

THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE MONKEY ANIMAL METAMORPHOSIS IN THE DUTCH-LANGUAGE ADAPTATIONS OF CALDERÓN'S *EL MAYOR ENCANTO, AMOR*, C. 1670

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The two parallel adaptations of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's El mayor encanto, amor, a retelling of Circe's and Ulysses' story from Homer's Odyssey, put animals onstage. However, the animals were certainly not all live animals, for the lions, bears, and tigers that feature in the two adaptations were too dangerous. Therefore, actors performed some animals via costumes. The article considers not only how this was a practical solution, but also how the costumes reflected the transformations that Circe performed on the Greek crewmen accompanying Ulysses. The transformations were incomplete, since even as animals the crewmen retained their ability to reason and, in some cases, even their speech. As such, the plays challenged the early modern understanding of animals as creatures without reason, solely led by their natural impulses. In their animal appearances, they failed to communicate with the human characters, but remained intelligible to the audience, disrupting the fiction of the play. Thus, the adaptations of El mayor encanto, amor questioned whether humans and animals are all that different.

On 8 April 1670, Adriaen Bastiaensz de Leeuw's play *De toveres Circe* premiered in the Amsterdam Public Theatre. The play retells the story of Ulysses and Circe from book ten of Homer's *Odyssey*.¹ As an adaptation of the court spectacle *El mayor encanto, amor* (Love, the Greatest Enchantment; 1635) by the Spanish playwright Pedro Calderón de la Barca, it marks the end of the

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1 See the online database *ONSTAGE, Online Datasystem of Theatre in Amsterdam from the Golden Age to Today* (<http://www.vondel.humanities.uva.nl/onstage/>) for information about performances in the Amsterdam Public Theatre.

2 See e.g. Kim Jautze, Leonor Álvarez Francés, and Frans R.E. Blom, “Spaans theater in de Amsterdamse Schouwburg (1638-1672). Kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve analyse van de creatieve industrie van het vertalen,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw. Cultuur in de Nederlanden in Interdisciplinair Perspectief* 32 (2016), 12–39; Olga van Marion and Tim Vergeer, “Spain’s Dramatic Conquest of the Dutch Republic. Rodenburgh as a Literary Mediator of Spanish Culture,” *De zeventiende eeuw. Cultuur in de Nederlanden in interdisciplinair perspectief* 32 (2016), 40–41; Frans R.E. Blom and Olga van Marion, “Lope de Vega and the Conquest of Spanish Theater in the Netherlands,” *Anuario Lope de Vega. Texto, Literatura, Cultura* 23 (2017), 155–60.

3 For a discussion of the original, see e.g. Frederick de Armas, “Claves políticas en las comedias de Calderón. El caso de *El mayor encanto Amor*,” *Anuario calderoniano* 4 (2011), 117–44; Frederick de Armas, “The Comedia and the Classics,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Hispanic Theater*, ed. H. Kallendorf (Leiden: Brill, 2014),

vogue for Spanish drama in Dutch seventeenth-century theatre, which had been initiated by the playwright Theodore Rodenburgh in 1617.² In Spanish, Calderón’s original is variably called a *comedia mitológica* (mythical comedy) or a *comedia de tramoya* (spectacle comedy or, comedy with stage machinery), and consequently the Amsterdam adaptation had to be spectacular as well.³

The title page of the printed edition of *De toveres Circe* explicitly states that it was performed “With Artifice and Animals”.⁴ The publisher Jacob Lescaille likely added this information to the title page as a marketing strategy to be able to sell more books. The title page also mentions that the play was “Vertoont op d’Amsterdamsche Schouwburg”, indicating that this was the official version of *De toveres Circe* as it was performed at the Amsterdam Public Theatre. While the title page reflects the structural improvements made to the Amsterdam Public Theatre in 1664–1665 to be able to stage more spectacular productions — that is, “With Artifice” — the reference to animals is a unique addition not found on the title pages of other contemporary plays. That the “animals” are mentioned separately from the “artifice” might suggest that live animals were used in the production of *De toveres Circe* as opposed to artificial animals. Because animals are essential to the plot line of *El mayor encanto, amor* and its recasting in Dutch, the necessary question is what their use and meaning are in the play and in a theatrical space. Therefore, my questions concern, on the one hand, to what extent Dutch theatre makers would have been able logistically to stage animals — either live or artificial — in the Amsterdam Public Theatre and, on the other hand, what the symbolic meaning is of animals in *De toveres Circe*. However, the Amsterdam adaptation is partly indebted to another translation that was made two years earlier in Brussels, which will be discussed here as well. The Flemish recasting of Calderón’s *comedia de tramoya* was delivered by the Brussels playwright Claude de Griek in 1668.⁵ De Griek’s adaptation is called *Ulysses in’t eylandt van Circe* (Ulysses on Circe’s Island), which might have been performed at the Brussels Public Theatre.⁶ The fact that *El mayor encanto, amor* was recast twice in parallel adaptations is extraordinary in itself

and already caught the attention of Jan van Praag in 1922 and Henry W. Sullivan in 1983.⁷

The present analysis arises from the understanding that acts of cultural transfer tell us more about the receiving culture than the parent culture. The differences between the adaptations and the original should not be regarded as errors in translation, but can actually be seen as reflecting theatre practices in the Low Countries.⁸ Then, we can see how animals were used differently in the theatres of Amsterdam and Brussels from the way they were employed in the theatres of Madrid.

THE TROUBLE OF ANIMALS ONSTAGE

As early as Greek antiquity animals were primarily used to produce spectacular effects: in various plays central characters made their entrances on chariots pulled by live horses.⁹ Likewise in the early modern period animals had a significant presence in day-to-day life and, thus, they occurred in Ben Jonson's and William Shakespeare's plays of the sixteenth century.¹⁰ According to Orozco Lourdes, live animals "all but vanished from the stage" in the seventeenth century, a result of the theatre becoming ever more professional from the sixteenth century onwards. Instead, stand-in animals were used in the seventeenth century.¹¹ These were likely painted on décor pieces made out of papier-mâché, or played by actors dressed in animal costumes. When in ancient Greek theatre stand-in animals were used, this was partly out of necessity as the benefits of using live animals usually did not outweigh the burden, and this must have been equally true for early modern theatre.¹² This further complicates the addition "With Animals" on the title page of *De toveres Circe*. Moreover, it is generally held that audiences had to wait until the 1970s before live animals reappeared onstage. This time, they challenged the border between reality and artifice.¹³ Furthermore, when animals appear onstage — in a context where what is presented also represents something else, for instance

33–58; Sebastian Neumeister, "El mayor encanto, amor de Calderón: aspectos lúdicos," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 90 (2013), 807–19; Alejandra Ulla Lorenzo, "Las fiestas teatrales del Buen Retiro en 1635: El estreno de *El mayor encanto, amor de Calderón de la Barca*," *RILCE. Revista de Filología Hispánica* 30 (2014), 220–41.

4 Original text: "Met Konstwerken en Gedierten". For this and the following quote, see Adriaen Bastiaensz de Leeuw, *De toveres Circe* (Amsterdam: Jacob Lescaille, 1670), fol. *1r. Furthermore, my interpretation of "Konstwerken" as artifice is based on the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT), which states under the lemma "kunstwerk" (modern spelling of "konstwerk") that in the case of theatre, "kunstwerken" should be interpreted as the machinery by which natural phenomena could be represented as well as by which some exceptional movements and gestures could be performed.

5 With Flemish I refer to the Dutch-speaking area in present-day Belgium, in what used to be the County of Flanders and the Duchy of Brabant.

6 However, the title page of the play says nowhere that the play was performed at the "Brusselsche Toonneel-burg" / "Thoonneelburgh", as in the case of De Leeuw's *Circe*. Yet, another earlier play by De Griek

does mention this fact. On the title page of De Griek's play *Samson, oft edel-moedighen Nazareen* (Brussel: Peeter de Dobbeleer, 1660), fol.

*1r., we can read that the play was "Verthoont op de Brusselsche Tooneel-burg" (Shown at the Brussels Public Theatre).

7 Jan van Praag, "Les traductions de *El mayor encanto amor* de Calderón en Néerlandais," *Neophilologus* 7 (1922), 8–19; Henry W. Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries: his reception and influence, 1654–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 40–42, 53–54. Both scholars were concerned with differences between the Spanish original and the Flemish and Dutch adaptations and whether the playwrights delivered sound translations of Calderón's original. In another article, I challenged their analyses: Tim Vergeer, "Recasting a *Comedia* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca: Parallel Adaptations of *El mayor encanto, amor* in Brussels and Amsterdam, c. 1670," *Anuario Calderoniano* 13 (forthcoming, 2020).

8 For transfer studies, see Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, "Deutsch-Französischer Kulturtransfer im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert. Zu Einem Neuen Interdisziplinären Forschungsprogramm des C.N.R.S.," *Francia. Forschungen zur Westeuropäischen Geschichte* (1985), 502–10; Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, "Deutsch-

in theatre — they are not just animals raised on a platform, but they are part of the illusion that the performance creates.¹⁴

This article tests the assumption that live animals were not used in early modern theatre and considers what the addition "With Animals" may indicate. The article explores, furthermore, the role that animals had in the adaptations of *El mayor encanto, amor*, asserting that animals in early modern theatre could confront the border between reality and artifice in a similar way as in modern theatre. Early modern theatre, and especially baroque theatre, played with the distinction between fiction and reality in several specific ways. One way was through the use of the proscenium arch. The proscenium arch creates the illusion that the spectators look through a picture frame into the fictional world of the stage. It acts as a physical border and indicates that the world inside the arch is different from the space outside it: the auditorium. This construction of the spectator vis-à-vis the stage influences the way that the spectator watches the performance: he or she is not part of the events onstage and those events are not real in the sense that they are not really happening in the spectator's world.¹⁵ However, the proscenium arch was not always present, the original performance of *El mayor encanto, amor* did not have one. Live animals could function as an alternative to the proscenium arch, while at the same time creating awareness of the border function of the arch. In a sense, animals always cross the boundary that we like to see between fiction and reality, since they were grotesque, exotic, and exciting figurants.

Yet, an objection can be made. Around 1670 several dramaturgs in Dutch theatre from the Amsterdam-based society of poets Nil Volentibus Arduum strongly believed that a good play adheres to the requirement of *vraisemblance*, a term deriving from classicist French dramatic theory, which demanded that the actions and events in a play should be believable. *Vraisemblance* relied in part on narrative plausibility but also on how convincing the spectacle was. The spectacle in a play had to be technically possible but also realistic and

probable as if it could have happened in real life.¹⁶ Although the staging of live animals would in theory have added to a play's believability, this meant that most transformations in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were discarded as spectacular events that could not be brought onto stage, including the metamorphoses performed by Circe in *De toveres Circe*. Nil Volentibus Arduum wrote about this in their *Onderwijs in de toneel-poëzy* (c. 1678):

[the playwright has to make sure] that the spectacle can be shown, and that it appropriately beguiles the Spectators' eyes; by which, if not done as such, the Spectators will not be entertained; they will laugh or be sad about it. Thus, *Horace* disallows the showing of *Procne's* Metamorphosis into a bird, or that of *Cadmus* into a Serpent onstage, because the Spectacle, near to impossible, will raise disbelief in the Spectators. [...] And to these belong many of *Circe's* [i.e. in *De toveres Circe*] Metamorphoses as well, in particular that of the Monkey.¹⁷

This hostile stance towards unbelievable events being performed before the spectator's eyes formed a challenge to Dutch playwrights to include animal transformations in their plays, which according to Nil Volentibus Arduum resulted in unsuccessful attempts. As the quote demonstrates, the society disagreed with De Leeuw's handling of the transformations in his recasting of *El mayor encanto, amor*. Despite their problems with the transformations in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Nil Volentibus Arduum did, however, argue for stories featuring magical or mythical themes, especially when grotesque and supernatural events were part of the plot. Such classical stories were deemed exceptional sources of inspiration for their familiarity among the audience.¹⁸

(LIVE) ANIMALS IN CALDERÓN'S ORIGINAL

Calderón's play about Circe and Ulysses was such a story with a magical, mythical theme. The play was first performed in July 1635 in the Estanque Grande

Französischer Kulturtransfer als Forschungsgegenstand. Eine Problemskizze," in *Transferts. Les Relations Interculturelles dans l'Espace Franco-Allemand (XVIIIe et XIXe Siècle)*, ed. Michel Espagne and Michael Werner (Paris: Rescherche sur les Civilisations, 1988), 11–34; Karolien De Clippel and Filip Vermeylen, "In search of Netherlandish art. Cultural transmission and artistic exchanges in the Low Countries, an introduction," *De Zeventiende Eeuw. Cultuur in de Nederlanden in Interdisciplinair Perspectief* 31 (2015), 2–17.

9 Peter D. Arnott, "Animals in the Greek Theatre," *Greece & Rome* 6 (1959), 177–78.

10 Laurie Shannon, "The Eight Animals in Shakespeare; Or, before the Human," *PMLA* 124 (2009), 472–73.

11 Orozco Lourdes, *Theatre & Animals* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 15.

12 Arnott, "Animals in the Greek Theatre," 177.

13 Lourdes, *Theatre & Animals*, 15.

14 Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 102.

15 Eversmann, *De ruimte van het theater*, 19, 136–37.

16 Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Onderwijs in de toneel-poëzy*, ed. Ton Harmsen (Rotterdam: Ordeman, [c. 1678] 1989), 423–27.

17 Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Onderwijs in de toneel-poëzy*, 425: “[De Dichter heeft te letten] dat zy [d.i. Kunstwerken] vertoont kunnen worden, en dat welgevoeglijk om de oogden der Aanschouwers te begoochelen. Het welk indien’t niet geschiedt, zullen de Aanschouwers in plaats van vermaakt te worden, daarom lachchen of verdrietig worden. Zo wil *Horatius* niet hebben datmen op het Tooneel zal vertoonen de herscheppingh van *Progne* in een Vogel, noch die van *Kadmus* in een Serpent, om dat de vertooning, by na onmogelijk in de kijkers, ongeloof verwekt. [...] En hier toe behooren ook veele herscheppingen van *Circe*, inzonderheid die vanden Aap”. All translations are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

18 *Ibid.*, 424.

19 Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Segunda parte de las comedias de don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, caullero del abito de Santiago* (Madrid: María Quiñones / Pedro Coello, 1637), fol. *2r. The original reads: “fiesta que se representò à su Magestad noche de S. Juan del año de seis cientos y treinta y cinco, en el estanque del Real Palacio del buen Retiro”. For more information on the *Segunda parte*, see Santiago Fernández Mosquera,

(the pond) of the Buen Retiro palace gardens in Madrid. In 1637, the play was printed in the second part of the collected works by Calderón, according to which it was a “feast, which was presented to his Majesty on the night of San Juan in the year [1]635, in the pond of the Royal Palace of the Buen Retiro”.¹⁹ Following book ten of Homer’s *Odyssey*, Ulysses’ men are transformed into swine, but they are also turned into lions and tigers, drawing from Virgil’s *Aeneid* and the subsequent medieval and early modern tradition in literature and art.²⁰ Denise DiPuccio argues that, through Circe’s enchantments, the original Spanish play challenges notions about fact and fiction. The result is confusion among the characters and the spectators alike. Particularly the audience “may sense that his own world is as enigmatic as that of his mythical counterparts”.²¹

This suspension of logic was enhanced by the performance situation at the Buen Retiro park. In the middle of the Estanque Grande there used to be an artificial island, as can still be seen on the 1656 map of Madrid by Teixeira Albernaz (Fig. 1). During the performance, the now disappeared island became the island of Circe and functioned as the realistic environment of this fictional world; in theatre studies this is typically called *environmental theatre*. In 1981, the theatre scholar Arnold Aronson termed such extraordinary performance situations as the Estanque Grande as *found environments*, which are performance spaces that were not originally intended as such and do not contain pre-ordained stage or audience areas.²² Such found environments can be chosen for a variety of reasons, but mostly emphasize the reality of the play or make the fictional world of fairy tales, myths, and science fiction seem more real.²³ The reality can then also be emphasized to convey a political message.²⁴ The found environment has to bring the spectator closer to the performance, to make it more real than it ever was: in this case, the play strives for full immersion on the part of the spectator. With regard to the Buen Retiro performance, the fact that the audience were circling around the island in little boats contributed to this experience.²⁵



Fig. 1. Pedro Teixeira Albernaz and Salomon Savery
Detail of: *Topographia de la Ville de Madrid*, 1656. 1.78 x 2.86 m, Engraving in 20 folios
Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain, INVENT/23233

Within this found environment at the Buen Retiro park, the presence of live animals also heavily contributed to the realistic feel of *El mayor encanto, amor*. We know that King Philip IV (1621–65) at least kept bears, tigers, and lions — the animals featured in the play — at his palace in the Casa de Campo, the royal hunting estate on the western side of Madrid. Similarly to Casa de Campo, the

“Los textos de la *Segunda parte de Calderón*,” *Anuario Calderoniano* 1 (2008), 129–30.

20 Pepa Castillo Pascual, “Circe *Diva*: The Reception of Circe in the Baroque Opera (seventeenth century),” in *Ancient Magic and the Supernatural in the Modern Visual and Performing Arts*, ed. Filippo Carli and Irene Berti (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 81–82.

21 Denise M. DiPuccio, “The Enigma of Enchantment in *El mayor encanto, amor*,” *Hispania* 70 (1987), 731–739; quotes at 731.

22 Arnold Aronson, *The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981), 164–66.

23 Peter Eversmann, *De ruimte van het theater*, PhD diss. (Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1996), 22–23, 155–59.

24 This was presumably also the case for *El mayor encanto, amor*. See De Armas, “Claves políticas en las comedias de Calderón,” 117–44; Santiago Fernández Mosquera, “El significado de las primeras fiestas cortesanías de Calderón,” in *Calderón y el pensamiento ideológico y cultural de su época: XIV Coloquio Anglogermánico sobre Calderón (Heidelberg, 24–28 de julio de 2005)*, ed. M. Tietz and G. Arnscheidt (Stuttgart: s.n., 2008), 209–32.

25 Melveena McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain 1490–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 218–220.

26 Eric Baratay and Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier, *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 20, 47, 50. They do not specify which animals.

27 José María Ruano de la Haza, “Lope de Vega and the Theatre in Madrid,” in *A Companion to Lope de Vega*, ed. Alexander Samson and Jonathan Thacker (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2008), 49.

28 Timothy de Paepe, “Computervisualisaties van de theaterarchitectuur in de Lage Landen (1600-1800),” in *Theater: Een westerse geschiedenis*, ed. Thomas Crombez et al. (Tielt: LannooCampus, 2015), 148.

29 Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *El mayor encanto, amor*, in *Segunda parte de las comedias de Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca* (Madrid: Carlos Sanchez, 1641), fol. 3r.: “Salen animales, y hazen lo que se va dziendo”.

30 Claude de Griek, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe, oft geen grooter Toovery als Liefde* (Brussel: Jan Mommaert, 1668), 5: “Daer verschynen een deel beesten van den wreedsten slaghe, als Leeuwen, Beyren, Tygers, en andere”.

Buen Retiro park “alternated paths, lakes, hermitages, grottoes, salons, and small outhouses, each containing a few animals”, say Eric Baratay and Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier.²⁶ Since the bears, tigers, and lions in the play might have been too dangerous to bring onto the stage the animals were likely kept in their cages during the performance of *El mayor encanto, amor*, while their presence could be felt and seen nevertheless. Yet, it is plausible that the domestic animals in the performance, for instance the swine, were, in fact, brought onto stage next to the actors. This practice is for example demonstrated by the live donkey in a performance of Lope de Vega’s *El cardenal de Belén* at the Plaza Mayor in Madrid on 7 September 1610.²⁷ In conclusion, the use of live animals in the court spectacle interacted with the found environment, thus contributing to the play’s verisimilitude.

BEARS, TIGERS, AND LIONS IN THE DUTCH ADAPTATIONS

A found environment such as the one at the Buen Retiro park theatre was not used in Brussels and Amsterdam when De Griek adapted his *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* and De Leeuw his *De toveres Circe*. These adaptations were performed indoors at the Brussels and Amsterdam Public Theatres respectively, so-called *théâtres à l’italienne*, with a deep scene, coulisse décors, and an auditorium with loges (Fig. 2).²⁸ Therefore, bringing live animals onto the stage must have formed a logistical challenge, if they were used at all.

The challenge of bringing live animals onto the stage in Brussels becomes immediately apparent during the performance of the first act. Ulysses’ men go to explore the island on which they are stranded after a heavy storm. Ulysses and his most-trusted valet Clarín choose another direction. The audience is soon treated to the first animal spectacle of the play. In Calderón’s original, the stage directions make clear that “Animals come out and they act such as they are said to be”.²⁹ De Griek adapted this stage direction: “There, there appears a group of animals of the fiercest kind, such as Lions, Bears, Tigers, and others”.³⁰

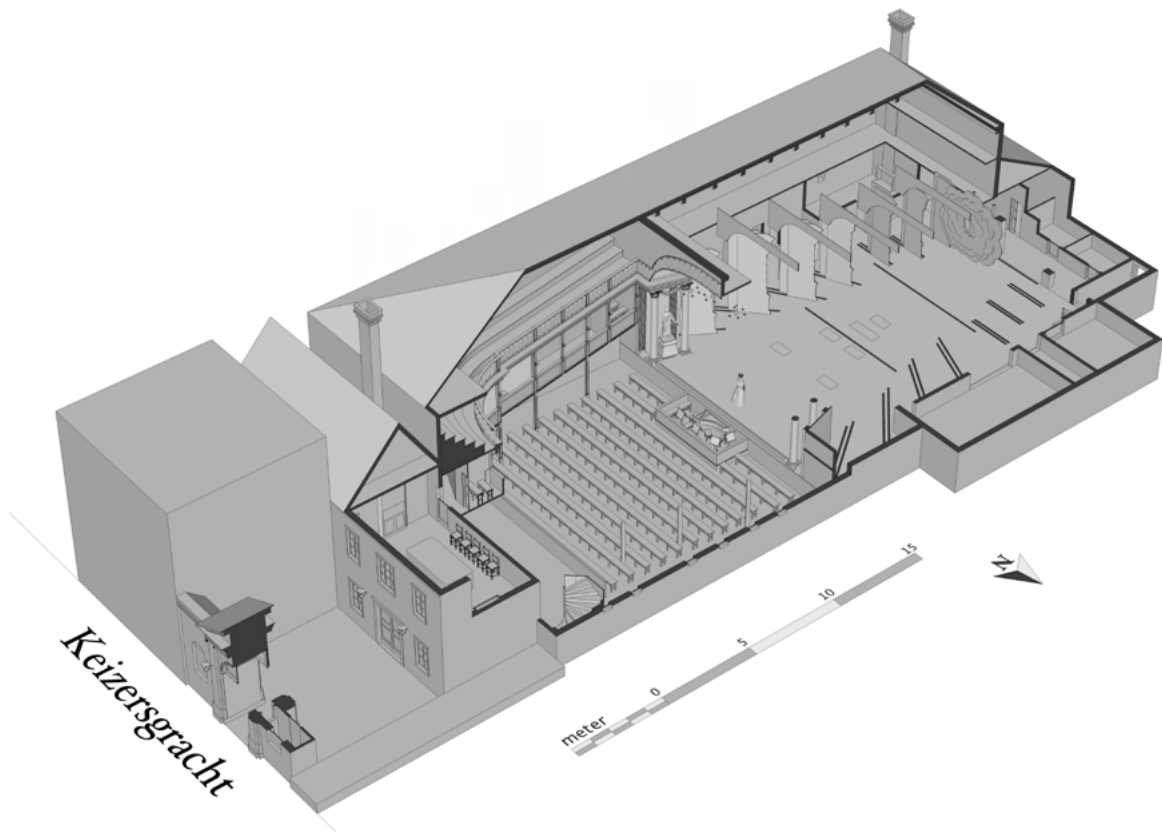


Fig. 2. Cross-Section (Computer visualization) of the Amsterdam Public Theatre, 1665–1772.

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De Leeuw's translation is less free: "Here, there appear some Animals of different kinds".³¹ Both in the case of Calderón's original and the two adaptations by De Griek and De Leeuw, there is a group of unspecified animals, but only De Griek's adaptation states here that at least three distinct species of animals were brought onto the Brussels stage: lions, bears, and tigers — animals too dangerous to have been real, unless they were kept in a cage.

31 De Leeuw, *Circe*, 3:
 "Hier verschynen eenige Dieren van
 verscheide gestalte".

In both the original text of Calderón and the adaptations by De Grieck and De Leeuw, Ulysses speaks to the animal king, the lion which appears before his eyes. In the Spanish original, Ulysses is surprised at the fact that the animals do not attack them, but actually are “humbled”, “kneeled”, and “defeated”.³² He then describes how the lion appears to be signalling to him and Clarín that they should return to sea and leave the island. His interpretation is that they are not welcome in the forest where this specific lion rules, but he is unaware that the lion is actually one of his companions trying to warn him about Circe’s magical powers.³³ De Grieck stays mostly true to the original, but he nevertheless adds a specific action to the scene. The stage directions clearly state that Ulysses has to put his hand on top of the lion’s head: “He comes near the Lion, and he lays his hand on his head, while he [the lion] as well as the other beasts repeatedly give signal that they should continue walking”.³⁴ The stage direction added by De Grieck is not present in De Leeuw’s adaptation.³⁵ Nevertheless, the lion equally nods to Ulysses in De Leeuw’s version to indicate that he and Clarín should leave the island.

Now, how was this performed? We know that the Dutch East India Company shipped all kinds of exotic animals to Amsterdam and became the main supplier of animals for north-western Europe during the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Amsterdam possessed a menagerie of its own, which was accessible to the public. As such, the wild animals featured in *De toveres Circe* were available in Amsterdam at the time. However, it seems unlikely that the lions from the Amsterdam menagerie were also used at the Amsterdam Public Theatre. The lion spoken to must have instead been an actor in a lion’s costume, who could then nod and gesticulate on cue to make his intentions clear. Only the lion is fully discussed by the playwrights; the other animals that had appeared before Ulysses and Clarín are described as a collective.

How did De Grieck, then, come up with his idea of adding bears and tigers to his adaptation? This information can be found in the following scene. There,

32 “humildes”, “postrados” and “vencidos” in the original text.

33 Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, fol. 3r.

34 De Grieck, *Ulysses*, 5: “Hy naedert den Leeuw, en legt hem de hant op het hoofd, terwyl hy soo wel als d’andere beesten gedurig een teeken geven dat sy souden door-gaen”.

35 De Leeuw, *Circe*, 3–4.

Ulysses' crewman Antistes gives extra information. After his sudden return, Antistes makes apparent that the animals which Ulysses and Clarín encountered before were, in fact, their companions who were transformed into animals by the sorceress Circe. Subsequently, Antistes relates what happened, but also how and into what kind of animals the Greeks were transformed. In Calderón's original, he makes clear that after having drunk enchanted wine one man seemed to be a beast with a spotted hide (a leopard or a jaguar), another looked like a serpent armed with scales, another covered with sharp stings (perhaps a hedgehog or porcupine), and yet another became a "most unclean animal" (a swine).³⁶

De Grieck follows Calderón in his descriptions, listing a spotted tiger, a serpent, an animal with spines, and a swine. De Leeuw, on the other hand, does not explain which types of animal transformation take place.³⁷ It is only when Ulysses' men are returned to their human form that they say themselves what kind of animals they were. In De Leeuw's version, we learn that Circe had been creative, transforming separate men into a tiger, a lion, a dragon, a bear, and a swine.³⁸ In Calderón's original on the other hand, Antistes never speaks about a bear or a dragon, animals which De Grieck and De Leeuw respectively added to their adaptations. As for the bear, the playwrights were inspired by the seventh book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, where Aeneas' ship passes by Circe's island. The hero hears "the angry growls of lions chafing at their bonds and roaring in midnight hours, the raging of bristly boars and caged bears, and huge wolfish shapes howling".³⁹

Both in the original and the adaptations, the animal transformations happened offstage, as opposed to the metamorphoses being shown in a so-called *changement à vue*.⁴⁰ This is evident when Ulysses forces Circe to change his men back to their human forms: Ulysses' companions enter the stage one after another in their human appearance.⁴¹ Maybe the illusion would have been disrupted if the metamorphoses were shown in front of the spectators.⁴² The coulisses

36 Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, fol. 4r.

37 Cf. De Grieck, *Ulysses*, 8; De Leeuw, *Circe*, 6–7.

38 De Leeuw, *Circe*, 13.

39 Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.15–18, in *Aeneid: Books 7–12. Appendix Vergiliana*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough. Loeb Classical Library 64 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918). This description, which says that lions are chained and the bears are caged, enforces, furthermore, the idea that live animals in cages featured in the original performance at the Buen Retiro park.

40 *Changement à vue* is literally translated "change in sight". A French theatre term, it designates a sudden and rapid change of décor while the curtains are drawn, and thus the change happens within the spectator's sight.

41 Cf. Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, fol. 5v.; De Grieck, *Ulysses*, 13; De Leeuw, *Circe*, 13.

42 Similar things were said about murder onstage: while a character might be able to die, the actor could not. This was impossible and therefore unbelievable. See Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Onderwijs in de toneel-poëzy*, 274, 387, 424–428.

always offered a solution in these kinds of situations, and thus the actual metamorphoses were not showcased.

THEATRE COSTUMES AS SYMBOLIC METAMORPHOSES

43 Yet, there is at least one example where a live domestic animal was used in the performance of a Flemish play. Support for this can be found in Antonio Francisco Wouters, *De devotie van Eusebius tot het H. kruys* (Brussels: Peeter de Dobbeleer, 1665), 1. In the very first scene, two characters bring a live horse onto stage, which is harnessed to a cart. This play was an adaptation of Calderón's *La devoción de la cruz* (1636).

44 Archelaus was changed into a dragon in De Leeuw's adaptation. See De Leeuw, *Circe*, 13.

45 "Een Aap, en eenige bonte lappen". *Inventaris van de kleederen, schermen, tooneelen, ende andere goederen, berustende in den schouwburg deezer stede [...]*, 1688, inv.nr. 315, 67—Archief Familie Huydecoper, Utrechts Archief, Utrecht.

46 Cf. De Leeuw, *Circe*, 13.

47 *Ontfangboek anno 1656*, 1656-1677, inv.nr. 428, 367A—Archief van het Burgerweeshuis: oud archief, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Amsterdam.

Since animals in *De toveres Circe* seem for the most part to have been too dangerous to be live animals, we should expect that indeed the stand-in animals were either painted on décor pieces made out of papier-mâché, or actors dressed in animal costumes, as was suggested earlier. For Brussels, it is unclear how the animals were staged after their transformation.⁴³ For the Amsterdam Public Theatre, however, we have an inventory drawn up in 1688, containing a list of all the décor pieces, costumes, and theatre props used in performances at the Amsterdam Public Theatre. Listed are stuffed animals, including two horses, a peacock, an elephant, a camel, a large eagle, two pairs of swans, and an owl, as well as a dragon.⁴⁴ As regards the animal costumes, there were several bears' and lions' hides, a dolphin's costume, and "a monkey, and several pieces of fur".⁴⁵ The absence of any tiger or swine costumes suggests that Ulysses' men were not transformed into those animals in the production of *De toveres Circe*, although De Leeuw's Timantes says that he was a tiger and Lebrél that he was a swine, when they are human again.⁴⁶ Perhaps one of the "pieces of fur" was spotted like that of a jaguar or striped like that of a Bengal tiger. As regards the swine, the directors of the Amsterdam Public Theatre could have decided to bring live pigs onto the stage. Although this would explain why the title page of *De toveres Circe* states that the play was performed "With Animals", this cannot be corroborated since only the revenues and not the expenses of the Amsterdam Public Theatre *post* 1656 have survived.⁴⁷ Moreover, the dissonance of a real animal beside a man wearing a skin would have called attention to the ersatz animals, ruining the *vraisemblance* of the scene.

Despite the absence of live animals, the use of fake animals and animal costumes could paradoxically have enhanced the *vraisemblance* of the adaptations

of *El mayor encanto, amor*. The Greek men retain their reason, while their minds were trapped in animal skins. In Calderón's text, Antistes says: "One man, though still with reason, was a brute, covered with fur".⁴⁸ Also in the Flemish adaptation this is stressed: "Although reason still served him as before, his body became covered with one or another fur".⁴⁹ De Leeuw, in turn, is less specific saying that "The body lost its shell from top to bottom, their human form became beastly".⁵⁰ Yet, several scenes later, De Leeuw also confirms that the Greeks did not lose their reason when Circe commands the reasonable animals that used to be Ulysses' companions to change back to human.⁵¹

Especially the original by Calderón and the adaptation by De Grieck describe the Greek men as being *covered* by animal fur, suggesting the use of hides or pieces of fur to hide the human skin beneath. In De Grieck's adaptation, this interpretation is further enforced by Circe's words, who says to Ulysses: "Your people have finally taken off the beastly form".⁵² This could have had an aesthetic motivation as well: the animal costumes emphasize that they merely *cover* the actors and hide their inner humanity; they are, so to say, halfway between animal and human. The spectator of both *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* and *De toveres Circe* sees a man in an animal skin and this corresponds with the events in the play. A similar representation of the metamorphoses can be found in a German woodblock print in an edition of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* (c. 1340) as early as 1474. Here, we see several human bodies bearing the heads of different animals (Fig. 3). This image continues well into the seventeenth century, for example in the depiction made of Circe's transformations by Crispijn van de Passe II (Fig. 4). The same strategy is applied in depictions of other metamorphoses, such as that of Actaeon by Jacob de Gheyn II (Fig. 5).

Did the animal costumes also have another function besides being a practical solution to the difficulty of bringing live animals on stage? Indeed, the partial transformations in the two parallel adaptations — and in contemporary

48 Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, fol. 4r.: "Qual era ya racional / bruto de pieles cubierto".

49 De Grieck, *Ulysses*, 8: "Schoon dat de reden hem bleef dienen als te voren, / Syn lichaem wirt bedeck met 't een oft ander vel".

50 De Leeuw, *Circe*, 6: "Het lyf verloor zyn stal van boven tot beneden / Hun menschelyke vorm wierd beestelyk".

51 *Ibid.*, 13.

52 De Grieck, *Ulysses*, 13: "U volk heeft eindeling dan af-geleydt de beest".



Fig. 3. German hand-coloured woodblock print of Circe, Ulysses, and the crewmen in their animal appearance from a 1474 printed edition of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* (c. 1360), fol. [g]1r, f. li. Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania, United States, Inc B-720.

Photo provided by the Provenance Online Project of University of Pennsylvania.

53 Castillo Pascual, "Circe Diva," 82.

54 *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 23rd edition (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2014), s.v. encanto 2; see also DiPuccio, "The Enigma of Enchantment," 731.

55 DiPuccio, "The Enigma of Enchantment," 732–33.

prints — suggest a certain symbolic interpretation of Circe and Ulysses' love affair, which was already present in the subject of *El mayor encanto, amor*. Calderón's *comedia* deals with the supposed opposition between love and emotions on the one hand and reason on the other. Love is regarded to be the greatest enchantment and "Circe is the most obvious allegory of the lustful female sensuality who threatens virtue and reason".⁵³ One should note that the definition of the Spanish word for enchantment, *encanto*, refers not merely to the result of magic, but also to something that astonishes or entrances you.⁵⁴ Therefore, Circe's enchantments are not only magical but also originate in her reason. These are the mind games which she plays with the people on her island.⁵⁵ The animal transformations are equally subject to this



Fig. 4. Crispijn van de Passe (II)

Circe transforms Odysseus' companions into swine, c. 1636–1670. 16.7 × 22.8 cm, Engraving. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

double definition of *encanto*, which plays with the distinction between reason and emotion, and fact and fiction. The unfinished transformations point out that there is no real difference between concepts that have traditionally been regarded to be each other's opposites. They reflect Circe's mastery of both irrational (that is magical) and rational enchantments: the sorceress-queen uses not just one or the other but continuously alternates between them.

Likewise, the halfway transformations challenge the opposition between emotion and reason. The metamorphoses in the Dutch-language adaptations address the early modern idea that beasts are far below any human sophistication. This echoes Aristotle's ideas about humanity as he describes them in his *Politeia*. According to Aristotle, man and animal were different, since "man alone of the animals possesses speech", and he alone "has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities"; finally, he is the only one to be a "political animal".⁵⁶ This gives human beings power over all other species. Circe demonstrates this by turning the Greeks into animals, whom she can control and incarcerate as she desires. While Aristotle argues that humans are different — and thus better — than animals, scholars from the early modern period mainly interpret this negatively. Dutch intellectuals, such as Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert and Gerardus Johannes Vossius, also defined humanity as the ability to use reason.⁵⁷ However, they stressed that man was always at risk of losing his reason — and thus control over his senses. If he was not careful man would return to beast, being solely driven by his *inclinatio animalis*, the pre-emotional state dominated by natural (animal) tendencies and impulses. The medical doctor Johan van Beverwijck explained in his *Schat der gesontheit* (1636) and *Schat der ongesontheit* (1642) that an excess of emotions could, furthermore, endanger a person's health: emotions were seen as an ailment and should be treated accordingly, or death would follow.⁵⁸ It is not strange, then, that emotions were also a serious concern to Dutch and Flemish playwrights. In fact, they believed that theatre could be a training school for our emotions, as the Dutch scholar Daniel Heinsius wrote in *De tragoediae constitutione* (1643).⁵⁹ *El mayor encanto, amor* and its Dutch-language adaptations exemplify this way of thinking when Ulysses falls under Circe's spell. But at the same time, the plays challenge this very idea, since Circe allows the Greek crewmen to retain their ability to use reason, when they are animals. Thus, the question is whether they become animals or are still human. By manipulating nature Circe blurs the human–animal divide. The animal costumes reflect this aesthetically, even though they might have been an unintended side effect

56 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 264 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 1253a, 4–18; 1254b, 26.

57 See for this and the following Johannes Konst, *Woedende waakghierigheid en vruchteloze weeklachten. De hartstochten in de Nederlandse tragedie van de zeventiende eeuw* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 11–16.

58 See Olga van Marion, "Lovesickness on Stage: Besotted Patients in 17th-Century Medical Handbooks and Plays," in *Illness and Literature in the Low Countries: From the Middle Ages until the 21st Century*, ed. Jaap Grave, Rick Honings, and Bettina Noak (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2015), 47–49, 59–60.

59 Daniel Heinsius, *De tragoediae constitutione liber* (Leiden: Elsevier, 1643), 12–13.



Fig. 5. Jacob de Gheyn (II)

Diana and Actaeon, c. 1588–1592. 34.3 cm × 44.5 cm, Engraving. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

of having to use animal costumes to represent animals onstage. Live animals would only hinder this interpretation. In this sense, the animal costumes are not only a practical solution to the problem of staging live animals, but they also bring about a very specific interpretation in which the spectator accepts that he sees an actor in an animal costume performing the role of a Greek

crewman who has been magically transformed into an animal, showing the animal nature beneath his humanity. Although it might challenge the idea of *vraisemblance*, the use of animal costumes reflects the philosophical and also medical concern that humans can be morally corrupted if they allow their passions to take over from reason.

MISCOMMUNICATION BETWEEN A MONKEY AND HIS BEST FRIEND

No other character demonstrates better how his halfway transformation influences human abilities than Ulysses' valet Clarín. In the play he is turned into a monkey when all other characters have become human again. His metamorphosis is exceptional in the play's plotline, since he not only retains his ability to reason but also his mastery of speech. Furthermore, he is the only character to be aware of his animal nature, unlike Timantes who says that he was dreaming, or Polydoor who says that he was sleeping.⁶⁰ They regard their animal transformation as an illusion, whereas Clarín knows that what is happening to him is real. This difference between Clarín and the other characters enables him to transgress the border of the stage, challenge the fiction of the play, and address the spectators directly. This ability to disrupt the fiction of the play also originates in Clarín's role as one of the play's two *graciosos*.

60 Cf. De Grieck, *Ulysses*, 13; De Leeuw, *Circe*, 13.

61 Jesús Gómez, *La figura del donaire o el gracioso en las comedias de Lope de Vega* (Sevilla: Ediciones Alfar 2006), 14, 19–26, 74; Susana Hernández Araico, "Gracioso," in *Diccionario de la comedia del Siglo de Oro*, ed. Frank P. Casa, Luciano García Lorenzo, and Germán Vega Carcía-Luengos (Madrid: Editorial Castalia 2002), 160–62.

In the Spanish *comedia nueva*, the *gracioso* is typically a valet to a nobleman or the protagonist. He is a comical figure, in everything the opposite of his master and parodying his actions, but completely loyal until the end. Furthermore, the *gracioso* can be sharp-witted, credulous and naïve, a coward, or a materialist with a preference for food, wine, and gold.⁶¹ Clarín demonstrates these same traits and this becomes especially fatal in terms of his human body, when he insults Circe. For the insult Circe "rewards" Clarín with a treasure chest, which to Clarín's surprise contains a pesky dwarf and a chattering chaperone. Driven crazy by the two, he goes back to Circe and begs her to rid him of his two tormentors, even if it means that the witch was to transform him into a monkey.

She obliges Clarín's "request". As with the other animal transformations, Clarín's metamorphosis happens offstage. Yet, the *gracioso's* transformation is different because Clarín is allowed to keep his mastery of human language in addition to his reason, so that he will be more grateful than the others which Circe turned into animals. Only when he looks into a mirror showing his true form will Clarín be returned to human.⁶²

As discussed earlier, according to Nil Volentibus Arduum, Clarín's transformation was next to impossible to stage in a believable manner. In their opinion, spectacle should be interwoven with the text necessary to the plot, and it should be technically possible to show the spectacle to an audience. Thus, Clarín's transformation "happens" yet again in the coulisses. But although the transformations happened offstage, the members of Nil Volentibus Arduum were still critical.⁶³ In all these cases of animal metamorphosis, they believed that the audience was not being entertained.⁶⁴ This claim demands a closer examination. I will limit myself in the following to a discussion of *De toveres Circe*, although much that will be said for this play also applies to De Griek's *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* as well as Calderón's original.

As much as *vraisemblance* was brought forward as a point of critique to discredit Clarín's transformation, the *gracioso's* metamorphosis is, in fact, useful to the plot. The *gracioso's* mirroring of Ulysses' actions makes Clarín the most popular character of the Amsterdam adaptation; the monkey metamorphosis only adds to his mirror function. When Ulysses has to decide between honour and love — in which Circe has entangled him — and has to discern between fact and magical fiction, Clarín's actions mirror this struggle. He too is confronted with Circe's illusions, but while Ulysses is a match for Circe, Clarín easily succumbs to the witch. Both men are tricked: the Greek king has to play along in Circe's enchanting games of love, while the *gracioso* is haunted by two infuriating companions before being turned into a monkey.⁶⁵

62 Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, fols. 13r.–15r.

63 Nil Volentibus Arduum, *Onderwijs in de toneel-poëzy*, 425.

64 According to Van Praag, the metamorphosis of the valet Clarín into a monkey seems to have especially pleased the "klootjesvolck" (rabble) of Amsterdam. His supposition lacks, however, any reference to reader responses or contemporary reviews to support his claim. See Van Praag, "Les traductions de *El mayor encanto, amor*," 12. Sullivan repeats Van Praag but gives no extra proof of the account. See Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries*, 54.

65 See DiPuccio, "The Enigma of Enchantment," 736.

In addition to the serious theme of deceit and false appearances, Circe's enchantments have their comical effects as well, which are largely dependent on Clarín's transformation. This is reflected in the reaction of Clarín's best friend, Lebrél, when he encounters the *gracioso* in his appearance of a monkey. In one scene, Lebrél wants to make Clarín his dancing pet — as he believes him to be a monkey after all — after successfully capturing him. Clarín protests and screams in agony, but his friend does not seem to understand him:

Klarijn.

It is me, Lebrél, why do you twist my throat?
Is it not a strange case? Oh intolerable misery!
I speak with a sound mind, but he understands me not.
Oh poor blood, Klaryn, what do you have to suffer!

Lebrél.

How he dances hither and yon, what poses he strikes!
[...]

Klarijn.

That he does not understand me!

Lebrél.

Grimace-maker, come on,
Be at rest, and follow me hither.⁶⁶

66 De Leeuw, *Circe*, 63: "*Klarijn*."

Ik ben 't, Lebrél, waar toe de króp
my toe te wringen? / Is 't niet een
vreemde zaak? ô duldeloos verdriet!
/ Ik spreek met goed verstand, en hy
verstaatme niet. / Och armen bloed
Klaryn, wat moet hy al bezuuren!
Lebrél. Hoe danst hy heen en weêr,
wat maakt hy al postuuren! [...]
Klarijn. Dat hy my niet verstaat!
Lebrél. Grimassemaaker, sa, / Wees
jy maar vry gerust, en vólg my
achter na".

The irony of this scene is that Clarín is after all punished by Circe, being humiliated and marginalized as a stupid animal by his best friend. Clarín quickly realizes this, as the audience must have done, too. Despite Clarín's efforts to communicate with Lebrél, he fails desperately. While the other characters cannot understand Clarín (they simply pretend that his words are the noise that a monkey makes), the spectators actually can. They will, therefore, respond to the 'animal' Clarín as fellow humans: since the audience can still understand Clarín, they are brought to his level, which the other characters believe to be non-human. Through this connection, Clarín in his appearance of a monkey

breaks the fourth wall, not so much by addressing the audience directly, but by drawing attention to the fact that other characters try to create the illusion that Clarín does not speak a human language. The audience might either think that the characters are ignoring Clarín on purpose, or they can accept that Clarín is really not speaking a human language, or they are forced to believe that they likewise make the sounds of a simian. The fact that the other characters also ignore the audience enforces the latter interpretation.

By ignoring the *gracioso* the other characters create distance between them as *dramatis personae* and Clarín as one of the *dramatis animalia*. Clarín is pushed outside the theatrical fiction, making him part of the communicative world of the spectator rather than that of the stage. As a monkey, Clarín finds himself in a metaphysical limbo and this has consequences for his position between the world of the play and the outside world of the auditorium as Clarín becomes the hinge that connects the two worlds.

Clarín remains Lebre's pet monkey during the whole fourth act and even learns several tricks for Lebre's entertainment. This is humorous but also provocative. Clarín's metamorphosis invokes and challenges Aristotle's distinction between humans and animals, generating compassion with an animal that can still speak and think, and questions whether humans are much different from animals. I suggest that compassion with Clarín becomes more intense because he is impersonated by an actor in a monkey costume. It makes his suffering transferable, something which, arguably, is impossible if there had been an actual monkey onstage. An animal would have had trouble communicating its humiliation to the spectators or eliciting compassion, partly also because dancing animals and bear-baiting contests were popular forms of entertainment in early modern Europe.⁶⁷

For Clarín's own peace of mind, he does not have to wait long to be turned back to his human self. At the beginning of the fifth act, Lebre makes Clarín his

⁶⁷ Andreas Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1–2, 6, 11–12.

chamberlain and hands him a hand-mirror. Curious as to his appearance, Clarín does a typically human thing and looks for his reflection in the mirror:

I am curious what kind of Monkey I may resemble,
I have to comfortably inspect myself in this hand glass.
Help, Jupiter, I am shocked at my disfigured face!
While looking in the Mirror, the Monkey robe flees him.
What is this? Now I appear to be myself again!⁶⁸

It is only when he looks at himself in a mirror that Clarín becomes human again. The underlying thought is that a mirror is impervious to deception for it can only reflect what is real.⁶⁹ Thus, the *gracioso* sees himself as a monkey and is shocked at his misshapen reflection. As a result, he is turned back to his human form in *changement à vue*, the only one in the plot of the original and both adaptations.⁷⁰ As a sort of amplification and hyperbole in one, Clarín's transformation will now be shown onstage.⁷¹

68 De Leeuw, *Circe*, 75: "Ik ben nieuwsgierig wat ik voor een Aap mag lyken, / Ik moet my met gemak eens in dit glas bekyken. / Help, Iupiter, ik schrik van myn mismaakt gelaat! *Al kykende in de Spiegel ontvliegt hem het Aapenkleed.* Wel hoe, nu lyk ik weêr myn zelven op een draad!"

69 De Leeuw, *Circe*, 49.

70 See Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, fol. 23v: "En mirándose al espejo se le cae el vestido de mona". Cf. De Grieck, *Ulysses*, 67: "Ter-wyl hy hem spiegelt valt hem het apen kleedt af".

71 It is also interesting to consider how this was performed, since the specific stage direction suggests that the monkey costume was pulled from his back. Possibly, a cord was attached to the costume, which was then pulled from within the coulisse making the robe slide off of Clarín's back.

CONCLUSION

The animal metamorphoses in the parallel adaptations of Calderón's *El mayor encanto, amor* are interesting case studies for discussing whether animals played any spectacular role in early modern Dutch theatre. Especially De Leeuw's *De toveres Circe* is remarkable in this regard as the title page of the printed text mentions that it was performed with "Artifice and Animals". I examined whether live animals were used in the performances of De Leeuw's adaptation and what their role was in the plot line. The texts of De Grieck's *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* and De Leeuw's *De toveres Circe* record that a variety of animals featured in the plays, of which most were too dangerous to bring on stage. The logical conclusion is that the animals were almost all impersonated by actors in costumes, with perhaps the exception of the swine. It has been argued that the animals in the two adaptations were used to

challenge the border between reality and artifice. The adaptations problematize the idea that animals are normally led by their *inclinatio animalis*, but in the play they appear to have control of their reason. Especially the *gracioso* Clarín demonstrates this. As a monkey he crosses the border from the side of the *dramatis personae* to the side of the *dramatis animalia*. As a consequence, the *dramatis personae* seem to be unable to understand Clarín. Only the audience realizes that Clarín has full mastery of the human language. This makes him a part of the communicative world of the spectator and brings them on the same level. The spectator should not identify with the human characters but with Clarín in his animal appearance. I have proposed that the adaptations of *El mayor encanto, amor* in a Dutch-language context question whether humans and animals are that different after all.

De Griek's *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* and De Leeuw's *De toveres Circe* are among the few Dutch plays that feature animals. When animals are, however, part of the plot in Dutch or Flemish plays, they can challenge ideas about what it entails to be human, but they also challenge the fiction of the play and foreground theatre as an art form. The two parallel adaptations of Calderón's *El mayor encanto, amor* perfectly demonstrate this philosophy.

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