, non-ending bombardment of email and text messages, or whether it is by our own hand, to choose to read, watch, view, and listen to, an unending stream of information, words, chatter, and pointless blather, human life is about movement, not just physical, but cognitive as well. This can be seen as physically moving about the planet Earth itself, by foot, automobile, boat, or plane, or increasingly, even around the universe, by rocket or spaceship. With the actator and the micronaut, it is in the mind and the imagination, which leads us to a future area inquiry, the imaginative text. For now, we leave the actator and the micronaut here, swimming amongst theatrical pieces, short stories and novels, poetry, films, videos, and the internet, like a voyeur or a peeping Tom, believing themselves to be part of the action, just like the astronauts swimming through the stars, asteroids, planets, and more! More to be discovered, explored, analyzed, and always, appreciated.

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