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Chapter 6

Dangerous Performance: Francisco de Arellano's *Auto de la destrucción de Troya*

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At the beginning of 1575, members of the Inquisition learned that a group of Moriscos staged the story of the Trojan War in the town of Borja, Zaragoza.¹ According to inquisitorial sources, these Moriscos gathered during the Islamic observance of Ramadan to celebrate the Conquest of Tunis, when the Turks stormed the *presidio* of La Goleta and wrested control of Tunis from Spain. For the occasion, the Moriscos selected Francisco de Arellano's *Auto de la destrucción de Troya*, and, a few days later, they staged a pastoral piece before moving to the nearby town of Maleján to continue with the festivities. After learning about similar celebrations in the region, authorities confiscated the only existing manuscript of the *Auto*. Placed with documents related to the Moriscos, the manuscript remained unknown for more than four hundred years in Zaragoza's *Sección del Santo Oficio del Archivo de la Audiencia Territorial*. In 1986, Francisco Ynduráin edited the *Auto* and the *comedia pastoril* plays delving into the theatrical representations of Moriscos in Aragon.²

The staging of Francisco de Arellano's play illustrates that the Moriscos were familiar with Spanish Renaissance theater, and, more importantly, they adapted the mechanics of staging theater for specific purposes. Unfortunately, the staging of Arellano's play also reveals that theater written or staged by Moriscos was a dangerous enterprise in a historical moment of increasing religious persecution. To better understand the censorship of these Moriscos, I focus on the performative aspects of Francisco de Arellano's play. In this regard, the rewriting of the Trojan

¹ In this essay, I use the term *Morisco* to distinguish those descendants of Muslims forced to convert to Christianity at the end of the fifteenth century from the Muslims who invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century and ruled Spain until the Conquest of Granada in 1492. However, L. P. Harvey suggests that there is an ideological bias inherent in the word (2). For historical accounts on Moriscos, consult the works of Mercedes García Arenal, Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Bernard Vincent, Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, and Julio Caro Baroja.

² For easier access to the manuscript and the inquisitorial case, consult Francisco Ynduráin's edition. As for the playwright, there is not enough information about Francisco de Arellano. Ynduráin does not believe that the author was part of the group of actors staging the *Auto* because his name does not appear in the inquisitorial case (10).

War can be considered a dangerous performance for what it does, what it shows, and what it provokes in the audience and the inquisitors. By approaching the play as performance, I argue that the staging of *Auto de la destrucción de Troya* (1574) allowed Moriscos to appropriate Spanish theater in order to 1) make associations with their social circumstances, 2) arouse compassion with those vanquished at war, and 3) address cultural practices that strengthen their sense of community. Particularly, I pay attention to the analogy between the Moriscos and the Trojans, the compassion aroused by shared emotions, and, finally, the reenactment of Moriscan cultural practices in a burial scene in the play.

During the inquisitorial process against these Moriscos, the accuser claimed that the play contained certain contentious words; however, the list of these words does not appear with the rest of the documentation. Francisco Ynduráin states that he did not find a single allusion to La Goleta: “Lo que no veo es que haya ‘ciertas palabras’ en el auto, que puedan servir de indicio siquiera para acusar de que la obra alude a la caída de La Goleta” (8). Ynduráin laments that the proof the accuser provided to the inquisitors has been lost, or that it was not included with the manuscript (11). Whereas Ynduráin laments the loss of the textual evidence presented to inquisitors, Jacques Lezra puts more emphasis on the impact of the Conquest of Tunis to contend that “one might equally argue that the whole of the work bears very heavily upon the circumstances of the taking of Goleta” (213). These readings have made a valuable critical contribution to a play that has been neglected, having been out of sight for centuries. Yet, these readings, regardless of the attention paid to historical conditions and social contexts, are still anchored in the text, which overlooks the significance of the performance of the play.³ The allusions Ynduráin failed to trace in the sources and the impact of the Conquest of Tunis that Lezra correctly identifies can be located precisely out of the bounds of the manuscript and, more specifically, in the relationship between text and performance. What’s more, the text itself provides hints at its performance.

The *Auto de la destrucción de Troya* has some of the features of Spanish theater before Lope de Vega’s successful formula and the rise of the *comedia nueva*. Despite having four acts, the author labels the play as *auto* and it contains an *introito*. It was performed at a moment that witnessed the influence of the Italian theater and an increasing interest in the classics. These influences explain why Francisco de Arellano chose Guido da Colonna’s version of Dictes and Dares’s *Ephimera* on the

fall of Troy as his inspiration (Lezra 214). The play begins with the Trojans attempting to retrieve Hector’s corpse from their enemies, the Achaeans.⁴ While the Trojans lament the death of their hero and conduct a solemn burial, the Achaeans plan an attack, despite having promised a truce. In preparing for the battle, the Achaeans choose Palamedes as their leader, and Priam, King of Troy, gives orders to his followers on the issues of war. In the second act, the Achaean Achilles confesses that he is in love with a Trojan woman, Polyxena, and sends a letter to her mother, Hecuba. In the letter, Achilles promises not to destroy the city in exchange for Polyxena’s hand in marriage. Given that Achilles killed her son Hector, Hecuba finds the request disturbing. However, Hecuba plans to deceive Achilles, making him believe that his wish is granted only to set forth a plot to kill the legendary warrior. After Achilles proposes a truce, the Achaeans decide not to follow him and continue with the fight. In the third act, Hecuba executes her plan and asks her son Paris to kill Achilles. Even though Paris does not want to kill Achilles, he decides to follow his mother’s orders. In the fourth and last act, the Achaeans and the Trojans fight. Upon the Trojans’ surrender, Menelaus proposes to send in a gift horse to the Trojans; unbeknownst to the Trojans, the horse contains Achaean soldiers who stealthily attack their adversaries. As a result, the Trojans are killed and the city is burned. At play’s end, Hecuba laments the destruction of Troy, and the Achaeans decide to stone her to death.

Since the beginning of the play, the analogy between the Trojan War and the social circumstances of contemporary Moriscos is unmistakable. As *performance*, the *Auto de la destrucción de Troya* does something more than stage a conflictive story for the entertainment and transformation of spectators. On the one hand, the Moriscos adapt one of the foundational stories of Western civilization using theater as the ideal spectacle. On the other, they place the Trojan War as an ideological background that raises questions absent in the original story at the expense of historical and textual accuracy.

The opening scene of the play connects ancient times with the early modern period. Waiting for Hector’s corpse, the Trojans greatly fear the destruction of the city and suffer for the death of their beloved leader. While the characters’ lamentations reflect universal emotions of loss, Priam’s words situate the departure of his son in an early modern Spanish context that indirectly equates the Trojans and the Moriscos. By describing either his son or his son’s murderer as “perro crudo e infiel” (line 340),⁵ Priam’s words redirect spectators’ attention to a period

³ *Performance* is a contested term due to its interdisciplinary nature. For introductory texts on performance studies, see Carlson, Schechner, Bial, and Reynolds. For this essay, I employ Richard Schechner’s definition of *performance* as the “whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that takes place in both performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of the performance—the precinct where the theatre takes place—to the time the last spectator leaves” (“Drama” 8). Dwight Conquergood makes a relevant distinction between the *said* and the *saying*: “Instead of endeavoring to rescue the *said* from the *saying*, a performance paradigm struggles to recuperate the *saying* from the *said*, to put mobility, actions, and agency back into play.” (“Beyond the Text” 31).

⁴ Episodes of the Trojan War appear in several *comedias*, such as Juan de la Cueva’s *La muerte de Ajax Telemón, sobre las armas de Aquiles* (1588), Tirso de Molina’s *El Aquiles* (1636), and Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Juan Zabaleta’s *Troya abrasada* (1644), among others. For the presence of Troy in Spanish literature, see Rey and Solalinde. In Spanish theater, see Kidd.

⁵ In Spanish, the word *infel* can be translated as unfaithful and as infidel. I am making the case that Arellano has in mind the second connotation in the scene. The recipient of Priam’s insult is, however, unclear. Although it is tempting

characterized by the challenges the Moriscos faced to keep their cultural identity, despite the multiple attempts to assimilate them to Christianity. After almost eight hundred years in Spain, Muslims were forced to convert to Christianity at the end of the fifteenth century and were subjected to a series of laws that demanded their assimilation. These attempts started with the mass baptisms supported by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros between 1499 and 1502. In forcing Muslims to embrace Christianity, monarchs broke the agreement made after the Conquest of Granada in 1492 that guaranteed religious freedom, and the Moriscos rebelled at the Alpujarras. Although forced conversions were not required in Aragon until 1525, they were part of a plan to create a unified monarchy based on Christian theology. In this atmosphere, the turning point was the decision made by the *Sínodo Provisional de Granada*, which was published in 1567. In the decree, Moriscos were forbidden to speak Arabic, wear regional clothing, dance their traditional dances like the *zambra*, use public baths, or keep the door closed during religious festivities. Reacting to the imposition of these laws, the Moriscos rebelled a year later in a battle known as the Second Rebellion of the Alpujarras. The conflict ended when King Philip II sent Don Juan of Austria to pacify the rebels. In 1571, Moriscos were either sold as slaves after being caught as hostages of war or dispersed through different parts of the Spanish kingdom to prevent future insurrections. The same year, the Turks were vanquished at the Battle of Lepanto by the combined forces of the Holy League, Spain, and the Venetian Republic. In this climate of repression and uncertainty, the defeat of Spain in the Conquest of Tunis in 1574, also known as the Battle of La Goleta, could give the Moriscos hope of a stronger Islamic dominion in the Mediterranean in a period marked by religious tensions.

In Priam's speech, the aforementioned adjectives ("perro crudo e infiel") evoke a religious struggle that was not at the center of the Trojan War, and they encapsulate the negative words that Old Christians used to insult those who did not practice Christianity. By equating the Moriscos to the Trojans, the actors interpreted Arellano's play as a means to arouse compassion for those defeated in war. The entire play seems to lean empathetically towards the Trojans and moves away from a positive depiction of the Achaeans. This is a surprising paradox in a play that supposedly was staged to celebrate the conquest of a city by military and naval superiority, i.e., empathy for the vanquished comes from the grief of having witnessed the destruction of a world and not from the celebration of the triumph of those skillful at war.

to think that he is referring to his enemy, Achilles, one must consider that Ilecuba describes herself as "sola, conbertida en perra / contra los dioses ladrando" (lines 2439-40) in a moment of intense emotional pain at the end of the play. Quotes from Arellano's play are cited from Ynduráin's edition.

In alluding to the religious struggle in Spain, the *Auto* also depicts different perspectives of members of the Morisco community regarding their situation in Spain. One of these different positions can be identified in Aeneas, who is characterized as a traitor. Aeneas agrees with the Achaeans and demands that they not burn marked houses while they destroy the city. In Lezra's words, Arellano makes available not "the pious Aeneas, but the Aeneas of false semblant, who deceives the Christians by trading with his enemies in order to remain in Troy, in Al-Andalus, in Valencia, in Aragon" (215). The religious connotations of the scene are obvious. Since the Middle Ages, Muslims and Jews were marked with visible symbols. In the scene, the marks are reminders of inclusion and exclusion. In terms of the performance, it is not clear if the actors showed these marks (*señales*) through gestures. However, the visibility of these signs could be problematic for outsiders who might interpret them in ways that are different from how insiders participating in the performance would interpret them.

This appropriation of the Trojan War story is more complicated when one realizes that the Moriscos are passing as both Trojans and Achaeans. One could argue that posing as Other is at the heart of acting; however, the possibility of Moriscos acting as others, such as Christians, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries caused anxiety to those who wanted to make clear distinctions.⁶ The problem for inquisitorial authorities was who was doing/performing the appropriation, rather than the selection of a known story already adapted in several contexts throughout centuries. Seeing the performance reminded inquisitorial authorities of the artfulness for acting that distinguished some Moriscos in their ability to hide their religion when under duress. In effect, Islam promoted the *taqiyya*, a practice that allowed its followers to dissimulate or conceal their faith in cases of threat or persecution (Sura 16: 116). Whereas Luis F. Bernabé Pons calls into question the Moriscos' knowledge of the term and proposes *niyya* as a concept better known by Moriscos ("Taqiyya," 508), Devin Stewart argues that Sunni authors in Spain sometimes avoided the use of the term *taqiyya* because of its association with Shiism ("Dissimulation" 441-42). The *niyya* is the intention of one's heart for the sake of God. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the majority of Moriscos resorted to dissimulation in crucial situations that could put them under the threat of the Inquisition, and performance served to highlight the skill of make-believe.

Although the opening scene illustrates how the Moriscos appropriate Spanish theater to make associations with their social circumstances, Hector's burial scene allows the Moriscos to arouse compassion for those in a similar situation. The scene achieves this objective by fusing actors and spectators, who share in the grief of a

⁶ On the topic of passing in early modern Spain, see Fuchs and Lee.

single death. Historically, the monarchy sought to separate Moriscos to avoid insurrections or the perpetuation of habits related to Islam. At the moment of the staging of Arellano's play, spectators had a fresh memory of the vanquished fighters who were dispersed through different parts of Spain after the Second Rebellion of the Alpujarras. With the arrangement of the dead body at the center of the stage, the play turns metaphorically into a burial site while spectators assume the role of mourners. In this case, there is a complicity between actors and spectators that goes beyond empathy. This fusion between actors, spectators, and surroundings is one of the extraordinary characteristics of *performance*. In discussing the relationship between spectators, actors, and their surroundings in performances, Schechner uses the example of theme parks and restored villages to note that "on the outside is the environment of the performance, on the inside is the special consciousness of performing and witnessing/participating in a performance" (*Between* 93); in other words, "the domain of the performance surrounds and includes the spectator. Looking at becomes harder; being in, easier" (*Between* 98). In the *Auto*, surroundings and spectators become an integral part of the performance. This choice is not a naive one since it forces the representation to flux within the realms of myth, ritual, and theater, hinting at the showing of a cultural practice, or, at least, at what spectators can perceive as one.

As a ritual, the staging of Hector's burial in the play conforms to the parameters of *performance* having a script to follow and expecting behaviors from participants. Given that they were not able to perform their rituals openly due to religious intolerance, the Moriscos cleverly managed to reenact one ritual metaphorically within a performance. The burial allows the Morisco community to express and share emotions about their own circumstances, e.g. the loss of their city, the sense of defeatism, and the death of prominent leaders after the Second Rebellion of the Alpujarras. In this sense, the fear of the inquisitors is understandable as they witnessed the staging of a play with traces of religious behavior.

Spanish theater also allowed Moriscos to address cultural practices that strengthened their community. By sharing emotions, the staging allows actors and spectators to experience *communitas*. Victor Turner has defined *communitas* as "spontaneous, immediate, concrete—it is not shaped by norms, it is not institutionalized, it is not abstract. *Communitas* differs from the camaraderie found often in everyday life, which, though informal and egalitarian, still falls within the general domain of structure, which may include interaction rituals" (274). In the scene of the burial, Arellano skillfully hints at staging directions through the dialogue of characters. The only stage directions appear in the text are the characters' entrances and exits, along with the introduction of several interludes that are not included in the manuscript ("Aquí pondrán un entremedio," "Aquí pongan otro entremedio," etc.). The consistency of providing minimal direction was typical

during a period that privileged the performance over the script. In addition, stage directions offer clues to understanding the interplay between setting, performers, and spectator in relation to the story as *performance*. According to Schechner, "performance takes place as action, interaction, and relation" (*Performance* 30). These stage directions, either directly or indirectly, conceal some strategies that allowed the Moriscos to allude to their religious practices without openly referring to them. Moreover, the representation of the burial recalls behaviors, considers the circumstances of the audience, and unmasks the make-believe of the theater.

The first hint showing how the scene fuses reality and pretense is Hector's description:

Yo quiero sea enbalsamado
con delicado argumento
y con doloroso ungüento
do estará
que bibo paresçerá
con la su espada en la mano
de cara al campo greçiano. (lines 494-500)

The specifications for embalming the body offer an idea of props, costumes, and makeup. The command that the body must continue to give the appearance of being alive is striking as this preparation speaks of the impossibility of an actor to embody the role of a deceased person, and, the emphasis on the awareness of the "liveness" of the actor. Before this description, Hector's wife, Andromache, hints at the skills of the actor: "¡Ay, que bien a entender dáis / que sois muerto!" (lines 388-89). By refusing to maintain the theatrical illusion of a dead character and stressing the "liveness" of the actor, the representation moves between two times simultaneously. In describing performance, Schechner's observes: "... actions move in time, from the past thrown into the future, from 'me' to 'not me' and from 'not me' to 'me'. As they travel they are absorbed into the liminal, subjunctive time/space of 'not me...not not me.' This time/space includes both workshops-rehearsals and performances" (*Between* 112). In essence, this scene illustrates the liminal position of the actor, who finds himself between life and death, between Trojans and Moriscos, and between Christianity and Islam.

In staging the play, Moriscos did not ignore the surroundings of the play; rather, they integrated them. This integration of the surroundings is of particular interest when one realizes that the dead body of the character/living body of the actor onstage faces the Greek site. Given that the play was staged in Zaragoza, the corpse is facing the Greek camp, and, therefore, strategically placed looking to the east. Although the actor does not look in the direction of the Kaaba in the city of Mecca exactly, he does look east as many Muslims in the Western hemisphere do at the

moment of death. In describing the religious practices of Moriscos, Pedro Longás notes that it was a custom to bury the corpse face up or sideways with the face looking at the *Qibla* (294). The *Qibla* is the direction that a Muslim should face at the moment of prayer or after death in the city of Mecca. In this sense, Hector's burial recalls a Muslim ritual hidden in the movements and positions of the actors, with the awareness that there is not a real dead body on stage. One can interpret this action as cultural resistance in the context of the religious assimilation project defended by the monarchy to unify Spain. As Randy Martin notes:

... [the] body is the appropriate source of action precisely because the control of mind makes it a site of resistance. Within our society, the mind is the thing that watches but also that which is watched. The body neither sees nor is seen. It has become the action itself. As with the actor on stage, the body, as a site of resistance, exists only in performance. (2)

Besides the character's willingness to grant Priam's wishes, the last line of the scene—"Señor, así ará" (v. 501)—reinforces the possibility of a prayer that was a requirement at the moment of burying a Morisco, emphasizing the monotheism of Christianity and Islam in contrast to Greek pantheism.

As I mentioned above, the *Auto* was staged to celebrate the Conquest of Tunis, and it was performed close to Ramadan, according to the inquisitorial report. The resemblance of this scene to the genre of *ta'ziyeh*, or the Muslim celebration of *Ashura*, is striking.⁷ Also transcribed as *ta'zieh*, *ta'ziye* *tâ'ziyé*, *ta'zīya* or *tazīa*, the term means mourning or consolation. *Ta'ziyeh*, a form of religious epic theatre, continues to be performed to commemorate the death of Husayn ibn-Ali (the grandson of Prophet Muhammad) in areas of the Middle East with significant Shi'a populations, such as Iran, Iraq, Southern Lebanon, and Bahrain. Before the assassination of Al-Hussein at the Battle of Karbala by supporters of Yazid I from the Umayyad dynasty in 680, Al-Hussein suffered persecution for ten days in the desert. In earlier performances, actors read short monologues directly from small strips of paper held in their hands, and spectators joined the actors in communal mourning ceremonies consisting of processions, religious chanting, and self-flagellation. Although there is no evidence of these celebrations in predominantly Sunni Spain, José Francisco Cutillas Ferrer has edited one *maqal*, *Crónica y relación de la esclarecida descendencia xarifa*, written in Spanish in Tunis during the seventeenth century. The genre of *maqal* includes a variety of books about the Battle of Karbala and the death of Husayn ibn-Ali. The *maqal* clearly shows how Moriscos in exile vindicated the lineage of the Prophet via Ali and commemorated the death of his grandson. In a later article, Cutillas Ferrer suggests, "This kind of literature reminded the Moriscos of the theatre performances they had witnessed

during the Golden Age in Spain" (55). Thus, although the influence of the *ta'ziyeh* in the staging of the *Auto* is almost impossible to demonstrate, their similarities are remarkable and telling of how the enactment of a burial can bring spectators together.⁸ In addition to staging a burial, the *ta'ziyeh* and the *Auto* have in common the use of piece of papers to aid memorization. In the case of the *Auto*, this can be seen in the exchange of the letters between Hecuba and Achilles.

Although the burial appears in the first act, the presence of death in the play is ubiquitous. In the precarious and liminal circumstances of the Moriscos as a community, this obsession with death acquires a special meaning. The second half of the sixteenth century witnessed an increase of eschatological texts written by Moriscos that centered on the themes of death and the afterlife. Miguel Ángel Vázquez explains that the proliferation of these texts was due to the awareness of the ending of Islam on the Peninsula (113). Vincent Barletta comes to a similar conclusion by recognizing the Moriscos' concern with death and the afterlife in manuscripts about Alexander the Great (159). Like the Trojans, the Moriscos were fearful of their destruction, and this fear appears in religious writing, legal treatises, and literary texts.⁹

At the end of the play, Arellano speaks to the audience and apologizes in case someone alters one of the verses. The playwright's admonition is an attempt to deflect criticism that might put him in danger as it happened with the Moriscos' staging of his work. This caveat shows the same concerns that appear in the introduction (*introito*) of the play: a sense of persecution and fear of punishment in a play with deep religious connotations. In a culture of surveillance, Arellano was aware of the dangers of staging performances for a community of Moriscos. As stated in these closing remarks, he anticipated future accusations and tried to exonerate himself *a priori*. Inquisitorial authorities behaved as expected. However, they failed to see that a script does not express all its meaning through words, but, instead, in performance.

⁸ A similar scene appears in the *The Martyrdom of Ali-Akbar (Shuhadat-e Ali Akbar)*, a play performed by a group from the village of Salah-Abad in the northeast of Iran in 1997. Hussein's sister brings him a white shroud and a sword before his death. On *The Martyrdom*, see Malekpour in *The Islamic Drama*, 83-90.

⁹ In writing this section, I realized that the burial scene echoes the feelings, affects, and emotions caused by the loss of Amy Williamsen to our scholarly community. In her memory, I would like to appropriate Hecuba's words at the moment of burying her son: "Lloremos todos su muerte / pues nuestro bien se a perdido" (lines 488-89). By putting Amy symbolically in the place of the male leader, I am making a feminist gesture as a recognition to her contributions to the study of women in the Spanish *Comedia*.

⁷ On the *ta'ziyehi*, see Chelkowski, Malekpour, Shahriari, and Sharifi Isaloo.

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Chapter 7

Rape, Censorship, and *El alcalde de Zalamea*, 2008

MINDY BADÍA AND SONIA PÉREZ VILLANUEVA

“Al rey la hacienda y la vida
Se ha de dar; pero el honor
es patrimonio del alma,
y el alma solo es de Dios”

—Calderón, *El alcalde de Zalamea*, 873-6

In March 2008, the theater group 2RC Productions, from Gran Canaria, Spain, initiated its first American tour in El Paso, TX with a performance of Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s *El alcalde de Zalamea*.¹ The production, adapted by Nicolás Fernández and directed by Rafael Rodríguez, graced the stage of the Chamizal National Memorial as part of the 33rd annual *Siglo de Oro* theater festival. 2RC’s work was widely praised by the Chamizal audience, and, in addition to this stateside success, the group’s adaptation of the Calderonian text earned a nomination for the prestigious Premio Max in Spain. During their U.S. tour, and as part of the annual meeting and symposium of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater (AHCT), the director and actors from 2RC participated in a post-performance workshop with members of the AHCT. During the discussion, the director revealed that representatives from the Chamizal National Memorial had censored the group’s production, prohibiting Rodríguez from showing the rape of Isabel in a scene that the actors had originally staged in full view of the audience. Through an analysis of the censored and uncensored versions of 2RC’s adaptation of *El alcalde*, we examine the stakes of theatrical depictions of rape.² While we

¹ We wish to express our gratitude to Rafael Rodríguez for his help in completing this project.

² Research for this essay was conducted based on viewing the live Chamizal performance of 2RC’s *El alcalde*, supplemented by watching the video recording of this same production held in the archives of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater. Our experience with the uncensored version is limited to the video produced by 2RC. While a full discussion of the differences between recorded and live theater is beyond the scope of this essay, it is